An Inquiry into Sound Healing and Music Therapy

by

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An Inquiry into Sound Healing and Music Therapy

Sound and music are powerful forces within the context of the subjective experience, the depths of which are underrepresented within traditional objectively focused research. This study delved into the internal experience of the practitioner when utilizing these forces in the therapeutic setting. As a music therapist who utilizes sound healing within my daily practice, I was interested in looking at my own experience of facilitating sound healing sessions and music therapy sessions. In comparing these two experiences I sought to draw some parallels as well as further define what is different about the two modalities.

Sound healing is the use of sound vibration to affect aspects of a person’s body and mind with an intention toward bringing harmony to their system as a whole (Wieder, 2004). There are a myriad of approaches to sound healing that range from the use of focused vibration produced electronically to an experiential and more musically focused approach that utilizes instruments such as gongs and crystal bowls that have unique healing properties (Wieder, 2004). My practice is focused on the latter approach. Music therapy also utilizes sound and vibration but the focus here is on musical interaction (rhythm, harmony, melody) within the moment and relies upon a therapeutic relationship as the impetus for change (Bruscia, 2014).

Within both sound healing and music therapy, an intention toward healing or wellness is held, as well as sensitivity to the soundscape and the responses of the individual receiving the sound or music. Both modalities have the unique ability to transform consciousness and require a certain presence for efficacy. When facilitating a sound healing experience or music therapy session the focus is at times on the person with whom I am working and at other times on my own experience. I ask myself: How is this affecting them? How do I perceive that they are receiving the music? How am I intuiting what to play? There is also a self-reflective process
occurring as well. As I play, I am receiving the sound, the music, and there is a depth of awareness occurring in the moment.

Within the context of the therapeutic setting, a central theme of presence or quality of consciousness to the moment is of utmost importance (Robbins, 1998). In looking at my experience of sound healing, certain aspects stand out as unique. I am often in a different internal space after playing. I feel repaired somehow, whether I am playing for myself or within a group setting for others. This feeling is different depending upon how I feel physically or emotionally on any given day as well as what I feel from the group or individual for whom I am playing. The sound itself seems to have the ability to physically alter my focus or mental patterns even without much effort on my part; those receiving the sessions often express this sentiment as well. In music therapy sessions there is also a shift that occurs during a session. It is not necessarily as though the sound vibrations themselves are creating the shift in this case but rather the world of the person with whom I am working. This world is felt through the music we create together, causing the similar effect of an alteration of mental and physical energies within.

These experiences bring up questions for me. What is it about sound healing and music therapy that is so powerful and encompassing? What are the factors that are of influence within these experiences? How does the experience of facilitating a sound healing session both differ and overlap with the experience of facilitating a music therapy session? To more fully understand the essence of this phenomenon in both the music therapy and sound-healing context, I chose to study my own experience of facilitating sessions in both of these modalities comparing the insights that arise about each.
Literature Review

Defining Music Therapy

Music therapy is defined by Bruscia (2014) as “a reflexive process wherein the therapist helps the client to optimize the client’s health, using various facets of music experience and the relationships formed through them as the impetus for change” (p. 36). Music therapy can be practiced in a variety of ways and encompasses many different approaches and philosophical viewpoints. Darrow (2008), organized approaches to music therapy under three main categories: approaches adapted from music education, psychotherapeutic approaches, and medical approaches. Within each category a wide range of specific approaches have evolved. Approaches adapted from music education utilize techniques that aid in a student’s learning process. Within psychotherapeutic approaches to music therapy; cognitive, emotional, behavioral, or physical disorders are addressed with the aim of improving a client’s well being. In the area of medical approaches to music therapy, goals that are in concert with the needs of patients in hospitals, or medical facilities are targeted. Approaches within this category aim to relieve pain, bring about relaxation, or decrease depression or anxiety (Darrow, 2008).

Training Requirements

The field of music therapy requires a bachelor’s degree from a college or university that has been approved by the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). Specific competency areas are addressed including: musical foundations, clinical foundations, and music therapy foundations. Clinical training of 1200 hours is required which includes both pre-internship and internship. Advanced training is also available which is focused on research and the advancement of clinical practices. In addition music therapists are required to complete a
national board certification exam in order to practice professionally. This allows for a national standard to be observed (AMTA, 2020).

**Defining Sound Healing**

Sound healing encompasses a large scope of approaches that center on utilizing vibration to facilitate healing (Beaulieu 2010; Goldman, 1998; Wieder, 2004). McKusick (2014), considered sound through the lenses of conventional vs. alternative approaches. She found that conventional medicine typically employed inaudible sound frequencies such as ultrasonic and infrasonic frequencies. These techniques are well documented and accepted into the mainstream medical field. These frequencies are used for specific purposes such as the utilization of ultrasound frequencies to break down scar tissue. Within alternative medicine, sound is used primarily within the audible range and encompasses a broad range of practices. She also specifies that sound healing within this context refers to general therapeutic sound while sound therapy is a subgroup focusing on more structured and clinical techniques. Sound healing then, in the context of this paper, is the use of sound in a general therapeutic manner to facilitate healing including the use of various acoustic instruments unique to the practice (McKusick, 2014).

**Training Requirements**

The field of sound healing does not have professional requirements that have been standardized. A wide range of training opportunities exist which result in certifications. The sound healing certification program at The Sage Academy of Sound for example, requires 11 days of instruction and hands on practice of 88 hours. Training in this program involves weekend intensives that focus on learning about the various sound instruments such as crystal bowls, tuning forks, and gongs along with different techniques and theories related to their use. Hands on experiences are also provided as sessions utilizing these instruments are demonstrated and
practiced by the students (Sage Academy of Sound, 2020). Numerous similar training programs are offered around the world with some offering more specialized and time intensive training on specific instruments and techniques.

**Healing vs. Therapy**

It is worthwhile to consider the differences between healing and therapy. According to Bruscia (2014), healing practices are often associated with the transcendence of a problem and “resources beyond the setting are called upon to assist and support the person in becoming whole and harmoniously connected to the universe” (p. 221). This is in contrast to therapy practices which often focus on a specific problem area and work toward minimizing or ameliorating issues. This is done while utilizing “resources (including music) [that are] human and dependent upon the unique potentialities of a specific client, therapist, and context” (Bruscia, 2014, p. 221). This human component to therapy is contrasted with a collective and universal component to healing.

This connection of healing to universal forces or energies, is explored extensively in the field of energy healing modalities of which sound healing is a part (Beaulieu, 2010; McKusick, 2012; Srinivasan, 2002). Srinivasan (2002) explored the idea of healing in relation to a “Unitary Consciousness” which he defined as an illuminating principle of the mind/body and universe. He wrote that healing occurs through “exchange of energy or information between the environment and an individual to provide a movement towards homeostasis” (Srinivasan, 2002, p. 15). This energy exchange could come through various modalities such as acupuncture or sound healing but has the shared intention of bringing the person into alignment with their core being within which the “Unitary Consciousness” abides. From this alignment healing then occurs naturally. The illness that expresses itself in the body in whatever form could be seen as a conflict which
connection with this universal energy resolves (Srinivasan, 2002, p. 16). McKusick (2012) echoed this central idea, describing the universe as a “unified field of varying frequencies, the arrangement of which determines the information present” (p. 66). Beaulieu (2010) also references this universal energy field and wrote that the strength of an energy field depends upon its resonance with the universal energy field (p. 17). This supports the assertion that healing occurs when the individual energy field is harmonized or connected with that of the universal energy field or unified consciousness.

**Sound as an Organizing Force**

Sound has been demonstrated to be an organizing force through fields such as Cymatics. Cymatics is the study of wave phenomena and vibration stems in part from work by E. F. P. Chladni, who experimented with bowing a metal plate covered in powder. The powder moved to create geometric shapes when influenced by the sound vibrations generated in the plate (Jenny, 2001). Jenny (2001) further describes this phenomenon while observing different objects in vibration “masses affected by a tone are, of course, naturally forced into the form corresponding to the vibrational effect.” (p. 27). Sound vibrations passed through water likewise have been shown to create intricate and beautiful geometries. (Lauterwasser, 2002). This ability of sound to unify the molecular motions of water and other materials into a symmetrical pattern of vibration demonstrates its ability to unify a field (Anderson, 2017).

The human body is also specially equipped to receive sound vibrations. In addition to being composed primarily of water, the human body’s 43 pairs of nerves within the nervous system transmit all sensory information to the brain, most of which is highly sensitive to sound (Anderson, 2017). This sensitivity to vibration has been utilized in vibrational healing practices to balance physiological systems within the body. Weider (2004) wrote about this process in her
work applying tuning forks to the vertebrae of the spine. She found that applying tuning forks that resonated with subluxated vertebrae relaxed surrounding muscles and restored coherent harmonic communication through the nervous system.

In essence, sounds come into the body not only through the ears but also through tactile means, with the body having a greater range of sensitivity to the frequencies of vibrations than the ears alone (Anderson, 2017). Sound healing then, can be seen as an immersive experience that affects one deeply on a physical level. It can also be considered to act upon other levels of experiencing as well. Anderson (2017) stated:

We witness sound as an objective physical phenomenon in the form of vibrations affecting both our body and the environment. But we also experience sound as an internal subjective phenomenon, affecting our emotions, conjuring memories, and interpenetrating the layers of our mind. Sound thus naturally unifies our consciousness in the sense that it bridges that which is internal or subjective and that which is external or objective. (p. 165)

This core experience of connection between objective and subjective states unifies both sound healing and music therapy session work.

