Assessment of Types of Learning Engagement Which Contribute to Integrative Learning in Music Therapy

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Abstract
This project examined student reports of their own engagement in integrative learning across the Fall 2020 semester. Students provided descriptions of how they made connections and specified which types of connections were used in the processes of metacognition, reflection, and self-awareness. Students explained how they demonstrated intentional learning when problem solving, directing their own therapeutic work, and making connections across theory, practice, disciplines, and in specific contexts. Furthermore, reports included the methods that students use to acquire learning and the evaluation of the implications of choices they make on their professional life and society as a whole.

Methodology
The study took place across the Fall 2020 academic semester at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire with 106 music therapy students in the program. The end of the Fall semester was used for the entire study. At the end of the study, students were asked in a group to reflect on different aspects of integrative learning to apply.

Classes Mentioned
Although students were not asked which classes they specifically integrated into other learning areas, every student mentioned classes, as illustrated below.

Table 1 shows the frequency with which students reported using metaphorical and cross-themes connections, including connections made between classes, and the frequency with which connections were made, demonstrated through connection, and interpreted through integrative learning. The most frequent connections noted were students applying what they had learned in classes to their clinical work. Students also reported using information from one class and applying it to another class, i.e. using skills learned in a public speaking class to give a presentation in a different class. The contexts in which connections were made included personal life, creativity, music therapy sessions, and employment.

Table 1
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<th>Application of Connections to Non-Academic Contexts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Planning, Intensive of Clinical Session</td>
<td>Acquiring Learning, Professional Growth Plans</td>
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Discussion of Results
Surveys and discussion questions indicate that students are aware of their own learning styles and use this awareness to create effective study and practice methods which they ultimately use in real-world applications, thereby demonstrating retention of knowledge. Results also indicate that students use information they have learned in music settings, general academic areas, and personal life in various disciplines and apply this information to their clinical work with a large variety of populations. Students indicated extremely high levels of understanding consequences of their decisions, monitoring effects of treatment to problem solving, planning ahead and predicting outcomes. Discussion of these areas show that these high levels can be attributed to the type of clinical work to which music therapists engage, which in turn forces them to use all available resources that they have accumulated during their academic career. The study also indicated that students have a clear understanding of methods of acquiring learning that work best for them as individuals and use this information in practicing, studying, and planning for to do these things most effectively.

When the results of surveys completed during the Fall 2020 academic semester were compared with recorded discussions on topics from the survey at the end of the semester, a much higher use of integrative learning was reported during recorded discussion. If a similar study were to be done in the future, a discussion type of setting may provide more accurate results. Some discussion with students at the end of the semester indicated that they had difficulty in describing when they did not mention use of integrative learning in their surveys because they assumed it was evidenced by their clinical work.

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