



Music Therapy New Curriculum

Include a culminating project within Psychology of Music course to enhance foundational and theoretical concepts with practical knowledge. University of the Pacific included the Music 4 Life® Music Medicine Boot Camp™ within the course syllabus during Spring semester 2019 with these findings.

Reflection Paper Thematic Summary

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As the culminating project for this semester in Psychology of Music, you will write a reflective paper about your experiences during and following the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp. Respond, specifically, to each of the following:

1. In what ways did the concepts covered in Psychology of Music relate to the sessions included in the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp?

Themes: The Music 4 Life Boot Camp contextualized many of the foundational and theoretical concepts covered in Psychology of Music. In particular, the students found the Boot Camp exercises and examples helpful for illustrating theories (e.g., expectancy theory), concepts (e.g., iso-principle), and biological underpinnings of music.

- Entrainment:
- Iso-principle:
- Structural Elements of Music:
- Expectancy Theory

2. In what ways have your beliefs about the role of music as a therapeutic or educational agent changed?

Themes: In general, the students were somewhat split on whether participation in the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp changed their beliefs about music as a therapeutic tool. In some cases students indicated that they already had a good idea about how music can be used to address non-music functions while others believed that there was insufficient empirical support for certain concepts (e.g., USE MEE) to compel a change in thinking. For one student the “unsettling” mood category seemed to challenge assumptions about the role of music in music therapy.

3. Consider your most recent fieldwork placements. How can you apply the concepts and skills acquired in the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp in those clinical settings?

Themes: All of the students were able to identify how to apply concepts (including specific exercises) into their current (or recent) fieldwork placements. In particular, the students tended to find mood-vectoring strategies the most applicable.

4. How do you see the concepts reviewed in the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp impacting your future clinical work (e.g., fieldwork placements, internship, or full-time employment)?

Themes: The students reported ways in which they see Boot Camp concepts informing their future practice while others see that the program (and protocols) are somewhat limited (to addressing affective functioning). Interestingly one student reported feeling empowered to use recorded music in clinical work while another remarked that Boot Camp concepts could be used for self-care.

5. Describe what you have learned about how personal biases may impact your music choices in your fieldwork. What changes do you believe you will make in the future?

Themes: Students appeared willing to share their personal music biases and how they were manifest in their clinical work. Common themes included: deferring to personal preference over client preference; avoiding pieces that are musically difficult; and choosing familiar over unfamiliar music. Other students continue struggling to understand the concept of “unsettled” and express a desire to avoid this type of music.

6. What do you still want to know more about with regard to the Psychology of Music and/or the material covered in the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp?

Themes: The students mentioned wanting to know more about:

- Follow-up research on the Boot Camp and the USE MEE model
- How non-music therapy professionals (nurses, physicians, etc.) would use this training in their work (so as it does not supplant the work of music therapists)
- How would one deploy the USE MEE model for clinical needs outside of emotion regulation, etc. (e.g., motor skills, spiritual care, communicative, etc.)
- Using the techniques for children with disabilities (e.g., ASD) or older adults with neurocognitive disorders (due to Alzheimer’s disease, cerebral vascular accidents, etc.)
- Specific clinical applications other than self-care (e.g., use more clinical examples in the training)
- How to create specific playlists for clients, i.e., include more specific guidelines on how to categorize music and how that interacts/corresponds with client music preferences

UOP Psychology of Music syllabus included these adaptations.

- 1. Deleted Chapter 16 “Music in Social Contexts” in Music in the Human Experience (Hodges & Sebald, 2011).**
- 2. Added two 55-minute live webinars with Judith Pinkerton, one before and one after completing the Music 4 Life Music Medicine Boot Camp eCourse (44 lessons = 3 hours at MusicMedicineAcademy.com).**

One music therapy student’s experience:

“I found through the Music 4 Life® Music Medicine program I began thinking more critically of the musical elements and how I use them in my music therapy sessions and personal music listening. From the clinical standpoint, I have noticed myself rearranging my interventions more frequently and being more flexible to accommodate a group of clients’ present mood before going into the target mood. In my personal music listening, I have found myself exploring more musical genres and opening myself up more to the feelings those bring. I have also used my musical preferences to give me insight to what emotions I may be feeling that I wasn’t always able to recognize. Receiving direct consultation from Judith and her intern Donnie helped me to open up and do some critical thinking about the uses of music professionally and personally.” -- Wren