**Highlighting Subjective Experiences in Music Therapy and Sound Healing**

In looking at research and literature within the fields of music therapy and sound healing that explore the therapist’s subjective experience within sessions, topics such as presence, intuition, consciousness, and intention emerge as common ground. Understanding these constructs of the internal world points to a deeper understanding of some processes at work within both fields.
Subjective Experiences in Music Therapy

Presence and Intention in Music Therapy. Muller (2008) explored and defined presence through music therapists’ perspectives. He examined music therapists’ experiences of being present to clients by interviewing eight music therapists about an experience of presence within a session. In this study, Muller uncovered a process of interaction between client and therapist that included the therapist’s ability to support and interact with the client’s resistance and openness to emotional content through both verbal and musical processes. Music played an important role in this process by introducing a connective force that revealed further dimensions of understanding. While the therapist was immersed in the musical dimension, presence and intention became an important component of the process. Muller described the requirement of presence as the therapists’ ability to “balance immersion in the music with reflection upon it” (p. 31). This in turn supported a relational flow to the client’s process.

Robbins (1998) shared reflections of the importance of self-awareness through presence in the context of the therapeutic setting. He defined presence as “how therapists respond to the spontaneous reorganization of their own inner fields, or their ever changing gestalt, and how they utilize their own conscious and pre-conscious symbolism is the essence of being therapeutically present with patients” (p. 20). An awareness of what is occurring within oneself is vital to being an effective facilitator or therapist. Feeling states arise within sessions that can be expressed symbolically within the music or worked with through the sound presented.

Intuition and Emotion in Music Therapy. Brescia (2005), explored the experience of intuition in music therapy sessions. She interviewed six music therapists regarding their experience of intuition within a recorded session of their choosing which she viewed with them prior to the interview. She found that therapists received intuitive information through, “physical
sensations and feelings, through the sound of an inner voice or inner music, through imagery, or through the spiritual realm” (p. 81). There were also certain conditions in which intuitive information arose. These included, “trust, deep listening, self-awareness, previous experience and education, and relationship to the client” (p. 82). The internal experience of intuition is shown here to have many facets that inform the therapeutic and musical choices made in order to connect to the client in a meaningful way. She further explored intuition in the context of relationship, which she described as “the emotional waters in which two people swim in order to find their intuition” (p. 89). In fact, Brescia found that one of the main roles of intuition was to help facilitate the therapeutic relationship. Even when a clear agenda was presented by a client the path toward progress was often unclear unless intuition was accessed and acted upon in the moment.

Priestley (1994) described shared musical space in practice of an advanced music psychotherapy approach, Analytical Music Therapy. She described feeling the client’s emotional state in her body and choosing through therapeutic intention to convey this back to the client; she identified this as emotional countertransference. She described the process while improvising with a client, “strange music with wide dynamics and the emotions were dispersed at once into the music—hers or mine or both—and we were then often able to get in touch with her deeper fears” (p. 102). Priestley noted the power of the music to hold and express emotion that was difficult to access through the verbal portion of the session.

**Accessing the Internal World within a Musical Relationship.** How the internal world is accessed, worked with, and expressed through music can be explored further by looking at the Nordoff-Robbins approach to music therapy. Aigen (1998) studied music therapy processes with eight children who were part of Nordoff and Robbins’ early work in a qualitative research study.
Aigen examined how musical forms connect with the child’s inner world, while at the same time pulling them into active musical dialogue with the therapists. This allowed the children to work through blocks and move into an expressive flow that was connected to their authentic self. He found that both active and passive forms of musical expression were at work in the process of reaching the child. Active musical expression through collaborative music making was key to the approach, however he also became aware of a passive phenomenon, which he termed “music for a child” (p. 276).

This component of the musical experience stemmed from the observation that music was at times presented intuitively by the therapist that was “neither a reflection of the child’s activity nor intended to stimulate an active response” (Aigen, 1998, p. 276). This music created in the moment seemed to be made out of “reverence and deep affection for both the client and the process of musical self-actualization” (p. 276). Music for a child points toward the importance of the aesthetically immersive experience to intuitively connect to the client’s internal world. Notable here is the therapist’s care and loving concern toward the client through the offering of intuited music with an intention toward reaching their internal self. This idea connects also with another aspect of the approach, being “poised in the creative now” (p. 281). This is the ability to be completely present and focused within the myriad of processes, both external and internal, that are expressing themselves within the musical space, remaining open to respond creatively in whatever direction is needed.

**Connection and Care through the Musical Relationship.** Within the Nordoff-Robbins approach to music therapy, a strong emphasis is placed on caring for and loving the client unconditionally, reaching beyond and working with the child’s pathological responses toward healthy and free responses. Bruscia (1987) stated, “As the child responds to the various elements
of improvised music, s/he forms a “musical self-portrait” that reveals the whole personality” (p. 34). This idea is expanded into a deeper dimension by Aigen (1998) in his study of this process, “There is a sense that whatever is happening on the psychological level between client and therapist is less important than is the contact between the deeper, essential beings of both participants in this process” (p. 314). Music then becomes the bridge which connects these deeper aspects and brings the essential beings of both into contact and thus into the musical work of the session.

This ability to connect in a deeply empathic way through improvised music is also seen in Analytical Music Therapy. Priestley (1994) wrote about the need for the therapist to maintain a high level of awareness within session work, placing an emphasis on the ability to discern the emotional context being offered by the client through a state of initial emptiness. From this space of emptiness an empathic presence is presented through the music “which can be heard and experienced and received into the patient’s empty places inside” (p. 138). She wrote about the importance of being “in tune with the point of greatest sensitivity” (p. 138) while at the same time not being overtaken by the feelings encountered. In this way the therapist can remain open to the patient’s healing process within the musical interchange.

Cooper (2010) examined what was guiding clinical decisions within a therapist’s consciousness through interviewing five Nordoff-Robbins music therapists about a memorable session. Some themes to emerge included the importance of the therapist’s faith in themselves, the music, and the therapy itself to be a life changing force in the client’s life. The perception of another source, which came through the music and was beyond the client or therapist, emerged as well. This implied a spiritual orientation to the approach. Linked to this was the report of a sense of wonder and joy, which came from musical inspiration and freedom. The ability of the
therapist to be open and fully present while listening to the client allowed for an “understanding of the client’s life-world through music” (p. 108) to emerge. The central idea of “being heard” seems to facilitate a truly transformative and deep relationship within this type of session work.

**Subjective Experiences in Sound Healing**

**Presence and Intention in Sound Healing.** Within sound healing, the practitioner is called upon to play or vocalize in order to bring healing energy to the client. Intention arising from conscious presence is often considered integral to sound healing, due to the practitioner needing to be aware of the client’s energetic body as they work (Goldman, 1998). McKusick (2012) utilized tuning forks to balance and harmonize a client’s energetic field and discussed the importance of intention within her practice. She stated:

> I have found that where I put my attention and intention is the level at which I am able to work…If I want to work on one specific thing, for example the adrenal rhythm, the mediating factor in this equation is my intention to work on this level. It is the ability to use my mind with this precision that seems to make the work effective in the way that it is. (pp. 64-65)

In sound healing there is often a reference to consciousness and subtle energies (Goldman, 1998; McKusick, 2012; Snow, 2011). Attention to these aspects of experiences is informing the practitioner on how or what to play.

Sound healing pioneer, Jonathan Goldman (1998) spoke of the importance of intention in his work with mantra and overtone chanting. Goldman stated that it is not only the frequency presented within sound healing but also the intention of the one creating the sound that allows healing to occur. He noted that there are many theories and practices of sound healing that differ
in their approach to the specific frequencies, mantras, and tones used to effect healing, but that each has proven effective.

Franklin and Carey (2005) presented several case studies that showed the efficacy of utilizing tuning forks, Tibetan bowls, and gongs with an intention toward helping clients shift their energy patterns and belief systems with a variety of conditions including peripheral neuropathy, plantar fasciitis, carpal tunnel, anxiety, lung congestion, stress, and panic attacks. These case studies anecdotally reported improvements over the course of treatment. Allen and Shealy (2005) explored the efficacy of toning and quartz crystal bowls on the energetic balance of the body through electrical measurements at acupuncture meridians. The energetic readings of 42 subjects were measured before and after treatment utilizing the Asyra, described as a computerized electronic electrodermal instrument (p. 5). They found that energetic readings increased with treatment and supported the idea that these types of therapies affect the energetic balance of the body.

This efficacy, in Goldman’s experience, seems to depend on the intention of the practitioner rather than the specific frequency or sound, as there are many ways to introduce healing frequencies to the physical body. He presented the equation “Frequency + Intent = Healing” (p. 5) as a foundational formula to sound healing work. He further explains this idea of intention through the different meanings projected through vocal inflections. Inflection conveys a person’s feeling state and can make a simple greeting take on various meanings from inviting to menacing or dismissive. So too is emotional intention conveyed through sound or music in a similar way.

**Emotion, Intention, and Intuition in Sound Healing.** Snow (2011) explored the idea that intention within sound can hold emotional energy. While taking part in a training course in
vocal sound healing she found that she felt unpleasant sensations when the student vocalizing with her was feeling anxious or uncertain. Simon Heather, the developer of the approach, addressed the importance of setting an intention prior to working with a client. He stated, “When we give sound healing we become an instrument for love and healing. This intention is carried to the person through the sounds we make” (pp. 105-106). Along with setting an intention he also stressed the importance of following one’s intuition as more experience is gained.

McKusick (2012) related that in her experiences working with tuning forks around the body she was able to observe a change in the sound of the tuning forks in those places that required balancing. In addition she was able to intuit the “story” of that dissonance. This story often consisted of emotional blocks a client may be experiencing due to past trauma. This intuiting of a client’s internal emotional blocks through sound could be relatable to a similar experience in music therapy while being immersed in a client’s world through shared musical space.

**Subjective Experiences of Sound Healing Recipients.** Snow (2011) explored the experiences of individuals receiving vocal sound healing in Great Britain with a special focus on healing, therapeutic efficacy, and sensory aspects. She interviewed 13 people about their experiences of sound healing and categorized responses within the contexts of physical, emotional, spiritual, mental, and insight. She also found many sensory responses reported including those within the contexts of color, images, haptic, smell, and other sounds.

