Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy
17 (3) 2025
ISSN: 2459-3338
https://doi.org/10.56883/aijmt.2024.336

ARTICLE

Safe and Sound: A mixed-methods study to explore relationships between special education classroom practitioners and autistic students through music therapy consultation

Lisa Margetts
University of Roehampton, United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the accessibility and viability of the *Safe and Sound* music therapy consultation protocol for classroom practitioners seeking to optimise relationships with students in a UK school providing specialist education for autistic children. Winnicott's theory of the holding environment provided the framework for an original evaluation instrument, which underpinned an autism-focused staff development programme. Five participants evaluated their usual musical interaction with a student (pre-intervention). Following the development programme (intervention), participants undertook six filmed music sessions with the same individual (post-intervention). Two self-chosen extracts, pre- and post-intervention, were self-rated against the evaluation instrument. Participants then reflected on their experiences in interviews. The same ten randomised video extracts were similarly rated by 18 UK music therapists. Qualitative results evidenced participants' learning during the study as enabling them to attune to the student and hold them in mind. Quantitative results showed the realisation of this in adaptation to the student through concrete musical skills. The study indicated that Winnicott's theory of the holding environment could support the optimisation of classroom practitioner-student relationships. The small sample prohibits outcomes generalisation and further research is needed to explore wider protocol viability.

KEYWORDS

music therapy consultation, autism spectrum, Winnicott, student-practitioner relationship, mixed-methods research

Publication history:
Submitted 28 Sept 2023
Accepted 26 Feb 2024
First published 14 Jun 2024

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Lisa Margetts PhD MA GRNCM is Honorary Research Fellow at University of Roehampton. She is a music therapist, researcher, educator and author. Lisa specialises in music therapy consultation research with special education staff teams overseas and in the UK. Her current clinical practice is with autistic children. [Lisa.Margetts@roehampton.ac.uk]

INTRODUCTION

Responding to a locally identified need, music therapy consultation speaks to a growing focus on collaborative and interdisciplinary professional practice (Maclean & Tillotson, 2019; Steele et al., 2020; Strange et al., 2017). Research demonstrates that classroom practitioners with no formal musical

Publisher: Queen Margaret University Edinburgh | Centre for Person-centred Practice Research

training can be supported by a music therapist to facilitate music sessions with children with special educational needs to enhance development and learning (Clough & Tarr, 2021; Margetts, 2022; Tomlinson, 2020).

The present study was motivated by the outcomes of the author's doctoral music therapy consultation research at a Development Centre for children with complex needs in Belarus (Margetts, 2022). A key finding showed that participating classroom practitioners required support to maintain two levels of awareness in this work—the internal process of change in perceiving and empathising with the student, which then underpinned the development of concrete musical interactional skills. In accordance with the Centre's request, results evidenced a significant qualitative shift in practitioner-student relationships with a positive impact on educational outcomes. Furthermore, potential transferability of the research protocol to wider contexts was indicated.

Central to that intercultural doctoral research was a new staff development programme designed for classroom practitioners working with children with complex needs (Margetts et al., 2020). The structure and processes of this first iteration are published elsewhere (Margetts, 2022). This present study investigated the accessibility, relevance and applicability of an autism-focused adaptation of that programme in a UK school. This second iteration has been named *Safe and Sound*. A structured, taught staff development programme specifically designed to support classroom practitioners seeking to optimise relationships with autistic students represents a currently unexplored area of music therapy research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research suggests that 1.2 million children and adults in England are on the autism spectrum (O'Nions et al., 2023). In a society which privileges neurotypical ways of being, autistic children can experience significant challenges in navigating social interaction and building relationships, with consequences for the individual's mental health and engagement with education.

The Cochrane Database for Systematic Reviews has evaluated the overall efficacy of music therapy for autistic children compared to other interventions (Geretsegger et al., 2022). Studies using a variety of methodologies have shown that engagement in co-improvised music-making within a therapeutic relationship can support the development of joint attention and focus, motivation, reciprocity, verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction (Kim et al., 2009; Rickson, 2016; Tomlinson, 2020; Vlachová, 2022). This can increase emotional regulation and facilitate creative and accessible ways of being with others (Rickson, 2021).

Writing and research concerning collaboration between music therapists and classroom practitioners in school settings is increasing (Rickson, 2012; Skewes McFerran et al., 2017; Steele et al., 2020; Strange et al., 2017). Music therapists use their skills to collaborate with and support the work of their colleagues in schools (Strange, 2021), principally through developing capacity for music-making with individual students (Margetts et al., 2020; Tomlinson, 2020) and in the classroom (Arns & Thompson, 2019; Clough & Tarr, 2021; Steele et al., 2022).

Presenting a critical and interpretive review of literature concerned with music therapy consultation, Steele and colleagues (2020) found that sustaining positive outcomes of this work typically posed a significant challenge. Commonly encountered reasons included a staff team's

dependence on one passionate practitioner for maintenance of musical activities (McFerran et al., 2017) and situation-specific challenges such as timetabling and staff availability (Coombes & Tombs-Katz, 2017; Maclean & Tillotson, 2019). Sustainable outcomes have been found to be strengthened where the primary focus is on the professional needs of classroom practitioners rather than on the needs of students addressed through the upskilling of staff. Steele and colleagues (2022) subsequently devised and interrogated a professional learning programme, *Music for Classroom Wellbeing*, in which individual teachers were supported to use music to optimise inclusive practice in their classrooms. Practitioners foregrounded emotional wellbeing as a primary need, to which this individually tailored programme was found to contribute.

Research that evidences the importance of the teacher-student relationship in schools has increased in the past decade (Aspelin et al., 2021; McGreery, 2016). Teaching is a complex profession in which daily emotional challenges can arise from occupational, relational and societal interactions (Adams et al., 2016; Glover Gagnon et al., 2019; Muenchhausen et al., 2021; Poulo, 2020). Teachers generally wish to build positive relationships with their students that support professional motivation and provide essential emotional foundations of learning, including the ability to operate within boundaries, self-regulate, and focus (Glover Gagnon et al., 2019). The affective quality of individual teacher-student interactions may vary considerably across a classroom. Sustained experience of challenging emotional encounters with students has been identified as a predictor of teacher stress (Koenen et al., 2019). This can lead to emotional exhaustion and a reduced sense of self-efficacy (Brunsting et al., 2014), both of which are causal factors of burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Muenchhausen et al., 2021). Positive teacher-student relationships moderate stress (Glover Gagnon et al., 2019; Hopman et al., 2018), improve the teaching and learning experience and outcomes (Muenchhausen et al., 2021), and can be a protective mechanism for at-risk students (Aspelin et al., 2021).

The *Safe and Sound* music therapy consultation protocol is framed by Winnicott's (1960) theory of the *holding environment*. Founded within the natural processes of caregiver-infant interaction, Winnicott presented the holding environment as comprising mutually supportive processes of identification and adaptation. *Identification* describes the process whereby the primary caregiver's love enables attunement with and holding in mind of the infant's emotional state. *Adaptation* represents an active awareness and instinctive emotional and physical matching of that feeling state (Levinge, 2015). Through reliable experience, the infant can begin to take for granted that what is needed will be provided. Winnicott (1971) theorised that, through this process, the child's inner world is able to find an incentive for contact with the external world and so they will naturally begin to play. Conversely, without a good enough caregiver-infant relationship, playfulness cannot grow with potential consequences for healthy development.

