

QUALITATIVE INQUIRIES IN MUSIC THERAPY:

A MONOGRAPH SERIES

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Edited by
Douglas Keith

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CONTRIBUTORS

Lindsay Markworth, MMT-MT-BC
Nordoff-Robbins Music Therapist
Twin Cities Music Therapy Services
Minneapolis, Minnesota
USA

Juyoung Lee, MMus, RMT
The University of Melbourne
Parkville, Victoria
Australia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Without words: Music as communication for children with autism <i>Lindsay Markworth</i>	1
A phenomenological study of the interpersonal relationships between five music therapists and adults with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities <i>Juyoung Lee</i>	43

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In 2014, Barcelona Publishers marks ten years since the first volume of *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy*. This ten-year anniversary is a useful time to reflect and take stock of the accomplishments of this publication. A quick snapshot of the publication since its inception may give us a (quantitative) sense of the works published here since 2004.

From the beginning, QIMT has published high-quality qualitative research in music therapy, a useful and relatively well-defined boundary. Within this boundary, one can look more closely at *qualitative research* and *music therapy*, two concepts that contain worlds of their own. *Qualitative research* has been described as a research paradigm, sometimes contrasted with quantitative research, and difficult to define (Wheeler, 2005). This particular research paradigm is characterized by a variety of epistemologies, methodologies and methods (Crotty, 1998). A glance at the volumes that have appeared since 2004 reveals studies in constructivist and subjectivist epistemologies. These studies have included methodologies that include phenomenology, natural inquiry, heuristic inquiry, grounded theory, hermeneutics, qualitative case study, self-inquiry, and biographical inquiry. However, the methodology that appears most frequently is phenomenology. This does not mean, however, that phenomenology is the "most important" methodology.

The second concept, *music therapy*, includes three elements: the client, the music, and the therapist (Bruscia, 1998). Researchers can focus on any or all of these. Each of these elements, of course, is multidimensional, offering a multitude of topics for interested researchers. In the studies published since 2004, over half focus on clients in some way, less than half focus on therapists, and a few focus on the music. Of course, in music therapy, it is often difficult or artificial to focus exclusively on one of these elements.

The current volume offers two studies that employ a phenomenological methodology. Both of these studies focus on the work of music therapists with clients who, because of various conditions, communicate in ways that are difficult for many people to understand. Indeed, it is often difficult to discern when they are communicating.

Lindsay Markworth's study focuses on the important role of music in Nordoff-Robbins music therapy, in particular how music functions as a communicative medium between music therapists and children with autism. She draws on interviews and video data to develop three categories of music as communication. Markworth describes how these categories (and their subcategories) may be viewed through the lenses of Meaning and Method.

Juyoung Lee's study focuses on the interpersonal relationships between music therapists and persons with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities. Lee interviewed music therapists with years of experience working with these individuals in music therapy, and presents a series of meaning units and distilled essences. Like Markworth's study, this is a valuable contribution to the literature on a topic that is hard to study, because of the challenges that typical verbal communication presents these individuals.

In addition to a welcome set of topics, these studies are characterized by particularly clear descriptions of the method, including the often complex steps involved in analyzing qualitative data. The authors are to be commended for this accomplishment, because communicating about the qualitative research process is rarely easy. I predict that readers will appreciate the transparency these authors have modeled, and that future researchers and students will reap concrete benefits. We hope you enjoy this volume of *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy*.

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