Snow (2011) found that there was a great variety to individual’s descriptions of their experience which surprisingly had very little to do with the actual sounds they were hearing. Rather than reporting on the sounds themselves color, imagery and haptic experiences were most often referenced. Snow defines the term haptic as “experiences related to touch, or other
exteroceptive stimuli, but also to interoceptive stimuli as well, such as thermal experiences” (p. 166). Revealing the depth of contact achieved within these sessions are numerous descriptions of internal phenomena, reports of spiritual insights, the accessing and healing of emotional blocks, and the relief of physical pain that was connected to mental states.

**Sound Healing in Relation to Music Therapy**

Bruscia (2014) outlined specific differences within the field of sound healing in relation to music therapy. He examined sound healing within the contexts of *vibrational healing, musical sound healing, and music healing*, bridging into a discussion on *music therapy in healing*.

**Vibrational Healing**

In *vibrational healing*, specific vibrations are directed into the physical body, electronically produced or with tuning forks, for a specific purpose such as restoring energy flow along a meridian. In Oriental Medicine, meridians are the energy pathways within the body that flow through and out from specific organ systems and into surrounding muscle and tissues (Franklin & Carey, 2005). These can be accessed and worked with at certain points known as acupressure points. Sound frequencies are often administered by an individual extensively trained in a specific area of expertise with knowledge of the physical body. Someone trained in acupuncture or a chiropractor with additional training in a vibrational healing method, for example, could practice the use of tuning forks on meridian points. Because the activating agent here is vibration and not music nor the relationships among client, therapist, and music, this falls outside of the realm of music therapy (Bruscia, 2014).

**Musical Sound Healing and Music Healing**

In the context of *musical sound healing*, sound is presented in a more musical and aesthetically pleasing way in which elements of rhythm; melody and timbre are considered
important (Bruscia, 2014). However, the sound itself is the healing agent and not the relationships created within the experience. In the context of music healing the main focus of the healing experience is shared between musical components and the sound vibrations.

**Music Therapy in Healing**

In some instances, sound healing practices may overlap with music therapy. Bruscia (2014) called this *music therapy in healing*, in which both the “music experiences and the relationships that develop through them to heal the individual in her ecology, to induce self-healing or to promote wellness” are utilized (Bruscia, 2014, p. 230). In this approach the therapist takes on a supportive role and allows the healing nature of the music experience along with the therapeutic support to guide the client through his or her own personal healing process. This can be in contrast to a more traditional music therapy approach in which the therapist takes a more active role in the therapeutic dynamic and may use music as more of a directive tool toward reaching specific goals (Bruscia, 2014).

**Shared Elements of Music Therapy and Sound Healing**

Though sound healing differs from music therapy as discussed above, there are also many elements that they share such as the use of music, sound, and vibration in the moment. Music therapy in addition to relying upon the therapeutic relationship is also “sound-centered, beauty-centered, [and] creativity-centered” (Bruscia, 2014, p. 37). Though sound vibrations are present in music therapy sessions they may not be regarded as integral or even considered by the therapist, and though music and the actions of musical forms on the mind and emotions of the client and facilitator are present in sound healing sessions, these may not be considered in this context. Nonetheless, both fields share a basis in sound and music and can benefit from
consideration as to how they might be otherwise unknowingly intertwined (Crowe & Scovel, 1996).

**Implications of Sound Healing in Music Therapy**

Crowe and Scovel (1996) explored the implications of sound healing in the field of music therapy by outlining various sound healing practices and considering the different focuses within these two fields. In music therapy the focus is “traditionally based on the client’s act of experiencing and interacting with the organization of sound that is music” (Crowe and Scovel, 1996, p. 22). Thus music therapy is an interactive process within a musical context that engages the client as an active participant within a dynamic relationship with both the therapist and the music created in the session.

Sound healing, on the other hand, does not necessarily engage a client on the level of interactive experience within a musical structure, nor does it rely on the relationships formed between client, therapist, and music. Rather it is more typically focused on vibrational frequencies directed toward the client who is in a receptive state, rather than an interactive one (Wieder, 2004).

Music therapists are uniquely positioned to include sound healing in their practices. Snow (2011) advocated for sound healing to be considered as an approach to be integrated into music therapy practice. She suggests that sound healing trainings designed specifically for music therapists would be beneficial to the field, “so that the training and expertise we have as therapists, can be carefully and thoughtfully brought together with techniques and methods in sound healing, with new models continually evolving” (p. 211). Crowe and Scovel (1996) also support an exploration of the ways in which music therapy and sound healing can inform and complement each other. This study seeks to uncover similarities and differences within the
experience of facilitating sound healing sessions and music therapy sessions to bring about a deeper understanding of how these two fields may interrelate on a subjective level.

**Research Question**

There is a lack of research that specifically examines the correlations between music therapy and sound healing. As a board-certified music therapist and trained sound healer, I seek a deeper understanding of the relationship between the two approaches, specifically the experience of the practitioner when facilitating sessions.

The main research question of the study is: What internal processes are occurring in the practitioner while facilitating music therapy sessions vs. sound healing sessions? Sub-questions include:

1. Are there similarities in the internal processes of the practitioner? If so, what is the nature of these similarities?
2. Are there differences in the internal processes of the practitioner? If so, what is the nature of these differences?
3. What are the components of the experience that contribute to both similarities and differences in the internal processes of the practitioner within these contexts?

**Method**

The methodology I chose to explore this topic is arts-informed heuristic self-study. Heuristic inquiry is a type of research that specifically investigates the human experience (Moustakas, 1994). In looking at my experience facilitating sessions within sound healing and music therapy, I found that I was interested in understanding more fully the differences and similarities within my internal state experience of each. A rich depth of subjective material is present within each experience, and as a music therapist this subjective experience often gives
rise to intuition, expressive choices, and receptive understandings in the moment. As I maintain a conscious presence within sessions of both sound healing and music therapy, looking more deeply at the phenomena within each context could provide greater illumination of the essence of each.

Sultan (2019) outlined the various characteristics of the heuristic approach. This approach is qualitative in nature allowing exploration into “experiences and perceptions of the researcher who is considered the key instrument of data collection and interpretation” (p. 5). In addition, this approach aligns with constructivism, which operates under the assumption that reality is personally constructed based on each person’s individual subjective perceptions and so relative to one’s experience of meaning. From a phenomenological perspective as well, it allows a depth of understanding to emerge with perception considered the initial source of knowledge.

Moustakas (1994) outlined six phases of the heuristic process that allow for immersion into the question (pg. 18).

1. Initial engagement.
2. Immersion.
3. Incubation.
4. Illumination.
5. Explication.
6. Culmination of the research in a creative synthesis.

Within these six phases different processes occur in order to support a deep connection to the topic being studied. Sultan (2019) outlined seven processes of Heuristic inquiry (p. 81). These are utilized in concert with the six phases of the heuristic process to support a deeper understanding.
1. Identifying with the focus of inquiry.

2. Self-dialogue.

3. Tacit knowing.

4. Intuition.

5. Indwelling.

6. Focusing.


Heuristic research is not a linear process, so any of these seven processes could be utilized at any point in the study as needed. In addition the six phases of the process are also non-linear as they happen cyclically throughout the research as new ideas come to light which themselves move through the process again until a creative synthesis, “a realization of the comprehensive essences of the topic of inquiry” is found (p. 99).

In addition, elements of arts-based research will be utilized throughout this process to deepen my immersion into the topic and provide further illumination. Arts-based research utilizes art (music, dance, poetry, and visual art) as data and considers aesthetic dimensions of expression to play a primary role in relaying information beyond that which is literal and potentially limited to a linear perspective (Viega & Forinash, 2016). This took the form of utilizing painting as an addendum to the reflexive journaling process. This experiential way of reflecting upon the sessions is termed “artistic consideration” within the following step-by step process and aided in deepening my reflection of each session.

As I studied my own experience, I was the primary participant in this study. I looked at my experiences facilitating sessions in sound healing and music therapy at my current place of
work. The step-by-step process that utilized the six phases and seven processes of heuristic inquiry follows:

Step 1: (initial engagement and immersion) Within the course of a three week period, facilitate and audio record one sound healing session and one music therapy session per week.

- Directly after each session reflect upon the experience through reflexive journaling and artistic consideration.
- Within a few days of each session listen to the recording and reflect upon the experience through reflexive journaling and artistic consideration.

Step 2: (explication and immersion) Review journal entries and art, extracting categories and organize these into themes. Further reflect upon the ideas expressed through self-dialogue and focusing techniques. Synthesize categories into four themes and distill the ideas therein to extract a more essential understanding.

- Extract themes related specifically to music therapy sessions
- Extract themes related specifically to sound healing sessions
- Extract themes related to both
- Extract themes of contrast between music therapy and sound healing

Step 3: (incubation) Movement away from the topic whenever it feels that through the process of immersion the focus has been lost. This occurred throughout the research process as needed to allow for illumination to occur.

Step 4: (explication and immersion) Listen to each initial recording one more time, condensing this process to one music therapy and one sound healing session per day over a week long period.

- Reflect upon the sessions in relation to the themes extracted in step 2.
Further distill information into a summary of what has been discovered

Step 5: (illumination and creative synthesis) – Illumination occurs throughout the research process, but is mentioned here, as it is most prevalent during the process of creative synthesis.

- Create a representation of the final data, which illuminates areas of similarity and difference between the experience of facilitating sound healing and music therapy sessions.

Representation of data within the creative synthesis is formed throughout the heuristic process itself. Through the process of reflection upon the experiences outlined above I was moved to create a final painting. This painting is presented, along with a summary of the main discoveries of this study in order to illuminate the essential nature of my experiences within the facilitation of sound healing and music therapy.