Aspects of the caregiver-infant relationship have been identified that link to those in the classroom, prompting increased awareness of the role of attachment in meeting students' needs (Delaney, 2017; Riley, 2011; Rose et al., 2019). Where teaching staff can respond empathetically to each student, a school may offer a holding environment that supports self-regulation, self-agency and a sense of belonging (Hyman, 2012).

These principles lie at the centre of the *Safe and Sound* music therapy consultation protocol. Accordingly, the centrality of the relationship between classroom practitioner and student and between consultant and staff team in effective practice is foregrounded (Margetts, 2022; Rickson, 2012; Steele et al., 2022; Twyford & Rickson, 2013). Participants are supported to connect with potentially natural parenting skills in developing live, reciprocal relationships with autistic students. The process of becoming able to attune to a student takes place on an emotional as well as a cognitive level and underpins the development of correspondingly sensitive ways of relating based in musical interaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research question 1: To what extent and in what ways might the *Safe and Sound* programme, framed by Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment, as realised through musical interaction, be accessible, relevant and applicable to UK classroom practitioners in relation to their work with autistic children?

Research question 2: What is the impact of participants' learning, in terms of identification with and adaptation to autistic students through musical interaction, on the nature of classroom practitioner-student relationships?

RESEARCH CONTEXT

The setting for the study was part of the not-for-profit organisation Autism Unlimited , with whom the researcher has been employed for four years. The school provides specialised education for 110 students between the ages of 4 and 19 who are diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum. The school prioritises child-centred approaches in accordance with the UK's Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (2019). A comprehensive Therapy Team works closely with educational staff to support students' individual learning journeys.

Participants

Following a presentation to a whole school staff meeting, five classroom practitioners volunteered to participate in the study: two teachers (T1, T2), two integrated support leaders (ISL1, ISL2) and one teaching assistant (TA). None of the participants had received formal musical training. Each practitioner worked with one student (not currently accessing music therapy) throughout. The students, four boys and one girl between the ages of seven and 10 years, used predominantly non-verbal communication methods. The participants suggested them in agreement with the children's class teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed a convergent mixed-methods pre- and post-test design (Creswell, 2015). To answer the research questions, a pragmatic approach facilitating the exploration of a real-world context through both quantitative and qualitative information was adopted (Rickson et al., 2016). Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment provided the framework for an evaluation instrument (Appendix), adjusted in accordance with the outcomes of the researcher's doctoral study (Margetts, 2018). This then underpinned the structure of the autism-focused staff development programme, integrating theoretical teaching, experiential work, observation and listening exercises, musical activities and spaces for reflection.

During six weekly group seminars, the programme aimed to support the development of existing understanding of behaviour as communication of feeling state, observation and listening skills and confidence in accessing creativity and playfulness. Each taught session corresponded to the core domains of the evaluation instrument, as shown in Table 1.

The points that the *Safe and Sound* programme would not be a music therapy training and that the researcher would not be working with the group as a therapist were emphasised throughout. Participants were encouraged to bring material from their classroom practice to group discussions, promoting a culture of dialogue. Individual supervision sessions and a training manual supported participants' learning processes, together with the researcher's availability via Autism Unlimited internal email system.

Prior to the staff development programme (pre-intervention), participants conducted ten minutes of musical interaction with a student, seeking to address the question: *"How can I engage this student in a playful musical interaction?"* A selection of musical instruments and a static video camera were provided. Participants were advised to aim to play with the student in their usual way in the classroom. Following engagement with the staff development programme (intervention), participants were supported to transfer their learning into six self-filmed music sessions with the same student (post-intervention). Self-monitoring of their work through reflective engagement with these videos was encouraged (Bishop et al., 2015). Continuing this process, participants then chose two extracts from the beginning of each pre-intervention and one post-intervention session, as a consistent point of comparison. These extracts were self-rated against the 10 descriptors of the evaluation instrument (Appendix) using a 10-point Likert scale where 1 denoted 'Strongly Disagree' and 10 'Strongly Agree'. A separate option of 'Don't Know' was also available. Participants then reflected in semi-structured interviews on their experience with the student. The transcriptions of these interviews were returned to participants for verification and comment prior to analysis. To provide triangulation, those same 10 pre- and post-intervention video extracts were randomised and rated in the same way by 18 UK music therapists. In accordance with the convergent mixed-methods design (Creswell, 2015), quantitative and qualitative data sets were analysed separately and then integrated to form a joint display (Figure 1).

Session format	Session outline
Training day (6 hours)	**Introduction to the programme** • Hopes and fears for learning • The importance of the teacher/pupil relationship • Why we are all musical • Attachment and children on the autism spectrum • Introduction to waiting, listening and looking • Group discussion • Musical activities throughout the day
Twilight session 1 (2 hours)	**Individualising physical space (core domain 1)** • Managing and moderating the environment for the child • Observation using elements 1-3 of the evaluation instrument • Group discussion • Musical activities
Twilight session 2 (2 hours)	**Waiting, listening and looking (core domain 2)** • Listening and observation in musical interaction • Video observation using elements 4-6 of the evaluation instrument • Group discussion • Musical activities
Twilight session 3 (2 hours)	**Matching and adapting (core domain 3)** • Matching and adapting in musical interaction • Video observation using points 7-9 of the evaluation instrument • Group discussion • Musical activities
Twilight session 4 (2 hours)	**Playfulness** • Secure attachment and playfulness • Video observation using the complete evaluation instrument • Group discussion • Musical activities
Twilight session 5 (2 hours)	**Reflection and preparation** • Reflective exercises • Preparation for music sessions • Introduction to the training manual • When is it time to refer to music therapy? • Musical activities

