

Pre-internship Fears of Music Therapists

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This study examined pre-internship fears of music therapy majors. Additional analysis included comparison of pre-internship fears of music therapy majors with pre-internship fears of music education majors. Subjects for this study were music therapy/music education majors at a large southeastern university (N = 61; N = 32) who were surveyed during the year prior to their internship. Utilizing identical procedures, each subject was asked to list the 3 greatest fears that they had concerning their internship. Two independent evaluators then classified the perceived fears based on a taxonomic structure developed during the initial study on pre-internship fears of music education majors. Reliability for the classification of pre-internship music therapy fears was .97. Ranking reported fears revealed a hierarchy of pre-internship fears and provided comparisons between the two populations. Analysis of data indicated that the music therapy interns listed "general preparation/being prepared" as their primary fear followed by issues relating to "failure/not cut out for therapy." The next most frequently noted fears related to concerns about "internship placement" and concerns about the "physical environment" (money, moving, housing, etc.). Music therapy subject responses were also examined in relationship to the responses of music education subjects. Subject responses revealed a very low fear concerning "discipline" for the music therapy majors, yet this category was the highest listed by the music education seniors. "Failure/not being cut out for teaching/therapy" was expressed as a concern with the next highest frequency by the education majors and was rated quite high by the therapy majors. Fears about the "physical environment including money, moving, etc." were quite high for the music therapy majors, yet these fears received very low ratings by the music education students. In addition, fears related to the "supervising teacher/placement" and "students not learning/clients not responding" also registered some-

what differentiated responses with therapy majors evidencing more concern when compared to the music educators.

An obvious and important aspect of music therapy academic training is to prepare prospective therapists with the necessary skills, attitudes, and knowledge base necessary for successful progress through the music therapy internship. One aspect that appears to have not received a great deal of research concerns is that of the *pre-internship fears* that a student might have prior to the internship experience. Perhaps, an analysis of these fears would provide important information for therapy training programs and more importantly, for success, not only in the internship endeavor, but also throughout one's career.

Observing and Assessing Components of Effective Music Therapy Training

Attributes and skills necessary for successful completion of the music therapy internship have been presented for over three decades. Madsen (1965) advocated a complete change of the undergraduate curriculum geared toward expanding technical and research expertise. Other research has specified the entry-level skills students should possess after completion of a 4-year academic sequence and a 6-month internship (Braswell, Decuir, & Maranto, 1980). Alley (1978) stipulated specific competencies necessary for the music therapy curriculum, and Galloway (1966) identified communication problems and basic differences in the expectations of academicians and clinical directors.

During this same time frame, attempts have been made to investigate the variables that contribute to music internship effectiveness (Brown & Alley, 1983; Cassidy, 1990; Legette, 1997; Madsen & Madsen, 1983; Madsen, Standley, Byo, & Cassidy, 1992; Standley & Madsen, 1991). While much research has been done, many aspects of academic preparation remain troublesome, especially those relating to preparing students for their internship experience (Madsen & Duke, 1993). Brookins (1984) suggested that emotional maturity and the ability to express needs and feelings are considered among those most important for the prospective intern to possess. Grant & McCarty (1990) explored the stages that an intern progresses through. One of their important findings was that whether

or not interns received their first choice of internship placement had a significant impact on both their personal and professional ratings.

One aspect that has not received a great deal of attention is the issue of pre-internship fears. These fears would seem to be both "global" and "specific." Perhaps students have numerous perceived fears throughout their undergraduate programs yet their fears as they prepare to leave undergraduate institutions and go to the clinical internship setting would seem to be especially important (Dropkins & Taylor, 1963; Travers, Rabinowitz, & Nemovicher, 1953).

A recent study (Madsen & Kaiser, in press) deals with perceived fears by classifying fears and attempting to assess relationships on the basis of comparisons between those students rated as having the *highest* potential for successful long-term teaching versus those students rated as having somewhat *lower* potential. There were differences between student fears when considering the highest versus the lowest judged teaching potential, yet most fears were quite similar for all students, regardless of their assessed potential. The present study has two purposes: (a) to attempt to classify salient fears of pre-internship music therapy students and (b) to compare these perceived fears to those of pre-internship music education students.

