

## Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy, Vol 12, No 1 (2012)

[Home](#) > [Vol 12, No 1 \(2012\)](#) > [Faire](#)

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [LOG IN](#) [REGISTER](#) [SEARCH](#) [CURRENT](#)

Font Size: [Small](#) [Medium](#) [Large](#)

### ARCHIVES

[Original voices: Story]

# “The Presentation”: An Intensive Arts-based Rite of Passage Adapted for the Training of Music Therapists

By Rosemary Julea Faire

## Abstract

This paper is firstly a story, told by both my students and myself. It started with my question: can arts other than music be used by Music Therapy students to negotiate uncertainties which arise at the threshold of entering into their new therapist community? A rite of passage from Expressive Arts Therapy in Toronto and Switzerland was transplanted into an Australian Music Therapy course. What emerged was truly magical. The students began by asking themselves defining questions... where am I now?... where do I want to be? They let art-works emerge from their growing edges to provide sometimes surprising answers. They then formed small groups and allowed the art-works to interact to create a Presentation - a ritual day of exchanging art-gifts. Their written reflections help illustrate the story. They describe “openness to possibilities”, “unexpectedness”, “like flying”, “a healing process”, “belonging”, “reverence”. Afterwards, in my own reflections, I attempt to grapple with the significance of such experiences in which we enter, through art-making, into the realm of “poiesis”. Are they vital to counterbalance the evidence-based approaches to knowing? What are the ramifications for an inquiry-based Music Therapy practice which values “not-knowing”? Can we deepen our courage to dwell in the discomfort of not-knowing while knowing finds us?



Rosemary Faire (RMT, REAT) Course coordinator of Master of Arts in Music Therapy at University of Technology Sydney.

## Introduction

“The Presentation” is a “rite of passage” which has been used in the training of Expressive Arts Therapists (Levine, 1997). As a Music Therapy educator at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), I have been inspired by my post-graduate studies in Expressive Arts Therapy to incorporate this powerful transformative ritual into the experiential self-work stream of our Master of Arts in Music Therapy course.

In 2008, and again in 2010, an adapted version of The Presentation formed part of a newly created elective, *The Arts in Supervision and Self Work*. The students threw themselves into this venture whole-heartedly, creating moving and memorable Presentation experiences.

At the end of his description of The Presentation, Steve Levine asks (Levine, 1997, p61) for “readers (to) give me their feedback”. I am therefore “feeding back” this paper in order to document the evolution of The Presentation into Music Therapy training. Students submitted written assignments at the end of this process. With their permission, I have incorporated their quotes, which so eloquently capture the essence of our incarnations of The Presentation.

“...It really brought home how vital it is to find time just to “be still” and allow whatever is right to come...Our own presentation itself was overwhelming, like flying. It was a constant process of keeping my mind open and neutral, again, like meditating...”

## An Invitation to the Reader

In retrospect there literally were no words that could have described the process to me in a way that I would have understood, it simply had to be experienced.

This quote is from one of the students who participated in The Presentation. It makes me wonder as I write this paper: can I immerse you, the reader, through a kind of resonance, letting the students' words enrich our story?

A story often begins with “once upon a time...”. These are the magic words which engage our narrative consciousness and suspend analysis for a time. I'd like to suggest that you consciously approach this paper with your poetic-mind, as if embarking on a journey of discovery which allows for a more-than-cognitive response – a gift may emerge and surprise you.

When I first shared some of our Presentation experiences at a Music Therapy conference (Faire, 2009), I invited the listeners to playfully “doodle” on some paper as an ongoing artistic response to what they were hearing. Doodling is a hybrid of drawing and doodling - an embodiment of open-minded “not-knowing”. The resulting doodles could then become a partner-in-dialogue afterwards in the spirit of arts-based inquiry (I will elaborate on this below). Perhaps you could experiment with such a different way of approaching this paper, by periodically pausing to doodle in order to engage both cognitive and non-cognitive domains of your experience? You might also want to use the stages of The Presentation as a template to inspire your own creativity...

## The Presentation Process

### Overview

The timeline of our Presentation is encapsulated in Figure 1 and summarized here. The story will be unfolded in each of the stages described below. In adapting Levine's Presentation (Levine, 1995) to our course, I made a number of changes, which will be described in the Discussion section.

Our “Presentation” process formed the “self work” portion of a 13 week elective subject, *The Arts in Supervision and Self Work* (ASSW). The background and concepts of The Presentation were introduced in Weeks 7

and 8. Then, over a two-week mid-semester break, the students began exploring a personal theme/question using a chosen arts modality (details below). They were to create three “takes”. In Week 10, students met in small groups (of 2-4) to share the stories of how they created their art-works. Small-group members then supported each person in their group to “dialogue” with their art-work(s). In week 11, the students met again in their small groups to co-construct from their art-works a group presentation for the class community. This was followed on the Saturday by a one-day workshop, The Presentation ritual: each group presented these virtually unrehearsed presentations as gifts for the class and the class responded with individual feedback gifts of artwork. Week 12 was devoted to small-group and whole-class reflections on the process. Groups had their final check-in and handed in their Presentation assignments in Week 13.

### Stages of The Presentation Process and the descriptions from participants

Ethical issues in using students' quotes anonymously as part of this paper have been addressed by consulting with the Chair, UTS ethics committee, and asking for student permission. Indented paragraphs are used to separate consecutive quotes from different students.

Stage 1:	Weeks 7, 8	Background, enabling concepts and foundations
Stage 2:	Break	Individual: Choosing the Art Modality
Stage 3:	Break	Individual: Three “takes” of art-work
Stage 4:	Week 10	Small groups: Sharing stories & dialoguing with art-works
Stage 5:	Week 11	Small groups: Co-creating the Presentation
Stage 6:	Saturday	The Presentation Workshop

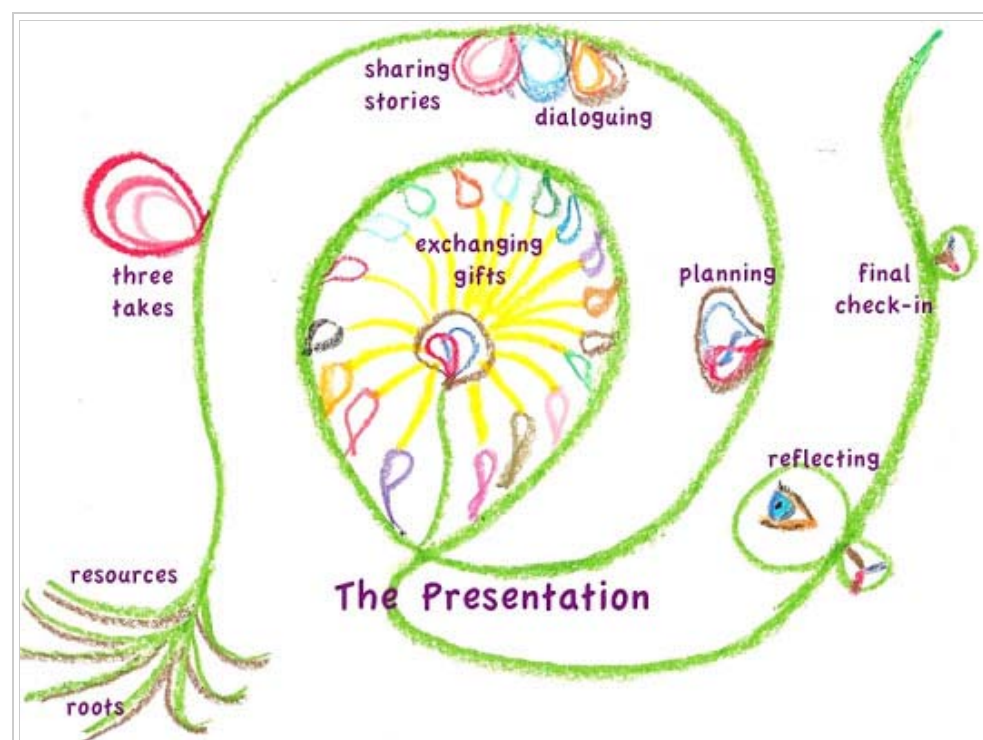


Figure 1. Overview of The Presentation Process

Stage 7:	Week 12	Sharing reflections
Stage 8:	Week 13	The Presentation assignment

## Stage (1) Building the Foundations: Roots and Resources

In the first half of the elective, students had been introduced to the field of Expressive Arts Therapy and had experienced key elements of this art-work-centred approach through peer supervision exercises in class.

In week 7, an experiential Expressive Arts Therapy exercise involving group spontaneous storytelling was used to link student's own observations about art-making to the principles they had been learning from peer supervision exercises and their recommended reading (McNiff, 1992; Knill et al, 2005; Levine, 1995):

I began with “once upon a time...”, briefly summing up my own journey into Expressive Arts Therapy and my desire to bring its gifts back into this very classroom in which we now found ourselves; the students were guided within the story to continue this story-telling by “doodling” on a piece of paper while free-associating with one another (I was “scribing” their words and phrases) on the question: “Where is this doodle (art) coming from?” Every utterance was embedded in our group story by prefacing it with “...and (speaker's name) said...”

