A Music Therapist's Self-Reflection on her Aboriginal Heritage: A Heuristic Self-Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

A Music Therapist's Self-Reflection on her Aboriginal Heritage: A Heuristic Self-Inquiry

Sarah A. Bell

This heuristic inquiry explored a music therapist's reflection on her Métis heritage and how it might influence her personally. The first five stages of Moustakas' heuristic inquiry were used as the framework to guide the research. Data was gathered over a five-month period through reflections in the researcher's personal journal and audio recordings of her referential improvisations. Data analysis involved using Neuman's coding method (2003) to organize the raw data that emerged from her journal and audio recordings. The results section revealed that two main themes emerged from the data analysis: her thoughts around her Métis ancestral heritage and her identity as a musician. Personal, clinical and research implications are presented and discussed.

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I dedicate this research to my family and especially to my grandfather whose memory lives on.

"Music is God's gift to man, the only art of Heaven given to earth, the only art of earth we take to Heaven."-- Walter Savage

"If I should ever die, God forbid, let this be my epitaph: 'The only proof he needed for the existence of God was music.'"-- Kurt Vonnegut

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Chapter 1. Introduction

While I was in my early teens, my family was told by a distant relative who had been doing some genealogy work on the family that we had Métis (Cree and Scottish) ancestry. At this point in my life, I had no connection with this part of my heritage and this study provided the opportunity to research this part of my history. I was inspired to explore my family history through research as my sister, Gloria Bell, wrote her thesis on traditional beading done by Métis. Her thesis is entiteld (2013) *Oscillating Identities: Re-presentations of Métis in the Great Lakes Area in the Nineteenth-Century*.

One of my practicum sites within the Graduate Certificate in Music Therapy at Concordia University was at a men's shelter where I worked with Aboriginal clients. For my Master's degree practicum, I again pursued working with Aboriginal clients, this time at an Aboriginal women's shelter. While at the women's shelter I was invited by staff to join in the morning circle. This happened each morning and consisted of having all of the women who were staying at the shelter and staff stand in a circle and engage in a smudge. Often a prayer would be said to end the practice.[1] By attending the morning circle, I engaged in the Aboriginal healing practice of smudging. I was intrigued by the integration of Aboriginal healing practices in my practicum, and wanted to explore this further by identifying the ways in which Aboriginal healing and music therapy practices could be connected for me.

Personal and Professional Motivation for this Study

As a newly accredited music therapist, I wanted to become more self-aware with regard to my feelings about my relatively unexplored Métis heritage. My aim was for this self-awareness to help me become more aware of my own values, preconceived notions, and assumptions about human behaviour. I hoped to better understand the world views of my clients who share Métis/Aboriginal heritage, and who may have had a very different experience of it than I have had up to this point in time. Engaging in Aboriginal healing practices and reflecting on my own heritage through musical improvisation, I also

[1] Through personal communication with staff at the shelter I was told that a woman could not engage in a smudge if she was on her moon time, her menstrual cycle. She would be deemed "too powerful" if she engaged in a smudge. Moon time is seen as sacred in most Aboriginal cultures.

hoped to develop my self-awareness as a musician and ultimately my ability to be an effective, culturally-competent therapist in a context where I hope to work.

While literature explores how teachings experienced as a child affect one's role as a therapist, little attention is paid to adult cultural experiences. As an adult at the beginning of this project, I had no knowledge of Aboriginal healing philosophies and practices, and wanted to learn more.

Self-Awareness and Multicultural Competence

Being a self-aware and multiculturally competent therapist is essential for both the therapist's own personal development and the quality of care offered to clients (Brown, 2002; Camilleri, 2001; Dileo, 2000, Hays, 1996; Mahoney, 2015). Carl Rogers (1957) understood that it is only through the therapists' understanding of their clients' perception of the world that it is possible for clients to transform. Therapists are not just encouraged to be self-aware, they are held responsible for this development by their professional codes of ethics. Adding to the dialogue of ethical responsibility, Mahoney (2015) indicated that therapists need to be aware of their own biases and limitations.

Aboriginal Healing Philosophies: Balance and Ritual

In the Aboriginal tradition, each person is composed of physical, emotional, spiritual and mental elements. Aspects of self-awareness that are related to Aboriginal healing philosophies involve the Aboriginal belief that balance is required for being healthy and when things are out of balance, then health is compromised. A healed person in this sense refers to someone who has all four elements, physical, spiritual, mental and emotional, in balance with one another (Lavalée, 2007). The Medicine Wheel framework, drawn from the Aboriginal philosophy of healing tradition, reflects these (Locust, 1990 & Bopp, Bopp, Brown, & Lane, 1984).