**Results**

**Step 1: Initial Engagement**

Three sound healing sessions and three music therapy sessions were chosen from my existing schedule for this study. Sessions were selected based upon consistent attendance by students. There were no specific requirements of those receiving music therapy and sound healing, as the focus of the study was on my internal experience as a facilitator.

**Setting**

Sessions took place in a school setting within a program designed for individuals with complex conditions such as Autism. The environment played a role in this study, as it was a contributing factor in my overall experience creating music as a facilitator. Sound healing sessions took place primarily in a large room with wood floors and high ceilings. A large red
door opened out onto a pathway and a lovely garden. There were windows in the room that looked out onto a beautiful landscape and often the sounds of nature (wind, rain, birdsong) drifted through the windows. Cars sometimes drove by on the nearby road, but not frequently. The room was also adjacent to a kitchen that was the source of ambient noise at times such as the clattering of dishes or faint conversation. The room was set up with yoga mats and blankets prior to the students entering. The gongs, crystal bowls, harp and chimes were also set up along one side of the room prior to the session’s start. One sound healing session for this study took place in the music room due to the sound healing space being used for an event. This session did not utilize the gongs, as they are difficult to move. Two or three students, teacher assistants, and sometimes the teacher attended sound healing sessions.

Music therapy sessions took place in a music room that is a slightly smaller than the sound healing space in the main school building. This room had large windows on either side. One window looked out to rolling hills, trees, and a pasture in which cows were sometimes grazing. The other window looked out onto a path that is often traversed by students going from place to place. The piano was centered in the room next to a wall and a variety of instruments were available, including standing drums, cymbals, a xylophone, wood blocks, and a variety of small percussion instruments. A chair was set up near the piano for the student to sit in upon entering and music sessions began at the piano. One student, a teacher’s aid, or teacher attended music therapy sessions. One session took place in a smaller music therapy room with a similar set up but smaller windows and less visual access to the outside environment.

**Music Therapy and Sound Healing Approaches**

The approach utilized within music therapy sessions followed an improvisational and humanistic model. This entailed relating to the individual in therapy through improvised musical
exchanges that took into account their current mood, energy level, and how they were expressing themselves through not just the musical exchange but also movement and vocal expressions. A variety of instruments were utilized including the piano, drums, tambourines, woodblocks, cymbal, ocean drum, xylophone and chimes. The piano was utilized as the main unifying and expressive instrument by the therapist.

The approach utilized within sound healing sessions was not specific to any particular model or approach, but took into account my instincts as a therapist who utilizes improvisation to present music that was complementary or related to the general mood I perceived from the student. This was balanced with a general focus toward being present within a space of intention that encouraged calming, grounding and focused sounds. The instruments utilized included the harp, crystal bowls, crystal harp, gongs, and chimes. The harp was used to begin and end the sessions, as I was able to gain a sense of everyone’s energy while playing this instrument and play in a musically expressive way. This allowed me to encourage the relaxing of tension initially and the waking up or increase of energy afterward.

**Gathering Data**

The data-gathering portion of the study took place over three weeks and I looked at one sound healing and music therapy session per week. Each session was between 20 and 35 minutes in duration depending upon the needs of those within the session. After each session I sat and wrote out my initial impressions via the journal reflection. I primarily typed up the reflection on the computer as I found writing out the reflection in an actual journal was less conducive to the speed of my thoughts. I recorded each session using an iPod supplied by my department for session documentation and stored the videos for later consideration. Within the same week as each session was recorded I listened again to each session in the music therapy office, and
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painted a picture or series of pictures that was reflective of my experience. I reflected upon these paintings and wrote out some thoughts around what this process brought up for me.

**Step 2: Explication and Immersion**

After collecting data in the form of journal reflections, paintings and initial reflection upon the paintings, I began to look through the journal reflections and considered the different ways that I described my process. I began underlining passages and circling often-used action words or ideas. After I got a better overall sense of my reflections, I began to employ the coding process.

**Coding Process**

I employed two coding techniques outlined by Saldana (2009). In vivo coding takes words or phrases that are of significance verbatim from a text. This technique was used on my first pass through the data after which I utilized descriptive coding which is the summary of a topic with a descriptive word or phrase.

Initially, I looked at each journal reflection and extracted words and phrases that stood out of the text “in vivo” to get a more concise view of my experience facilitating sessions. See appendices for examples of in vivo codes. For sound healing see Appendix A, and music therapy see Appendix B. These initial in vivo codes were put into an outline format and each line was further coded with a descriptive word or short phrase. These descriptors when considered across all of the reflections became 18 categories from which further connections were discerned.

When looking at the frequency that each category was mentioned in the journal reflections, I was able to organize them further from those most often mentioned to those least often mentioned. The categories were then placed within different formats such as lists, bar graphs, a flow chart, and a Venn diagram. Throughout this process I was able to see more clearly
various connections between the categories. This led me to ascertain a deeper conceptual understanding of the processes occurring within those sessions in my personal experience as a facilitator. Upon further consideration of how those categories fit together within the session process, four unique themes emerged which united the 18 categories into similar domains.

**Categories**

Eighteen categories emerged throughout the coding process relating to my experience of facilitating sound healing and music therapy sessions. Twelve of these categories were shared between sound healing and music therapy; two were unique to music therapy and four unique to sound healing (see Table 1).

**Table 1**

*Category Placement Within the Modalities*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shared Categories</th>
<th>Categories unique to music therapy</th>
<th>Categories unique to sound healing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Environment</td>
<td>Sense of Purpose</td>
<td>Feeling of the Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Sense of the Energy</td>
<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal State</td>
<td>Mutuality</td>
<td>Direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sound Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questioning and Considering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Force</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of times each category was referenced in journal reflections varied. The following bar graphs, Figures 1 and 2, demonstrate the number of times the categories were mentioned within each modality. The themes marked with an asterisk are those mentioned only in that modality. Those labeled with an “a”, “b”, or “c” indicate those categories with the same number of responses.
Figure 1

*Number of Category References in Sound Healing Reflections*
Artistic Consideration

In addition to journal reflections I chose to create paintings for each session. This allowed me to further explore my experience of facilitating sessions from another perspective. The process of painting allowed me to translate the feelings and images that arose while re-listening to the sessions through color, shape and texture. This symbolic representation of my experience
helped strengthen my connection to my internal processes. As I was painting thoughts about the meaning behind the images and colors I was using came into my mind. After painting I wrote down some of these associations. Upon later consideration of the images and colors these associations along with my own intuitive sense of what the paintings were saying about my experience helped me to create a list of meanings that corresponded to different elements of the paintings.

**Paintings for Sound Healing Sessions.** The paintings created when listening to sound healing sessions presented several similarities. Certain shapes emerged consistently to represent the feel of the instruments as they were being played. In addition, specific colors were associated with these instruments, referencing the quality of the sound they produced. Images surfaced in paintings as well that were representative of different meanings within the session context. This is illustrated in Tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3**

*Consistent Associations within Sound Healing Paintings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Colors</th>
<th>Shapes</th>
<th>Qualities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gongs</td>
<td>Red, orange, black, gold, dark colors</td>
<td>Circles</td>
<td>Warm, grounding, rich, supportive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harp</td>
<td>Pink, red</td>
<td>Ribbon like lines</td>
<td>Sweet, warm, grounding, comforting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal bowls</td>
<td>Blue, purple</td>
<td>Vertical and horizontal brush strokes</td>
<td>Cooling, celestial, lightening, lifting, spacious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimes</td>
<td>Yellow, pink</td>
<td>Dots</td>
<td>Sparkly, magical, starry, joyful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

*Images and Their Associated Meaning within Sound Healing Paintings*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feathers</td>
<td>Sweeping away distractions, clearing the energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black dashes and dots</td>
<td>Distracting noises, clattering plates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bird shapes, flock of birds</td>
<td>The feeling of freedom and thoughts dissolving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water, the ocean</td>
<td>A vast field of sound, all connected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise, sunset</td>
<td>Overall warm and peaceful feeling, layers of crystal sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>Growth and movement out of the foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session One.** I used a single canvas for session one of sound healing. This was my first artistic exploration and I found that the qualities of the painting changed as I layered the images. In order to have a clearer representation of the feeling of the session I chose to use multiple canvases in the next artistic reflections and change canvas whenever I felt moved to or that the quality of the sound changed viscerally for me. The sections of the session are layered here and create an underwater landscape with the gongs becoming the ground, the bowls representing the water and the melodic elements of the harp represented by plants that seem to undulate (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3**

*Painting for Sound Healing Session One*
Session Two. In utilizing different canvases I was able to explore the quality of each section of the session and the instruments utilized within them more fully. I found that the personality of each soundscape emerged more fully. In this series of paintings (see Figure 4), I felt a strong connection between the colors and shapes that emerged and the events of the session. I was able to visualize the quality of the sound in reference to the flow of the session and this helped to bring to light the strong role that the instruments played in affecting the feel of the energy.

Figure 4

Paintings for Sound Healing Session Two

Session Three. This sound healing session was unique in that it was held in the music room. The other room was being utilized for an event. Because of this, the gongs were not used as they are difficult to transport, and I focused more on playing the crystal bowls, harp and chimes. The absence of the circular shapes is evident here and the overall quality of the paintings
is lighter. I found myself going more deeply into the crystal sounds and imagining visually a depth of layers within that aspect of sound that was not previously evident. This is also the only sound healing painting series that includes a specific image, birds flying into the sunrise/set. Going more deeply into the crystal gave rise to this symbolic representation of thoughts drifting up and floating away (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

*Paintings for Sound Healing Session Three*

**Paintings for Music Therapy Sessions.** The paintings created when listening to music therapy sessions presented a greater variety of shapes, images and color combinations than were present in the sound healing paintings. The shapes, images and colors were not representative of specific instruments in the same way that they were in sound healing. Here they were associated
with an emotional and musical quality and another layer of conceptual imagining shown by
symbolic representations of a dancing figure, a staircase, and trees growing in a rolling pasture.
The variety of images here is reflective of the varying emotional expressions created within the
interactive and musical moment. Because the images and colors varied for each section I’ve
included the descriptive tables related to each session beneath the paintings.