Table 1: Outline of the *Safe and Sound* programme

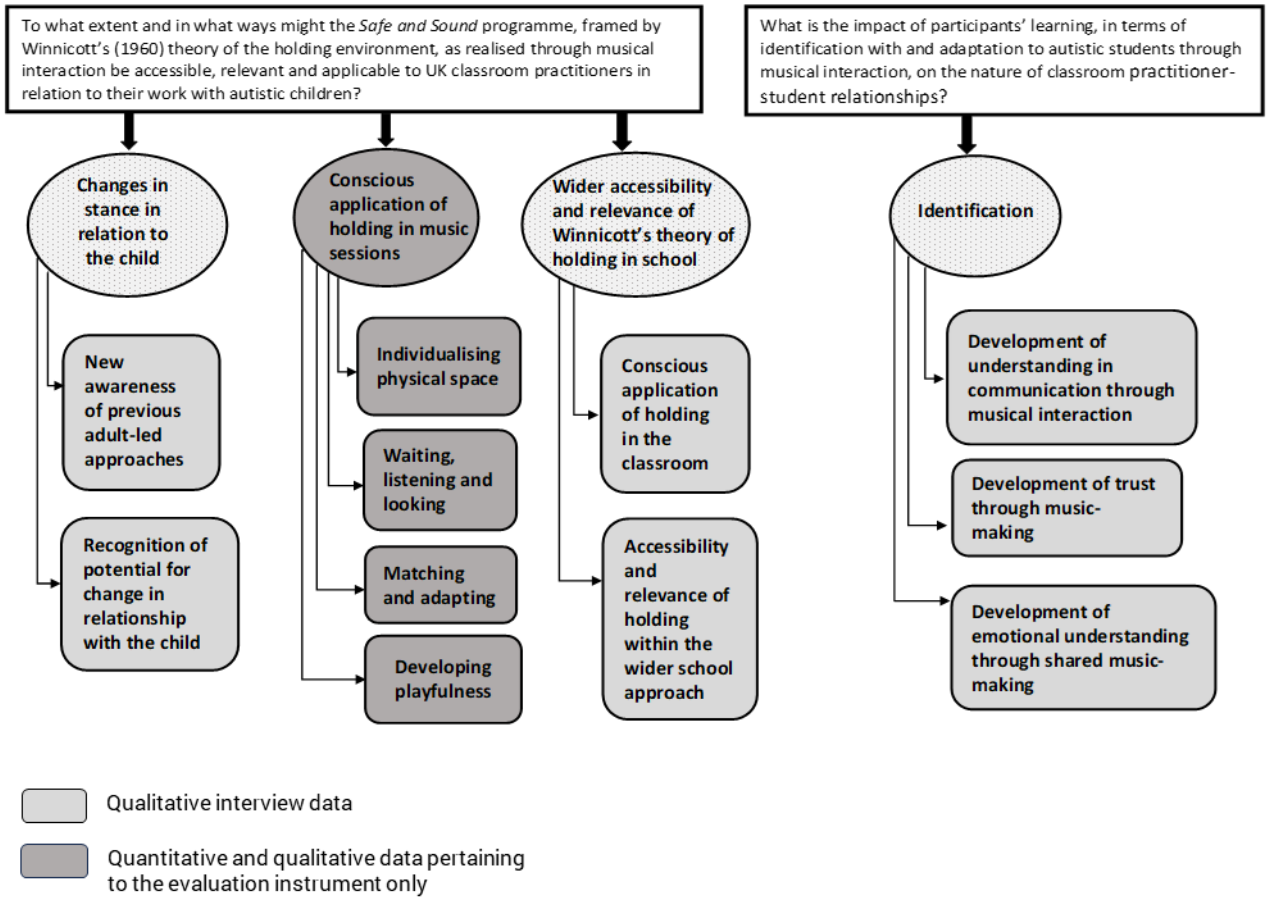

Figure 1: Thematic map derived from quantitative and qualitative data sets

RESULTS

Framed by the two research questions, an otherwise inductive thematic analysis of classroom practitioner participants' (N=5) verbatim interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2013) produced themes 1, 3 and 4, each with between 2 and 3 sub-themes. Verbatim data items were allocated once only.

Continuing to answer research question 1, quantitative and qualitative analysis was undertaken of data collated from five classroom practitioners and 18 UK music therapists pertaining directly to the 10 descriptors of the evaluation instrument. These results are shown in Table 3.

Research question 1 asked: To what extent and in what ways might the *Safe and Sound* programme, framed by Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment, as realised through musical interaction, be accessible, relevant and applicable to UK classroom practitioners in relation to their work with autistic children?

Theme 1: Changes in stance in thinking about and relating to the student

New awareness of previous adult-led approaches

Four participants spontaneously recognised the extent to which they had led the pre-intervention music session for the student.

> I think in my first session, I was just so keen for [the student] to … essentially do something with the instruments there … it was very much me guiding it rather than me allowing him to create and explore (T2).
>
> I was just desperate to try and get her attention back and to bring her back in the room … and try and do what we do in the classroom, which is make everything exciting for her (TA).
>
> I was talking a lot more and I was leading a lot of it … I also wanted him to sit instead of moving around the space (ISL1).
>
> I felt like I sort of led it and I couldn't believe that actually (T1).

Recognition of potential for change in the relationship with the student

All participants recognised the potential for positive change in their relationship with the student.

> Before … the thing about our relationship that wasn't healthy was that he was so dependent on me. Whereas now he's not completely dependent on me, but we still have the relationship, which is nice (T2).
>
> And it got to the point where he then wanted me in his world … that was a *huge* step (T1).

Theme 2: Conscious application of Winnicott's (1960) theory of holding in music sessions

As described, classroom practitioners (N=5) self-rated their self-chosen pre-and post-intervention session extracts against the evaluation instrument descriptors using a 10-point Likert scale where 1 was 'strongly agree' and 5 'strongly disagree.' Results are shown in Table 2.

Owing to the small sample size, descriptive statistical analyses were undertaken of the five pairs of scores for each descriptor. The total percentage change for each is shown as *CP % change* in Table 3.

Eighteen UK music therapists similarly rated the same 10 now randomised pre- and post-test video extracts against the ten descriptors of the evaluation instrument. The larger sample enabled the use of an unpaired t-test to compare the means of pre- and post-test results, denoted as *MT t-test* in Table 3.

Next, a further unpaired t-test compared the means of the two combined sets of pre-test (N=888) and post-test (N=888) scores returned by the UK music therapist participants. The mean pre-test score was 6.4, with a standard deviation of 2. The mean post-test score was 7.3, with a standard deviation of 1.93.

The mean of pre-test minus post-test equals -0.92951200 with 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -1.11258261 to -0.74644139 and with a standard error of difference of 0.093. The t-statistic was 9.97, with df = 1775 ($p < .0001$). By conventional criteria, this change is considered to be extremely statistically significant.

Classroom practitioner self-rated scores											
Core domains	Rated elements	Pre-intervention					Post-intervention				
		P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Individualised physical space	1. Has set up the room appropriately for the child.	4	6	5	5	7	7	9	8	9	8
	2. Has structured the session appropriately for the child.	3	7	4	4	6	7	10	7	9	9
	3. Sets boundaries of acceptable behaviour according to the child's needs.	7	7	5	7	6	6	9	8	9	9
Waiting, listening and looking	4. Is able to wait and allow space for the child according to their individual needs.	4	2	6	4	6	7	10	9	8	8
	5. Observes the child closely and consistently.	8	7	7	5	7	7	10	9	9	9
	6. Listens to the child closely and consistently.	7	7	6	6	7	7	10	9	9	9
Matching and adapting	7. Is able to time and pace musical responses appropriately.	6	7	5	3	7	5	9	8	8	8
	8. Responds sensitively to all communications from the child: Musical and non-musical.	7	7	1	3	6	6	10	8	8	8
	9. Matches musical elements with the voice and/or an instrument.	6	7	5	2	6	7	10	7	8	9
Playfulness	10. The adult and the child together are able to enjoy creative and flexible musical play.	3	6	3	7	7	9	10	10	10	10