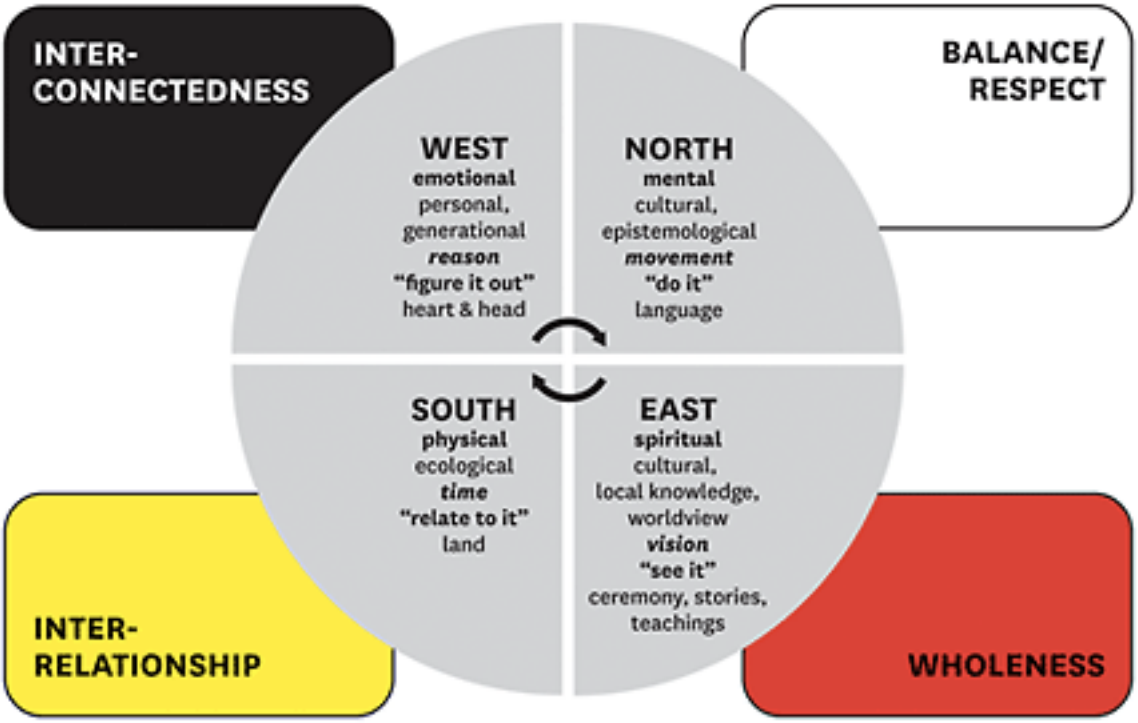

Figure 1. Medicine Wheel Teaching. Taken from J. Sanderson, *The Cree Way: Traditional paths to learning* (master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1991).

An Aboriginal belief is that people have the means to heal, and restore balance, within themselves. This idea that the means to heal are within a person allows a viewing of the person in a holistic way. Dicks (2014) wrote, "Healing from an Indigenous perspective is more than focusing on one area of being, but considers all aspects of the human being" (p. 34). The concept of a person equipped with the inherent strengths to lead to their own healing is also seen in Roger's (1957) person-centered theory. Similarly, a theory of balance is present in holistic music therapy as well; Bonny (1986) wrote that the goal of holistic medicine is to pursue the well-being of the total person. It means "that the total person - mind, body and spirit - must be brought to the 'healing table'" (p. 3).

Drawing from music therapy literature and Aboriginal tradition, the importance of self-awareness and multicultural competency is clear. It is these competencies which I am most interested in exploring, that may allow the music therapist to offer culturally sensitive and relevant interventions leading to client transformation.

Rationale for Study

Despite the many connections between music therapy and Aboriginal healing practices noted above, there remains a need for further research on multicultural music therapy (Vaillancourt, 2007; Yehuda, 2002). Within the context of this self-inquiry, I hope to contribute to the conversation on healing and music therapy. I resonate with Moreno's statement:

> There are many parallels between modern music therapy and the role of music in traditional cultures . . . parallels can be seen between the therapeutic uses of music in imagery to induce altered states of consciousness in music therapy practice and music to assist in triggering the trance state in shamanism and spirit possession . . . unfortunately, the music therapy profession has not made more than a token effort to understand and develop these connections. (2005, pp. 331-332)

There is a gap in the music therapy literature in that it does not include the voices of Aboriginal cultures. Kenny (2002) further clarifies the need for inclusion of Indigenous academics in music therapy dialogue. To bring about "honest and respectful post-colonial discourse with professional music therapists, we must hear more than the voices of non-indigenous academics (p. 9)." My research intends to inform this conversation by taking into account my voice as a Métis music therapist.

Despite the requirement in the Canadian Association of Music Therapy (CAMT) Code of Ethics (1994) for self-awareness and culturally competence, there is very little literature addressing music therapists doing this work, particularly in the realm of heuristic inquiry (Borgal, 2015). To my knowledge at the time of writing, only two heuristic inquiries of this nature have been published in the music therapy field (Borgal, 2015; Schenstead, 2012). Both researchers conducted research on their primary instruments. Schenstead (2012) heuristic study resulted in her feeling more self aware and connected to her main instrument, the flute. Borgal (2015) conducted a study involving the use of her voice, in end-of-life care. Her work concluded with her feeling more authentic as an individual and in her clinical role as a music therapist. Heuristic

inquiry is the ideal paradigm for my research, as gaining insight into my own thoughts and feelings is at the core of both my intention and this methodology.

Aboriginal Voices in Music Therapy

Given that multicultural competency and self-awareness are crucial parts of a music therapist's work, and that few music therapists with Aboriginal backgrounds have written about their personal perspectives on their culture and identity as music therapists, I hope to contribute to this small but existing dialogue and inspire others to do the same. To my knowledge, Tamara Dicks, and Carolyn Kenny are the only music therapy researchers who are both Indigenous and practicing music therapists in North America. Dicks (2014) informed the professional music therapy dialogue with her study that explored the role of drumming and song and their healing effects on Indigenous women's lives. Apart from music therapy, the literature indicated that Aboriginal creative arts therapists combined their knowledge of Aboriginal healing practices with their work as therapists (Dufrene, 1991), although there is a lack of documentation around which specific practices are being incorporated into their work.

As a music therapist, my cultural identity is directly related to how I interact with my clients. Therefore in order to best help my clients especially when working in cross-cultural situations, I need to know how I define myself with regards to my heritage. In discussing Aboriginality, Waldram (2009) described the concept of blood quantum as a "sometimes confusing notion that suggests that Aboriginality is related to biological heritage" (p. 57). As art therapist, Vivian (2013) stated 'I have the blood quantum to be considered Inuit but my knowledge of Inuit traditions and Inuit customs is extremely limited (p. 2). Like Vivian (2013), I too have the blood quantum to be considered Métis, yet my knowledge of Métis culture was non-existent at the start of this research.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to examine my emerging relationship as a music therapist with my Métis heritage through heuristic music self-reflective practices that incorporate Aboriginal healing practices.

Primary research question. What insights do I have about my Métis heritage when I engage in self-reflective music improvisation after engaging in the Aboriginal healing practice of smudging?

Assumptions and Delimitations

I entered into this research with the following assumptions, which I still hold. I assumed that it was important for music therapists to connect with their heritage even if it was not an implicit part of their upbringing. I assumed that a deeper understanding of my own Métis heritage would be important to my development as a music therapist. I assumed the music I created during my improvisations was of value to my: (a) professional development as a music therapist; (b) personal development; and, (c) development as a musician. Additionally, I believed that the CAMT's concept of spirituality within its definition of music therapy included Aboriginal healing and spirituality for Aboriginal clients. Finally, drawing on the music therapy literature and Aboriginal tradition, I entered into this study with the belief that combining self-awareness and multicultural competency would potentially help me as a music therapist to offer culturally-sensitive and relevant interventions.