**Session One.** This session moved from a detached, tired and cold feeling place to one of
warmth, connection, and fluid expression. This can be seen in the sequencing of the images
created (see Figure 6). The red lines (which represent the musical connection and movement
toward engagement) support the boat, floating on a dark sea. The sun and horizontal striations
represent the energy of creative expression through the tempi and music expressed. The last
painting is the culmination of that energy into structured musical cohesion with an element of
growth emerging from it (see Table 5). Creating paintings in this context allowed me to see how
the session evolved through the nature of the therapeutic connection along with the feel of the
music.
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Figure 6

Paintings for Music Therapy Session One

Table 5

Elements and Associated Meanings in the Paintings for Music Therapy Session One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images, Shapes, and Colors</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines and Dots</td>
<td>Energetic and joyful expressions and communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swirls</td>
<td>Fluid movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean</td>
<td>The emotional foundation or mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Light, warmth, and care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunrise</td>
<td>Development of the music and infusion of calm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trees</td>
<td>Developing ideas in the music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling hills</td>
<td>A solid foundation supports the development of ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical strokes</td>
<td>Rhythmic communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>The musical vessel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turquoise</td>
<td>Emotional inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark blue</td>
<td>Depth of emotion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light blue</td>
<td>Cooling subtle energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Love and care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Warmth and stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Brightness, joyful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marigold</td>
<td>Mature joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Growth and connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session Two. This session had music with more percussive qualities and a strong movement from a somewhat chaotic, high energy to that of joyful coherence. The different images and colors that I utilized represented this raw, energetic expressive quality and how it was supported musically with a foundation of flexible care (see Table 6). The stair shapes clearly felt like different structures presented in the music to support rhythmic cohesion and organization. This intentional structuring led to the painting with many different shapes and repeating lines that represented rhythmic interplay within that foundation. The last painting represents a culminating feeling of mutuality wherein the energy of the music became reciprocal and connected (see Figure 7).

Figure 7

Paintings for Music Therapy Session Two
Table 6

Elements and Associated Meanings in the Paintings for Music Therapy Session Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images, Shapes, and Colors</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Pure raw energy, lightness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>The flow of emotional adventuring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing lines and dabs</td>
<td>Unformed, undefined energetic expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeating lines</td>
<td>Rhythms emerging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swirling lines</td>
<td>Quality of the energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stairs</td>
<td>Moving on a structure toward connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal/vertical impressions in thick paint</td>
<td>Merging together of ideas into a mutual expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Raw energy, bright and hopeful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>Innocent expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Intention toward connection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>A strong support, grounded, warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Accentuated expression taking conceptual forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark purple</td>
<td>Expression merging with intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Growth within the communication and connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Session Three.** The images in the paintings for session three (see Figure 8) show a spacious, slightly leading movement toward a great deal of energy. Various meanings within the images illuminate the process of this session (see Table 7). The dark blue is representative of the cold day and a sort of sluggish or reluctant energy. This is highlighted by the orange and yellow lines, which represent the gentle encouragement toward engagement in response to what is given (the many small lines). In the second painting an expression of self begins to emerge and energy is present. The xylophone and blocks bring in both a melodic and percussive energy (represented by the red). As the complexity of interaction increases a drum is brought in and strong playing with hands breaks the energy of the cold day entirely with warmth and expression.
Figure 8

Paintings for Music Therapy Session Three

Table 7

Elements and Associated Meanings in the Paintings for Music Therapy Session Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images, Shapes, and Colors</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hand</td>
<td>Visceral connection point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dabs and flourishes</td>
<td>Different qualities of expressive play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ribbons</td>
<td>Vocal interplay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horizontal striations</td>
<td>Underlying foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A person dancing</td>
<td>Embodied sense of self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>Wholeness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing lines</td>
<td>The interplay of different phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Light, bright energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark blue</td>
<td>The heavy sluggish cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light blue</td>
<td>Calming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Creative suggestions of warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Playful, raw, dancing, energetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Mellow, growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Care, warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Defined, percussive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 3: Incubation

Incubation occurred throughout the study. This occurred naturally within the first three weeks as I focused my energy on gathering data and stepped away between journal entries and painting without trying to analyze what was gathered initially. This allowed the information to settle into my consciousness in a natural way. After gathering data, movement forward took place in moments of inspired action. As I pondered the data and considered how to code the information, correlations emerged naturally and inspired action in the form of different ways to organize the categories and themes to bring order and depth to my experience. At times the data seemed to lose meaning and my purpose became muddled. At these times I would step away to gain a broader perspective and with time new ideas emerged while looking again at what I had gathered. In this way, insight naturally arose leading me through the heuristic process toward a culminating creative synthesis.

Step 4: Explication and Immersion

To uncover common themes shared by the categories I looked again at the categories (see Figures 1 and 2, pgs. 30-31) and paintings while re-listening to the sessions. I allowed myself to write what came to mind freely and considered the different ways in which the categories were presented within each modality. I found myself drawn to sketching out visual representations of the categories in order to more fully understand how they fit into the flow of sessions. This process allowed me to experience moments of illumination that lead toward developing four themes.

I first sketched out a Venn diagram. This allowed me to viscerally experience the placement of the categories within each modality overall. The center of this visual demonstrates the difference between category placements within modalities. Starting from the top with those
categories mentioned most frequently, you can follow the lines in the center of the overlapping circles to see where each category connects to the same in the other modality. Those listed in yellow and orange are those unique to music therapy and sound healing. This encouraged me to consider those categories where the lines traveled the greatest distance, which showed a point of difference in number of times mentioned. This also helped me to further consider the general variations in category placement between the two.

**Figure 9**

*Venn Diagram Relating Categories within Modalities*

The five categories that showed the greatest difference in number of times mentioned between modalities were intention, internal state, physical environment, connection and listening. Potential reasons behind this will be explored more fully below.

As I further considered the categories and their associated in vivo codes (see appendix A and B), similarities between certain groups of categories began to emerge. The underlying structure of the session played a role in this consideration as well. In order to visually experience
the different functions of the categories within the scope of a session, I created flow charts for each session that illustrated how the categories presented within the timeline of a session. The bold headings on the examples below (see Figure 10) are taken from initial outlines related to the journal entries and created during the coding process.

**Figure 10**

*Flow Chart Examples*

As I considered these elements of the session process I began to imagine in my mind a flow of energy within the sessions and was moved to sketch out a visual representation of the movement of energy within the two modalities. The following sketch (see figure 11) was created as a visceral representation of the sessions in terms of this imagined flow. This process allowed
me to experience another perspective of the flow of energy within a session, how the modalities might relate to each other, and where the categories existed within this flow. The colors in this sketch were representative of different felt qualities related to this process. Here sound healing flow is represented by the light green (SH) and music therapy flow is represented by the purple (MT). Additional words beyond those represented by the typed categories are those that came to mind freely as I drew. This sketch also included the image of the sun, which was present in both sound healing and music therapy paintings to represent a central energetic creative source that is present in both modalities.

Figure 11
Flow Sketch
Themes

The process of reflection upon the data and sketching out session flow in this way brought to mind possible themes. In looking at the purpose of each category within the flow of a session I found that some were primarily receptive in nature informing further action and some were more active, leading and engaging the energy toward a specific purpose or aim. Those that were more active seemed to incrementally lead toward a state of cohesion. Four themes emerged from this process.

1. Impressions and observations
2. Engagement through active processes
3. Creation-oriented processes
4. Being in the flow

The following, (Table 8) shows the categories assigned to each theme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Impressions and observations</td>
<td>physical environment, general sense of the energy,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>internal state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Engagement through active</td>
<td>questioning/considering, imagining, feeling,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>processes</td>
<td>thinking, listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Creation-oriented processes</td>
<td>intention, expression, movement,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>direction/instruction, sound quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Being in the flow</td>
<td>connection, presence, force, mutuality, sense of purpose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theme 1: Impressions and observations. This theme included what I was taking in or observing related to the physical environment, a sense of the energy, and my internal state. All of these categories were receptive in nature and informed the further action that I would take.

Within sound healing (SH) sessions this category was mentioned in 33% of the responses noted in journal reflections and in 19% of responses noted in music therapy (MT) sessions showing a
greater focus on this area in sound healing and a moderate focus here in music therapy (see Figure 12). Physical environment was considered most prevalently within sound healing sessions, as was consideration of my internal state. A general sense of the energy was equal in both.

**Figure 12**

*Visual Representation of Categories in Theme 1*

![Diagram](image)

*Physical environment* was one of the five categories showing the greatest variation in number of mention between modalities. It was mentioned three times in music therapy reflections and 15 times in sound healing. Within sound healing this aspect informed my playing more frequently as I took into consideration the sounds and images in the environment such as the sounds of coughing, clattering dishes next door, or trees in the mist to inspire the music that I played. In music therapy this aspect was largely ignored after initial notice and became more of a passing consideration as the music and energy presented by the individual in therapy eclipsed notice of the environment once the shared musical space was entered.

*Internal state* was also among the five categories showing greatest variation in mention between modalities. Internal state was mentioned nine times in MT reflections and 27 times in
SH. Within sound healing, internal state was considered to a high degree with a variety of mentions about a range of sensations within my body and brain such as tension, fatigue, frustration, calm, and grounding. The sound itself seemed to make me more aware of my physical body as I played. My goal in sound healing was to convey a relaxed and calm energy and the sound seemed to draw attention to any tension, discomfort, or mental/emotional activity unrelated to the moment that I was feeling. The sound then seemed to enter into these spaces to calm and heal the disturbance. I felt that the more calm and centered I became the more I was able to be a model of what I hoped those receiving the sound would experience.

