

***CON ESPRESSIVO: THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF A MUSIC THERAPY SYLLABUS AND ASSESSMENT  
IN SPECIAL EDUCATION***

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**PhD**

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Doctor of Philosophy, University of Technology, Sydney, 2012

## **Certificate of Authorship/Originality**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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## **Ethics Approval**

The Human Resources Committee of the University of Technology, Sydney has provided ethics approval for this research (UTS HREC REF NO. 2005-186A). The Department of Education and Training also approved this study. Permission to include individual student photos and the *Maria Movie* was provided by the special schools and individual parents of the participating students through signed consent forms.

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## **Abstract**

This thesis presents a Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment designed for the special education context. The research process which influenced the development is outlined. Details are provided of the research steps that include: pilot and extended music therapy interventions, educator questionnaire, music therapist survey and interviews, application of the Assessment and peer review. The music therapist survey included music therapists (n=40) from Australia and the United Kingdom working in the special education context. Ninety percent of surveyed therapists acknowledge applying six or more of the 10 Board of Studies Life Skills Music Education Outcomes (Board of Studies, 2003). These results support the inclusion of Board of Studies Education Outcomes alongside music therapy outcomes in the Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment. The Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment include the categories of: communication, initiation, response, movement, social interaction, emotional expression, listening and decision-making. The Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment seek to validate music therapy in the special education setting by situating music therapy in the education context. The Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment provide a resource for programming, reporting and linking music therapy to the education curriculum. The Music Therapy Assessment supplies a practical tool that measures activity within sessions which enables accountability within the education context. The inclusion of music therapy and Board of Studies Education Outcomes is combined to produce a Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment that is accessible to both educators and therapists. This thesis presents the design of the Music Therapy Syllabus and Assessment and outlines the influence of research steps on its development.