The literature review was delimited to include broad Aboriginal healing philosophies and practices, as little was documented pertaining specifically to the Métis nation. The full heuristic method requires interviewing others about the phenomenon being studied. The methodology was delimited as I was the sole participant in this study and did not interview anyone else. The methodology was further delimited by not including Moustakas' heuristic 6th step due to time restrictions. The results section was delimited by not including reflections that felt too sensitive and/or private for me to share.

Key Terms

Self-awareness. "Self-awareness is a psychological state in which people are aware of their traits, feelings and behaviour. Alternately, it can be defined as the realization of oneself as an individual entity" (Crisp & Turner, 2010, p. 2).

Multicultural competence. Cultural competence is defined as a set of values, behaviours, attitudes, and practices within a system, organization, program, or among individuals, that enables them to work effectively cross-culturally. Further, it refers to the

ability to honour and respect the beliefs, language, interpersonal styles and behaviours of individuals and families receiving services, as well as staff who are providing such services. Striving to achieve cultural competence is a dynamic, ongoing, developmental process that requires a long-term commitment (Deboba, 1993).

Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal peoples refers to descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people — Indians, Métis, and Inuit. These are three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices, and spiritual beliefs.

For the purpose of this paper I have chosen the term Aboriginal when referring to healing philosophies and practices. I use it as a broad term and throughout the paper Aboriginal and Indigenous are used interchangeably. Authors cited throughout this paper have used the term Indigenous and thus with respect to them the term was not changed.

Indigenous peoples. The United Nations defines the term "indigenous" as a generic term and includes that people may use other terms such as Aboriginal or First Nations/Peoples to define this group. The United Nations bases the term "indigenous" on the following:

> (a) Self-identification as indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member; (b) Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies; (c) Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources; (d) Distinct social, economic or political systems; (e) Distinct language, culture and beliefs; (f) Form non-dominant groups of society; (g) Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities (United Nations: Permanent forum on Indigenous Issues [Fact sheet]).

Aboriginal healing philosophies/practices. Aboriginal healing philosophies/practices includes the practices of smudging, rituals, sweat lodges, talking circles, medicine wheel and vision quests. The philosophy of balance is a core part of one's health, balance of emotional, mental, physical and spiritual aspects (McCormick, 1996).

Métis. A "person who self identifies as Métis, is distinct from Aboriginal peoples, is of historic Métis Nation Ancestry and… is accepted by the Métis Nation" (Métis National Council, 2002). The Métis National Council further states:

> To register as a citizen of the Métis Nation, or for a parent to register a child as a citizen of the Métis Nation, a person must self-identify as Métis and provide proof of your identity with government-issued photo identification; and prove descent from the "historic Métis Nation" by undertaking a genealogy which traces your ancestry to a person who received Métis scrip or a Manitoba land grant or who identified as a "Half-Breed" in the 1901 Canadian census, other census or trading record: long form birth certificates or marriage certificates or baptismal records will assist in showing your connection to this ancestor (p. 2).

> **Music therapy.** Music therapy is the skillful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain, and restore mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Music has nonverbal, creative, structural, and emotive qualities. These are used in the therapeutic relationship to facilitate contact, interaction, self-awareness, learning, self-expression, communication, and personal development.
>
> (Canadian Association for Music Therapy, 1994).

Chapters Summary

This heuristic inquiry has been organized into five chapters. Chapter One includes my personal relationship to the topic, my assumptions, delimitations and scope of research as well as the primary research question, subsidiary questions, and key terms. Chapter Two is a literature review examining music therapists' self-awareness and multicultural competencies. Aboriginal healing philosophies as they are linked to music therapy and other creative arts therapies are also explored. Chapter Three outlines the research methodology: Moustakas' (1990) heuristic inquiry is articulated, along with the five steps used to conduct the research. Chapter Four presents the results and themes that emerged from the data. Chapter Five involves the discussion of the results, including implications for myself in personal and profession domains as well as broader clinical implications and recommendations for education and future research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Therapists and Multicultural Competence

Rogers (1957) wrote that for client transformation to happen the therapist must seek to understand the client's perception of the world, and that it is through the therapist's understanding and empathetic stance that the client transforms. The literature indicated that in order to achieve cultural competence, therapists need to look at their own beliefs and identity thereby coming to a deeper understanding of their identity as well as their clients' worldview (Brown, 2002; Hays, 1996; Dileo, 2000). Through her ADDRESSING model, Hays (1996) offered a tool for therapists to consider how their beliefs may affect their clients within sessions. This model encouraged therapists to be more aware of their beliefs around the following concepts: age, disability, religion, ethnicity, social status, sexual orientation, Indigenous heritage, national origin and gender. Authors who have written extensively in the field of multicultural counseling and therapy, Sue, Ivey, and Pederson (1996) provided a framework for cultural competence, involving three areas: (a) cultural awareness and beliefs, (b) cultural knowledge and (c) cultural skills. This framework encouraged therapists to use culturally-sensitive interventions, and to be aware of their own cultural background and their clients' cultural background. Sue et al. (1996) proposed that therapists become more self-aware by learning about their own stereotypes, values, and biases. Sue (2006) offered the following steps to help therapists improve their competency when working with ethnic minority clients: (a) Assess clients, making sure to take into account their clients' backgrounds including their culture, level of acculturation, and their perceptions and values; (b) If clients have not had therapy before, suggest pre-therapy interventions, the goal being to get clients accustomed to Western psychotherapy and what it can entail; (c) Approach sessions systematically, by forming and testing hypotheses, understanding resistance, and being aware of clients' potential discomfort; (d) Evaluate each therapy session by reflecting on what went well and assessing the therapeutic bond; (e) Consult with other professionals specifically about cultural norms, attitudes, and behaviors. Lastly, Sue (2006) encouraged therapists to have culture-specific knowledge, thereby adding to their own cultural competence. The cultural competence model by Sue et al. (1996) was critiqued by researchers for its emphasis on cultural differences rather than focusing on

links between cultures. Additionally, the model's efficacy for both therapists and clients was questioned due to a lack of evidence. The cultural competence model also presented culture as constant, and failed to incorporate thinking about culture as a continuum that can change with time (Abrams & Moio, 2009; Carpenter-Song & Longhofer, 2007; Tervalon & Murray Garcia, 1998). Sue (2006) responded the conceptual framework for cultural competency is mainly philosophical and lacks operational definitions and practical ways of measuring if a therapist is actually culturally competent (p. 238).