Table 2: Classroom practitioner self-rated scores

Core domain	Rated elements	Classroom practitioners (CP) qualitative data results	CP (N=5) % change	MT t-test
Individualised Physical Space	1. Has set up the room appropriately for the student	**T1.** So [the student] came in, he had room to move, he had space. The instruments were around for him to explore, him to lead, and I copied by finding instruments that were similar. **T2.** I think the setup with the drums in the middle on the red mat worked really well, because [the student] does like to walk around the room so much but having sort of that focal point in the middle, that in itself I think he found quite grounding. **TA.** [The student] loved the piano. She then would play other instruments but then wait for me to respond on the piano and that became our song. It was 'Pia pia piano.' She loved that. So yes, I think setting up the room where she was allowed to use the piano really helped her just *flourish.*	52% increase	**Pre-test** N=89 M = 7.03, SD = 1.72 **Post-test** N=87 M = 7.50, SD = 1.58 *t*(85) = 1.9146 p = .0589
	2. Has structured the session appropriately for the student	**TA.** I think I tailored it more to what [the student] needs, so relating each musical instrument to a song she likes, which then engages her. She has something to relate to. **ISL1.** I've got a structure, so there's a clear beginning, there's a clear part where he can do whatever, and then there's a clear goodbye. **T2.** And with my Phase 3 session it's why it was so clear that he'd got used to the structure because he started singing along with the goodbye song straight away. Whereas the [Phase 1] session was just kind of, "here are some instruments. Let's make some noise. OK, it's finished". There was no sort of preparation or a wind down or anything.	75% increase	**Pre-test** N=87 M = 6.58, SD = 1.77 **Post-test** N= 87 M = 7.09, SD = 1.88 *t*(84) = 2.0411 p = .0444
	3. Sets boundaries of acceptable behaviour according to the student's needs	**T1.** A couple of times he would perhaps stand on an instrument … but then I would break the silence and I'd say, "we don't do that". And then he would go back to playing them appropriately or I'd model it. **T2.** So seeing actually how quickly he respected the boundary that I put in place was really nice and it was kind of, he's tested me. He knows what I now expect.	28% increase	**Pre-test** N=83 M = 7.15, SD = 1.63 **Post-test** N=84 M = 7.48, SD = 1.56 *t*(78) = 1.5739 p = .1196

Waiting, Listening and Looking	**4.** Is able to wait and allow space for the student according to their individual needs	**TA.** When it was post intervention then I'm waiting for her to choose and if she doesn't do anything for a while, that's fine. **T1.** With the fact that I realized I needed to allow [the student's] freedom of movement and of expression, his frustration reduced massively because he knew when he came in here he wasn't going to have any pressures and he wasn't going to have anything hold him back. **ISL2.** I think the training's definitely given me the urge to wait … I've learned from here, from [the student] especially, just every child Is different and sometimes some children do need that little longer to respond. **ISL1.** I wait a lot more. There's a lot of more silence from me, and then I wait for him. Then the last video … He was really quiet for really long time, and I was really quiet. **T2.** Whereas now I look at it and I know that actually he needs that space, he needs to have the waiting, he needs to request what he wants in his own way and allow space for him to decide what he wants to do …	90% increase	**Pre-test** N=90 M = 6.19, SD = 2.08 **Post-test** N=90 M = 7.50, SD = 1.87 *t*(89) = 4.5022 p = <.0001
	5. Observes the student closely and consistently	**ISL1.** I think in the [phase 1 video] I was kind of just watching that he wasn't going to throw something or stand on anything or hurt himself. Whereas this [phase 3 video] because he knows the room, I'm just kind of watching his body language more, seeing how *he* is. **ISL2.** So I tried to always make sure that I would move with him to follow him with my eyes.	30% increase	**Pre-test** N=90 M = 7.14, SD = 1.78 **Post-test** N=90 M = 8.30, SD = 1.48 *t*(89) = 4.8021 p = <.0001
	6. Listens to the student closely and consistently	**ISL1.** I also see just him in general, because I realized that there's certain pitches in his voice… vocalizers that when he's upset it's really really high pitch. **ISL2.** He'd just look me straight in the face and just make vocal noises at me and wait for my response … It was like we were talking … Yes, I think that was my favourite moment!	33% increase	**Pre-test** N=90 M = 6.42, SD = 1.95 **Post-test** N=90 M = 7.84, SD = 1.81 *t*(89) = 5.4982 p = <.0001

Matching and adapting	**7.** Is able to time and pace musical responses appropriately	**ISL1.** I know we've got sometimes half an hour, sometimes 15 minutes, depending on the time he gets in, but I don't think he feels rushed. **ISL2.** And I just was waiting for [the student] to do something and then just trying to react to him to see what I could get back. **T1**. I think for [the student] it was sort of his time to express himself in the way he wanted to. **T2.** When he would first come in and we do the Hello song and then just sort of a steady pulse because, no matter when in the process he was coming through, he'd always come in and just need a few minutes to pace and ready himself.	36% increase	**Pre-test** N=90 M = 5.96, SD = 1.91 **Post-test** N=90 M = 7.07, SD = 2.04 *t*(89) = 3.8800 p = .0002
	8. Responds sensitively to all communica-tions from the student	**ISL2.** He needed to get his tapping experiences out like his sensory needs or his vocal needs of the "ba ba ba" … And I think I think it definitely regulated him. Upon leaving he was always very calm. **ISL1.** Sometimes he's running around and climbing the chairs and coming back … and then I match his pace. **T1.** The pulling me up, the eye contact and then … he would make a noise to see me make a noise. Or he'd play an instrument for me to [play it]. And sometimes he'd come over and be like, "this is what I want".	66% increase	**Pre-test** N=90 M = 5.79, SD = 2.09 **Post-test** N=90 M = 6.78, SD = 2.07 *t*(89) = 3.5689 p = .0006
	9. Matches musical elements with the voice and/or an instrument	**TA.** I think I tried to match mainly based on pitch … [the student] was on the cymbal and I tried to match the sound on the keyboard … where I was sat, instead of getting up and running over to something else to try to do that and volume as well. **ISL2.** I was kind of mimicking his noises and his sounds and the noises he was making on the instruments. I was just trying to match him, so he knew that I was, you know, answering him back almost. **ISL1.** And then he just started really quiet and we just built up and up and up, which was really nice. And some [sessions] he just comes in and he's loud and we're loud together, so I think that's really good. **T1.** I talked a lot less, I mimicked his noises, and then I had that more communication because I was getting on his level. I was communicating his way and I had so much more eye contact.	58% increase	**Pre-test** N=90 M = 5.60, SD = 2.23 **Post-test** N=90 M = 6.74, SD = 2.27 *t*(89) = 3.6233 p = .0005

Table 3: Joint display of quantitative and qualitative results pertaining to the research evaluation instrument

Theme 3: Wider accessibility and applicability of Winnicott's (1960) theory of holding in school

Conscious application of holding in the classroom

All participants valued the secure framework for *Safe and Sound* that was Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment, as well as the programme's approach that integrated theory and practice.

> The theory was very important … I don't think we would have got the amount of progress without this holding environment. Because I do think this is what's really worked (T1).
>
> You taught us quite a lot before we'd even done the sessions. And then obviously we practised during the training as well (ISL2).

Each participant articulated ways in which their learning had impacted on their classroom practice.

> But I think because of *this*; knowing [the child's] vocalisation pitch when he's happy, in class I feed back, "oh he's really happy … this is what it sounds like in the Safe and Sound sessions." But then, when there's like screeching, really, really high pitch, then I'm like, "no, this is him upset" (ISL1).
>
> I think the whole waiting and allowing for space. Not just sort of physical space, but also the silence and all of that has been probably one of the things that's really changed my practice the most (T1).
>
> The way you teach, it changes once … you've learned a bit more about the Winnicott theory … I have learned … just get down to the child's height and sit and let them know that you're fully there (ISL2).
>
> I've applied it into the swimming pool and we've gone from a boy who would barely let go to now jumping in! Just because we allowed him that space and that time (T1).
>
> Just waiting. Giving them the process time. Because [the student's] processing time is quite long (TA).

