

# Assessment of Integrative Learning in Music Therapy

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## Abstract

This project examined whether or not students used content from designated music therapy courses outside their classroom work. Documentation of when and how the content was used was examined. Sustainability of the use of content outside the courses was noted, along with an examination of any perspectives changes that students experienced. Areas of inclusion for this content assessment included but were not limited to any diversity awareness and appreciation. Special questionnaires which were completed by students about how they integrated the content from their courses into contexts outside the classroom represented multiple sections and semesters of the following courses: Clinical Applications of Percussion Techniques, Psychology of Music. Coding scheme and unitizing methodology for identification of themes was used to examine the data. Layers of integration which have been previously noted include: impact of properties of music and musical elements and performer's musical ability and performance; connections between memory for lyrics, melody, harmonic structure and rhythm on ability to perform with musical flow, passion and communication of emotion and motivation; ability to sing, lead singing, pay attention to responses of clients, and make therapeutic decisions while simultaneously performing, observing, and responding to clients; ability to identify major goals in therapy, structure music activities to target therapeutic goals, and evaluate therapeutic options with respect to effectiveness in elicitation of therapeutic responses; and impact of awareness of role of music in society, culture, politics, and the environment on ability to place therapeutic work into context.

## Description of the Classes

### MUTX 340 – Psychology of Music

This course examined the process through which frequencies are perceived as music by learning about neuroanatomy and neurophysiology. The class was exposed to cultural uses of music, including various uses of music in the Holocaust, the religious conflict in Ireland, and cultural meaning within Native American music. Students then applied their understanding of the ecological, collative, and psychophysical properties of music to elicit specific responses in their personal lives through intentionally programming music for desired effects.

### MUTX 298 – Clinical Applications of Percussion Techniques

After learning percussion techniques and history related to different instruments and ethnic music, students applied this information through leading group percussion sessions in two clinical settings: the Northwest Regional Juvenile Detention Center and a dementia unit at the Syverson Lutheran Home. Students prepared formal session plans and critiques each week for grading and classroom presentation.

### Variety of Majors

Both classes were comprised of both music therapy and non-music therapy majors. Some of the majors included nursing, art, psychology, and kinesiology.

❖ Appreciation is expressed to Differential Tuition sources and to the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at UW-Eau Claire as well as to the UW-System LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes Project for support.

## How do students understand Integrative Learning and in what ways?

- ❖ The students demonstrated that they understood integrative learning in many ways:
  - ❖ Students expressed change in perspectives
  - ❖ Students applied information learned in music therapy courses to other courses
  - ❖ When given freedom in homework assignments, students took the initiative and applied knowledge from the classroom to personal areas of own life – implementing music therapy techniques to benefit either their lives or the lives of others
  - ❖ Students drew a connection between course content and their future careers or volunteer work
  - ❖ Students recognized the reasons for their own personal preferences for different musical styles

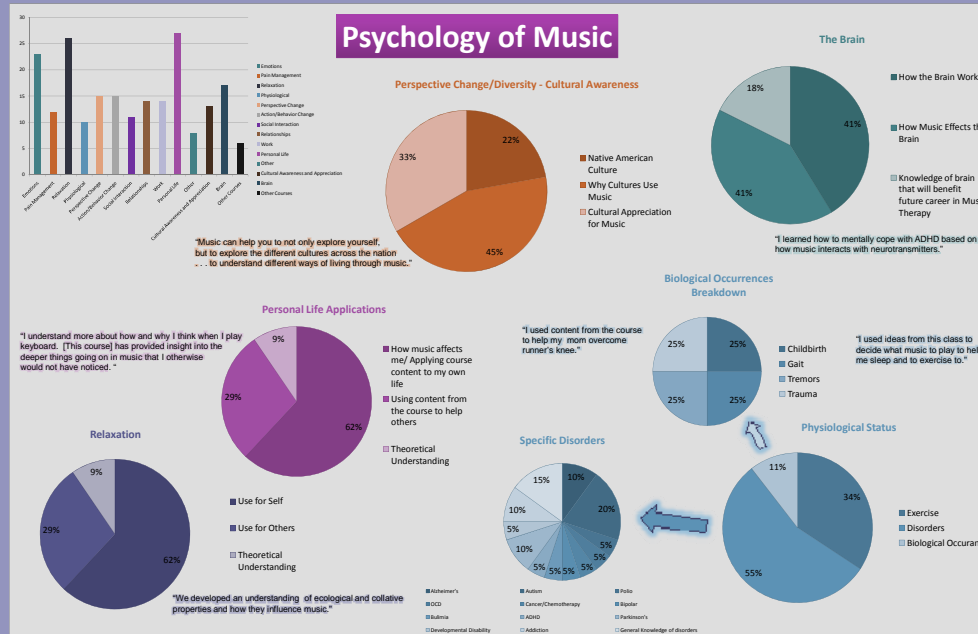


## Did the students use integrative learning because of assignments or on their own?

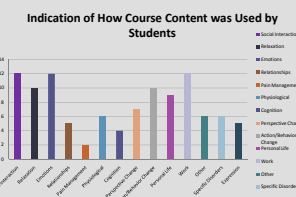
- ❖ Students were asked to create “application” projects as a part of their coursework. Despite this being an assignment, students found creative ways to make their application relate to their lives in ways not specifically addressed or assigned in class
- ❖ Students were not asked to use music therapy coursework for other classes, but 20% of students commented that they had

## How does integrative learning influence what students do?

- ❖ Many students took course knowledge and integrated it into their own lives to more effectively accomplish personally set goals:
  - ❖ *Training for a marathon* – using music helped this student to improve her pace and increase her stride length. Because she had used music consistently, she was able to sing it mentally during the race and achieve the same results as when she was training
  - ❖ *Back exercises* – music was used as a motivational tool to complete an exercise routine needed to relieve chronic back pain
- ❖ Students used course content to solve existing life problems such as:
  - ❖ Study habits
  - ❖ Waking up in the morning
  - ❖ Used music as a communication tool with family members
  - ❖ Incorporated music with arts and crafts activities to create rhythmic organization for people with developmental disabilities



## Clinical Applications of Percussion Techniques



**Further Categorizations (Cross-Referenced):**

<b>Social Interaction</b>	Communication – 4
	Use for Self – 1
	Use for Others – 10
	Theoretical Understanding – 6
	Other – 2
<b>Emotions</b>	Use for Self – 7
	Use for Others – 3
	Theoretical Understanding – 3
	Other – 2

**Student Perspectives:**

“The nature of music, and especially percussion instruments, fosters social interaction and positive emotional responses. Playing a drum/tone chimes can be a way for an individual to safely and positively express themselves.”

“Positive social interaction and percussive expression allows mood to be lifted and awareness or release of emotions to create a positive, stress-free environment.”

“Percussion activities can create a healthy and stable environment for them (residents of the Syverson and JDC) to participate and express themselves.”

“Our use of rhythms at the Syverson showed [the residents] ability to interact.”