Therapists and Cultural Humility: An Extension of Cultural Competence

Cultural humility has been identified as an additional and necessary component to interact effectively with clients. Cultural competence is defined as

> [a continuous] process that requires humility as individuals continually engage in self-reflection and self-critique as life-long learners and reflective practitioners. It is a process that requires humility in how physicians bring into check the power imbalances that exist in the dynamics of physician-patient communication by using patient-focused interviewing and care. And it is a process that requires humility to develop and maintain mutually respectful and dynamic partnerships with communities on behalf of individual patients and communities in the context of community-based clinical and advocacy training models. (Tervalon & Murray-Garcia, 1998, p. 118)

The idea of cultural humility is linked to that of cultural safety, a term originating from the Indigenous viewpoint of Maori nurses. Willams (1999) described cultural safety as an open and respectful working environment where people share, learn from one another and there is an acceptance of one another for who they are and the needs they might have. Williams further emphasized that in the environment people listen with attentiveness to one another and treat one another with dignity.

Cleary and Schweitzer (2015) concluded that for therapists to be effective and offer clinically-ethical services, they must be must be culturally competent, culturally humble, and demonstrate cultural safety. Combined, these elements offer therapists a culturally-informed way of providing effective services to clients.

Music Therapists and Cultural Competence

The CAMT (1994) established expectations requiring music therapists to evaluate how their experiences, attitudes, culture, beliefs, values, and care social context, individual differences, and stresses influence their interactions with others, and integrate this awareness into all efforts to benefit and not harm others. The CAMT professional competency documents indicates that music therapists should be self-aware and evaluate how their culture affects their experience and interactions with others (1994). This document additionally indicates that self-awareness is not only a private and professional obligation when interacting with clients; the therapist must act in accordance with her or his ethical code in the public sphere as well. The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) professional competencies maintains that the therapist recognize must recognize their own emotions, attitudes and responses within the therapy process (2011). Therapists must also demonstrate a cultural awareness regarding sexual orientation, sex, race, age and disability. Furthermore, the AMTA indicates the need for the therapist to be effective in sessions by being authentic and empathic. The AMTA also has an advanced competency document noting that for therapists to best facilitate the clients' progress in therapy, therapists must use their self-awareness, utilize personal self-reflection and identify and be aware of their personal issues. Regarding multicultural competencies, therapists must be aware of how therapy is viewed in various cultures and more specifically how music therapy is viewed in cultures other than one's own (AMTA, 2011).

Music therapists are additionally encouraged to "engage in self-care activities which help to avoid and alleviate conditions (e.g., burnout, addictions) that could result in impaired judgment and interfere with their ability to benefit and not harm others" (p. 10). These competencies point out the need for therapists to engage in activities to reflect on their cultural beliefs, which is an aspect of self-care that has the potential to minimize harm when working with clients of different cultures. To this end, Brown (2002) encouraged music therapists to ask the following questions of their clients and themselves: "What are your values and beliefs? What cultural teachings have you experienced? How might these teachings affect your practice as a music therapist?" (para. 18). These questions invite the music therapist to reflect on cultural influences that have been with them from a young age.

Music Therapists and Self-Awareness

Camilleri (2001) noted that music therapists' increased self-awareness results in personal development, which then enhances the level of care being offered to clients. She added that self-awareness helps music therapists to be natural and authentic in their interactions with clients. The music therapist's authenticity is represented by her or his physical presence as well as in the music. Furthermore, this authenticity helps music therapists to be therapeutically beneficial and may result in therapists feeling empathetic towards their clients (pp. 81-82). Along these lines, music therapist Dicks (2014) mentioned her heritage in her graduate thesis and discussed how in her adult life she explored her heritage through attending drumming workshops and cultural events. William and Fauth confirmed the value of this type of research in their 2005 study, which found that therapists who reported being self-aware in sessions resulted in their clients rating them as being more helpful to them in sessions (p. 378). This study confirmed that therapist self-awareness has the potential to directly impact client experience. Music therapist Bruscia (1986) included self-awareness as an advanced competency for advanced level and graduate training music therapists. He articulated that therapists who work through their personal issues and engage in self-reflection obtain greater self-awareness, which benefits clients. Cultural awareness is an extension of self-awareness and thus must be sought after by music therapists.

Musical self-awareness. Music is the main medium in which music therapists interact with their clients. Music therapist and researcher Camilleri (2001) discussed how being aware of herself has lead to a change in her music. She wrote:

> Music has become integral to the way I interact with my patients because I have allowed it to reflect me and to act as a bridge. There is now a more direct and conscious connection on my part between myself, my music, the music of the patient, and my patient. My presence and interventions are now more genuine and authentic because they are based on a more refined representation of who I am. (p. 81)

Camilleri (2001) argued that the music that music therapists create within sessions represents who they are. The music they create is an extension of their ability to

navigate their self-awareness, thus music coming from a self-aware music therapist would be open, spacious, welcoming, and inclusive.

Multicultural Music Therapy Literature

Aigen (2005) wrote that within cultural music styles cultural lies the culture itself, and that to engage in a cultural musical style is to participate in the attitudes and values which characterize the culture. On the essence of culture and music therapy theory, Aigen (2014) and Stige (2002) posited culture is contained within music. *Culture-specific music therapy* is the recognition of music therapy in culture and that both therapist and client have cultural identities. Chase's (2003) review of multicultural music therapy literature acknowledged the need and inclusion for multicultural training in training programs. Her research highlighted the need for practitioners to have resources for music therapy sessions with multicultural clients.