The doodles that emerged were then placed on the floor together and we gathered around them; they were allowed to interact aesthetically by being moved (first by their creators and then by non-creators) to where “they wanted to be” in relation to the others. Finally we told a spontaneous story around the circle linked based on our doodle-collage. The class ended with a discussion of this experience and how their insights about art-making linked with Expressive Arts Therapy principles (Knill et al, 2005; Knill, 2000; Knill, 2001).

In week 8, I gave a brief overview (based on Levine, 1999a) of the philosophical underpinnings of The Presentation and its history in the training of Expressive Arts Therapists (as described in Levine, 1997). Students discussed philosophical questions in small groups, such as “What is Mind/Body?” “What is knowledge?” “What is art/aesthetics/ritual/play?” Then in the large group, we brainstormed what value such experiential/autobiographical self-work might have in Music Therapy training.

## Enabling The Presentation

So that students could engage more than superficially in The Presentation process, which would evolve over half a teaching semester, they had been familiarized with a number of enabling concepts and experiences:

### Familiarity with the Art of Not-Knowing

Although at first an anathema for students who want to “know how to...”, the art of being comfortable with a state of “not-knowing” is emphasized as a vital skill in our training.

“Knowing” is exemplified in the students learning to design Music Therapy programs based on clients' special needs and evidence concerning effective methodology. However, if their practice as Music Therapists is not open to “not-knowing”, they risk overlooking some valuable sources of guidance for their work: other, more intuitive ways of knowing which emerge when given the space: moments of contactful silence and letting go of “the plan” or “surfing the wave” of a session. Their challenge is portrayed as balancing a healthy scientific skepticism, requiring an evidence base, with a quality of openness, leaving room in themselves and their Music Therapy sessions for questioning their assumptions and sometimes receiving surprising answers (Eberhart, 2003).

Resources from Expressive Arts Therapy, Somatic Education and Body Psychotherapy are used throughout the course as a consequence of my own background. These fields place a lot of trust in this state of “not-knowing” and have developed methods for cultivating it.

For example, in Expressive Arts Therapy (Knill et al, 2005), not-knowing is exemplified by “decentering into art making” (letting go of the focus on the problem to engage in art) and “dialoguing” with one's art-works (asking the art-works questions and letting them answer), skills which are employed during The Presentation (below); in Somatic Education (Faire, 2002), not-knowing occurs via the “inhibition” of habits and playfully asking our bodies to rediscover how to move with ease and grace; and in Body Psychotherapy (Totton, 2003), not-knowing lies in asking our bodies to voice the unsaid parts of ourselves within a supportive relationship. These concepts formed a backdrop to The Presentation process. Students' feedback and written accounts (quoted in a later section), indicate a very important role played by *not-knowing* in this autobiographical inquiry at many stages of their process: using an unfamiliar arts modality; letting their art-works emerge; not-knowing what the art-works would “say”, how they would interact with others' art-works and how the final Presentation would form itself; and finally not-knowing how others would respond.

### The Art-work as Other

A key feature of the attitude within Expressive Arts Therapy toward art-works is that they are “entities”, even “oracles” with which to enter into dialogue, rather than objects to be analyzed (Knill et al, 1995).

Such dialogue bridges the aspects of the self metaphorically referred to as: •

- Ordered (Apollonian) / Chaotic (Dionysian)
- Conscious / Unconscious
- L-hemispheric / R-hemispheric
- Scientific-rational / Artistic-non-rational

This self-identity of the Presentation art-works was encouraged at the outset: in making three “takes” of their art-works, students were asked to adopt the attitude that the art-work itself would let them know how it needed to change for the next take, and when it felt “finished”. Then, later in the process of dialogue, if students lapsed into analyzing their art-works, they were encouraged back to dialogue by literally changing places (much like the Gestalt two-chair methods) in order to first speak from their own voice (asking a question), and then with the voice of their art-work (giving an answer). Later, in planning their joint presentations, students were again asked to let their art-works find a way to interact.

## Rites of Passage, Liminality and Communitas

Levine (1997) has drawn on the work of sociologist Arnold Van Gennep and anthropologist Victor Turner in constructing The Presentation experience for his students. As a rite of passage which serves as a symbolic initiation of students into the professional role of Expressive Arts Therapist, The Presentation exemplifies Turner’s concepts of “liminality” (the not-knowing which occurs in such a transitional space between roles) and “communitas” (the sacred I-Thou sense of relatedness which develops amongst participants). The largely improvised nature of the presentations themselves also adds to their capacity to induce a liminal state (Ruud, 1995).

## Art-works as Gifts

As Levine (1997) makes clear, the art works produced as part of The Presentation process are conceptualized (through the work of Marcel Mauss and Lewis Hyde) not as “performances”, but as “gifts” in several different senses:

- they are bestowed upon us, “from the gods”: gifts of inspiration and intuition, carrying wisdom capable of sustaining us through the trials of our own and others’ suffering;
- they are brought into being by our own artistic “gifts” and talents;
- they form the vehicles for the deep personal sharing and feedback (gifts of self and gifts of gratitude) exchanged between presenters and the rest of the group and thereby contribute to the sense of “communitas”.

As Levine’s essay title, *Bearing Gifts to the Feast*, implies, these art-work gifts are “eaten”, “consumed” to “nourish the soul” of participants in this rite.

## Stage (2) Choosing the Art Modality from a Growing Edge on the Creativity Contour Map

During the period between weeks 8 and 10 (which included a two-week mid-semester break), students were asked to prepare for subsequent weeks by constructing their autobiographical art works:

Map your current comfort zones and growing edges in the arts modalities, and choose one modality in your growing edge; engage in a process involving several “takes” of an art work based on the following suggested themes and questions concerning your maturation as a music therapist:

- a. Current resources “Where am I now (in relation to larger contexts)?”
- b. Learning goals “Where do I want to be? What excites me?”
- c. Obstacles “What could be an obstacle to where I want to be?”
- d. Possibilities for overcoming “What do I need to do to move through the obstacle?”

These themes and questions were drawn from Ellen Levine’s description of an Expressive Arts Therapy student supervision group (Knill et al, 2005, p.244).

I have previously described a tool I have found useful as a therapist and teacher, which I call the Creativity Contour Map (Faire, 2003) – Figure 2.

I often use a Creativity Contour Map exercise to help students to make explicit their level of comfort /discomfort with a potential creative activity that I am about to suggest to the group; if, for instance, they map an activity into their “NO WAY!” zone, they can feel free to say “Pass” when the time comes, rather than feeling pressured to do something too scary. The Growing Edge is described as a little scary, but also a little tempting, and is the place students are encouraged to play, since most productive learning occurs here. The value of students’ finding their growing edges in arts other than music is that they have an opportunity to experience the vulnerability that their clients may feel when asked to make music. In addition, the other arts may provide self

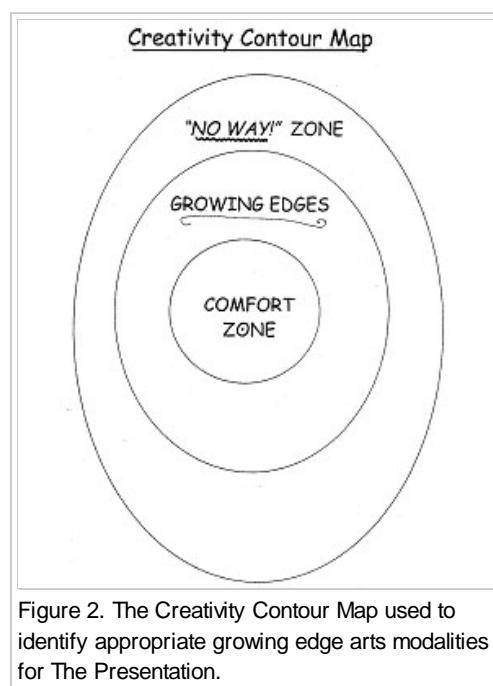


Figure 2. The Creativity Contour Map used to identify appropriate growing edge arts modalities for The Presentation.

care resources for reflection and replenishment after a day of music making.

In applying the Creativity Contour Map to The Presentation, I suggested that students map their current comfort zones, growing edges and No Way zones in terms of a wide range of art forms in order to arrive at their choice of a “growing edge” for the creation of their Presentation art-works.

The range of art modalities they chose is presented in Figure 3.

In their Presentation assignments, students described the reasons for their choices:

I needed to redirect my creative energy toward my growing edges not only for the purposes of The Presentation but also to push my boundaries for my personal development.

Dance:

I had ballet dancing lessons for two years when I was six. I stopped my dancing lessons because my

ballet teacher at that time mentioned to me that I did not dance very well and I should consider dropping it. Since then, I stopped my formal training in ballet dancing and have not engaged in much dancing activities by myself or in public. I have become very self-conscious about dancing in front of people because I am afraid that I would dance badly and make a fool of myself...

Drawing:

...I never really had a good relationship with drawing, painting...getting into trouble from my mum for spilling paint on the floor...never got good marks for my art works...I felt I wasn't creative and good enough. The art teacher (in high school) and I did not have a very good relationship. She was mean and very critical. If she didn't like the drawing or the painting she would make us start again. I remember feeling extremely frustrated...my self esteem dropped and I no longer had the desire to draw or make any form of art work...

### Stage (3) The Three Takes

Once the modality had been chosen, students were asked to allow the art-works to emerge in their own time over the next few weeks. This process was to involve several (at least three) “takes” of an art work based on one or more of the suggested themes (current resources, learning goals, obstacles and possibilities for overcoming them).

The challenge...