Accessibility and applicability of Winnicott's (1960) theory of holding within the wider school approach

All participants agreed that their learning about Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment fitted with wider school approaches with benefits for both staff and students.

> Using this in my practice has been hugely beneficial and I don't see why this can't be used throughout the whole school (T1).
>
> And I liked as well how much of the theory was based on parent-child relationships. Because I think obviously being in the school we're in, everything we do is mirroring that parent-child relationship (T2).

> I think it would be great if there were more people doing music sessions with their students. So many students here could benefit and really enjoy it (ISL2).

Research Question 2 asked: What is the impact of participants' learning, in terms of identification with and adaptation to autistic students through musical interaction, on the nature of classroom practitioner-student relationships?

Theme 4: Identification

Development of understanding in communication through musical interaction

This theme described ways in which participants began to make an emotional connection with the student. All participants agreed on their developing understanding of the student's communication and the student's understanding of them as a dialogue partner in music sessions.

> I think he learned to wait for me as well … I remember he would say a sound and then wait a little bit and he was looking like, "it's your turn!" (ISL1).
>
> And I remember when we were halfway through, and we had a breakthrough where he actually looked at me and … did his noises and he wanted that [interaction]. And then after that I saw, "oh, I'm actually speaking his language now. We've got that to and fro" … A massive difference (T1).
>
> I think that eye contact was a big thing because as he was walking around freely, he would always look to see if I'm looking. So I think that is important (ISL2).
>
> I'm not in here, just playing an instrument as well. I'm in here playing something based off what she's done. And I think she's smiling a lot more. She's interacting with me a lot more. She's coming to sit on my lap for the piano, and she knows that this is something we do together (TA).
>
> He would be wandering around, and I'd just be sat still in one place. And then he looked at me from wherever he was at in the room, and he'd walk straight to me and either take my hand or put his hand to my face (T2).

Development of trust through music-making

All participants stated that trust had grown in their relationship with the child.

> Whereas now it's almost as if he knows, this is our time together. This is what we do (T2).
>
> We would sing that she's in the music room and then she'd come in. Near the end of the sessions, she came into school singing that song because she knew. And she'd only ever sing it on a Tuesday (TA).

Participants agreed that allowing space for the student in music sessions was central to the development of trust, together with the practitioner's focused attention, patience and responsiveness.

> So he knows that I'm a safe space and I'm going to allow him that time and space (T1).
>
> So yes, tailoring [the session] towards her and just waiting, pausing, listening to her … I think she maybe felt that she had the space to explore and it wasn't restricted (TA).
>
> And with the waiting and the patience of him having a turn, me having a turn, I think we both felt a bit more relaxed because he was feeling that I was calm and that was giving him vibes to be calm (ISL2).
>
> I know in the training we talk about mother and child bond, maybe that has sort of led [the student] to think, "oh I have a relationship with her now. She gets me, she plays my music, she listens, she looks at me, she waits" (TA).

Three participants described how this trust was generalised into the classroom.

> I think now if I go into his class and work with him, I feel like he knows me. That he feels like I'm a safe person because he will just come up to me now if I'm in the class and make noises with me and rock and want that reaction back (ISL2).
>
> I think he accepted me a lot quicker than maybe the other teaching assistants … It's almost like he feels more safe with me, which is nice (ISL1).

All participants described a process of learning from and about the child, supported by the one-to-one time together in music sessions.

> You learn so much with them being in here, one on one and it just takes you into a whole new world of what they're trying to tell you, what they're thinking (ISL2).
>
> I feel like I thought I understood him really well, but since doing this, I understand him a lot more and … I think he understands me a lot more as well (T1).
>
> I've also found from the [Phase 1] video when I was on my knees, I was taller than [the student] and he kept moving away … Because it is quite a domineering thing if someone is towering over you … where I … stayed sat down, he felt quite free to go around (ISL1).

Development of emotional understanding through shared music-making

All participants described an increased understanding of the student's emotional states during music sessions and in the classroom. Three participants found that this sometimes produced uncomfortable feelings of 'not knowing.'

> That's probably been a challenge of mine trying to work out if he's just going to touch the door, or whether he's actually trying to indicate to me that he wants to go (ISL2).

> But I would worry, I suppose, about is she going to be ready for this today? Is it going to be asking too much of her? (TA).
>
> And I think my worry about him not wanting to spend time with me was also partly me projecting that on to him and actually me potentially not wanting to spend time with him because we've not seen each other for so long (T2).

Three participants reflected on positive changes in the student's engagement with staff and classmates that they attributed to the trusting relationship developed during music sessions.

> [The student] is getting so much better at sharing and waiting … So potentially that's because she is sharing instruments in here with me and she's waiting for my response (TA).
>
> And sometimes he'll be saying something and the students will copy him. And then he's like, "oh! She's copying me too!" (ISL2).
>
> [The student] is not just running away from [staff]. He's taking himself out and waiting, and "this is what I need right now" … I like to think the sessions have really supported that (T2).

DISCUSSION

This study interrogated the accessibility, relevance and applicability of the *Safe and Sound* music therapy consultation programme for five classroom practitioners working with autistic students in a UK school. The discussion of outcomes is framed by the research questions.

Research question 1

The extent to and ways in which the *Safe and Sound* protocol, framed by Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment as realised through musical interaction, might be accessible, relevant and applicable to UK classroom practitioners in relation to their work with autistic children was evaluated from integrated quantitative and qualitative data sets (Creswell, 2015). These comprised scores and interview data returned by Autism Unlimited participants and 18 UK music therapists, which pertained directly to the evaluation instrument used throughout the study (Appendix). This was then further informed by inductive thematic analysis of participants' interview data (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Results showed agreement that Winnicott's (1960) holding theory provided a vital foundation for practitioners' music sessions with the students and in the classroom, and that the approach held for the wider school environment. A clear shift from practitioner-led to student-led approaches and broadening of awareness of student behaviours as communication of feeling state were foregrounded

Quantitative results returned by classroom practitioners (n=5) showed positive percentage increases between pre- and post-intervention self-chosen video extracts for each evaluation descriptor (Table 3). Particularly substantial change in both quantitative and qualitative data was recorded for element 4, 'Is able to wait and allow space for the student' (90%) and element 10, 'The adult and the child together are able to enjoy creative and flexible musical play' (88%). Participants were unanimous as to the importance of waiting and allowing space for the student's spontaneous gestures in facilitating the development of playfulness in music sessions and in their teaching practice.

ISL1 stated that "the training I got … was you really taking yourself out and being patient. There's power in waiting. And I've found that in the classroom." T1 agreed. "I've seen … I call them little miracles throughout my [teaching] sessions … And I didn't realise that if you just give [students] that, again, holding environment, that space, that time, they really do flourish."