Method

Subjects for this study were music education/music therapy majors at a large southeastern university ($N = 61$; $N = 32$) who were surveyed prior to their internship. All senior music therapy majors participated and their responses were compared to previous data from music education seniors (Madsen & Kaiser, in press). All data for this study were collected using identical procedures. Students were given the following instructions:

Please take a blank piece of paper and write the three greatest fears that you have concerning your internship.

Students were given 10 minutes to write their answers and their papers were collected for subsequent analysis.

Response Classification

In the first study, a trained evaluator first classified and tabulated the pre-internship fears of music education students such that a taxonomic base was determined. Papers were then re-read by an

additional independent evaluator, after which the taxonomy was slightly changed by collapsing several categories. Fears of music therapy seniors were similarly analyzed and classified according to this extant taxonomy. All perceived fears from the music therapy seniors could easily be assigned to the original music education classification (Madsen & Kaiser, in press). In the present study two independent evaluators read and assigned music therapy pre-internship fears to this same classification system. Reliability for these ratings was .97 for the music therapy fears using the standard formula $\frac{\text{agreements} + \text{disagreements}}{\text{agreements} + \text{disagreements}}$ (Madsen & Madsen, 1983).

Results

Several subjects provided only one or two responses even though they were asked for "three greatest fears." This, therefore, brought the total number of responses to 147 for music education students and 84 for music therapy students.

Ranking of Fears

Ranking reported fears revealed a hierarchy of pre-internship fears and provided comparisons between the two populations of music therapy/music education. Subject responses revealed a very low fear concerning "discipline" for the music therapy majors, yet this category was the highest listed by the music education seniors (see Table 1). "Failure/not being cut out for teaching/therapy" was expressed as a concern with the next highest frequency by the education majors and was rated quite high by the therapy majors as well. The classification of "not being able to apply knowledge" is interesting in that there again appears to be a large discrepancy between the two groups.

Fears about the "supervising teacher/placement" seem of much greater concern to the therapy majors, which is consistent with the music therapy research literature (Grant & McCarty, 1990). "Not being professional" and "embarrassment" while listed by the education majors did not receive *any* listings by the therapy majors. Interestingly, the fear of "general preparation/being prepared or not having knowledge" received a relatively low listing by education majors yet was the highest fear listed by the therapy majors. There were also differences in fears concerning "students/clients will not like me" which *no* therapy major listed. Fears specified least fre-

TABLE 1

Pre-internship Fears: Music Education and Music Therapy

Pre-internship fears	Music education (N = 61/ total responses = 147)	Music therapy (N = 32/ total responses = 84)
Discipline	24	2
Failure (not cut out for teaching/therapy)	14	19
Not being able to apply knowledge	11	2
Concerns about supervisor/placement	6	18
Not being professional	6	0
Embarrassing (saying something stupid)	5	0
Specific preparation/lack of specific content knowledge	5	4
General preparation/being prepared (or not having knowledge)	5	20
Competent	5	8
Students/clients will not like me	4	0
Expectations (not meeting)	3	1
Using time effectively	3	0
Not being respected	3	2
Students not learning/clients not responding	2	10
Physical environment concerns (money, moving, etc.)	2	13

Note. Due to an unequal number of subjects/responses and to allow for group comparisons, the data are listed in column percentages.

quently resulted in low rankings for “not meeting expectations,” “using time effectively,” and “not being respected.” Interestingly, “students not learning/clients not responding” also registered somewhat differentiated responses with the therapy majors evidencing more concern when compared to the music educators. Music therapists listed aspect of the “physical environment including money, moving, etc.” as quite high, yet this category received a very low rating by the music education students.

Discussion

Perceived fears of music therapy pre-interns suggest some interesting and important findings. These findings provide the focal point for this study. In order to put the student pre-internship fears in perspective, it should be remembered that all of the students in this study were completing a music therapy/education 4-year degree program and were judged as effective up to the point of this

study. All of the music education subjects subsequently finished all requirements for their internship. Additionally, successful completion of the internship by previous music therapy students would also suggest a high degree of attainment. Therefore, inferences concerning these data should be viewed as indicative of differences among a group of relatively "very good" students.

It does appear that certain fears are more prevalent than others. The very high listings for "concerns about the supervisor and placement" are paramount fears of pre-intern music therapists. These fears when combined with fears about the "physical environment, money, moving, etc." seem to suggest that pre-intern music therapists might need more assurances concerning these particular issues. Interestingly, in the previous study (Madsen & Kaiser, in press) specific concerns regarding "lack of specific content knowledge" was one aspect that differentiated the "most outstanding" music education students from those considered as having "less potential." That is, only those students judged at the end of their internship to have the highest potential for professional success cited this as a fear. Could it be that this fear represents a portent for greater subsequent success?

