

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

A student music therapist's exploration of her cultural identities in relation to music therapy practice in a specialist music therapy centre in Aotearoa New Zealand

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music Therapy

at Massey University, Mt Cook, New Zealand.

Hee Hyun Han

2015

## **Abstract**

This heuristic research explores a student music therapist's (SMT's) journey of discovery with respect to her cultural identities in relation to music therapy (MT) practice with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. A review of the literature was undertaken to investigate issues of identity in relation to MT practice. In order to analyse and evaluate the SMT's experience of working with culturally diverse clients, secondary analysis of the student's reflexive journal was used to identify the relationships between the SMT's cultural identities and her MT practice with clients. Four main themes emerged during the process of thematic analysis of data: experiencing strong feelings as an SMT; observing individual reactions as an SMT and interpreting clients' reactions; making connections and disconnections with clients; and learning to adapt and refine the use of MT methods. The research emphasised how a student can learn about practice and research through reflexive self-examination, and raised awareness of the complex interactions of identities of therapist and client that occur in MT practice.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to people who have helped me throughout this journey:

To Mum, Dad, Aunt and Uncle, for providing emotional, spiritual, and physical support, especially during the times of distress and grief surrounding Dad's operation.

To my research supervisor Dr Sarah Hoskyns for supporting me in my practice and research, and helping me to get through the difficult times.

To the Sir Roy McKenzie Trust for the McKenzie Music Therapy Scholarship for making my placement and this research possible in Auckland.

To the team at the music therapy facility and my clinical supervisor for supporting me throughout my placement and research, and providing me with extra care and encouragement.

To my clients and their families for their generous acceptance of and involvement in this research.

To all my colleagues in Wellington, for your motivation and friendship in addition to our passion for music therapy.

To Andrea for accommodating me in Wellington on my monthly visits.

To Judy for your amazing editorial work and delivering things so promptly and sensitively.

The Massey University Human Ethics Committee gave ethical approval for this research.

Application: Southern A Application – 11/41, 15/08/11.

## Table of Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Abstract.....  | i   |
| Acknowledgements.....  | ii  |
| Table of Contents.....                                       | iii |
| List of Figures.....   | vi  |
| 1 Introduction.....  | 1   |
| 1.1 Background to this Research .....                        | 1   |
| 1.2 Research Context and Placements in the Community.....    | 3   |
| 2 Literature Review .....                                    | 5   |
| 2.1 Identity and Cultural Identities .....                   | 5   |
| 2.2 Multiple Identities.....                                 | 6   |
| 2.2.1 Ethnic identity and immigrants .....                   | 6   |
| 2.2.2 Disability identity.....                               | 7   |
| 2.2.3 Musical identity.....                                  | 9   |
| 2.2.4 Student music therapist’s identity .....               | 10  |
| 2.3 Implication of Identities on MT Practice.....            | 12  |
| 2.4 Summary.....   | 14  |
| 3 Methodology.....   | 15  |
| 3.1 Research Questions and Aims .....                        | 15  |
| 3.2 Methodology.....   | 16  |
| 3.2.1 Heuristic research and its relevance in practice ..... | 16  |
| 3.2.2 Secondary analysis .....                               | 18  |
| 3.3 Methods and Study Design.....                            | 19  |

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
| 3.3.1 | Self-reflexivity and reflexive journal .....                                   | 19 |
| 3.3.2 | Data sources and secondary data.....   | 20 |
| 3.3.3 | Data analysis .....  | 21 |
| 3.4   | Ethical Considerations .....   | 22 |
| 3.4.1 | Informed consents .....  | 22 |
| 3.4.2 | Meeting with Māori student advisor .....                                       | 22 |
| 3.4.3 | Code of ethics and ethical approval .....                                      | 23 |
| 3.5   | Summary.....   | 23 |
| 4     | Vignette of MT practice.....   | 25 |
| 5     | Findings .....   | 30 |
| 5.1   | Experiencing strong feelings as an SMT .....                                   | 32 |
| 5.2   | Observing my own reactions as an SMT and interpreting clients' reactions ..... | 34 |
| 5.3   | Making connections and disconnections with clients.....                        | 39 |
| 5.4   | Learning to adapt and refine the use of MT methods .....                       | 41 |
| 5.5   | Summary.....   | 42 |
| 6     | Discussion.....  | 44 |
| 6.1   | Review of the Main Findings .....  | 44 |
| 6.1.1 | Multiple identities .....  | 45 |
| 6.1.2 | Interactions with clients .....  | 48 |
| 6.2   | Implications for MT Culture and the Community .....                            | 48 |
| 6.3   | Reflections on the Research Process and Limitations .....                      | 49 |
| 6.4   | Future Research .....  | 51 |
| 7     | Conclusion .....   | 52 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| References.....   | 54 |
| Appendices.....   | 58 |
| Appendix 1 Facility information sheet.....                                | 58 |
| Appendix 2 Facility consent form.....                                     | 59 |
| Appendix 3 Information sheet for client’s caregiver or family member..... | 60 |
| Appendix 4 Consent form for client’s caregiver or family member.....      | 62 |
| Appendix 5 Information sheet and assent for client.....                   | 63 |
| Appendix 6 Information sheet for music therapy clinical supervisor.....   | 64 |
| Appendix 7 Consent form for music therapy clinical supervisor.....        | 65 |
| Appendix 8 Examples of reflexive journal entries.....                     | 66 |
| Appendix 9 Examples of secondary data analysis (coding).....              | 67 |
| Appendix 10 Examples of secondary data analysis (initial categories)..... | 68 |
| Appendix 11 Examples of secondary data analysis (possible themes).....    | 69 |
| Appendix 12 Main findings.....  | 72 |

**List of Figures**

Figure 1. Ivan Shishkin, “Oaks” 1887. Quotes from Welleran Poltarnees, “An Anniversary Blessing” 1999. ....29

Figure 2. Four main themes of the findings .....31