There was a similar consonance concerning this key area in qualitative results relating directly to the evaluation instrument. Participants clearly described learning from individual students as to the time and space they needed to maintain self-regulation, initiate, and engage in an interaction. TA summarised: "I'm waiting for [the student] to choose, and if she doesn't do anything for a while, then that's fine." This comment also illuminated a change in participants' capacity to manage silence. T2 realised: "[the child] needs to request what he wants in his own way and allow space for him to decide what he wants to do." These findings resonate with literature which foregrounds child-led educational approaches, such as allowing time and space for the child to make choices (Kossyvaki et al., 2012; Rushton & Kossyvaki, 2020).

Statistical results obtained from UK music therapists (n=18) were predominantly similarly positive. Change in respect of eight out of ten rated elements was assessed as statistically significant (Robson, 2011). Two elements that did not reach a statistically significant level were concerned with element 1 (individualised environment) and element 3 (behavioural boundaries). This could partly reflect the available view of the session space in the short video extracts and that no behaviours of concern were observed. Six elements showing a particularly statistically significant level of change were concerned with core domain 2 (waiting, listening and looking) and core domain 3 (matching and adapting). This may be seen as evidence of participants' growing capacity for identification with and musical adaptation to the students (Levinge, 2015).

Research question 2

The impact of learning on the nature of practitioners' relationships with both the individual students in music sessions and the classroom was evaluated from thematic analysis of participants' qualitative interview data.

Theme 4 described ways in which participants became able to identify with individual students. Winnicott's (1960) holding theory describes 'identification' as the caregiver's capacity to tune into the child's emotional state and constantly hold them in mind. All participants felt that their ability to attune to the student's needs had significantly increased. T1 reflected: "I've learned … that we can get into each and every child's world. We just need to find the right key. And that's huge!" There was agreement that increased understanding of the student's communication, involving waiting, listening and observation, supported this process. ISL 1 explained: "I also just see him in general. Because I realised that there are pitches in his voice … that when he's upset it is really, really high pitch."

Results revealed a shift in each participant's experience of the student as their music sessions together progressed. Tension between them eased and trust developed. T1 explained: "I feel like we have a kinship where he knows that I'm going to support him." Genuine enjoyment in musical shared play grew exponentially. Participants increasingly looked forward to the sessions. All emphasised positive change in the ongoing relationship with the student as the most enjoyable outcome. ISL1 reflected: "When I see him he'll still come hold my hand or he'll still sit next to me in class … He's

a great boy. I do think he's cool." T2 added: "Now I'm obviously sad it's ending. I don't want it to."

These findings correlate with the literature review. Authentic enjoyment in playing with the child is, Winnicott (1971) maintains, essential to live, responsive relationships. In the classroom, this reduces stress and promotes conducive and enjoyable teaching and learning (Hopman et al., 2018). Poulo (2020) further posits that teachers need to feel emotionally held and supported if they are to be able to form these relationships. Towards the end of the study, the *Safe and Sound* group members described the research group sessions as "a space just for us" within which they felt safe to share work experiences together and engage in musical play.

Glover Gagnon and colleagues (2019) emphasise the need for interventions specifically designed to support teachers to understand and navigate their relationships with their students. The present research found that Winnicott's (1960) theory of the holding environment, based on natural caregiving processes (Phillips, 2007) and realised within musical interaction, offered an appropriate framework to support optimisation of classroom practitioner-student relationships. The *Safe and Sound* programme supported participants in the processes of identification with the students and adaptation to their needs through the development of concrete, responsive musical skills.

The literature emphasises sustainability as fundamental to music therapy consultation (Bolger & Skewes McFerran, 2020; Margetts, 2022). Choice of orientation, genuine collaboration based on respect for local context and an exchange rather than a help approach have supported maintenance of the positive outcomes of *Safe and Sound* in the classroom. As T1 summarised: "Let's learn [the students] before we try to teach them something!"

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Mixed-methods research can be particularly vulnerable to bias (Robson, 2011), partly owing to closer researcher-participants relationship than is typical of experimental methodologies. The researcher's sustained employment at the school and degree of familiarity with participants appeared to enable reflection on challenges as well as positive outcomes encountered in music sessions.

All aspects of the study were undertaken with the researcher. It was impossible to remove all corresponding potential factors for bias, including the researcher's gender, age, personality, knowledge, skills and experience. Sustained professional experience, supervision and peer support enabled maintenance of appropriate boundaries. However, participants' responses to the researcher would inevitably have influenced their attitude to and engagement with the research process.

Triangulation used to offset bias and support methodological rigour included employment of quantitative and qualitative data sources, different research methods, and peer review of participants' self-selected video examples by 18 UK music therapists.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Although not a formal area of enquiry during qualitative interviews, participants nonetheless spontaneously detailed their affective responses to their experiences with the students during and following the research. The substantial volume of post-intervention material generated particularly concerned participants' increased sense of self-efficacy and reduced levels of stress (Muenchhausen et al., 2021) and was sufficient to warrant a third corresponding research question. This will be

explored in a future publication.

Music therapy consultation has been described as a unique practice that requires new knowledge and skills (Rickson, 2012). The *Safe and Sound* programme has been integrated into the annual training programme offered to classroom practitioners at Autism Unlimited. As the protocol has, to date, been developed and researched by the author, there is scope to interrogate its efficacy when offered by other music therapists in the schools in which they work. Future research could also usefully and formally evaluate outcomes for students engaging in *Safe and Sound*.

FUNDING

The study was supported and partially funded by Autism Unlimited. The organisation has requested acknowledgement in this article.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference EDU 20/ 189 in the School of Education and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 04/02/2020.

REFERENCES

Aigen, K. (2005). *Music-centered music therapy*. Barcelona Publishers.

Adams, J., Dudenhöffer, S., Claus, M., Kimbel, R., Letzel, S., & Rose, D.M. (2016). Coping patterns in special school staff: Demographic and organisational factors. *Occupational Medicine, 66*, 138-142. https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqv157

Arns, B., & Thompson, G.A. (2019). Music therapy teaming and learning: How transdisciplinary experience shapes practice in a specialist school for students with autism. *Australian Journal of Music Therapy*, *30*, 31-52.

Aspelin, J., Östlund, D., & Jönsson, A. (2021). 'It means everything': Special educators' perceptions of relationships and relational competence. *European Journal of Special Needs Education, 36*(5), 671-685. https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2020.1783801

Bishop, C. D., Snyder, P. A., & Crow, R. E. (2015). Impact of video self-monitoring with graduated training on implementation of embedded instructional learning trials. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 35*(3), 170-182. https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121415594797

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013*). Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners.* SAGE.

Coombes, E., & Tombs-Katz, M. (2017). Interactive therapeutic music skill-sharing in the West Bank: An evaluation report of project Beit Sahour. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy, 9*(1), 67-79. https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v11i1.291

Creswell, J. R. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. SAGE.

Delaney, M. (2017). *Attachment for teachers: The essential handbook for trainee teachers and NQTs*. Worth Publishing.

