

*Book Review***Music Therapy Training Programmes in Europe: *Theme and Variations*. (2016).
Edited by Thomas Stegemann, Hans Ulrich Schmidt, Elena Fitzthum, and Tonius Timmermann
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This book provides an overview of all 119 European music therapy training programmes as well as a detailed portrait of 10 selected music therapy training courses from various countries, reflecting different music therapy backgrounds, approaches, phases of institutional developments, etc. It gives insights into the theoretical background, admission procedures, and the structure and content of each training programme, focusing especially on clinical training and internships, musical training, experiential learning and music therapy self-experience, as well as the evaluation procedures concerning the quality of teaching.

Keywords: *education, training, music therapy, Europe, evaluation.*multilingual abstract | mmd.iammonline.com**Introduction**

Designing, evaluating, and updating the content disseminated in clinical education programs¹ is key to ensuring pre-professionals will be adequately trained to enter their respective professions with the right tools and knowledge to embark on their careers. Music therapy is a field where there is great diversity in educational, research, and clinical work when considering international standards and requirements. Variation and diversity exist in what is taught in various education programs, the approaches that are emphasized, and the time and type of certification required to work as a music therapist. Therefore, a systematic overview of music therapy programs proves useful in understanding what is being taught and the direction of the music therapy field in academia. That is where this current text becomes an important new information resource.

Music Therapy Training Programmes in Europe provides a fascinating overview of selected music therapy programs in ten different countries including: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, London, Poland and Spain. Background information is provided regarding the themes and philosophies influencing the programs, admission criteria, curriculum structure, clinical training and internships, musical training, and experiential (self-experience) learning (where applicable), evaluation procedures concerning quality of teaching, and PhD program. It also offers a brief overview of all current 119 European music therapy training programs for reference. This book review will provide a summary of the broad topics listed, along with comments and future recommendations.

There were several topics that stood out as important and useful features of the text. There appeared to be strong psychotherapeutic foundations that were consistent in European training approaches, which is in sharp contrast to North American music therapy programs. Even though the approaches taught or emphasized showed slight differences depending on the culture and area where music therapy was established, the psychodynamic and humanistic philosophies were a common thread among the ten programs featured. Another mutual strand was the momentum towards personal growth included by all.

With respect to the varying admission criteria, each school required different levels and focuses on the musical skills required. All programs emphasized the importance of free and group improvisation. Moreover, all programs included an in-depth interview with the candidates to explore candidate's interests, personality, and experiences prior to acceptance. It would have been interesting if there was a chapter or a summary comparing some of the similarities in programs in Europe to music therapy programs in Australia, Canada and the United States to see if there are further common threads or more differences on the global front.

On the subject of program duration, there were large differences surrounding the length of the programs and the

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¹ The word programs and programmes are being used interchangeably throughout this review.

number of credits required for a degree or diploma. For example, some programs were full time 4-year trainings and others were 2-year part time trainings. Even though program duration showed great differences, authors summarized four basic components of the programs as: music therapy core (including self-experience and internship), musical and artistic formation, medical and psychological foundation, and miscellaneous (e.g. writing the thesis, scientific subjects, other arts therapies) (p.155). The ten-featured programs, although demonstrating some similarities, emphasized different degree/diploma content. These summaries were helpful in understanding the general components and curricula focus of music therapy programs in Europe.

Each program focused a different percentage of time on musical training in their curriculum depending on their environment. For instance, music therapy programs housed in the department of music had an advantage in offering the music component classes over programs housed in the medical department. Even though the percentage of musical training for therapy was different, all music therapy programs in Europe required students to develop creative musical skills, various ranges of instrument skills and free improvisation skills which focused on their flexibility abilities rather than performance skills. A discussion on the future directions of training programs would also have been interesting to see what changes may be ahead for the current programs that were discussed.

The structure and length of clinical training and internship were vastly different in each program depending on economical situations and location. Practical hour requirements ranged from 75 clinical hours for receiving the bachelor's degree to 765 hours in a 4-year full-time program. However, the majority of programs required students to gain experiences in various settings with children through to adults and with both individuals and groups. These clinical opportunities were deemed as essential in assisting students to develop various perspectives of music therapy, repertoire, and comfort for the future when they begin to work independently as therapists.

All programs recognized the importance of experiential and self-experience training required in order to be prepared to undertake a clinical caseload. Although all programs followed criteria from the European Music Therapist Register (EMTR), which outlines a minimum of 200 hours of documented self-experience (e.g. students participating in or receiving ongoing Music Therapy, Group Music Therapy, Psychotherapy, Systemic Therapy, Humanistic Therapy), each school set a different format and length of self-experience training depending on their finance situation, location, philosophy, etc. For those persons looking to develop or revise their current programs this type of information is helpful in showing trends and examples of what to include with respect to experiential training components.

Finally, authors pointed out the growth in the number of PhD program which is evidence of music therapy development in Europe. They indicated the importance of the networking of PhD students with each other and other countries. This is exciting to learn as there are still relatively few PhD programs which are specifically music therapy based. PhD programs encourage research and the development and evaluation of clinical standards, which not only impacts clinicians and researchers, but clients receiving music therapy services. Europe's contributions in clinical and research settings create an international impact in many fields, not only music therapy. It will be interesting to observe the developments for European clinicians and researchers in the near future.

In my opinion, the structure of this book was well developed to understand and follow the authors' information from introduction to conclusion. Each selected music therapy program was introduced in a consistent format to enable the reader to compare the various aspects of each program with the others. Descriptive statistic graphic data was helpful to understand a percentage of basic curriculum across eight music therapy programs. The appendices provided a list of all music therapy programs in Europe which is an excellent overview for those who are interested in music therapy training programs in Europe and to further learn and assess the various options and program curricula.

I recommend this book to educators and supervisors who are considering redesigning or enhancing current curricula, or are looking for new programs to inform their clinical supervision. Moreover, this book will be helpful to prospective students who want to compare differences and similarities of music therapy programs in Europe when choosing an appropriate program based on their perception of music therapy, economic situation, location, and interests. One note worth mentioning was the lack of the student voice. The authors could have included anecdotes of experiences in the programs, and also what the students' perspectives were on potential areas for growth or change in Europe and the implications that might have for education and training programs in other countries. Overall this text is an excellent and timely resource as music therapy continues to develop not only as an art but also as a science, and the foundation that clinicians and researchers work from is created and informed by the educational process.

Biographical Statement

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