Adding to the practitioner view, Goodman (2015) wrote the role of multiculturalism in music therapy is crucial as the profession of music therapy grows in North America and around the world. One avenue toward a therapist's greater awareness of multiculturalism is to study oneself in this context. While many music therapy traditions assert the value of self-awareness, there is an explicit emphasis on cultural implications (Priestley, 1994; Kim, 2013). Analytic music therapists attend; *intertherapy,* a type of music therapy session for themselves, with the goal of gaining greater self-awareness and competence as a practitioner. While some (Brown, 2002; Froman,2009) have noted the scarcity of literature examining professional music therapy practices in multi-cultural contexts, Goodman's (2015) multivolume work entitled *International Perspectives in Music Therapy Education and Training: Adapting to a Changing World* has added substantially to this field.

Aboriginal Healing Philosophies and Practices: A Broad Review

Aboriginal healing philosophies. When discussing Aboriginal healing philosophies and practices in detail, it must be acknowledged that they are difficult to define. Robbins & Dewar (2011) noted that it is difficult to define exactly what Aboriginal philosophies and practices consist of due to the oral tradition of First Nations cultures. They additionally acknowledged that Aboriginal cultures are diverse in Canada.

McCormick (1996) recognized the diversity of Aboriginal cultures and added that therapists who work with Aboriginal clients must also take into consideration the clients' relationship with their Aboriginal culture. He urged therapists to be aware of their clients potential adaptation to Western culture and the negative/positive experiences associated with both Aboriginal and Western cultures.

A common Aboriginal philosophy is that each person is responsible to seek help for their own healing (Locust, 1998). Moodley, Sutherland and Oulanova (2008) added "…when clients seek the help of a traditional healer they are in a position to address their spiritual, physical, emotional, or mental wellbeing in one consultation or with the same healer" (p. 156). Adding to these perceptions of healing, McCormick (1996) wrote that the First Nations perspective of healing involves a balance of the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical aspects of a person. This concept of balance derives from the Aboriginal healing philosophy of the Medicine Wheel, which represents the four elements separately and as a whole. Transcendence is central to the goal of healing for First Nations people. Transcendence in the First Nations healing context is related to the ego (Lafromboise, Trimble, & Mohatt, 1990). My personal understanding of the ego is that the ego is related to the concept of how you view yourself, your identity. Thus healing in a First Nations context in my understanding could look like coming to a new view of how you see yourself.

Aboriginal healing practices. Aboriginal healing practices include: using the eagle feather to speak within a group context while others listen, and use of a purification ceremony (smudging) where traditional medicines (sweet grass, tobacco, cedar, sage) are burned in a shell and each person can cup the smoke from the shell and put the smoke over their eyes, ears, head and body (Heilbron & Guttman, 2000). Hunter, Logan, Goulet and Bartons (2006) provided further examples of healing practices for First Nations people including smudging, talking circles, drumming circles, and sweat lodges. They concluded with the following thoughts: "Their use (Aboriginal healing practices) contributed to self-awareness and following a cultural path, which fostered self-determination through choice and empowerment" (p. 19).

Aboriginal Healing Practices in Contrast to Western Healing Practices

The goal of healing within a First Nations context seems to have a different connotation than within Western contexts. Understanding the previous sentence is imperative for therapists working with clients who are First Nations as the way they view healing might be contrasted with the way the therapist views healing for their client.

In an issue prepared for a national Aboriginal women's summit, the Native Women's Association of Canada (2007) recommended that when using traditional healing methods they encourage people to:

> Conduct research that is specific to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women healers and healing; Understand and communicate that it is disrespectful and hurtful when traditional healing is misused, especially by non-Aboriginal people; Respect the intellectual property of traditional healers and their medicines; Research how traditional healing can be effectively combined with other health services (Native Women's Association of Canada, 2007, p. 3-4).

Music therapy and Aboriginal healing philosophies. Dufrene (1991) provided the following definition of healing from an Aboriginal perspective. She wrote that traditional healing is effective in treatment in psychological, social, and spiritual domains. She emphasizes that healing in an Aboriginal perspective not only focuses on the individual but takes into account their community as well (p. 125).

In contrast to the Indigenous perspective, the Western perspective of psychotherapy emphasizes the individual and involves "explicit talk about the person's thoughts, feelings and emotions to affect change" (Kirmayer, 2007, p. 233). Furthermore:

> [because] the declared aim of psychotherapy is usually the alleviation of psychological distress, psychotherapy, even of severe pathology, always involves subtler normative questions of how to live the good life. Thus, the goals of psychotherapy are tied to the cultural concept of the person. In North America, these goals are framed in terms of a rhetoric of self-fulfillment and individual accomplishment ... In western psychotherapy, the symbolic meanings of distress are to be sought within the individual, in his personal history and idiosyncratic view of the world. (p. 248-249)

There is little research done in the area of music therapy and Aboriginal healing philosophies though there are connections between them. Music is intrinsic to Aboriginal

healing philosophies and practices, and is regarded as having spiritual properties (Archibald, 2012). Linked to this, the CAMT Code of Ethics asserted that music therapy can address spiritual needs of clients (1994). Music therapist, Moreno (1995) observed that in both music therapy and traditional healing there is a "common element of music that serves as a symbol of the healing power of the practitioner" (p. 331). Music therapist and Aboriginal scholar, Kenny looked at rituals as a specific element of Aboriginal healing philosophies. Kenny (2012) discussed the concept of ritual in relation to music therapy: "Ritual reminds us of our place in the order of all things. Music reminds us. The four elements in ritual and music that encourage harmonic insight are: 1) patterns, 2) processes, 3) images, and 4) symbols" (p. 1447). Kenny referred to the music therapist as someone who maintains rituals and "...plays a supportive role and presents a simple ritual structure which will serve as an inspiration for the patients to accomplish their own healing" (p. 1333). Rituals facilitate the clients' healing processes within both Aboriginal and music therapy contexts. The concept of four elements further mirrors the Medicine Wheel (Figure 1) in Aboriginal healing philosophies and rituals (Oulanova & Moodley, p. 352), people are composed of four elements (mental, social, emotional and physical) just as music is (Kenny, 2012, p. 1765).