Geretsegger, M., Fusar-Poli, L., Elefant, C., Mössler, K.A., Vitale, G., & Gold, C. (2022). Music therapy for autistic people. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 5*, CD004381. https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD004381.pub4

Glover Gagno, S., Huelsman, T. J., Kidder-Ashley, P., & Lewis, A. (2019). Preschool student-Teacher relationships and teaching stress. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 47*, 217-225. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-018-0920-z

Hopman, J. A. B., Tick, N. J., Van der Ende, J., Wubbels, T., Verhulst, F. C., Matas, A., L D Breeman, L. D., & Van Lier, P. A. C. (2018). Special education teachers' relationships with students and self-efficacy moderate associations between classroom-level disruptive behaviours and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 75*, 21-30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.06.004

Hyman, S. (2012). The school as a holding environment. *Journal of Infant, Child, and Adolescent Psychotherapy, 11*, 205–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/15289168.2012.700793

Kim, J., Wigram, T., & Gold, C. (2009). Emotional, motivational and interpersonal responsiveness of children with autism in improvisational music therapy. *Autism, 13*, 389-409. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361309105660

Koenen, A-K., Vervoort, E., Kelchtermans, G., Verschueren, K., & Split, J. L. (2019). Teachers' daily negative emotions in interactions with individual students in special education. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Disorders*, *21*(1), 37-51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1063426617739579

Kossyvaki, L., Jones, G., & Guldberg, K. (2012). The effect of adult interactive style on the spontaneous communication of young children with autism at school. *British Journal of Special Education*, *39*, 173–184. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12001

Levinge, A. (2015). *The music of being: Music therapy, Winnicott and the school of object relations*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Maclean, E., & Tillotson, C. (2019). How do music therapists share? Exploring collaborative approaches in educational settings for children with autism spectrum conditions. In H. Dunn, E. Coombes, E. Maclean, H. Mottram & J. Nugent (Eds.), *Music therapy and autism across the lifespan: A spectrum of approaches* (pp. 197-226). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Margetts, L. (2022). *Intercultural music therapy consultation research. Shared humanity in collaborative theory and practice.* Routledge.

Margetts, L., Ockelford, A., Hargreaves, D., & Sutton, J. (2020). Potential spaces: Supporting the development of relationships between classroom practitioners and children with complex needs in Belarus through music therapy consultation. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, *30(*4), 338-356. https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2020.1806913

McGreery, M. (2016). Temperament as a behavioural construct: Assessing the classroom environment and student-teacher relationship. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, *51*(4), 238-245. https://doi.org/10.1177/1053451215589176

Muenchhausen, Sv., Broenig, M., Pfeifer, R., Görtz, A. S., Bauer, J., Lahmann, C., & Wuensch, A. (2021). Teacher self-efficacy and mental health – their intricate relation to professional resources and attitudes in an established Manual-Based Psychological Group Program. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, *12*(510183). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.510183

Ofsted, (n.d). *Education Inspection Framework 2019: Inspecting the substance of education*. https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education

O'Nions, E., Petersen, I., Buckman, J. E.J., Charlton, R., Cooper, C., Corbett, A., Happé, F., Manthorpe, J., Richards, M., Saunders, R., Zanker, C., Mandy, W., & Stott, J. (2023). Autism in England: assessing underdiagnosis in a population-based cohort study of prospectively collected primary care data. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*, *29*(100626). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2023.100626

Pasiali, V. (2014). Music therapy and attachment relationships across the lifespan. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy, 23*(3), 203-223. https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2013.829863

Phillips, A. (2007). *Winnicott*. Penguin Books.

Poulo, M. S. (2020). Students' adjustment at school: The role of teachers' need satisfaction, teacher-student relationships and student wellbeing. *School Psychology International*, *41*(6), 499-521. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034320951911

Rickson, D. (2012). Music therapy school consultation: A unique practice. *Nordic Journal of Music Therapy*, *21*(3),268-28 https://doi.org/10.1080/08098131.2012.654474

Rickson, D. (2021). Family members' and other experts' perceptions of music therapy with children on the autism spectrum in New Zealand: Findings from multiple case studies. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *75*(101833). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2021.101833

Rickson, D. (2022). *Music Therapy with Autistic Children in Aotearoa, New Zealand: Haumanu ā-Puoro mā ngā Tamariki Takiwātanga i Aotearoa*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Rickson, D., Castelino, A., Molyneux, C., Ridley, H., & Upjohn-Beatson, E. (2016). What evidence? Designing a mixed-methods study to investigate music therapy with children who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in New Zealand contexts. *The Arts in Psychotherapy*, *50*(119-125). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aip.2016.07.002

Riley, P. (2011). *Attachment theory and the teacher-student relationship*. Routledge.

Robson, C. (2011). *Real world research*. Wiley

Rose, J., McGuire-Snieckus, R., Gilbert, L., & McInnes, K. (2019). Attachment aware schools: The impact of a targeted and collaborative intervention. *Pastoral Care in Education*, *37*(2), 162-184. https://doi.org/10.1080/02643944.2019.1625429

Rushton, R., & Kossyvaki, L. (2020). Using musical play with children with profound and multiple learning disabilities at school. *British Journal of Special Education*, *47*(4), 489-509 https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12334

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2007). Dimensions of teacher self-efficacy and relation with strain factors, perceived collective teacher efficacy and teacher burnout. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *99*(3), 611-625. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.611

Skewes McFerran, K. S., Crooke, A. H. D., & Bolger, L. (2017). Promoting engagement in school through tailored music programs. *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, *18*(3). http://ijea.org/v18n3/

Steele, M., Crooke, A. H. D., & Skewes McFerran, K. (2020). What about the teacher? Synthesis on literature describing music therapist teacher support programmes. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, *20*(1). https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v20i1.2839

Steele, M., McFerran, K. S., & Crooke, A. H. D. (2023). Shifting the focus to teachers: A new approach for music therapists working in schools. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, *41*(1), 10-18. https://doi.org/10.1093/mtp/miac020

Strange, J. (2021). Improvised music to support Intensive Interaction for children with complex needs: A feasibility study of brief adjunct music therapy. *British Journal of Music Therapy, 35*(2), 43-52. https://doi.org/10.1177/13594575211028038

Strange, J., Odell-Miller, H., & Richards, E. (Eds.). (2017). *Collaboration and assistance in music therapy. Roles, relationships, challenges*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Tarr, J., & Clough, N. (2022). *Addressing issues of mental health in schools through the arts: Teachers and music therapists working together.* Routledge.

Tomlinson, J. (2020). Music therapist collaboration with teaching assistants for facilitating verbal and vocal development in young children with special needs: A mixed methods study. *British Journal of Music Therapy*, *34*(2), 95-107. https://doi.org/10.1177/1359457520971815

Twyford, K., & Rickson, D. (2013). In their element! Student responses to the work of a music therapist in music therapy school consultation. *Music Therapy Perspectives*, *31*, 1217-136. https://doi.org/10.1093/mtp/31.2.127

Vlachová, Z. (2022). Means of musical dialogues and reciprocity: Improvisational music therapy for social interaction of a pre-school child with autism spectrum disorder. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, *22*(2). https://doi.org/10.15845/voices.v22i2.3191

Winnicott, D. W. (1960). The theory of the parent-infant relationship. In D. W. Winnicott (1990), *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment* (pp. 37-55). Hogarth Press.

