

QUALITATIVE INQUIRIES IN MUSIC THERAPY  
MONOGRAPH SERIES

VOLUME 1

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BARCELONA PUBLISHERS

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## A New Monograph Series

# QUALITATIVE INQUIRIES IN MUSIC THERAPY

Barcelona Publishers is pleased to present the first issue in a continuing series of research monographs, entitled “Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy.” The purpose is to provide opportunities for qualitative researchers to publish their studies in a refereed periodical that does not have the ordinary limits of a journal. The editorial review board consists of music therapy practitioners and scholars, selected by Barcelona Publishers for their expertise in qualitative research.

A monograph will be published whenever a sufficient number of studies have been accepted, rather than according to any fixed time schedule. Each monograph will have a guest editor who will work with the researchers, editorial board, and publisher in preparing the studies for final publication.

Only unpublished research studies on music therapy that are in the qualitative paradigm will be considered for publication. The following definitions shall apply:

- Unpublished: any study that has not appeared previously in a book or journal. Theses and dissertations will be considered, however, prior to submission they must be appropriately edited for publication (see below).
- Research study: any systematic, integrity-monitored inquiry that involves the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data and ultimately leads to a discovery that enhances our understanding of music therapy.
- On music therapy: studies that deal with all areas of clinical practice, theory, research, education, supervision, and ethics in music therapy.
- Qualitative paradigm: a study that is non-positivistic in epistemology, regardless of whether numeric or non-numeric data are used. Methodologically, the studies may be naturalistic, experimental, phenomenological, hermeneutical, heuristic, constructive, theoretical, ethnographic, historical, critical, discourse analytic, or creative in approach.

Studies submitted for review should adhere to the following guidelines:

- The study should include the following sections, unless the nature of the study dictates otherwise:
  - Introduction: a summary of personal involvement in the research topic;
  - Related Literature: a review of literature outlining the significance and need for (a) researching the topic, (b) in the qualitative paradigm.
  - Problem Statement: statement of the purpose of the inquiry and, when appropriate, the specific research questions posed at the beginning of the inquiry.
  - Method: a concise but comprehensive description of: how and why participants were selected; ethical precautions taken; materials and equipment used; procedures for collecting and analyzing the data; citations of other researchers who have developed or used similar methodology.
  - Results and Discussion: A summary of findings and their implications.
- All studies must meet ethical standards for the treatment of human subjects, as demonstrated by approval by an institutional review board. Consent forms and evidence of approval must be submitted with the study.
- All reports must be formatted as follows:

- Text: Single-spaced, 12 font, on standard size white paper, with equal margins of 1 3/8 inches (3.5 cm) on top, bottom, left and right. Tabs and indents are ½ inch or 1.5 cm.
- Titles and Headings: Title of study is capitalized, centered, and in 14 font; Author's name is not capitalized, centered, and in 14 font; first level headings are capitalized, centered and in 12 font; second level headings are flush left, not capitalized and in 12 font; third level headings are italicized, not capitalized, and indented once.
- Citations and References must adhere to APA guidelines.
- All figures, tables, illustrations, notation, photos, etc., must be placed where they belong within the text document, and already inserted into the text file. Separate files will not be accepted.
- Audio or video recordings will not be included in or attached to any paper publication; however, when appropriate, they may be made available on the Barcelona website.
- To submit the study, send four hard copies and one disk to:
  - Kenneth Bruscia
  - Barcelona Publishers
  - 1425 Tullamore Lane
  - Phoenixville PA 19460 USA

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Submission Guidelines for Contributors	iii
Editors	v
Contributors	vi
Table of Contents	vii
Editor's Introduction <i>Brian Abrams</i>	ix
A Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Listening to Music When Upset <i>Kathryn Racette</i>	1
A Phenomenological Investigation of Being Effective as a Music Therapist <i>Pascal Comeau</i>	19
Spiritual Moments in Music Therapy: A Qualitative Study of the Music Therapist's Experience <i>Maya K. Marom</i>	37
An Investigation of Meaning in Clinical Music Improvisation With Troubled Adolescents <i>Susan C. Gardstrom</i>	77





## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

*Qualitative music therapy research* is a term encompassing a diverse domain of inquiry. It involves the investigation of many facets of music therapy phenomena, including experiences, meanings, processes, relationships, and stories, and it often addresses dimensions of music therapy such as art, beauty, and creativity, at in-depth levels. Qualitative research is typically based upon the epistemological assumption of multiple constructed realities and truths, which are informed by numerous perspectives and in which the usual and the unusual hold equal value because both represent valid contributions to the understanding of a phenomenon.

The central goals of qualitative research are enlarged constructions, deepened understandings, and expanded awareness of a given phenomenon. The researcher does not pre-define the parameters of the phenomenon under investigation, but rather discovers the relevant and meaningful parameters as these are revealed by the phenomenon itself during the process of the research. Likewise, the researcher allows methodological design to emerge and evolve as the research progresses, in accordance with the nature of the phenomenon.

