Demographics

According to the Public Hearing of the Korean Music Therapy Association in December 2007, 688 music therapists graduated from 12 Music Therapy Graduate Schools since 1997. 45% of all music therapy practitioners are working with young children in various settings: Music Therapy Centers, Developmental Research Centers, Community Centers, Kindergarten and Schools, Hospitals, and Others.

Music therapists are serving children with physical injury and abuse, adopted children, divorced families, and multicultural families. In addition to music therapy in special education, the demand of serving children age birth to five years in general preschool settings is increasing.

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Representative of Asia

The creative approaches through music will be a method of awakening the unlimited potentials of young children.
Balkin (1985)
Background Information

Governmental recognition of music therapy as a healthcare profession is currently in progress. Federal regulation related to include music therapy in the special education laws is discussed. In the public hearing of December 2007, the Korean Ministry for Health, Welfare and Family Affairs suggested to the Korean Music Therapy Association to submit documentation describing the qualification and certification of Korean music therapists. The Association is diligently working on the approval. In 1997, Sookmyung Women’s University Graduate School started the Music Therapy Training Program with Dr. Byungchuel Choi. In its relatively short history, music therapy in Korea has developed exponentially and dramatically during the last twelve years. One of the contributions to such a development was the vivacious activity of having coordinated workshops and conferences with foreign professionals. More than 60 foreign professionals have participated in various workshops organized by Byungchuel Choi either in Korea or in the US.

Common Approaches

Music therapists in Korea are well educated. Many have extensive knowledge in general theories and philosophical frameworks. Music therapy approaches applied in early childhood music therapy include primarily Behavioral Music Therapy (Applied Behavior Analysis) and the Nordoff-Robbins Creative Music Therapy Model. Music therapy session include music listening, instrumental, and vocal improvisation. Music education approaches such as Orff Schulwerk, Kodaly, Dalcroze, Gordon’s theory and methods are also commonly used with young children.

Case Vignette

U-Young is a five-year-old boy, who is diagnosed with autism. He has many behavioral issues. When communicating, he uses a screaming voice. Through reflection of his means of communication in a song improvisation, the music therapists started to interact with him. Structured song activities with instrumental accompaniment assist him in controlling his behavior and evoke participation. Step by step he changes his vocal expression to a desirable communication.

Song/Activity

“Stop Right Now” is a very popular Korean children’s movement song written by the well-known composer Kim bang-ok.

The lyrics mean move around freely and stop. The structure of the song cues the children when to move and stop. This song is often used in music therapy sessions in Korea.

About the Panelist

Hye Won Chung has worked with young children with developmental disorders and families in various settings since 1999. She is a Ph.D. candidate, studying with Dr. Byungchuel Choi at the Sookmyung Women’s University, Seoul, Korea.

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Prominent Publications

The following selected master thesis provide an overview of the wide range of research conducted in Korea.