Dufrene (1991) observed that in the majority of First Nations healing rituals, music is used. If the therapist is unaware of how the client views music, and specific instruments (e.g. drums) they would miss the associations that the client has with music, and thus potentially be an ineffective and unethical therapist. Aboriginal scholar and music therapist Kenny (1982) discussed elements of Aboriginal healing philosophies and made connections between music therapy and these philosophies. For example, like some music therapy sessions, aboriginal healing philosophies are ritualistic. Furthermore, the concept of clients accomplishing their own healing is common between some music therapy approaches and also fits within one of the Aboriginal belief systems as documented by Locust (1990). Kenny further discussed the role of women and guidelines in the Native community. She wrote that women are seen as the 'guardians of morality' (p. 239-240). She encouraged women to know themselves, honour the gifts the Creator has given, stay in balance, show respect, and lastly, stand tall. Knowing yourself (self-

awareness) is both a music therapy competency and concept that is embraced in Aboriginal healing philosophies.

The Aboriginal healing philosophy as noted in Chapter One, involving viewing the person in a holistic framework, is also seen in music therapy. Amir (1996) described the music therapist taking into account that a person is made up of physiological, mental, spiritual and emotional parts. Guided Imagery and Music therapist Helen Bonny (1986) wrote that "the total person-mind, body and spirit-must be brought to the 'healing table" (Bonny, 1996, p. 3). Elements of Aboriginal healing philosophies and practices appear in music therapy methodologies and interventions. These philosophies will be further discussed in relation to other creative arts therapies and art therapy specifically in the section which follows.

Creative Arts Therapies and Aboriginal Healing Philosophies. A number of creative arts therapists have made links between the creative arts therapies and Aboriginal healing. Archibald, Dewar, Reid and Stevens (2012) stated that

> For Aboriginal people, traditional arts, culture, spirituality, and healing were, and are, interconnected. While there are many similarities between Western and Indigenous approaches to the creative arts and healing, this is one of the most significant differences. Indigenous approaches include arts and culture in a holistic model of healing that encompasses the physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual world. (p. 7)

Dufrene (1991) presented the differences between creative arts therapies and traditional Aboriginal healing beliefs, though there seems to be an emergent trend seeking to bring the two together. She asserted creative arts therapists are drawn to traditional Aboriginal healing due to the Aboriginal healer's use of artistic methods including singing, drumming, sand paint, and mask carving (p. 128). While she encouraged creative arts therapists to learn about traditional healing techniques, she advised caution. Therapists should be cautious when using creative arts with clients due to the cultural associations that may exist. Specifically for music therapists, Moreno (1988) wrote that using the clients' own cultural music may evoke more than "ordinary musical and extra musical associations" (1988, p. 27).

Vivian (2013) explored incorporating the Medicine Wheel into her art therapy practice, thereby developing an eclectic approach. She further discussed the importance of proceeding in therapy sessions with caution and respect stating that art therapists should not take the place of a shaman nor use traditional Aboriginal healing methods.

> If the art therapist is working with an Aboriginal person who is seeking a traditional healing technique, the clients should be referred to a traditional healer, shaman or medicine person. (p. 39)

Art therapist and Aboriginal scholar Phoebe Dufrene (1991) discussed creative arts therapies and explored in her work how she seeks to use Aboriginal healing and creative arts therapies; although she does not say specifically how she achieves that balance, she does note that she works in this model.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Situating the research

Heuristic research methodology was developed by Moustakas, using a word derived from the original Greek word heuriskein, meaning "to discover or to find" (Moustakas, 1990). Moustakas wrote that the heuristic process refers to an internal search where one uncovers the nature or meaning of experience and that this process may involve "creative self-processes and self-discoveries" (p.9). Bruscia (1998) described the internal search as reflective self-inquiries/practice where the therapist uses any form of contemplation or reflexive study aimed at understanding her or his own attitudes, beliefs, and emotions. Specific techniques include: studying client logs, reflecting on one's own professional journal, writing a musical autobiography, doing a construct analysis, doing an introject analysis, and miscellaneous other recommendations, such as seeking supervision, experiencing one's own form of music psychotherapy regularly and nurturing one's musical self (Bruscia, 1998). The heuristic method was the ideal fit for my study, as I wanted my research to reflect self-inquiry as well as include creative findings and reflections on creative self-reflective practices.

The current research closely followed the traditional steps of heuristic inquiry:

1) Initial Engagement
2) Immersion
3) Incubation
4) Illumination
5) Explication

I chose to remove the sixth step, creative synthesis, due to time restrictions. Additionally, the creative output that was an inherent part of my immersion phase felt complete to me as a creative representation of my process.

Validity

Moustakas (1990) defined validity in heuristic research by posing the following question, "Does the ultimate depiction of the experience derived from one's own rigorous, exhaustive self-searching and from the explications of others present comprehensively, vividly, and accurately the meanings and essences of the experience?" (p. 32). While the following is not a part of heuristic inquiry, in order to achieve an

accurate representation of my experience, I consulted with Aboriginal scholars through email to edit my thesis at the end of my study. The Aboriginal scholars were not participants in my research. Consultation was sought regarding the depiction of Aboriginal philosophies and beliefs. I felt this necessary, as people who are not from Aboriginal cultures might not know many of the beliefs and customs of this culture. Consultation also helped ease my worries around this study being perceived as culturally appropriating, as I was seeking to bring others into my work and not to exploit or depict wrongfully customs and beliefs of which I knew little.

In this heuristic research I, as both researcher and participant, made the final judgement of the validity of this study. As my research dealt with personal family history, and the dissemination of results not only affected me but my family as well, I spoke with my sister about our family heritage and discussed with her what would be the most accurate and honouring way to communicate my experience around it.

In addition to consultation with Aboriginal scholars and my family, I consulted regularly with my research supervisor to ensure the integrity of my data analysis.

Participant

I was the sole participant in this study.