"Discipline" was at the top of the music education list and ranked as these students' most important fear. Indeed, it received a much greater frequency when compared to all other fears for the music education subjects. This finding does seem consistent with other literature indicating that discipline is, indeed, a primary concern of both pre-service as well as in-service teachers (Dropkins & Taylor, 1963; Madsen & Madsen, 1983; Travers et al., 1953). Yet, the pre-intern music therapy students listed this as one of their lowest fears. Perhaps the difference between these two populations relates to the differential training that these two groups receive before they enter the internship setting.

The issue of "failure" (ranked high by both populations) reveals an understandable uncertainty on the part of these students. The classification of "inability to apply knowledge" (ranked #3 by the education majors) received little attention from the therapy majors, yet a related expressed fear of "being prepared/not having knowledge" was perceived high by the therapy majors and relatively low by the education majors. This fear seems to constitute a reasonable fear in that internship is the place where previous learning needs to be expressed in a practical manner. It is also interesting that

fears concerning "not being professional," "being embarrassed," "clients/students not liking me," and "using time effectively" received *no* response from the therapy majors, yet were all listed by the education majors. Perhaps music therapy curricula evidence a better outcome in these areas, or perhaps other issues are responsible for these fears not being evidenced by therapy students.

The most important finding of this study concerns different music therapists' perceived fears about *placement* including the physical environment and clinical supervisor. The large discrepancy between the two populations seems extremely important in assessing potential "hazards" during the therapy internship. Grant and McCarty (1990) found that while this "fear" is prevalent during the beginning of the internship, it does not persist throughout the internship. Also the large number of students who complete the internship experience regardless of not being placed in their first choice would suggest that the high prevalence of "fear" concerning initial placement is not founded. Or perhaps even if initially perceived, it dissipates after adjusting to the internship setting.

Other differences, especially the large disparity between the perceived fear of discipline seem important in that all clients served by the therapist would be considered "very special" or even "extremely problematic" by the music educators. The lack of perceived fear concerning ability to manage the client setting would appear to be a most encouraging aspect of music therapy curricula. The difference of "not being prepared or having requisite knowledge" is also of interest. Perhaps music education majors are more sanguine concerning their knowledge base because of the homogeneity of their prospective students.

All of the above issues seem to be related to effectiveness in the field. However, attempts to incorporate suggestions in academic training programs continue to be troublesome. When beginning teachers/therapists are observed across somewhat extended periods of time, it becomes clear that most young students' fears are not consequential. A particular person might have difficulty in the short term but eventually learn to deal with the ongoing necessities of consequential long-term interaction. Other concerns do seem important, especially those relating to inability to discipline for the education majors and placement issues for the therapy majors.

When we attempt to isolate specific attributes in academic training that have demonstrated effectiveness in practice or are sub-

stantiated in the research literature, we often assume, that if all of these individual components were put together, we will have a "complete" teacher/therapist or at least a confident and nonfearful one. Indeed, this is a major point concerning application of techniques learned across the various undergraduate courses and field experiences. We often assume that these myriad experiences will prepare students for subsequent success. It would appear from the current studies that even when students leave us to begin their student internship that they still have some "fears" (Brockhart & Freeman, 1992).

Many questions are raised by these data. For example, one may speculate as to whether these pre-internship fears are self-fulfilling and influence the internship and subsequent teaching in negative ways. Or perhaps the number and/or specific nature of a person's fears indicate a level of confidence and/or success. For example, there is an obvious difference between "being confident" and/or "being scared" and "being an effective/ineffective teacher/therapist." Many people seem to believe if we increase confidence, we will have better practitioners. Much like performance anxiety, some people may indeed perform better with reduced stress, others may actually be able to reduce their stress level but still perform badly—yet without stress.

It also might be instructive to ask freshmen to list their "perceived fears" and work toward amelioration of these fears or to determine if the fears remain constant throughout the undergraduate experience. Or, perhaps, fears go through a metamorphosis gradually changing across the curriculum. While some fears may prove to be very important indicators, others may prove to be unimportant. Obviously much more research is necessary. Extended studies with larger samples as well as sampling from a nationally representative group are encouraged.

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