I thought the whole process of creating an artwork would be stressful and challenging. However, I found the experience quite enjoyable and liberating. It gave me an opportunity to release what was on my mind through the form of art.

...I was so impressed by the ethos underpinning Levine's paper that I knew I would regret it if I took the easy option and only presented a superficial or “easy” truth about myself and my attitude to life...After all, if I ultimately want to be able to help other people overcome their own insecurities and obstacles, I need to be able to do it for myself as well!

The emergence...

One night, while I was doing and thinking something totally different to these themes, I felt an urge to play guitar...it became my first take of the art making process.

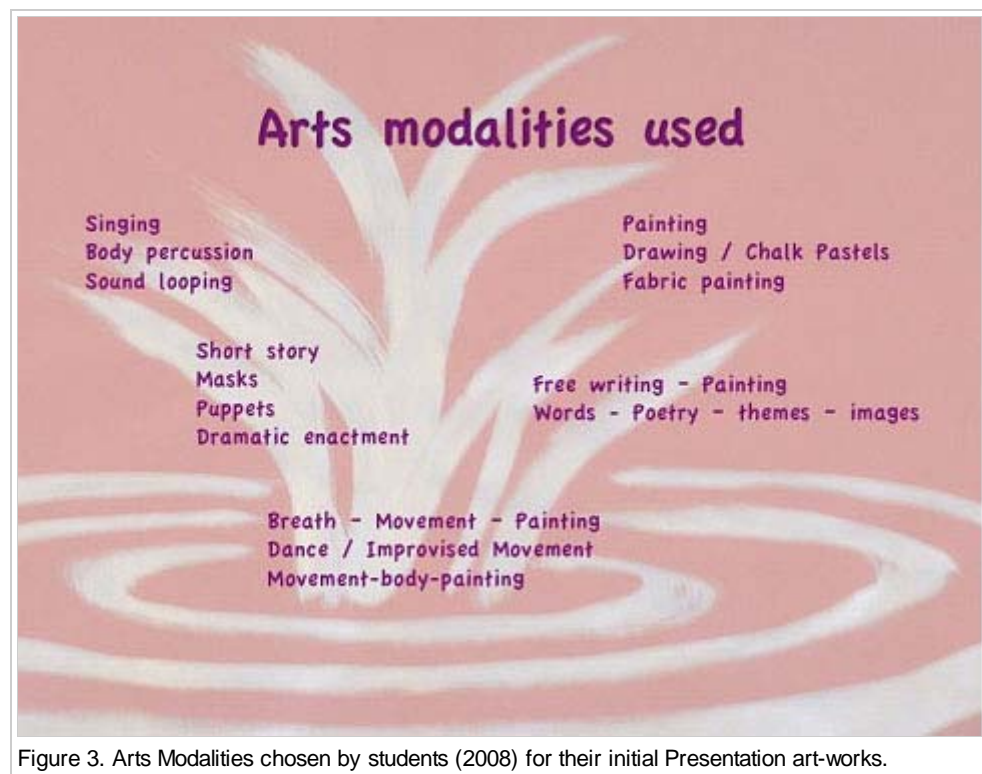


Figure 3. Arts Modalities chosen by students (2008) for their initial Presentation art-works.

...I picked up the guitar again after the meditation. A melody came out from my mouth. I notated down, and that was my second take.

...As I meditated on my notes from the first 2 takes, I had a revelation from my God on this theme...

My subject matter...came to me in a dream...I woke. The image was extremely vivid in my mind...After I knew it was recorded I fell asleep straight away.

Surprisingly I found that once I had committed myself to doing the second take, the words came with relative ease and I began to enjoy the creative process.

After dialoguing with my artwork however, I surprised myself with the relevance of the words and the metaphors to both my professional and personal lives. This stage in the process really awakened me to the thoughts and emotions which I often aim to subdue and ignore, however which need addressing in order for future growth and development.

It was quite incredible that just expressing to myself the desire to write something seemed to be the only catalyst needed, and incredibly poems just came to me...The first poems came to me during my morning meditation....Some poems even emerged whilst I was in the middle of cleaning the kitchen...

During the life of this assignment (and I choose the word “life” as it was like the realisation of the existence of another entity)...

The colours I chose seemed to jump out at me and the image rapidly took shape on my canvas. It felt like a very short time. This time the painting amazed me. What struck me was the spontaneity of the act of doing the painting. I had a sense of achievement, as I never thought I could paint like this. Here was an image that had emerged through me painting!

Second take...

Suddenly the story of my personal obstacles was being mirrored right in front of me...A beautiful metaphor for boundaries was sitting before me...

Third take...

...it was a very therapeutic experience, from which I am still harvesting. What I have been able to take away from it all, is a sense of achievement. Having the boldness to attempt the art work and finish the art work was a metaphor in itself for newly learned confidence in expressing myself and trying something new. Growing edges are something to be embraced and celebrated, it is a place of growth and exploration.

The first take emerged while I was journaling in preparation for the art-work. The words naturally began to flow from within and appear on the paper. The poem had begun to form before I realised what was happening, it came from an inner depth without any conscious attempt to record it.

Over the next few days this first take grew into a cathartic experience which I relished, absorbing the depth of the expression of meaning. I also felt happy knowing my innate creativity had produced the first take of my poem by its own accord. After the words had come out unexpectedly and sat on the paper, I began to feel some physical sensation as if something was happening within me...I felt as if I was healing the past. This writing process was having a somatic affect. I was getting in touch with bodily sensations while at the same time I began to feel emotionally liberated.

My poem is an oracle, the entity of my reality, embracing a message from my unconscious, the result of a conversation with the archetypal realm, getting in touch with things about myself.

Take three. Voila! The artwork took over and I was impelled...This worked beautifully.

#### **Stage (4) Sharing Stories of the Art-works and Dialoguing with the Art-works**

In week 10, students brought their art-works and met in their small groups. They told one another the stories of their creations and then supported one another to dialogue with these art-works, asking them questions and letting the art-works answer.

I felt vulnerable during the dialogue but also supported by my group. The shared vulnerability gave us a greater respect and understanding of each other. It is just such open acceptance that promotes courage and confidence to express one’s self not only in that group, but also in the wider community and specifically, as a music therapist.

I didn’t think I had much more to say on the subject matter...Yet there was a whole untapped story that was part of the artworks that I was largely unaware of. The dialogue process allowed for the development of self awareness into some of the smaller stories that affect the larger narrative.

This was a bizarre process for me. How I entered and how I left were completely dissimilar representations of myself, both mentally and spiritually.

I only realized that there were 2 images in one painting when I had completed the painting and turned it upside

down...

The dialoguing with the artwork, whilst initially feeling ridiculous, provided answers to questions I realise existed and furthered the personal exploration of both the processes/modalities and the result/artwork.

## Stage (5) Co-creating the Presentation

During the class on week 11, the small groups met to prepare their presentation to the large group. Their art-works did not have to be shown explicitly in this presentation, and they were encouraged to let all their art-works and themes mingle to find a way they wanted to be shared together.

One student described in her assignments how she “woke up one morning” with the idea of how to connect the art works of her group members.

The initial idea for the presentation by the group was prompted by a dream I had, in which we were performing the presentation...

I felt being supported and valued...the feeling got stronger when I heard my song sung by all of us during the rehearsal, and there was a sense of peace and satisfaction in me; I felt safe and being understood. I felt that we were connected in a way that language could not explain.

Just the night before whilst adding the final touches, I heard a song which completely complemented my artwork...this band was close to me so this piece connected on more levels than one.

## Stage (6) The Presentation Workshop

### The Setting and Structuring the Day

(Student feedback from the 2008 Presentation led to my making some changes to the design of this workshop, primarily by ritualizing the beginning, transitions and ending stages; the description below is of the 2010 Presentation.)

The Presentation workshop was held on the Saturday between weeks 11 and 12 of our regular week-night classes. Saturday workshops with experiential content often form part of our MAMT subjects, so students had been accustomed to spending a full day engaging in open-ended learning with one another. The workshop was also held in our familiar Music Therapy classroom with its classic 60’s brilliant “Australian Green” carpet. A few weeks before this workshop, we had held a community music making celebration of our lovely Kuring-gai campus – a “castle in the bush”. This event may have also contributed to a sense of place and safety.

The first thirty minutes of the workshop were devoted to an introduction to the day and the preparation of the space and equipment needed. Since small groups had only been given one opportunity to plan and run through their presentations, it was again emphasized that these were not “performances” but “gifts”, and that surprises form a valuable part of this process. As usual with experiential work, students were reminded of the importance of self-care through the day, and confidentiality agreements were made. I also reminded students that, since this was likely to be the final Presentation (our course is being phased out), I would be writing a paper and possibly using their de-identified written reflections with permission to document our Presentation journey.

Each group would have half an hour: about 15 minutes for their presentation, followed by a time in which the rest of the group could respond to the presentation with their own artistic “gifts” which would then be given to the small group members. Feedback gifts were not compulsory, but each small group was assigned to be the feedback group for one other group, with additional spontaneously given feedback by others if they were inspired.

### The Opening and Transitioning Rituals

Prior to the start of the first presentation, the whole group participated in a warm-up, starting with symbolically “brushing off” one another the “rush to arrive on time” (or other concerns that might hinder participation), and ending with a meditative time for self-centering while listening and toning to the sounds of a Tibetan bowl. This bowl was also used to remind us to re-center ourselves between each presentation. A lunch break divided the seven groups into morning and afternoon sessions. After the last group had presented and received feedback gifts, there was time for a final re-centering and a reminder of the importance of self-care over the next few days. We ended the day with small group check-ins and a whole group musical improvisation with lots of drumming.