In music therapy sessions I noted my internal state near the beginning but often put it aside focusing instead upon the individual in therapy, their emotional state, and deciphering what I felt they needed to engage in the musical experience. This meant that my internal state was often ignored to more fully focus on the person in therapy and the outward or active elements of interaction involved in the session process.

*General sense of energy* was mentioned equally by sound healing and music therapy, and involved intuiting the energy level of the group or individual, their level of stress or calm, maintaining an awareness of how they were expressing this physically and/or musically, and how this was reflected in my own visceral awareness in the moment. This included descriptors such as tired, rushed, settling, detached, chaotic, and joyful in reference to the overall feel of energy I was sensing in the space.

**Theme 2: Engagement through Active Processes.** This theme included questioning/considering, imagining, feeling, thinking, and listening. These were categories that provided inspiration toward creativity and connection in session work. These actions were supportive of the movement toward those processes where the active work of sessions took
place. Within sound healing (SH) sessions this category was mentioned in 19% of journal responses and in 23% of responses noted in music therapy (MT) sessions (see Figure 13). This showed a moderate level of focus on this area in both music therapy and sound healing.

**Figure 13**

*Visual Representation of Categories in Theme 2*

*Questioning/considering* referred to the process of looking at what was occurring analytically based on responses of the person in therapy and what might be called for in order to guide and support them toward the desired outcome. This was expressed with internal questions and thoughts about what was needed, what was conducive to engagement, and imagining what would bring everyone back. In music therapy this was related to what would bring about more engagement, and in sound healing to what would bring about more of a relaxed and receptive state.

*Imagining* included those instances I found images or ideas arising in my mind related to the music or soundscapes such as colors, shapes, objects, or scenes. This included specific imagery such as the ocean or a whirlwind and also nonspecific imagery that embodied the feel of the energy such as a washing of calming light, or a reference to stimulating and bright colors.
These imaginings were inspirational in nature and framed the moment from a different perspective. This helped to bring energy and vitality to the moment.

*Feeling* referred to a bodily enjoyment/evaluation of the music related to sound healing sessions only, in that it was an evaluation of the aesthetic quality leading specifically toward visceral relaxation. This was described with terms such as lovely, calming, a spacious soundscape, and peaceful energy.

*Thinking* was referred to when thoughts that came into my mind demonstrated I was unsure of the direction to take from a felt sense. This interestingly was not mentioned in my journal entries for music therapy sessions. This seemed to be reflective of the fact that I was engaged fully in the activity of the moment and the space for extraneous thoughts was not present. Within sound healing sessions I found myself with more space to bring in extraneous thoughts. This manifested as for example, calling to mind aspects of environmental music therapy when the sounds of the kitchen were distracting from my peace, or thinking about what I would do with other instruments that I did not have in the moment or could bring in the future. This aspect seemed to emerge when I felt less connected to the moment. The thoughts had a tangential or mind wandering quality to them. This could be because the playing was less demanding and could be held constant with a wandering mind whereas in music therapy sessions my mental energy seemed to be held or engaged more actively in music making.

*Listening* was among the five categories showing greatest variation in mention between modalities. This category was mentioned 11 times in music therapy reflections and three times in sound healing. Listening was mentioned in music therapy in relation to taking in not only the music, but also deeper aspects of expression. This included phrases such as listening for periods of silence, seeking the flow of a musical conversation that is balanced, and a felt sense of the
music’s meaning. Listening in this context then referred to a focused and yet receptive state that took the sound of the music, the energy of the music and the person making the music in order to discern meaning. In sound healing, listening was referred to in relation to the resonance or quality of the sound or feeling the different resonance in the room. The contrast here seems to lie in the need for listening for the meaning of music created coactively as opposed to a primary listening to the aspect of the sounds themselves.

**Theme 3: Creation-Oriented Processes.** This theme included categories that were informed by the process occurring in sessions and had an active quality that was grounded in an awareness of the many elements leading up to therapeutic decision-making. These included intention, expression, movement, direction/instruction, and sound quality. Within sound healing (SH) sessions this theme comprised 41% of the responses and 33% in music therapy (MT) sessions (see Figure 14). This points to a high focus on this area in both sound healing and music therapy.

**Figure 14**

*Visual Representation of Categories in Theme 3*
Intention was among the five categories showing greatest variation in mention between modalities. This category was noted 18 times in music therapy reflections and six times in sound healing. In music therapy journal reflections this referred to actions taken in the moment that guided the work toward a specific outcome related to the direction of the therapeutic process. These included actions such as bringing focus, to encourage but not demand, bringing the energy down, to balance and ground excited energy, and encourage playfulness. Within sound healing sessions the mention of intention was less prevalent in reflections. This could reflect the fact that the intentions for sound healing sessions were more clear-cut and unidirectional throughout the entire session with a focus on steadiness or playing in a certain way to ground or center the energy such as playing with dissonance to create focal points. Within sound healing, intentions centered around utilizing sound to bring in qualities of focus, steadiness and movement toward sound cohesion. Within music therapy, intentions were more often about stimulating or balancing the energy toward interaction and were more active in quality.

Expression referred to the musical qualities brought forth in the moment. These were equally mentioned in both sound healing and music therapy. In music therapy the range of expression moved between a wide range of elements such as the fluctuation between keys, the expression of grounding energy, playful exchanges of word and sound, bright moments, and reflective and slow music. Within sound healing, descriptions of the musical quality were centered around a narrower range of elements. These were described with phrases such as deliberate movement between consonance and dissonance, calming energy through chordal predictability, and utilizing glissandos and melodic lines to relieve stress.

Movement was written about in both sound healing and music therapy sessions equally to describe a variety of occurrences. In music therapy this included phrases such as: movement
informs tempo and rhythm; connection toward cohesive movement; and building and expressing excitement. In sound healing reflections phrases included: movement between consonance and dissonance; movement between calm and singular tones; and movement about the group. This shows the variety of ways movement was considered and utilized in each modality to both inform the music made as well as express the different qualities of the musical moment.

*Direction/instruction* was a category mentioned only in sound healing reflections and referred to verbal instruction such as taking deep breaths and stretching. This was intended to guide the class into a state of relaxation and provided cues toward expected or desired behavior.

*Sound quality* was a category unique to sound healing reflections and was the most mentioned of all themes for this modality. Sound quality referred to the sensations or visceral experience of the specific instruments and how their use affected the energy of the session. This included references to binaural beats, pulling out long tones on individual bowls, utilizing specific gong combinations to create a certain vibratory experiences, providing different vantage points for the sound, and layering instruments such as chimes with a long tone on the bowls to provide a richer soundscape.

**Theme 4: Being in the Flow.** This theme included categories related to experiences of connection, presence, force, mutuality, and a sense of purpose. Some overlap was seen in the types of responses noted in each of these categories such as phrases containing the words connection, a sense of presence, and no ego involvement. These were often referenced while fully engaged in the creation-oriented process and seemed to occur spontaneously and without effort. Within sound healing (SH) sessions this theme comprised 8% of responses and 31% in music therapy (MT) sessions (see Figure 15). This shows a low focus on this area in sound healing and a high focus here in music therapy.
Presence was mentioned in both sound healing and music therapy. Within music therapy this was more of an alert and active presence where there was a sense of awareness of what was needed as thoughts subsided. This took the form of moving into the activity of the moment with reference to creating the music in the moment, honoring the quiet nature of the moment, and awareness of holding back from a personal musical desire in order to support a mutual musical space. In sound healing, presence was more often related to visceral experiences such as feeling the vibrations in the whole self, being present in the feeling of the vibration, feeling stillness within the presence of the room, losing the sense of time, observing thoughts floating away, and not thinking about the past or future.

Connection was among the five categories showing greatest variation in mention between modalities. This category was mentioned 15 times in MT reflections and once in sound healing. In music therapy sessions, connection was related to moments of coactive expression. These were described as moments of care and happiness within connection and purpose, conversations and contemplations, joyful camaraderie, a matching of energy, a click, and cohesiveness within
the shared musical experience. Connection in sound healing was related to a feeling of connection with everyone’s energy overall and was not a mutual experience on the action level.

Force refers to the sensation of being pulled by an outside energy to take action and is described in music therapy sessions as a connection to something greater, a natural evolution within the moment, and moving within the music without a sense of ego involvement. In sound healing force referred to a felt sense of when to move between instruments or close a section of the session.

Mutuality was mentioned only in music therapy sessions and refers to an experience that stems from being active within the shared musical space. This was described as playful exchanges of word and sound, music making that had a natural ebb and flow between therapist and individual, a play between presentation and allowing, and mutual give and take.

Sense of purpose was also only mentioned in music therapy sessions and stemmed from a caring focus on the other, an acknowledgement of beauty through connection and care, an experience of being present in something beautiful, the sense of being given a gift of authenticity, and a connection to something greater.
Figure 16

Percentage of Theme Presence in Music Therapy

![Music Therapy Pie Chart]

- Impressions and Observations: 31%
- Active Processes: 18%
- Creation Oriented Processes: 30%
- Being in the Flow: 21%

Figure 17

Percentage of Theme Presence in Sound Healing

![Sound Healing Pie Chart]

- Impressions and Observations: 40%
- Active Processes: 19%
- Creation Oriented Processes: 33%
- Being in the Flow: 8%
Step 5: Illumination

Differences Between Experiences Within Modalities

In looking at where differences appear within my experience of facilitating music therapy and sound healing sessions, I found it beneficial to consider the categories that had the greatest variation in number of mention between modalities and categories unique to each modality. I then looked at the themes in which those categories fell (see Table 9).

