

In summary we consider it necessary to establish music therapy as a recognized psychotherapeutic art discipline. According to the Straßburg Declaration for Psychotherapy (1990), we also believe that music therapy education should consist of theory, experiential music therapy, and practice under supervision – including the acceptance of a variety of therapeutic treatment theories, methods and techniques.

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## Finding the Mark: Designing research training for Music Therapists

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We are currently developing the Roehampton University post graduate diploma for revalidation to become an MA in September 2006. This development is in response to a mandatory requirement by the regulatory body for health care professions in the UK, The Health Professions Council. All UK training courses will become MA from September 2006.

One of the key tasks in selecting students is balancing their areas of strength and weakness: we require that they have the following:

- Professional skill upon at least one instrument

- Academic skills, ideally involving musical study at undergraduate level
- Relevant work experience
- Some knowledge of music therapy practice in the UK and an interest in or empathy for the psychoanalytic approach taught at Roehampton.

Many potential students have strengths in one or more areas, but weaknesses elsewhere, which for example allows us sometimes to select students whose academic skills may not be strong, but whose musical skills are strong and understanding of music therapy is already well developed. This means that some students find the written work harder than others, and these same students might find that the prospect of writing the traditional dissertation usually required of an MA degree prohibits the idea of applying to train as a music therapist.

Furthermore we would want to avoid turning down potential music therapists on the grounds of academic ability or the promise of academic ability alone. The profession may lose a diversity and richness that currently exists. On the other hand as a Music Therapy department, we remain committed to research as an essential tool for the professional environment and as enabling a greater depth of clinical understanding. To this end, but also in anticipation of the current development, the Roehampton course already provides an introductory module in research methods that has gradually proved successful in terms of students' results, and popular with students.

Our dilemma is complicated and we have the following questions:

- How can we provide assessment at MA level for trainee music therapists for whom writing a traditional research project is too difficult within the timing of the course?
- How can we avoid turning down potentially good clinicians on the grounds of academic ability?
- How can we continue to make the course attractive to those with potential as clinicians but who consider that they would be unable to write a traditional research project?
- How can we continue to make the course attractive to overseas students for whom English is not their first language?

This year, the Music Therapy Department holds a Learning and Teaching Fellowship awarded by the Roehampton Educational Development Centre. As part of this fellowship, we have begun a short research project. The aim of the project is to identify and newly devise a diverse selection of assessment methods to complement and/or substitute the current dissertation. We are undertaking a literature review into methods of assessment, and are undertaking in-depth consultation with colleagues in the UK, our external examiners, students, and clinical placement managers.

In order to revalidate the course to MA, we aim to develop the research module of the training. Students will choose a research idea, write a research proposal and undertake some or all of the research process. Assessment for this module will include the submission of a research proposal, and a literature review. We anticipate that students will then choose from a ,menu‘ of assessments in order to make up the number of credits required. We aim to keep this new module grounded in theory, that is to say each student will need to demonstrate a facility to integrate theory and practice as part of their research.

As part of this process we are keen to learn from the experience of other trainers, and would welcome your thoughts. We ask that you take five minutes now to look briefly at our questions and that we use this as a basis for a short discussion to fill the remainder of the time etc. We then ask if you could take time to fill out the form and return it to us before the end of the conference.

### **Music Therapy MA – Trainers questionnaire**

*We are currently developing the Roehampton University post graduate diploma for revalidation to become an MA in September 2006.*

*Whilst we have ideas about how the training will develop, we are keen to learn from the experience of other trainers, and would welcome your thoughts.*

*We aim to develop the research module of the training. Students will choose a research idea, write a research proposal and undertake some or all of the research process. The assessment will include a literature review. We anticipate that students will then choose from a ,menu‘ of assessments in order to make up the number of credits required.*

1. Is your course undergraduate or postgraduate?  
Undergraduate      Postgraduate
2. What are your entry requirements? (eg age, previous qualifications, work experience and personal qualities)
  - 2.a. Are you able to accept students without formal academic qualifications?  
Yes                  No
  - 2.c. If no, would you like to be able to accept students without formal academic-qualifications?  
Yes                  No
3. What are the learning outcomes for your training?
  - 3.a. How are these determined (eg by the University, regulatory body, course trainers).
4. What are the different methods of assessment that you use?
  - 4.a. Which assessment methods do you consider to be the most helpful?
  - 4.b. Which assessment methods appear to cause students the most challenges?
  - 4.c. How do you take into consideration issues that might arise for second language students when you are planning assessments?

4.d. Can students choose the methods by which they are assessed?

Yes            No

If yes, please give details:

4.e Is there any discrepancy between the way in which you would like to assess students, and the way in which you are required to assess students (eg by your institution)?

Yes            No

If yes, please give details:

5. Are students required to complete a piece of research?

Yes            No

If yes, please give details:

6. What facilities are you able to offer students in order to support their learning?

7. Have you published, written or spoken about learning, teaching and assessment? If so, we would be very grateful to have references for this work.

8. What are the 4/5 key or seminal texts on Music Therapy in your country?

9. Would you like to say anything else about methods of learning, teaching and assessing on Music Therapy training courses?

### **Conclusion:**

In the course of this seminar it became clear that most of the topics under discussion were connected specifically to the particular situation in each country: the problems which arise when different languages are used within one country and the subsequent difficulty of finding appropriate literature in translation which can cover the curriculum and theoretical perspective of that country, the difficulties experienced by minorities and the need for offering psychological support through self-experience. Least familiar, but perhaps most interesting for the authors, were the differences in the expectations, learning, and cultural support experienced by trainees from Asia and from Western cultures. The lively discussion among all participants, which followed the presentations, revealed very clearly that music therapists, as practitioners and educators, have to be aware and responsive to all the different challenges presented by cultural issues.

We ended the seminar with increased respect for each other's concerns, and with renewed motivation to develop our profession as music therapists in the most responsible way.

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