The ritualistic elements, such as the sounding of the bowl and toning to mark the beginnings and endings of the day as well as each new presentation, assisted in the emotional availability and connectedness of the experience for me. It also helped centre and ground the group, which lead to a supportive and respectful atmosphere. The initial discussion regarding the way the day was to be run and general housekeeping issues such as breaks, comfort, confidentiality, feedback responsibilities, order of presentations and self care, as well as asking if there were any questions, also helped settle us as a group and prepare us to be available to receive the gift of each presentation.

The presentations were very revealing and enlightening. I thoroughly enjoyed the Tibetan bowl toning as a rite

of passage to induct the sessions. I felt frazzled when I arrived to the presentations due to a late arrival...I felt angry and helpless...which was not the desired mentality. When...began the Tibetan bowl toning I immediately closed my eyes and felt a calm wash over me..." (this)... "was an excellent way to begin and end each sharing. It really affected me in a profound way. I felt all my limbs disengage and my mind open when I heard the metallic resonance of the bowl. It was also exceptional at clearing the mind.

The instrumental jam was also profound for me. I can only explain with the metaphor of food. It is when you think you are not hungry, until you have your first bite only to find all self-control fly out the window. This was how I felt on the instrumental jam...how I must have been in need of expulsion...After the jam I felt so energised, happy, excited with a spring in my step.

## Experiences of The Presentation

I was personally very moved by the depth of the sharing of artistic gifts.

Detailed themes that students had been addressing in their art-works will not be described for reasons of confidentiality, but I'd like to include the following four common general themes and a collage of phrases, taken from my own summary and journaling of the day, to give readers some insight into the depth of issues that were shared:

Overcoming obstacles and freeing the self: "out of past lives, past childhood, past fears, out of the earth, remolded, is born a new beginning, full of promise, rhythm and song...from behind the masks, platitudes and customs, from underneath the burden of our ancestors, from deep inside we struggle to be free of our boxes and break free and sing and play and dance"

Self-transformation, metamorphosis: "liminality, forcing me to love myself through your unconditional love...the mask I hide behind to get your applause causes me grief ...tame that judge, no longer an adversary"

Choice points: "the easy or the hard path? ...the winds of change are here...which way to go?"

Not-knowing/life transitions: "...building without quite knowing, putting the pieces together, improvising until something emerges...I am not afraid"

I have selected below students' descriptions of The Presentation exchanges in relation to their feelings during the process, their references to not-knowing, and their references to gift-giving and group *communitas*.

### - Feelings during the presentation itself:

...I don't remember a lot of what actually happened during the actual presentation. It has the feeling of a sky dive. I have impressions of moments and feelings. Time at once stood still and sped up. I was almost an out-of-body experience...When it was over it was like landing from a sky dive. We coasted in and it took about 200 metres of skating before falling flat on my face, out of breath, enveloped in parachute. When I lifted the edge of the deflated chute, I had a room full of people looking at me. But gradually the gazes dropped away to paper, crayons, pencils, words, notes, sounds. And one by one they were delivered, like the heavy first drops of a summer storm, warm, firm and full...

Immediately prior to the start of the presentation I was nervous, similar to musical performances. This was, I think, due to the fluid nature of the presentation. However, once it began it flowed and turned out better than any of the members of the group had thought it would.

### - References to not-knowing:

The fact that the presentation was the first time that the combined artworks had been executed together in their entirety, meant that it had a natural fluidity and was open to change and invention in the moment. I believe this is one of the reasons that it was so fulfilling...

It was a feeling of delight to make an unplanned and improvised sound. Its movement to blend with the more concrete steps of my partner progressed naturally, which was a final communication between the two artworks.

...She too looked surprised but my surprise came from her lack of resistance that she felt safe enough to embark on an unknown journey. This was trust. The music relayed calm and I felt I was in the moment without judgment or control...

...It really brought home how vital it is to find time just to "be still" and allow whatever is right to come...Our own presentation itself was overwhelming, like flying. It was a constant process of keeping my mind open and neutral, again, like meditating...

We did not get to practice even once so it was a "real" improvisation. However it turned out pretty good and created a nice harmony. We let the moment go on with the music. I got lost in the presence and I could feel that everybody else was in the moment...

...As soon as I realised that everyone was just in the moment trying to see and interpret our presentation in



their own terms and perspectives, I let myself go. I release all the tension and stress I had about the presentation. I just continued playing the drum...I became emotional. From that moment I did not look at the paper to check the list or the order of the presentation. Instead I looked at my small group members. I spoke to them through the eyes...and the little gestures...just enough to understand each other...It was emotionally intriguing and spiritually restoring. I could feel the uniqueness from each person in the room filling up the space. Everyone seemed to be trying to reveal their true colours. How beautiful and special is that? Without the support I physically felt from the big group I would not have been able to set myself free and just let myself get captured in the moment.

This unknown aspect of the presentation was “exciting” and gave a natural effect to the readings, as if we were playing freely with the unexpectedness of “not knowing” or not having a plan of what was going to happen next.

When it was my turn to dance, I just reminded myself to be confident and my dance seemed to flow along well thereafter...I felt especially satisfied and fulfilled after the completion of my dance...that I could believe in myself more from now on...

Leading up to the presentation I was not sure what to expect on the day. In retrospect there literally were no words that could have described the process to me in a way that I would have understood, it simply had to be experienced. Overall I found the presentation a very affirming and positive experience.

...I had a hard time trying to explain what we did at the workshop... asked me during dinner. I just could not answer her. It was very strange. I didn't know how to answer her question even though it was a very simple question. It was really weird. The experience was nothing like anything we had experienced before. I could not relate it to anything else.

#### **- References to the gift giving and group communitas:**

To allow myself to feedback to others' gifts with a creative gift of my own, was in itself a gift. It was such a privilege...

The experience of receiving the “gifts” (their presentations) of the other groups was a transitioning experience of going to “other places”: a privilege. The “gifts” were received not unlike surprises at birthdays and Christmas time. By giving pieces of ourselves we received pieces of the others back, confirming the “gifts” were not judgments of each presentation, they were representative of emotion or thankfulness which may have been triggered. It was a delight to witness the faces of those receiving the “gifts”, reading them one by one, or listening to the verbal “gifts”.

...I felt a sense of belonging in connection to each others' suffering. With this came reverence for the sacredness of an individual and their uniqueness. I felt empathic connection...

...The feedback in the form of gifts through art was even more astonishing. It was not the art work itself but the giving...I felt it said “I understand, I support you in your suffering”. In my visual imagery I saw a continuous invisible loop, like an electrical circuit, where the energy reverberated between self and others. I had not experienced such authentic gift giving since childhood, nor the overwhelming feeling of being appreciated for who we were, individually and as a group.

...The feedback...said we'd been heard, listened to and understood. We were important parts of something bigger, and we were both part of the circle and encircled...

Through this sharing process I believe a healing process began where we were able to transform ourselves, and possibly others by what we shared, gave and received, and the questions we enabled others to ask themselves. We shared our authentic selves and it showed in our presentations and our responses. Through this we formed social bonds, became a more cohesive group and benefited from the exchange of the “gift” of self we were willing to share and the suffering we owned.

### **Stage (7) Sharing reflections on the Presentation**

During the class in week 12, students talked about their experiences of The Presentation workshop with their small group members and then the large group.

Issues raised by students in the large group tended toward two main themes or questions, which were discussed:

- Can one still call something a “gift” if it perturbs ones self? A few students described being left with an unsettled or “raw” feeling, with no one to talk to afterwards who would really “understand”; although our follow-up session was only a few days after the workshop and students had been encouraged to use self-care methods if needed, this perceived “gap” makes me feel thankful that I had not asked students to express their suffering, as it seemed that their self-care resources had been stretched; our group discussion, and hearing that others had had similar experiences, seemed to alleviate this sense of perturbation;
- What if people didn't seem to “get” what their presentation had been about because the whole story of the artworks had

not been shared with the large group? People's experiences of the same presentation were apparently so different, students pondered the age-old questions, (so eloquently discussed by Ken Wilber in chapters 4 and 5 of *The Eye of Spirit*, 1997), of where meaning lies in art; did it matter that the observers' meaning did not match the creator's intended meaning? Students seemed to come as a group to the conclusion that it was the "gift" exchange that mattered more; they portrayed the process as containing beauty because the "ripples from others' shadows were interacting with their own"; some students still needed and were given the space to explain their art-works so that they could experience closure.

In this class, students were also asked to give me brief written feedback about their experiences of The Presentation in the form of "key words" that came to mind, any "memorable moments" they wished to note, and "suggestions for improvement".

The following reflections are quotes from written assignments.

### Reflections about the overall process:

The main ramification for me was empowerment. It became clear that this is a particularly effective way for me to make sense of my feelings. It's a means always available to me. It seems to bypass my tendency to intellectualize and rationalize, which is a glorious and freeing discovery. It is important to make time to be still and quiet, to allow myself time for the right inspiration to come. Not just when it comes to self-supervision, but in any situation where I feel stuck or unsure...