Materials

The materials used in the research included the researcher's personal journal and the following instruments: piano, oboe, accordion, violin, and, voice. For smudging, sweetgrass, cedar, a shell, and matches were used. A laptop with the appropriate software was used to make recordings of improvisations.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Initial engagement. The first five phases of Moustakas' heuristic inquiry guided my research. Though my proposal was accepted in March of 2015, my initial engagement with the research began earlier in September 2014, where I had my music therapy practicum at the Native Women's Shelter of Montréal. It was at this site that I began exploring the Aboriginal healing practice of smudging. I also met women who were drummers and who shared songs and stories of their people; I learned about the sacredness of the drum in their different Aboriginal cultures. These experiences were the beginning of my exploration of Aboriginal healing practices and philosophies and this is

when I became more involved in thinking about my own identity as a Métis person and the Aboriginal world view and my identity as a music therapist.

Immersion. The second phase, immersion, involved three steps: 1) engaging in the Aboriginal healing practice of smudging; 2) singing and playing whatever instrument I was intuitively led to; and, 3) writing about the experience in my personal journal to synthesize my feelings and thoughts.

Journal entries were written immediately after musical improvisations with the following instruments on the dates below:

1. May 12/15 -- Piano
2. June 16/17 -- Violin
3. June 26/15 -- Accordion
4. September 30/15 -- Oboe
5. October 19/15 -- Piano

Incubation. The third phase, incubation, involved ceasing the practices of improvisations and smudging, and not reading or listening to any of the improvisations or journal entries I had done to this point. In this way, I took a break from research and made a conscious effort to focus solely on my clinical work as a music therapist.

Illumination. The fourth phase, illumination, involved using the first phase of Neuman's (2003) coding analysis by reading through my personal journals several times and compiling all relevant quotes and feelings in one document. In accordance with my assumptions about valuing my creative output, I listened to my musical improvisations and wrote in my personal journal about both the musical qualities of the improvisations and the thoughts that came to me as I listened to them. I next read through my reflections on my music improvisations and compiled all quotes, feelings and images that emerged from the data into the document previously referred to.

Explication. Open coding was used to identify themes relating to my research question (Neuman, 2003 [see Appendix A]). Axial coding (see Appendix B) was used to further organize the themes and categorize the document into sections. Selective coding helped identify the two main themes that emerged from the data. Quotations and images from my journal were used to further link and organize these sections.

Chapter 4. Results

The primary question of the research was: What insights do I have about my Métis heritage when I engage in self-reflective music improvisation after engaging in the Aboriginal healing practice of smudging? The following are the themes that emerged from the data to answer these questions. The quotations included in this chapter are taken from my personal journal.

From Fear to Trust: Thoughts around my Ancestral Heritage

Métis heritage: Messy and jumbled. Data analysis revealed my fear in participating in this research; I was particularly worried about how others would perceive the work I was doing. Data analysis further found that the first three improvisations of music I created were "reflective of how I felt about my identity with regards to my heritage, messy and jumbled." I was anxious about the phrase "cultural appropriation" and wondered if people might think I was participating in cultural appropriation through my research. Perhaps most poignantly, this fear stemmed primarily from my physical appearance as I do not have typical Aboriginal features and I was afraid that people would think that I did not have a right to do this self-heuristic inquiry from a Métis perspective. Another knowing emerged through the data: an intuitive awareness that it is natural for me to have "messy and jumbled" feelings and thoughts around my ancestral background.

Smudging: No one can tell you who you are. After smudging and improvising, I wrote the following in my journal: "Seeking after one's identity is not meant to be done alone" and "community can reflect who you are." I also wrote "Surround yourself with beauty and you will become it" and "There is an inherent longing in my soul for beauty." On the fear and worries I had about doing this research I wrote, "No one can tell you who are, you have to decide, claim it, become one with it." These ideas speak to my actively seeking answers to Who am I? While I have sought others help on this journey, I am the only one who can decide how to define myself and claim my identity.

Regarding the act of smudging I felt "anointed," and the "cedar felt purifying." In my journal I wrote about my smudging experience at the Aboriginal Women's Shelter where after a smudge a woman would read a prayer. One part of the prayer always stood out to me and it had to do with asking the Great Spirit to help us from ourselves, and the

idea that “I am my own worst enemy.” I also wrote that the “smudge felt peaceful and grounding” and that the act of smudging helped me to “let whatever needs to come out come out.” Smudging for me was powerful spiritual and ritualistic act. I found it helped me to accept and allow myself to simply be.

Allowing Myself to be Present in the Music, Respecting my Inner Being

Music connects to different parts of my self. Data analysis uncovered that different characteristics of my self were revealed when I played different instruments during my improvisations. The piano was the first instrument I learned and I wrote “playing piano felt like home.” I am a shy person, yet on the piano I reflected I felt I had a “commanding presence.” Reflecting on playing oboe, I wrote it “feels like an old friend you come back to.” I reflected on how I felt about my heritage, writing that I need to “follow my heart” with the research and that instead of judging myself and worrying what others thought that I needed to “Be kind to yourself, be gentle with yourself.” When I think of an old friend I think of love, acceptance and encouragement. If the oboe (audio improvisation) could speak (as an old friend would) I imagine the music would reveal encouragement as represented in “follow my heart,” and “be kind to yourself.” Data analysis highlighted how important music is to me and that musical improvisations reveal insights about how I am doing internally.

This material led to the recognition that I do not fully acknowledge how important playing music is to me as I so often play music for others and to others and not for myself. This seems an importance experience for me to learn that while I take care of my clients I also need to take care of myself, and one of these ways is to make time to improvise. The data further illuminates my identity as a musician with the following quotations, “playing piano felt like home” and that “playing music nourishes me.”

Engaging with my inner musical child. The data revealed that studying music has changed my perception of what I think music is. My audio recordings revealed dissonance and a willingness to play what I perceived as “ugly” sounds. The fact that I played these sounds without judgement, without worrying how I may be perceived reveals to me that I have come a long way from being the shy second oboe player in orchestra, so afraid to make mistakes or anything other than “perfect” sounds.

The data also revealed that I have a musical child within me, waiting to get out and needing to be nurtured. I wrote about playing like a child, that my playing sounded like a "kid playing an instrument." At times I had an image of a "baby learning to walk." The data highlighted a sense of "child-like humour,"

My role as a music therapist: Acceptance and trust. Dialoguing with the data found improvising on the violin to reflect my role as a music therapist; I wrote after playing, "acceptance with where I'm at, take the client where they are at." My journal contained other feelings I had while improvising including "uninhibited joy" on accordion. Along with joy came "frustration" on the violin, an instrument I am learning at the moment. When using my voice I reflected in my journal "I felt grounded and earthy, it felt natural for me to add my voice.