Table 9

Differences and Similarities between Modalities by Theme and Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Categories with largest difference in number of times mentioned (modality with greater number of mentions)</th>
<th>Categories unique to music therapy (MT)</th>
<th>Categories unique to sound healing (SH)</th>
<th>Categories similarly represented in both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Impressions and Observations</td>
<td>Internal State (SH), Physical Environment (SH)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sense of the energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Active Processes</td>
<td>Listening (MT)</td>
<td>Feeling, Thinking</td>
<td>Questioning/Considering, Imagining</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Creation-oriented Processes</td>
<td>Intention (MT)</td>
<td>Direction/Instruction, Sound quality</td>
<td>Expression, Movement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Being in the Flow</td>
<td>Connection (MT)</td>
<td>Sense of Purpose, Mutuality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Presence, Force</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Within sound healing, differences within my experience facilitating sessions are evident initially within the theme *Impressions and observations*. More emphasis was placed here in terms of considering my *internal state* and the *physical environment*. This points toward a strong visceral component to the experience of facilitating sound healing sessions. This is contrasted by a weak focus here in music therapy, as consideration of the environment and my internal experience was more of a passing observation as I focused on other aspects of the experience.
Within the theme *Creation-oriented processes* the most mentioned category in sound healing is *sound quality*. This category was also unique to the modality. This demonstrates a strong focus on the sounds created by the instruments. In sound healing there is an emphasis on isolating the unique elements of those sounds such as layering drawn out tones of the crystal bowls or striking specific gongs to create a binaural beat. This is not emphasized in music therapy sessions. *Sound quality* is also experienced from a visceral perspective and could in turn be relatable to the categories mentioned above, *internal state* and *physical environment*. This visceral, internal experience of the instruments is key to discerning the effects of the sound within the body. Also within this theme and unique to sound healing is the category *direction/instruction*. This describes the more directive focus within sound healing toward encouraging movement between relaxed and alert states as needed.

Also unique to sound healing were the categories of *feeling and thinking*. These categories fell within the theme of *Active processes*. These categories are internally driven and thus further support the idea that sound healing sessions were directed more by internal interpretations rather than an interaction with external influences.

Within music therapy sessions, the theme that stands out most prominently is *Being in the flow*. This theme presents categories that are unique to music therapy as well as one category with a high difference in number of mentions between modalities. The category with greater emphasis in music therapy sessions is *connection*. This reinforces that connecting to the musical moment with the individual in therapy, and the reciprocal musical communications that arise from this process are highlighted in music therapy. In sound healing, connection is mentioned briefly as an underlying sense of collective unity. Also within this theme are the categories unique to music therapy, *sense of purpose* and *mutuality*. Both of these categories further
reinforce the importance of connection within the musical moment. Sense of purpose arises within experiences of mutuality, which are the moments of greatest connection and potential growth through interaction.

Other categories with a high difference in number of times mentioned between modalities with a strong focus in music therapy are listening and intention. Most notable of these two is intention within the theme Creation-oriented processes. Music therapy sessions unfold in response to therapeutic intentions that fluctuate and vary depending upon the needs of the student. The musical interactions therefore include a wide range of emotionally expressive intent. This is in contrast to the largely unified intention in sound healing: bringing relaxation or calm. The other category of note here is listening within the theme Active processes. In music therapy, high importance is placed on listening deeply for meaning in order to discern what the music or student is communicating. In sound healing, listening is important, but without the deeper dimension of emotional or interpersonal context.

**Similarities Within Experiences Between Modalities**

Within both modalities all four themes include categories of similarity (see Table 9). In the theme Impressions and observations, a sense of the energy is the only category strongly represented in both modalities. This illuminates the importance of gathering an understanding of the general mood or feeling in the space as a foundational point from which to move forward.

Within the theme Active processes, two categories are equally represented. The category questioning/considering plays an important role in both modalities, as assessment of the student’s response is continually occurring in order to discern direction. In complement to this, the category imagining allows for unique and creative energy to emerge through novel ways of interpreting what is perceived.
Within the theme of *Creation-oriented processes, expression and movement* are similarly represented in both modalities. *Expression* is innate in musical communication and may take various forms such as a calming, grounded pulse for sound healing or an upbeat and bright rhythmic interchange in music therapy. *Movement* is also a category central to both within this theme. In music therapy, *movement* refers to synchronizing the movement of the music to what is occurring in the moment. In sound healing the movement of the music encourages greater focus and relaxation.

Within the theme *Being in the flow*, two important categories bring a unifying strength within both sound healing and music therapy. *Presence* allows for an open allowing of the process of the session to evolve in the moment without excessive mental distraction or unnecessary ego interference, and *force* refers to the pull of the moment, the music, and inspiration that arises within therapeutic presence.

**Relating Paintings to Themes**

When looking at the themes side by side with the paintings, several correlations emerged. Within sound healing sessions, sound quality was the most often mentioned theme. This felt connected to my tendency to associate the instruments with specific shapes, colors and brush strokes when painting. It seemed that my tendency to use specific colors was more predictable in sound healing sessions as the intention was unified for all of these sessions. The expressive nature of the painting then became about a visceral feeling within which I related to the instruments themselves.

Within music therapy sessions the number of images and the meaning behind the colors varied from session to session, thus reflecting the greater number of intentions and wider range of expression present in the music. The consideration of the student’s experience, and the
importance of connection and mutuality, may play a role in the types of images that I felt drawn
to paint as well. A common image in the paintings is water depicting the flow of movement
through the emotional realm. The images of a boat, hand, and figure of a person, emphasize the
importance of the self within this movement. In addition, the images of stairs, trees, and rolling
hills depict an intention toward growth within the structure of the musical moment. These all
point to a more external purpose. These images are also of the external world, and the movement
outward into conceptual reality.

In contrast, the images in the paintings related to sound healing, feel to me very internal
and unformed. The exception to this is an ocean horizon with birds taking off (which represented
thoughts floating away). The themes related to sound healing point toward a focus on the internal
world and a visceral interpretation of the sound and environment. This inward focus is
represented by greater simplicity within the sound healing paintings with movement into the
soundscape represented by the layering of color within horizontal and vertical striations and
swirls or circles.

Within music therapy the music is adventurous, creating forms in the external world. I
move outward with the flow of interaction and expression. I am connected to things of the
physical realm, emotions and images. Exploring connection with activity and energy. Growth is
present. The following painting (Figure 18) represents all of the paintings merged together to
more clearly capture the feeling of these differences and similarities between the two modalities.
Discussion/Conclusion

Creative Synthesis

As I came to the end of the heuristic journey, I found myself visualizing a flow of energy between these two modalities that merged in the center (see Figure 19). This center could be considered the open space of therapeutic presence within the body. I considered the elements of both modalities as centered in their flow through the space of therapeutic presence. Within this space, the overlapping circles represent the similarities between the two modalities. The quality of sound healing sessions is represented in the left circle and music therapy sessions are represented in the right.

On the side representing sound healing I felt a flow or movement into the center and then back out. This felt like a feeding of energy into the central space of presence that nourished the
body and mind before moving naturally and intentionally back through the space of sound healing. As I moved through facilitation of the session, a greater awareness and sensitivity to the sound and energy of the space was created and felt simultaneously. A general sense of the previous paintings is contained within this flow of movement visualized; through the circular shapes of the gongs, layered strokes of the bowls, and ribbon like lines of the harp. This movement of sound energy was felt as an energetically soothing and aligning force.

This same energy of therapeutic presence was accessed in music therapy sessions though it had a different quality and flowed with a bright, direct, and invigorating feel. This outward movement went through the emotional realm and into expression and care within the musical moment with all its myriad of potential interactions. This more intentionally diverse expression of presence is fueled by musical force and is felt viscerally as warmth within the heart. The colors and shapes echo those found in the previous paintings related to music therapy and elicit a feeling of growth and energy.
Figure 19

Creative Synthesis of Music Therapy and Sound Healing Facilitation Process
References


Muller, B. (2008). A phenomenological investigation of the music therapist’s experience of being present to clients. *Qualitative Inquiries in Music Therapy, 4*, 69-111.


Sage Academy of Sound Healing. (2020). *Sound Healing Certification Program*.