I am absolutely blown away by the power of this whole process. I believe the growth of the individuals throughout the steps involved in presentation of the gifts, lies entirely in their honesty with themselves, and openness to possibilities.

The responses were genuine and so positive. It is often a rare moment when people so genuinely affirm each other for who we are, especially in an educational setting where I am used to being wrong or not quite good enough. The arts open up a whole other world of knowing yourself and your worth. Having other people value my artwork was an amazing feeling.

I am appreciative to have had the opportunity for this experience it really clarified my role as a healer and the importance for self care on both an individual and communal level. I conceptualise and understand at a deeper level the nature and function of healing.

By finding the key to ourselves, we find where we buried the different parts of ourselves: everyone has the right to have a chance to find their key and turn the lock opening the door to self discovery. After reflecting on the whole process I am still astonished at how all the small groups were able to present a complete "gift" which has risen from their individual artworks. The presentation workshop was also an indication of the safe and supportive environment we students have come to know and experience during our journey toward growing professionally, while activating our potential and unique qualities...

Personally I think it is crucial for the individual to create this presentation over a lengthy time frame, as exactly it had intended. The process is deeply personal and by creating time and space around it, it becomes a therapeutic journey. The information and readings supporting it were well detailed and explained. In my opinion if a student had left the process to the last minute the unfurling of emotions and intermodal interventions may not have occurred...

I have experienced so much. Expressive art therapy has opened a door of communication with myself and others to find true self, empathy and authenticity. In the past my art has been my comfort and support whereas now I also see art as a source of dialogue... Was the medium serving as a bridge between the adult and the child? ... The opportunity for us as adults to play becomes lost in the constructs of society and its expectations. How liberating to reconnect with the child even if just for a while...

The process itself was a growing edge. Each take uncovered a surprise and each take required a response... During the presentation itself I felt such a state of liminality. Had there been overt control I feel achieving this space would have been difficult. It also appeared the group also entered this state... I felt I was in the moment without judgment or control... I felt a sense of belonging in connection to each others suffering. With this came reverence for the sacredness of an individual and their uniqueness. I felt empathic connection. The feedback in the form of gifts through art was even more astonishing. It was not the art work itself but the giving... I felt it said "I understand, I support you in your suffering."...

I was surprised at how well the presentation worked as apart from the general structures we created, the performance was largely improvised. How did such a deep and meaningful theme emerge in our work, which was undiscussed? How did the presentation work? How did beauty emerge after all of the diversity and chaos? How did our gift shower over our supportive community and allow them to see the undiscussed themes? How was the feedback created, with such understanding, compassion and meaning? Something whispers deep within that it was a spiritual energy; it was a gift from the angels. Art was the medium that allowed the magic to occur and *communitas* allowed the gift of authenticity.

The experience of the workshop I found to be really strong, the day has left an imprint in me. It really made me

appreciate processes and objectives that are part of the Expressive Arts and have greater confidence in my chosen path of music therapy. It was a day that really clarified why I am doing what I am doing, as I was able to embody the process. Through this embodiment there was healing that occurred. The experience gave me greater faith in the healing arts...

...As there was emphasis placed upon a reflection process and further analysis after The Presentation this meant that the experience could not just be easily forgotten and suppressed, rather I had to acknowledge and process it. I had to own it to be able to begin to release and detach from the sensation...

...Release. The presentation helped me become aware of tightness and blockages in my body as the performances themselves were physically, emotionally and spiritually expressive and I was open to receiving. There are somatic reactions...

...Affirmations. Being heard and listened to was a grace of the day, as there was something really healing in being really listened to. Particularly when communicating from areas in the self that are usually repressed.

## Stage (8) The Presentation assignment

In week 13, students submitted written assignments (worth 40%) of 1500-2000 words reflecting on the Presentation process (from which their quotes in this paper have been drawn), (the marking criteria are in [Appendix A \(pdf\)](#)).

The initial stress came from assignment stress. Will my sketches be good enough...? How much do I open up? How much is too much? An executive decision was made to let the presentation flow and create itself. This way it would avoid coming across forced and stagnant and feel natural to us...The recreation, capturing, dialoguing and sharing of a personal dream came as an epiphany to me. It also forced me to question myself in a new way. Yet again, I would not have questioned myself in this way if it were not for this assignment...

## Discussion

### Alterations from the original Presentation

The structuring of our Presentation differed in several ways from the original framework used by Levine (1995):

- I changed the central theme to be addressed by students in their presentations; Levine asked students to “present some issue or conflict in his or her life...through one or more artistic media” (p44), a task which would involve their willingness to...“present his or her pain to the group...their “psychopathology”...a telling of the suffering of the soul.” (p45). In our one-class-per-week educational setting, and a class of 19 students, I wanted to give students the option of depth without requiring it; I didn’t feel I could provide a sufficient psychotherapeutic safety net to encourage buried trauma to surface. (Like Levine, I was aware that the “surrounding environment of the university is antagonistic to the experience of *communitas*” (p58)). However, because students were required to read Levine’s original description, some chose to plumb the depths, take risks; each student self-regulated yet the outcomes were profound;
- Unlike Levine, I did not include the option for students to verbalize (“I feel...I imagine...I remember”...p44) their post-presentation feedback to each group; I wanted to minimize the potential for this feedback to dissolve into analysis and judgment (I’ve found students tend to lapse into this very easily despite instructions), so all feedback was in an artistic form;
- Levine met with students before the Presentation ritual to help them structure their presentation; in our version, students met in small groups to plan their group presentation. During my Expressive Arts Therapy training in Switzerland with Paolo Knill and Steve Levine, I experienced such a group presentation structure as a student and felt it would be more appropriate in our context; by containing both individual and group stages, this structure seemed to add another level of “not-knowing” and also a powerful small-group bonding experience;
- Levine provided a written response to students after their written assignment; due to our presentations being group, not individual, my feedback took the form of my artistic gift to each group after each presentation, although individual assignments were subsequently read and graded with short comments;

Despite these differences, when I read Levine’s description of “activating an archetypal need longed for by all group members” (p58), I feel a resonance with what occurred in both our Presentation experiences. Perhaps the structure is less important than the value placed on providing a space for such gifts to emerge in ourselves and our learning community.

As also described by Levine (1995), the Presentation was a part of a larger body of “self-exploration through artistic media” (p.46), peer supervision and trust-building experiences. In our case, peer supervision formed the first half of the ASSW elective, and autobiographical assignments (written, artistic and somatic) feature in other subjects that either preceded or followed. These built trust not only in one another, but in the process of asking questions through art-making.

### Ways of Knowing, Not-Knowing and Inquiry-based Practice

Levine situates the Presentation “within the context of the theory of rites of passage” (p47) and “the notion of the gift” (p51) in order to “understand how it can be so effective”. I would like to add my own cognitive “take” by asking: How does The Presentation sit within the broader context of Music Therapy/Expressive Arts Therapy practice and research? Were we actually

“doing research”? I would like to offer the interpretation of *The Presentation* as a “systematic inquiry methodology” which serves an inquiry-based practice.

The emergence of Evidence-Based Practice (E-BP) has brought the power of the scientific method and the evidence produced by scientific research to many humanities and health care disciplines, including Music Therapy. These can be valuable tools in evaluating questionable claims about the power of music to heal us (see critique by Summer & Summer, 1996).

However, the growing orthodoxy of Evidence-Based Practice has been critiqued on a number of levels (practical, political and philosophical) to have limitations in its relevance to humanities and helping disciplines such as nursing (Wall, 2008; Griffiths, 2005; Mitchell, 1999), social work (Webb, 2001), disability services (Burton & Chapman, 2004), psychotherapy (Feltham, 2005) and music therapy (Edwards, 2005). Music Therapists have also debated the type of evidence that is needed in our field to answer different types of questions - hence the wide range of research methods available to us.

E-BP hinges on valuing “Knowing” which is arrived at via a rational and scientific process. This is a legitimate and necessary part of our practice and we should certainly not “throw the baby out with the bath-water” in acknowledging the limitations of science (Wilber, 1997). However, a reliance predominately on Evidence-Based Practice (with its current emphasis on scientific/medical methodologies) can create an imbalance in which other sources of wisdom tend to be invalidated: the artistic, non-rational intuitions, especially about our own process, which arise from “meaningful moments”, silent communion, “surfing” the unfolding moments in a relationship. Therefore E-BP needs to be balanced in human-centred disciplines such as Music Therapy with an Inquiry-Based Practice (I-BP) underpinned by valuing “Not-Knowing”.

This balance between evidence-based-knowing and not-knowing-based inquiry is illustrated in the Gestalt “figure-ground” perceptual alternation (Figure 4a). It can also be represented as a cycle: beginning with knowing...suspension of knowing in order to enter into a state of not-knowing...letting a question emerge...finding a suitable systematic inquiry methodology for that question...results of which lead again to knowing...(Figure 4b).

The arts are well-placed to serve as tools for such inquiry-based practice (Austin & Forinash, 2005; Herman, 2000; McNiff, 1998), because engaging in creative artistic self expression or receptive arts contemplation takes us into what Expressive Arts Therapist Paolo Knill calls “an alternative experience of worlding” (Knill, 2000), in which our everyday reality and way of knowing the world can be suspended.

It requires the researcher to tolerate the ambiguity of not knowing and to trust that the creative flow of images, music, movement, poetry, and story telling will evolve into recognizable patterns of meaning that bring together and integrate primary processes with cognitive thinking...” (Austin & Forinash, 2005, p. 460).