APPENDIX: SAFE AND SOUND EVALUATION INSTRUMENT WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THE ADULT'S RESPONSES

Increasing the Student's sense of Emotional Safety	The Student's Behaviours are Understood and Responded to as Potentially Communicative				B
	CD	**Elements**	**Adult's Observed Responses**	**Possible Interpretation of Responses**	
	Individualised Physical Space	**1.** The room and the instruments are set up for the individual student in advance	The adult is able to allow the student to enter in their own time. Can take into account the student's individual needs, (for example, visual or positioning), in organising the session space. The student is able to access the instruments safely, spontaneously and freely.	Setting up the room specifically for the student potentially demonstrates that they have been held in mind and remembered.	
		2.The session is structured appropriately for the student	Is able to structure the session through thinking about the student's individual needs, taking into account any sensory difficulties and/or restricted movement, and capacity to tolerate proximity in considering the nature of the musical activities to be offered.	Flexible structuring of the session specifically for the student demonstrates the adult's sustained thinking about the student's responses and needs in advance of and during each session.	
		3. Boundaries of acceptable behaviour are set	Is able to maintain safe and appropriate behavioural boundaries for the student in accordance with their needs.	The adult seeks to understand the student's behaviour as communication of their feeling state and considers session boundaries accordingly.	
	Waiting, watching and Listening	**4.** The adult is able to wait, and to allow space for the student according to their individual needs.	Is able to wait for the student to initiate an interaction, musical or non-musical. Is able to stay with silence, remaining quiet but visible, or may create a musical atmosphere designed to be enabling (e.g. vocalising a phrase in the rhythm of the student's breathing). Is able to think about, rather than react to possible rejection of their availability.	The adult is focused on the student, who is the centre of the experience, potentially supporting the student to begin an interaction using sounds and non-verbal communication. A reflective approach to the student's presentation is demonstrated.	
		5. The adult observes the student closely and consistently	Is able to closely observe non-verbal communication. Is able to notice fleeting moments of potential connection (eye contact, movement) and respond to them using appropriate instrumental and/or vocal sounds, gestures, movement and looking behaviour.	The adult is taking in something of the student and responding accordingly using sounds and silences. This communicates to the student that the adult is observant, responsive and accepting.	
		6. The adult listens to the student closely and consistently	Is able to listen to the student's sounds or silence. Is able to notice fleeting moments of potential connection (instrumental and/or vocal sound) and respond to them using appropriate instrumental and/or vocal sounds, gestures, movement and looking behaviour.	The adult is taking in something of the student and responding accordingly using sounds and silences. This communicates to the student that the adult is listening, receptive and interested in them.	

Increasing the Student's sense of Emotional Safety	The Student's Behaviours are Understood and Responded to as Potentially Communicative				R
	CE	**Elements**	**Adult's Observed Responses**	**Possible Interpretation of the Adult's Responses**	
	Matching and Adapting	**7.** Timing and pace in musical responses	Is able to show an awareness of timing and pace in adapting their musical responses flexibly to those of the student.	Tuning in to the student's pace inspires further confidence in the student that they are being listened to and thought about. Timing of give and take in the interaction may indicate familiarity and trust.	
		8. Responding sensitively to all the student's communications	Is able to remain attentive and to recognise and sustain capacity to respond to all of the student's communicative attempts: gaze, movement, silences, instrumental and/or vocal sounds.	The adult's focused attention communicates to the student that they are being listened to and thought about, together with a sustained interest in the shared interaction.	
		9. Matching musical elements with the voice and/or an instrument	Is able to match the student's sounds and musical ideas with their own: for example, in terms of sound quality, pitch, loudness, duration, shape and intensity.	Further demonstrates to the student that their sounds are heard, accepted, and interesting to the adult, who may feel increasingly included in, and energised by the interaction.	
	Playfulness	**10.** Is able to sustain creative and flexible musical play	The adult and student together are able to enjoy creative and flexible musical play. May constitute warmth, liveliness, fun, humour, give and take, trying things out, challenge.	Sufficient emotional safety has been established in relationship. Student and adult are able to sustain engagement in shared musical play.	

Ελληνική περίληψη | Greek abstract

Safe and Sound: Μια μελέτη μικτών μεθόδων για τη διερεύνηση των σχέσεων μεταξύ εκπαιδευτικών ειδικής αγωγής και αυτιστικών μαθητών μέσω μουσικοθεραπευτικής διαβούλευσης

Lisa Margetts

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Αυτή η μελέτη διερεύνησε την προσβασιμότητα και την βιωσιμότητα του πρωτοκόλλου της μουσικοθεραπευτικής διαβούλευσης *Safe and Sound* για τους εκπαιδευτικούς της τάξης που επιθυμούν να βελτιστοποιήσουν τις σχέσεις με τους μαθητές σε μια σχολική μονάδα του Ηνωμένου Βασιλείου που παρέχει εξειδικευμένη εκπαίδευση για αυτιστικά παιδιά. Η θεωρία του Winnicott για το περιβάλλον κρατήματος πρόσφερε το πλαίσιο για ένα πρωτότυπο εργαλείο αξιολόγησης το οποίο υποστήριξε ένα πρόγραμμα ανάπτυξης προσωπικού με επίκεντρο τον αυτισμό. Πέντε συμμετέχοντες αξιολόγησαν τη συνηθισμένη μουσική τους αλληλεπίδραση με έναν μαθητή (πριν την παρέμβαση). Μετά το πρόγραμμα ανάπτυξης (παρέμβαση), οι συμμετέχοντες πραγματοποίησαν έξι βιντεοσκοπημένες συνεδρίες μουσικής με το ίδιο άτομο (μετά την παρέμβαση). Δύο αυτοεπιλεγόμενα αποσπάσματα, πριν και μετά την παρέμβαση, αξιολογήθηκαν από τους ίδιους με βάση το εργαλείο αξιολόγησης. Στη συνέχεια, οι συμμετέχοντες αναστοχάστηκαν σχετικά με τις εμπειρίες τους μέσω συνεντεύξεων. Τα ίδια δέκα τυχαιοποιημένα αποσπάσματα βίντεο αξιολογήθηκαν αντίστοιχα από 18 μουσικοθεραπευτές στο Ηνωμένο Βασίλειο. Τα ποιοτικά αποτελέσματα έδειξαν την εκπαίδευση των συμμετεχόντων κατά τη διάρκεια της μελέτης, επιτρέποντάς τους να συντονίζονται με τον μαθητή και να τον κρατούν στο μυαλό τους. Τα ποσοτικά αποτελέσματα έδειξαν την πραγματοποίηση αυτού μέσα από την προσαρμογή προς τον μαθητή μέσω συγκεκριμένων μουσικών δεξιοτήτων. Η μελέτη έδειξε ότι η θεωρία του Winnicott για το περιβάλλον κρατήματος θα μπορούσε να υποστηρίξει τη βελτιστοποίηση των σχέσεων εκπαιδευτικού-μαθητή στην τάξη. Το μικρό δείγμα αποτρέπει τη γενίκευση των αποτελεσμάτων και απαιτείται περαιτέρω έρευνα για τη διερεύνηση της ευρύτερης βιωσιμότητας του πρωτοκόλλου.

ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ

μουσικοθεραπεία, διαβούλευση, φάσμα αυτισμού, Winnicott, σχέση μαθητή-επαγγελματία, έρευνα μεικτών μεθόδων