Historically, publication venues for music therapy research have favored conventional, scientific paradigms, centered upon singular truth claims that support generalization and that may predict causal or correlational relationships between operationalized, quantitative variables. Publications guidelines in such venues have been fairly uniform with respect to the content, organization, and length of research report manuscripts. Consequently, they have tended to accommodate neither the diverse purposes nor the unconventional designs of qualitative studies. Nor have they tolerated what is often the in-depth content and extensive length of qualitative research reports. While the conventional venues have made, and continue to make, vital contributions to the music therapy research literature, there remains the need for venues that will accommodate qualitative research.

Over the years, a number of scholarly journals have accepted qualitative research reports for publication. However, the editorial guidelines and space limitations of these journals often have either prevented the publication of many qualitative studies or demanded that authors modify their reports to an extent that would have compromised the full integrity, richness, and meaningfulness of their work.

In response to these circumstances, Barcelona Publishers introduces *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy*, a research monograph series specifically reserved for original qualitative music therapy research studies of various topics and lengths.

This monograph series may be regarded as a periodical in that its prime function is to publish the latest findings of qualitative research; however, given the relatively small number of music therapists in the world doing qualitative research, there will be no attempt to publish an issue annually. Essentially, each issue will appear when there are enough studies to warrant publication.

Each of the four studies included in the present volume are unique both in the purpose and in the methodology employed by the researcher. Each, in its own way, represents a meaningful and valuable contribution to the music therapy field.

Kathryn Racette's "A Phenomenological Analysis of the Experience of Listening to Music When Upset," a revised version of her original 1989 manuscript, represents one of the first qualitative music therapy research studies of its kind. For publication of the article in this volume, the author has made some minor modifications in her characterization of the literature, as well as other changes, based on the present state of the field and her current views on her own research. However, much remains in its original state, and thus the reader should consider the context of the time in which the study was conducted.

For example, Racette's discussion and review of the phenomenological method reflects its unprecedented application in music therapy research at the time, while the central emphasis of the study concerns the exploration of the phenomenological approach in music therapy research wherein the phenomenon of *listening to music when upset* serves primarily as a means of illustrating the method's application. Moreover, due to the predominance of positivist thought at the time of the study, the author expressed a concern for the potential distortion of participants' actual experiences due to the retrospective reflection upon experiences in the phenomenological method. Given the growing acceptance of non-positivist thought in contemporary qualitative music therapy research, the view that any memory can be true or pure would likely be rejected in favor of a view that all memories of experiences are initially constructed and subsequently re-constructed according to each individual's continually unfolding personal and cultural contexts, and that while such constructions may vary in their integrity, comprehensiveness, and trustworthiness, one is never more true than another.

Pascal Comeau's "A Phenomenological Investigation of Being Effective as a Music Therapist," a revision of his 1991 manuscript, represents another classic among qualitative music therapy studies. Like Racette, Comeau utilized phenomenological inquiry as his primary methodology, but because the idea of utilizing phenomenology in music therapy research had already been introduced in the literature, he placed his emphasis upon inquiring into the phenomenon itself (being effective as a music therapist) versus the methodology. In Comeau's approach, participants were asked not only to describe experiences of being effective but also of being ineffective, so that the nature and boundaries of the phenomenon could be revealed through the polar contrast between these two types of experiences.

About a decade and a half following the Comeau and Racette studies, Maya Marom completed research entitled "Spiritual Moments in Music Therapy: A Qualitative Study of the Music Therapist's Experience." Using a methodology representing a variation of classic phenomenology, Marom explored the many dimensions of spiritual experiences in music therapy, as expressed from the perspective of music therapists. Through her analysis of interview transcripts, she was able to identify a unique categorical scheme of experiences that shed light on the nature and significance of the wide array of experiences considered to be spiritual in various ways.

Finally, around the same time that Marom completed her study, Susan Gardstrom completed "An Investigation of Meaning in Clinical Music Improvisation With Troubled Adolescents," which was originally her Ph.D. dissertation. Gardstrom utilized a combination of phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiry to analyze the verbal transcripts of study participant interviews. She also used Bruscia's *Improvisational Assessment Profiles* (IAPs) in her analysis of the music. This unique methodology resulted in a poignant understanding of meaning in the improvisation experiences and products of the research participants.

The reader will note that, although all four studies in the present volume happen to utilize some form of phenomenology (alone or in combination with other methodologies), studies to be submitted for future publication need not be limited to this approach. The series is in fact open to all cultures of inquiry that are relevant to music therapy, and one purpose of the series is to present the wide array of these cultures to the public.

*Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy* represents an exciting development in music therapy scholarship. It affirms the legitimacy of qualitative research studies and honors the significance of the author's creativity and artistry. I believe it will inspire and encourage the promulgation of further qualitative research in the music therapy field and will serve as a vital source of knowledge. I offer sincere thanks to the contributing authors, each of whom was willing to share her or his work. Each of them also participated graciously throughout the editorial revision process. I also thank the members of the editorial board, who have done outstanding work in reviewing manuscripts and who have demonstrated the utmost reliability and professionalism. I applaud all parties involved for allowing the review and revision processes to serve as opportunities for the continued evolution of the work included in this volume. I am truly honored to have been entrusted with the responsibility of being guest editor of this inaugural volume, and I am grateful for what I have learned through collaboration with the contributors, editorial reviewers, and publisher.

Brian Abrams  
Guest Editor  
Volume 1