Systematic arts-based inquiry differs from art-making per se, because it is centred on a research question and uses clearly defined arts-based procedures to explore this question. It also can differ from analyzing art-works using qualitative methodologies (such as phenomenology or hermeneutics), since the art need not be objectified, but instead can be treated as a presence, an “oracle”, or “gift” which brings insights about one’s self (Herman, 2000; McNiff, 1998; Knill, 2001; Knill et al, 1995 ; Knill et al, 2005).

Using these resources, systematic arts-based inquiry has taken a number of other forms apart from *The Presentation* in the UTS music therapy course, for the purpose of therapist self-development:

- The Autobiographical song-lyric method: (“What can the Key song lyrics in my life tell me about myself?”) - a song-based self analysis performed by constructing a time-line of significant songs in one’s life and then teasing out and grouping the key “moving” lyrics toward identifying one’s life themes (Faire, 2005). This process is a bridging of unconscious and conscious knowing, based on resonance between somatic and linguistic memory (Faire, 2004).
- The use of Somagrams: (“What does my body want to say to me?”) developed by somatic psychotherapist Stanley Keleman (Keleman, 1987) uses drawing to bring into consciousness disowned aspects of the bodily self. This method was one of the options for somatic autobiography in our elective Verbal and Body Psychotherapies (Faire & Kellehear, unpublished).
- Experiential engagement with the Cycle of Embodied Processes: (“What are my habitual ways of being?”) As part of their self-care work, students relate their practicum / daily lives to five stages of a cycle drawn from Gestalt Therapy (Kepner, 1997): Centering, Taking In, Grounding, Expressing and Contact. The question asked is whether one can find a balance between indulgence and denial at each stage. (This cycle echoes the five developmental rights described by Robin Grille: the right to Exist, Need, Support, Freedom and Love (Grille, 2005).) Group musical improvisations are then used as an arts-based inquiry method to further explore each stage.

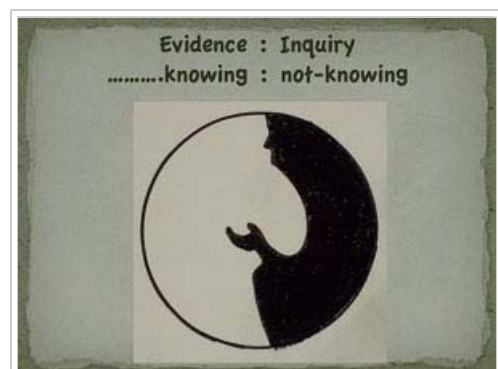
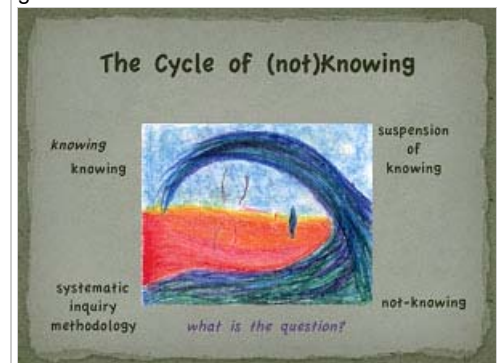


Figure 4. Knowing and not-knowing as: a) figure-ground



b) cycle

## Traps and Strengths of Inquiry-based Practice – the larger picture

The multiplicity of “knowing” is ancient wisdom, exemplified by the ancient Greek concepts of Praxis (knowing by acting), Theoria (knowing by seeing) and Poiesis (knowing by making) (Levine, 1999b). Ken Wilber’s modern version of this multiplicity is described as “Sensibilia – apprehended by the eye of flesh”, “Intelligibilia – by the eye of mind” and “Transcendelia – via the eye of contemplation” (Wilber, 1997).

If knowing is indeed inherently

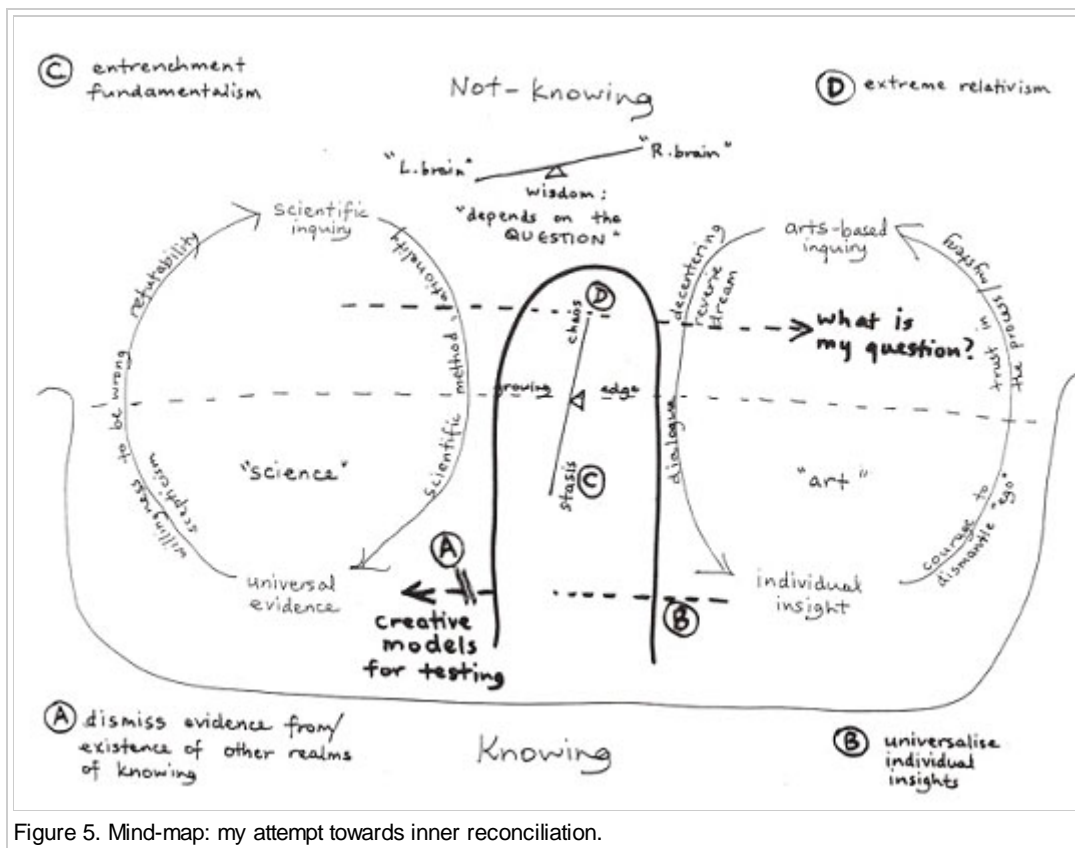


Figure 5. Mind-map: my attempt towards inner reconciliation.

discontinuous, it follows that research methodology appropriate to one domain, such as “scientific-medical” or “positivist” world view, must also be inappropriate for certain questions. There is ongoing debate about whether arts-based inquiry should be called “research” (Kriz, 2000; Levine, 2000). In my mind-map in Fig. 5 (which I have left unpolished to reflect my own process rather than a general theory), I have attempted to reconcile my own “scientist” and “artist” by recognizing that there are methodologies that have validity within but not outside their own domains. The cycle of knowing/not-knowing can take place both in scientific inquiry and arts-based inquiry, depending on the question. Between lies a metaphoric doorway. Traps occur both in (A) dismissing non-scientific knowing and (B) universalizing individual insights, as well as (C) fundamentalism and (D) extreme relativism. This mind-map (simplistic, dualistic yet personally therapeutic) echoes the four quadrant model of Ken Wilber (1997), which features “interior” and “exterior” quadrants. This paper has presented methodologies useful for inquiry within Wilber’s “interior/artistic” domain.

## Inquiry-based Practice in Music Therapy Practice

Music and other arts modalities have been used in our UTS Master of Arts in Music Therapy course as methods of autobiographical inquiry for greater self-understanding. Such “self work” is considered by us to be vital for both the training and professional development of therapists; we believe that a commitment to continuing to expand our capacities for therapeutic presence, empathy, self-monitoring and reflection underpins sustainable Music Therapy practice.

Not-Knowing and asking questions through the arts can begin to bridge the rational and the non-rational. Alongside Knowing (gathering “evidence” that music therapy “works”), we can also value the significant role that Not-Knowing plays in our practice.

The following examples are offered to illustrate some possible ways in which inquiry-based practice could enrich a Music Therapist’s resources:

- I encounter a moment with a client in which we seem to be “stuck”; instead of allowing my discomfort with this to drive me back to “the plan/outcomes” for the session, can I pause and allow the silence and space for something to emerge in either myself or the client...? (not-knowing; principle of “inhibition” from Alexander Technique);
- Dialogue with a client’s creation: Perhaps the art-work itself can “speak” to us? “If this song were a being, what would it look like? What would it say to us?”;
- Arts-based research as self-care: I come home after a session and am troubled by the sound or the song of my client; I process my response through the creation of my own art-work and dialoguing with it (see Herman, 2000);
- If I had a research question to ask, what would it be? Could I use decentering through art making (Knill et al, 2005) to

uncover the research questions that have meaning for me?