https://sageacademyofsoundhealing.com/abouttraining


### Appendix A

#### Sound Healing Category In Vivo Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Related text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Sound quality**         | - Flowing/soothing sensation with strings and harp  
- I play deliberately (on the gongs)  
- One tone on each gong (mercury and mars)  
- Move to the symphonic and earth, makes a lovely combination of vibrations  
- Visceral, felt in brain and body  
- Binaural beats  
- Wash of energy  
- Bring up volume  
- Swing beating  
- Pull out long tones on individual bowls  
- Focused  
- Tapping  
- Bring in chimes (move about the group to bring up energy)  
- Provide different vantage points for the sound  
- Crystal bowls provide a base of fluid sound (underneath and around the sounds)  
- Tapping sounds and louder energy (the sounds meld)  
- I bring in chimes to add an extra layer (randomly consistent)  
- Gongs – I play more quickly than usual  
- A lot of overlapping beats  
- Bring in the splash of the creation gong  
- I focus on the bigger gong more than usual, it’s steadiness.  
- Grounding sound beneath the sound of plates, etc.  
- I bring out the chimes and move around circumference of space (to corral the energy)  
- I form a base with one chime pulling out tones and tapping bowls  
- Hold out with the bowls  
- Bring in the harp  
- I start out sparsely, playing around with sounds (bowls and crystal harp)  
- Playing longer tones with crystal harp  
- A beautiful flow of sound  
- Creating a spacious soundscape |
| **Internal state feelings**| - I feel a push to get things done  
- It’s nice to relax into playing music  
- I feel a fluidity as I play  
- I listen more deeply  
- Aware of a tension in my body  
- Cold feeling, fatigue  
- The sound is making me more aware of my body's fatigue  
- My brain becomes less active (the sound is very relaxing)  
- Harp feels grounding  
- I feel the need to play more loudly  
- Feeling some tension  
- Trying to release and be with the bowls  
- I move through frustration (at times I want to stop playing)  
- I am aware of my body (a fluctuation between tension and relaxation)  
- I feel a restless pull to end and hold out with the bowls  
- I feel more aware of the sound resonance  
- The view is distracting and then relaxing when focused on the natural beauty to inform musical expression  
- I focus on the mechanics more than the feeling at first  
- I feel a settled energy in myself  
- Feeling a connection to the space  
- Taking in the energy of nature (animals, wind, trees, misty grey sky, a lone tree on the hilltop against the grey sky – very romantic, ethereal scenery)  
- Feeling very relaxed  
- Appreciating the crystal sound  
- Feeling the crystal sound as a blanket of soothing energy over me  
- A pervasive calming sensation in my head and brain  
- I enjoy the sound  
- I could have played longer |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expression</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Feel fluidity as I play strings and melody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Playing dissonance to echo what’s happening</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Move deliberately between consonance and dissonance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Dissonance and consonance alternating</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mirror instructions with fluctuation of the music</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pulling the music up and down melodically</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Louder glissandos and free form melody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Upbeat and energized yet relaxing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- A calming energy through chordal predictability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Glissandos and melodic lines to relieve stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relaxed and fluid melody, slight melody, repetitive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Create a focal point with diffuse melody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Creating variation (of melody)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Playing with dissonance to create focal points</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Play in a deliberate and natural way</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Undefined melody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unattached glissandos</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Play chords more defined, tapping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Playing slowly, into defined melody, rhythm, tempo</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Physical environment</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Cloudy out, cold</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Making extraneous sounds part of the soundscape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Coughing sounds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Provide different vantage points for the sound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Space next door being prepared for an event – dishes and talking in the next room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Rainy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In the music room (a different space)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It is a more sound dampening space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- More activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very large windows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- People walking by the windows</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cows outside in the pasture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Cold, grey day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Beautiful trees in the mist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- It was time to go (physical time constraint)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>General sense of energy</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Tired-fatigued “Monday” vibe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sense some restlessness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Depth of relaxation in the room</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Notice a range of relaxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Chaotic energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Energy begins to settle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Everyone in a receptive mode, not as relaxed as usual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Everyone gets up more quickly than usual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Energy is a bit restless but happy, joyful</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Energy settles well about 10 minutes in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Energy moves up into an active state</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Feeling of music</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Lovely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Calming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Very relaxing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Beautiful and calming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Brings in a more relaxed energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Grounding energy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Feeling is off</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Chords begin to feel relaxed and fluid</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Playful aspect to tapping</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- A spacious soundscape</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Gentle peaceful energy (harp) - slowly</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Movement</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- I move deliberately in the playing between consonance and dissonance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- I move to the gongs (to ground restlessness energy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Move to earth and then symphonic gong</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Move toward splashing and clearing sounds</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Move between calm singular tones</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Moving slowly</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Move about the group</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Bring in chimes at end to stimulate movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>- I move through frustration</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Moving to the gongs (ground tension)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Move about the circumference to corral the attention back to the bowls</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Thinking</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- I think about ending but feel to continue</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Thinking about centering</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thinking about a song with clattering sounds like an ocean
Thinking about making the background noise a part of the music
Thinking about environmental music therapy and how I would play to include the sounds with other instruments.
I wonder is it my expectation or energy that created the decreased relaxation or the external sound distraction?
Think about how to play the few instruments to make it interesting.
Thoughts are there but I’m not attached to them.

**Presence**
- Not thinking about past or future
- Present in the feeling of the vibration (visceral, felt in brain and body)
- Stillness, the presence of the room and moment
- Thoughts are there but I’m not attached to them – In the background they drift away, disintegrate
- I lose a sense of time
- Let go of thoughts about “making it interesting”
- Floating away thoughts, back to the sound

**Imagining**
- Imagining sound coming out from the center and washing calming light over everyone
- Sweeping and clearing out
- Bringing energy up to a more awake space
- Imagine myself in the group’s position
- Imagine what would bring everyone back
- Thinking about sounds of the ocean
  - Natural imagery has romantic mystical quality

**Questioning/considering**
- Watching the group/ checking in
- Imagine what would bring everyone back
- I wonder if this tension is mirrored in what the group feels
- I check in, everyone is in a receptive mode, not as relaxed as usual
- I consider I will be playing the bowls and crystal harp for most of the session
  - Alternating between checking in with students and taking in imagery from outside

**Direction/Instruction**
- I instruct the students to breathe, listen and close eyes
- Instruct “deep breath”
- Instruct stretching
- Instruct breathing and stretching
- Draw attention away from external sound
- Calling awareness into moment with verbal instruction

**Intention**
- Making extraneous sounds part of the soundscape
- Bring in chimes to stimulate movement
- I focus on steadiness, on the sound
- I feel the need to fill the sound space
- Playing with dissonance to create focal points
- I bring in the intention to take it down to a close

**Force**
- Play until a felt sense to end
- Feel the draw to close out the bowls
- Physical visceral sense that it’s time to close
- I feel a natural close to the session
- I play for awhile until I feel a settling of the group and my own energy into the music

**Listening**
- I listen more deeply
- Trying to find the right sound
- Feeling the different resonance in the room

**Connection**
- Got a sense of everyone’s energy
### Appendix B

**Music Therapy Category In Vivo Codes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Related text</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Intention**                    | - To bring the energy into a positive place, encourage, build up  
- Bring their energy into my playing  
- A need to balance and ground the excited energy  
- Toward support for loving growth in the world  
- Bringing the energy down  
- Conclusion, gratitude  
- Close the space  
- Acknowledgement of self and other  
- Bring separate self back into focus  
- Bring my focus into the music  
- Taking care not to present too much, just what is needed  
- A balance between trying to stimulate engagement and sitting in the stillness  
- Bringing energy into the day  
- Encourage but not demand  
- Encourage playfulness and adventure  
- Bring in more energy  
- Imitate and initiate to provide opportunity to lead  
- Welcoming activity |
| **Expression**                   | - Put an energy of warmth into the music  
- Calming yet bright music  
- Bringing their energy into my playing  
- Fluctuate between keys  
- I match, am pulled into a flurry of sounds  
- Discern a beat  
- Present my expression of grounding energy  
- Play simply  
- I pull back  
- Spacious, steady, simple rhythms  
- Playful and simple sounds  
- Bright moments of expression  
- I fill spaces between energetic bursts with reflective yet slower energy  
- Present music that is faster, upbeat  
- Playful exchanges of word and sound |
| **Connection**                   | - Look for a connecting point  
- Respond to subtle cues  
- Connection energy through the music  
- Beautiful and warm  
- There was a click  
- There was cohesiveness within the shared musical experience  
- Fluid, grounding sensation  
- Matched the energy being received  
- Created cohesive movement  
- Seek a core tempo to support  
- Reinforcement of feelings expressed  
- Joyful camaraderie  
- Care and happiness at connection in music and purpose  
- Music emerges from connection  
- Conversations and contemplations |
| **General sense of energy**      | - Detached, not connected, rushed, stressed  
- Ebb and flow from disconnected to connected  
- Sense of winding down or ending  
- Slow disinterest  
- Dissipation of warm fluid feeling  
- Focused and rushed but open  
- Presented energy is engaged and quick  
- Tired energy  
- Calm  
- A settling into the day  
- Coming out of a rest state |
| **Sense of purpose**             | - Focus on the other  
- Acknowledgement of beauty |
### Seeking connection
- Care and happiness at connection in music and purpose
- A conversation of sound that both listens and reflects and brings to expression some core of being present in something beautiful
- Beautiful gift
- Authentic reception
- No ego
- Connection to something greater
- Beauty, hope, sweetness, joy
- A safe space of joyful sound interactions

### Listening
- Taking in speed and tempo
- Music seems secondary to listening
- Periods of silence
- Natural sense that expression has been met
- Reflect felt sense
- Authentic reception
- Wait for inspiration
- I take what is offered and find a tempo and feel
- I feel the need to allow, ending when longer lull occurs
- Seek a flow of conversation that is balanced
- Pull back when feeling a tightness of demand

### Internal state feelings
- My own fatigue in the background (ignoring it)
- Grounding sensation
- An attitude of discovery, tentative allowing, slight guard
- I need to wake up to a higher level of regulation
- My internal system senses overwhelm viscerally
- Settling in
- Warmth in heart and stomach area
- Gratitude and helpfulness
- Feeling sluggish energy internally

### Imagining
- Like a cup or chalice (connection energy)
- Warmth coming from inside the body
- Stimulating and bright – oranges, reds and yellows
- A whirlwind followed by a calm sunlit warmth
- Movement toward the conceptual world
- Look to a lighter level
- The surface
- A field of aliveness is created in the dark morning

### Mutuality
- Always a new experience
- Acknowledgement and musical connection occurs
- Gratitude, a gift
- Music emerges in ebbs and flows
- Playful exchanges of word and sound
- A play between presentation and allowing
- A mutual give and take

### Questioning/considering
- What is needed?
- Guidance and support
- Opposite of expectations
- Listening seems to be felt by the other
- Conducive to engagement?
- I offer choices, various instruments, demonstrate and encourage
- Assess level of freedom felt by the individual

### Movement
- Movement informs playing – tempo, rhythm
- Connection created cohesive movement
- Disconnection leading to connection and celebration
- Building and expressing, speed and excitement
- Words bring focus toward action
- Movement into activity

### Presence
- Create the music in the moment
- Thoughts subside
- Movement into activity (the moment)
- Aware of holding back from what I “want” to hear to allow for the music to emerge from the mutual space
- Honoring the quiet nature of the moment

### Force
- Of the music and emotion and something higher
- Evolution within the moment
- No ego
- Connection to something greater

### Physical environment
- Cold and rainy
- Rainy, cold
- Distraction with the large window