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**Promoting Communication and Socialisation in Music Therapy for Children
with Cerebral Palsy**

**Research thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Music Therapy
at the New Zealand School of Music, Wellington
New Zealand**

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted as an exploratory case study as identified by Yin (2009) using primarily qualitative data gathered from a clinical practice setting with young children. The primary aim was to find out how music therapy could promote communication and socialisation for children with cerebral palsy at an Early Intervention Conductive Education Centre. This case study research involved two in-depth cases of children diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at different levels of severity at aged four to five years old. It documents individual music therapy sessions over a three month period. Assessments of the two children's communication and socialisation skills were made using the Assessment, Evaluation, and Programming System for Infants and Children (AEPS) to provide a comparison before and after the intervention. Staff perceptions about the nature of the children's communication and socialisation in music therapy were sought using a short and informal interview with two staff members at the Centre. These three data sources were triangulated in the analysis and the findings are discussed individually. Each child showed diverse observable improvement in communication and socialisation based on perspectives of staff members interviewed, on clinical notes and on the AEPS evaluations. It is hoped that this mixed methods study could lead towards a more specific quantitative inquiry in the future about the effectiveness of music therapy for children with cerebral palsy.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Study Design	1
1.2 Personal Stance of the Researcher	2
1.3 Research Question and Aim	3
CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND	5
2.1 Conductive Education	5
2.2 The Music Therapy Programme	6
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
3.1 Clinical Features of Cerebral Palsy (CP)	9
3.2 The Communication Process for Children with CP	12
3.3 The Importance of Early Intervention	13
3.4 Music Therapy and Early Intervention	14
3.5 Music Therapy and Cerebral Palsy	16
3.6 Relevant Music therapy Approaches and Techniques	19
3.7 Summary	21
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY	22
4.1 Case Study Research	22
4.2 Participants	23
4.3 Ethical Considerations	24
4.4 Methods and procedures for data collection	25
4.4.1 Recruitment of Children for the Study	25
4.4.2 Clinical Notes	26
4.4.3 Recruitment of Staff Members	26
4.4.4 Interviews	26
4.4.5 Assessments of children’s communication and socialisation	27
4.5 Music Therapy Intervention	28
4.6 Data Analysis	28
4.6.1 Analysis of clinical notes	28
4.6.2 Interview analysis	29
4.6.3 Analysis of AEPS	30

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS	32
5.1 Introduction/ Overview.....	32
<i>5.1.1 Clinical notes categories.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>5.1.2 Interview Categories.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>5.1.3 AEPS assessment</i>	<i>34</i>
5.2 Case I: Zaizai.....	34
<i>5.2.1 Music Therapy Student’s Clinical Notes.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>5.2.2 Interviews</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>5.2.3 AEPS Assessments</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>5.2.4 Summary and Triangulation of Analysis of Data Sources.....</i>	<i>57</i>
5.3 Case II: Matthew.....	60
<i>5.3.1 Music Therapy Student’s Clinical Notes.....</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>5.3.2 Interviews</i>	<i>73</i>
<i>5.3.3 AEPS Assessments</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>5.3.4 Summary and Triangulation of Analysis of Data Sources.....</i>	<i>84</i>
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	88
6.1 Communication and Socialisation in Music Therapy for Children with CP	88
6.2 Limitations	88
6.3 Further Research	90
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION.....	92
REFERENCES.....	93
APPENDICES	99
APPENDIX 1: Consent Form – Parent/ Guardian.....	99
APPENDIX 2: Consent Form – Staff Member.....	101
APPENDIX 3: Assent Form - Children	103
APPENDIX 4: Information Sheet for Parents/ Guardian.....	104
APPENDIX 5: Information Sheet for Children.....	107
APPENDIX 6: Information Sheet for Staff Members.....	108
APPENDIX 7: An Example of a Clinical Notes and Reflections.....	110
APPENDIX 8: Staff Members Interview Guidelines	113
APPENDIX 9: An Example of a filled AEPS Assessment.....	114
APPENDIX 10: An Example of an Interview Transcript	116
APPENDIX 11: Cantonese Hello Song	123
APPENDIX 12: Song from Zaizai Spontaneous Music Making	124

APPENDIX 13: It's Your Turn to Sing125