## Conclusion

My somatic response to re-reading Levine’s chapter in *Poiesis* on The Presentation a year after our first Presentation was “goose-bumps.” I realized that we had embodied the spirit of The Presentation and that it was still “alive” in my students. They had brought home to me the vital significance of the feedback gifts in completing the circle, and I am now moving toward closure of that feedback loop by writing this paper as my gift.

In hindsight, I am wondering if the process was so powerful that by the end of it the students had forgotten their original questions, or perhaps it was I, myself, who forgot that there had been questions? In the assignment instructions, I had neglected to ask them to reflect specifically on their original questions from their post-Presentation vantage point, something I’ve only realized afterwards, and which I would change to more fully complete the systematic inquiry process.

However, perhaps the true gift of The Presentation was that we could, in fact, forget the questions?

## The Droodles?

And so, having completed both our story and my reflections, I now come back to you, the reader, in the hope that our telling has found some places of resonance and perhaps even offered up a gift? If you did indeed “doodle” (it’s not too late either), I now invite you to dialogue with your art-work; or more broadly to use this description of The Presentation to explore “not-knowing” at your creative growing edges, letting such inquiry-based practice enrich your own Music Therapy life.

## Acknowledgements

I’d like to acknowledge the support and editorial advice given to me by my (Music Therapy lecturer) colleague, Katie Peterson, and my (Alexander Technique teacher) partner, Alex Nicolson. Many thanks also to all the students who participated in The Presentation and enabled me to use their words.

## References

- Austin, D. & Forinash, M. (2005). Arts-based research. In Wheeler, B. (Ed.), *Music therapy research* (pp. 460-473). Gilsum NH: Barcelona Publishers.
- Burton, M. & Chapman, M.J. (2004). Problems of evidence-based practice in community based services. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 8(1), 56-70.
- Eberhart, H. (2003). Surprise: An aspect of art-analogy in therapy, supervision and coaching. *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 5, 60-68.
- Edwards, J. (2005). Possibilities and problems for evidence-based practice in music therapy. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, 32, 293-301.
- Faire, R.J. (2002). *Even smarter bodies? Increasing the somatic literacy of PDHPE teachers*. ACHPER Healthy Lifestyles Journal, 49(1), 16-20.
- Faire, R.J. (2003). Music therapy, expressive arts therapy and mental health. In Issakidis, C., Hanlon, P., Robertson, S., Kellehear, K. et al. (2003). *There’s no health without mental health, contemporary TheMHS in mental health services*, Sydney Conference Proceedings 2002 (pp52-57), TheMHS Conference, Sydney, Australia.
- Faire, R.J. (2004). Myself: How to be as if – a review. *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 6, 176-178.
- Faire, R.J. (2005, July). *An autobiographical expressive arts therapy method: Song lyrics that reverberate across a lifespan*. Workshop presented at the 11th World Congress of Music Therapy: From Lullaby to Lament, Brisbane, Australia. Retrieved from [www.zulenet.com/ecosomatics/workshop\\_songlyric.html](http://www.zulenet.com/ecosomatics/workshop_songlyric.html)
- Faire, R.J. (2009, September). *Inquiry-based practice: Not-knowing and asking questions through the arts to bridge the rational and non-rational*. Paper presented at the Australian Music Therapy Association National Conference, Sydney, Australia.
- Feltham, C. (2005). Evidence-based psychotherapy and counselling in the UK: Critique and alternatives. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 35(1), 131-143.
- Griffiths, P. (2005). Evidence-based practice: a deconstruction and postmodern critique: book review article. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 42, 355-361.
- Grille, R. (2005). *Parenting for a peaceful world*. Sydney: Longueville Media.

- Herman, L. (2000). A methodology for arts-based research – Entering the worm-hole: Inviting clients' disturbing images into liminal space. *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 2, 70-74.
- Keleman, S. (1987). *Embodying experience: Forming a personal life*. Berkeley: Center Press.
- Kepner, J. (1997). *Body process, A gestalt approach to working with the body in psychotherapy*. NY: Gestalt Institute of Cleveland Press.
- Knill, P.J. (2000). The essence in a therapeutic process: An alternative experience of worlding? *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 2, 6-14.
- Knill, P.J. (2001). Unlimiting limits: Principles of an "oeuvre-oriented" expressive arts therapy. *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 3, 70-75.
- Knill, P.J., Barba, H.N. & Fuchs, M.N. (1995). *Minstrels of soul: Intermodal expressive therapy*. Toronto: Palmerston Press.
- Knill, P.J., Levine, E.G. & Levine, S.K. (2005). *Principles and practice of expressive arts therapy: Toward a therapeutic aesthetics*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Kriz, J. (2000). Thoughts about research in the field of expressive arts therapy. *Poiesis: A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 2, 82-86.
- Levine, E. (1995). *Tending the fire: Studies in art, therapy and creativity*. Toronto: Palmerston Press.
- Levine, S.K. (1997). Bearing gifts to the feast: The presentation as a rite of passage in the education of expressive therapists. In Levine, S.K., *Poiesis: The language of psychology and the speech of the soul* (pp. 43-61). London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Levine, S.K. (1999a). Poiesis and post-modernism: the search for a foundation in expressive arts therapy. In Levine, S.K & Levine, E.G (Eds.), *Foundations of Expressive Arts Therapy: Theoretical and Clinical Perspectives* (pp. 19-36). London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Levine, S.K. (1999b). Editor's introduction. *Poiesis, A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 1, 2.
- Levine, S.K. (2000). Researching imagination – imagining research. *Poiesis, A Journal of the Arts and Communication*, 2, 88-93.
- McNiff, S. (1992). *Art as medicine: Creating a therapy of the imagination*. Boston: Shambhala.
- McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Mitchell, G.J. (1999). Evidence-based practice: Critique and alternative View. *Nursing Science Quarterly*, 12(1), 30-35.
- Ruud, E. (1995). Improvisation as a liminal experience: Jazz and music therapy as modern "Rites de Passage". In Kenny, C. (Ed.), *Listening, playing, creating: Essays on the power of sound* (pp. 91-117). Albany: State University of NY Press.
- Summer, L & Summer, J. (1996). *Music: The New Age elixir*. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Totton, N. (2003). *Body psychotherapy: An introduction*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Wall, S. (2008). A critique of evidence-based practice in nursing: Challenging the assumptions. *Social Theory & Health*, 6, 37-53.
- Webb, S.A. (2001). Some considerations on the validity of evidence-based practice in social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31(1), 57-79.
- Wilber, K. (1997). *The eye of spirit: An integral vision for a world gone slightly mad*. Boston: Shambhala.

## Appendix

[Presentation Assignment Marking Criteria \[pdf\]](#)

### Moderated discussion

Add your comments and responses to what you read on Voices in our [moderated discussions forum](#). Contributions should be e-mailed to either [Joke Bradt](#) or [Thomas Wosch](#). Please indicate the title and url of the article you are responding to.

©VOICES:A World Forum for Music Therapy.

# Voices

A WORLD FORUM FOR MUSIC THERAPY

[HOME](#) [ABOUT](#) [LOG IN](#) [REGISTER](#) [SEARCH](#) [CURRENT](#) [ARCHIVES](#)

## VOICES

[Overview](#)  
[Focus and Scope](#)  
[Vision statement](#)

## JOURNAL

[Current Issue](#)  
[Back Issues](#)  
[Search the Journal](#)  
[Guidelines](#)  
[Submission](#)

## FORTNIGHTLY COLUMNS

[Current Column](#)  
[Previous Columns](#)

## COUNTRY OF THE MONTH

[Current Month](#)  
[Previous Months](#)

## DISCUSSIONS

[Moderated](#)  
[Discussions](#)  
[Unmoderated](#)  
[Discussions](#)

## RESOURCES

[Upcoming Events](#)  
[External Resources](#)

## INFORMATION

- [For Readers](#)
- [For Authors](#)
- [For Librarians](#)

## USER

Username

Password

Remember me

[Journal Help](#)

[Home](#) > [About the Journal](#) > [Editorial Policies](#)

## Editorial Policies

- » [Focus and Scope](#)
- » [Section Policies](#)
- » [Peer Review Process](#)
- » [Open Access Policy](#)

## Focus and Scope

Through its two sections, the Original Voices and the Research Voices, VOICES: A World Forum for Music Therapy (ISSN 1504-1611) intends to support the discursive practices of music therapists around the world by producing a free first class online international forum. This publication will encourage participation from every continent and will nurture the development of music therapy practice, theory, discussion and debate. Because culture has an important role in music and music therapy, we will encourage contributions that find their source in the cultural influences of each continental region.

Voices is published by [GAMUT, Grieg Academy Music Therapy Research Centre, Uni Research/University of Bergen](#) (Norway) in affiliation with [Antioch University](#) (US) and in collaboration with World Federation of Music Therapy. Thanks to our sponsors and a group of international editors cum volunteer academics Voices is made available for you to read, free of any charges.

## Vision Statement

VOICES: A World Forum for Music Therapy seeks to nurture the profile of music therapy as a global enterprise that is inclusive and has a broad range of influences in the International arena. The forum is particularly interested in encouraging the growth of music therapy in developing countries and intends to foster an exchange between Western and Eastern as well as Northern and Southern approaches to the art and science of music therapy.

## Section Policies

### Original Voices

The section Original Voices is designated to a range of innovative genres that have been characteristic for the journal since the very beginning, such as essays, interviews, perspectives on practice, reports, and stories. Listed alphabetically, descriptions of the genres usually included in this section are:

#### Essays

Some reflections and contributions are difficult to forge into theoretical papers and other traditional styles of academic writing. Yet these contributions can add significant aspects to our discursive practices in music therapy. In Voices we therefore encourage authors to make advanced reflections in a more free and personal style, through use of the essay genre. Texts in this genre may elaborate upon an issue or problem, in an analytic and interpretative



manner, including constructive speculations or experiment with more fluid genre mixing.

### Interviews

Interviews may have an important role to play in a journal such as Voices, as this genre is particularly apt for communication. Interviews are particularly good at helping us to maintain the humanistic aspects of our work in music therapy. The relationship between the interviewer and interviewee can communicate the dynamics of an interpersonal dialogue, shared between two professionals or perhaps a music therapist and a traditional healer. Because so much of the written word is created by Western academics, the interview provides a wonderful environment for reaching out to experts who might be willing to share traditional knowledge not readily available in texts. This would be a good example of one of those bridges we mentioned earlier because often traditional healers share knowledge through stories. And it is an important aspect of the mission of Voices to create this type of bridge. We want to create a level playing field in which established scholars who regularly publish scientific articles can come into discourse with new scholars and new practitioners as well as established traditional practitioners.

### Perspectives on Practice

Texts in the Perspectives on Practice genre have a practical focus and the authors reflect upon presented case material or vignettes, whether these are linked to a clinical context or a community context. While authors are encouraged to relate their reflections to current research and theory, texts in Perspectives on Practice are not themselves presented as research or theoretical contributions. Voices considers this genre to be very important in that it may contribute to the integration of practice and theory. Contributions are encouraged, on innovative and new practices as well as on more conventional or traditional practices of music therapy.

### Reports

Reports may describe music therapy developments of various sorts, such as the development of a program or a project, or a specific way of working. Reports may illuminate local or regional traditions, and may also illuminate national or international developments. Authors are encouraged, however, to avoid confusion with the report series in the section Country of the Month on the Voices website.

### Stories

Stories provide structure in a narrative form that can frame a problem, or create a metaphor that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. In some societies, stories are part of an oral tradition, and one that can transmit knowledge in vivo. Storytellers respond to the presence of the listener or audience and make adjustments in their stories based on the age, disposition, mood of the listener, the purpose of the gathering, and the function of the story in the context. Stories are often told to honor the hero, heroine or other characters in the story. They are told to transmit important knowledge about the best ways to exist in a society. They are also told as a meaningful expression of history, affiliation, and reinforcement of social norms. In Voices, stories can take a written form, but can also respond to readers as imagined listeners, therefore addressing, in part, some of the more traditional uses of the story format and the “immediacy” available in this genre.

### Editors

Carolyn Kenny, Antioch University

Open  
Submissions

Indexed

Peer  
Reviewed

## Research Voices

The section Research Voices is designated to empirically based research (quantitative and qualitative studies), literature-based research (historical research, review articles, and theoretical studies), and mixed methods research. Listed alphabetically, descriptions of the genres usually included in this section are:

### Empirically Based Research

Various types of empirical research may be submitted to Voices. We urge authors to follow the IMRaD structure whenever possible:

1. **Introduction:** Develop the problem of investigation, review pertinent literature, and state the aim of the work.
2. **Method:** Describe details of the method used (subjects, materials, design, and method of analysis), so that – when relevant – the study may be replicated.
3. **Results:** Present representative empirical material.  
(and)
4. **Discussion:** Discuss principles and relationships and point out exceptions. Show

agreement or disagreement with published research work. A conclusion and statements about the significance of the work may be presented at the end of the discussion or in a separate section.

### Qualitative Studies

Qualitative research is a broad label covering approaches such as case studies and interpretive ethnography and biography, informed by a large range of perspectives, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics and critical theory, as well as feminist, postmodern, and postcolonial perspectives. How the researchers position themselves in this landscape determines to some degree the criteria of evaluation. While in some cases systematic analysis of the empirical material is central, in other cases the interpretative and critical aspects will be crucial. The reflexivity of the researcher more than the rigor of the method will count as the criterion for evaluation of such studies and authors and reviewers are referred to the [EPICURE agenda](#) which allows for dialogic evaluation of qualitative research.

### Quantitative Studies

Various types of quantitative research may be submitted. These include descriptive, correlational as well as experimental studies. Typical criteria used in evaluating quantitative research include: Thoroughness of related literature, Clarity and relevance of purpose, Relevance and utility of research design in addressing research questions, Rigor of research design, Adequacy of the description of procedures used, Control of confounding variables, Risk of bias, Reliability and validity of measures and data collection, Appropriateness of data treatment and integrity of analysis, Appropriateness of conclusions. Voices recommends using available guidelines for the reporting of quantitative research, such as the [CONSORT statement](#) for randomized controlled trials and the [TREND statement](#) for non-randomized evaluations. For the presentation of results, information about direction and magnitude of effects is often essential (for example effect size, p-values, confidence intervals). The appropriate use of figures is also often important and helpful in understanding the meaning of the results of quantitative research.

### Literature-based research

This section includes theoretical studies, historical research, and review articles, and may therefore include texts informed by a large range of meta-theoretical perspectives:

- **Historical research**

As the discipline and profession of music therapy grows older and becomes more culturally and geographically diverse, the importance of historical research is increasing. Historical research goes beyond the description of events and the gathering of facts and dates to include critical examinations and interpretations of these events in order to understand the contexts, processes, agents, and ideas that helped to shape them.

- **Review articles**

Review articles are critical evaluations of material that has already been published. Voices wants to stimulate the production of such articles. Review articles contribute to the development of music therapy by considering the evolution of existing research in elucidating an issue or problem. Authors should:

- Define and clarify the issue or problem to be reviewed
- Summarize previous research in order to inform the readers about the state of knowledge pertaining to the issue or problem
- Identify gaps, inconsistencies, and contradictions - as well as other aspects - in the literature reviewed
- Suggest further steps in the investigation of the problem or issue.
- For systematic reviews of quantitative research, we recommend using available guidelines for the reporting, such as the [PRISMA statement](#).

- **Theoretical Studies**

Authors of theoretical articles draw on existing literature in order to promote or evaluate theories of music therapy or fields closely related to music therapy. As music therapy is multi-faceted, theoretical articles may build upon scientific research literature and/or theoretical contributions from the humanities. Voices encourages authors to provide theoretical contributions to the field. Moreover, Voices finds it especially important to encourage developments that integrate clinical relevance, empirical grounding, critical awareness, and philosophical refinement.

### Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research usually involves the combination of qualitative and quantitative

approaches to research. Studies within mixed methods research therefore emphasize how various methods can supplement and support each other (and de-emphasize differences and incompatibilities). Researchers typically collect mixed data within a single study, concurrently or sequentially. Mixed methods research is especially relevant when data from different sources complement each other; when one method alone cannot answer the research questions; or when data from one method helps researchers understand data collected from another. In some ways, studies that combine empirically based research and literature-based research also can be considered mixed methods research. Selecting the best approach to the evaluation of mixed methods research can be a challenge. Voices recommend authors and reviewers to use the [EPICURE agenda](#) as a basis and then to supplement with the various statements on quantitative research evaluation as relevant (see Quantitative Studies above).

Editors

Karin Mössler, Uni Research

Open  
Submissions

Indexed

Peer  
Reviewed

---

## Peer Review Process

### General Information

The Journal section of *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* offers an international avenue for publication of texts on contemporary music therapy, with a specific focus upon multidisciplinary and multicultural dialogue and understanding. Texts in a variety of genres are included in the journal (see below). We encourage submissions from music therapists and others who work with music and health as scholars and/or practitioners.

Three issues of the Journal are published a year; March 1, July 1, and November 1. Texts for the standard genres could be submitted at any time of the year.

All *articles* in the standard genres are reviewed internally by the Editors-in-Chief and externally by two members of our Editorial Board. The review process of articles may be outlined as follows: The manuscript is first reviewed internally by the editors. Author(s) may be asked to produce revised versions before the text is sent to external reviewers. When the reviewers have evaluated the manuscript the action editor produces an evaluation statement, with the reviewers' evaluations enclosed. A minor or a major revision may be requested. Author(s) then produce a revised article at their earliest convenience. When a major revision has been asked for, a second external review is made. When the article is accepted for publication it is sent for professional language checking and copy-editing. The authors may read the proofs of the article before printing.

The review process usually takes 6-8 weeks. The procedures outlined above are established to ensure the quality of articles and to help and guide authors. We aim to make the review process a constructive and professional peer critique, and authors' comments and feedback on the process will be appreciated.

Authors from all over the world are welcome to write in the journal. Therefore, we offer advice regarding language to those for whom English is the second, third or fourth language, and Non-English authors are also welcome to submit an additional version of their article written in their native language. This version must be edited for language by the author her-/himself.

There are limitations to how well musical processes could be described in words, and *Voices* therefore encourages authors to use figures, and audio and video recordings for documentation and illustration of practical work.

---

## Open Access Policy

This journal provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge.

---

### Moderated discussion

Add your comments and responses to what you read on *Voices* in our [moderated](#)

[discussions forum](#). Contributions should be e-mailed to either [Joke Bradt](#) or [Thomas Wosch](#). Please indicate the title and url of the article you are responding to.

©VOICES: A World Forum for Music Therapy.