An important recognition about my desire to trust in the music therapy process emerged during data analysis. I wrote "trust in the process, search out the places of dissonance and you will find truth, there is truth in my voice, there is depth here, ancient and primal." I realize it is one thing to acknowledge there is truth in my voice, yet this truth also needs to coincide with trusting myself, and making time to explore and create. As a new music therapist I find I doubt my self and I sometimes wonder if I have made the right career choice, these improvisations and interactions with my clients thus far have taught me that there is "beauty in the journey, beauty in the uncovering" and that I need to "trust in the process, trust in my abilities and trust in myself."

Along with truth, the data revealed the longing in my soul for beauty. These two are entwined in the data: one cannot be without the other. The concept of beauty, I believe, is inherent in my music therapy work. My perception of the work that I do is bringing beauty into places where there is not always beauty apparent. Settings like nursing homes can be at times distressing, with people suffering. Perhaps like the beauty within me, within settings where there is suffering there is also beauty struggling to be revealed for the world to see. I think as humans, suffering is inevitable and naturally we are drawn to light and beauty, and the purpose of life is to seek beauty and to find it in ourselves and others.

Affirming my connection: Scottish heritage. The audio recordings confirmed my connection with my Scottish roots. The improvisation on June 16/15 on violin had a

Celtic lilt, “back to my roots where I felt connected.” Growing up I Highland danced from ages 5 to 18, and I also visited Scotland when I was 14. These experiences made me feel connected to my Scottish roots, which I mainly identify with prior to this research project. While this research project is now finished, this statement is still true. I include this section because my research question related to how I feel about my ancestral identity. In Chapter One I described how my Métis heritage was not an explicit part of my bringing, however, my Scottish heritage was an explicit part of my upbringing, in which I learned traditional dancing and visited Scotland. Part of the reason for this study was to develop my self-awareness about how I felt about my ancestral heritage, and it is important for me to note how I feel about my heritage that I feel the most connected to.

Can’t rush your healing. The data analysis confirmed my belief that identity is not something that can be rushed, it needs to be nourished and sought after. My improvisations were reminiscent of Appalachian Springs by Aaron Copeland. I have always loved this work, the open spaces and the playfulness of which it is composed. I find Copeland’s work peaceful. This work sounds like how I feel about my identity.

A song by one of my favorite singer-songwriters, Trevor Hall, entitled “You Can’t Rush Your Healing” was present during my research process. These words are especially true with how I feel about my identity. As someone with mixed heritage it has at times felt difficult to make sense of. The idea of healing to me means that healing brings about change and can result in someone feeling more comfortable in their own skin. I realize that conceptualizing one’s identity is process and cannot be rushed.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Limitations

Given the heuristic methodology, this study's results are limited, and: (a) Reflect my personal insights and perspectives, which likely have variable levels of direct relevance for potential readers; and, (b) May not result in practical applications of how Aboriginal healing philosophies may be used in music therapy intervention contexts.

Personal Implications

Identifying that smudging helped me to feel grounded and calm and has made me feel more connected to my Métis roots. While I am not currently working with clients from the Aboriginal population, engaging in smudging helped me to reflect on my work at the Aboriginal Women's shelter and solidified my belief that engaging in traditional teachings has incredible value for people who are seeking out their Aboriginal ancestral heritage. Listening to my audio recordings also reaffirmed my strong connection with my Celtic roots.

Regarding this, one image I had while listening to the recordings of my musical improvisation stands out; a Two Row Wampum. Yamamoto (2013) wrote:

> The Two Row Wampum symbolizes how two nations should relate to one another and that the two row wampum is the first covenant of peace, friendship and perpetuity between the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch. The two purple rows that give the belt its name represent the Haudenosaunee in their canoe and the Dutch in their ships, traveling side by side down the River of Life, respecting each others' laws, cultures, and worldviews, and working together to protect their shared environment. The three white bands represent peace, friendship and perpetuity, which are three principles routinely referred to in subsequent treaties by the Haudenosaunee. (p. 18)

Perhaps this image represents how I feel about holding two cultures in one hand; I am of both European and Métis heritage. The two can coexist within me and there may be times when I feel more connected to one part of my heritage and that is fine and good. This statement speaks to some of the fear I had upon first embarking on this study: I wondered if after this study if I would feel more connected to my Métis roots. I have since recognized that there is no timeline on identity. Another image I had was a stream

opening to a river; now at the end of this study I think I have become the stream opening into the river, with a fuller sense of who I am, my identity, and what that encompasses.

Professional Implications

I embarked on this study to become more self-aware as a music therapist with the aim of better helping my clients. Through this research, I have learned that it is a crucial aspect of my own self-care to both write in a journal and make music. My audio recordings held a lot of depth and required listening, writing, and analyzing to make sense of them, thus in the future I will make time for this experience. I have also come to believe that music is an extension of myself and therefore I need to value it and treat it with respect. Through this research and my own personal therapy during the course of this study, I have also learned that I understand aspects of myself through music and where words fail to convey what I am trying to get across, I say it with music. Reflecting upon my relationship with music, the end of this study, and my first six months of working as a music therapist I wrote:

Music helps me to feel like myself
In places that are new with people I don't know
Music is an old friend of mine
We journey on this life together

Acknowledging that identity is a life-long process has helped me to be more compassionate with clients who are seeking answers related to "Who am I?" Additionally, as I have worked through this question and still have questions, I know in the future that it might bring up countertransference issues that are imperative for me to be aware of and which I am now better equipped to successfully navigate.

This inquiry has helped me to be intentional about engaging with my Aboriginal roots through the traditional practice of smudging. I have learned that I find smudging "peaceful, purifying, and grounding." All of these descriptors are elements I would like to bring with me as a music therapist into a session with clients. Having learned that I find smudging to have a grounding element for me helps me to become aware of effects it might have for my clients who engage in smudging. In the future, should I work with Aboriginal clients or should clients instigate smudging, I will feel more comfortable and be able to partake and lead a client in this practice as I have done it for myself.

Additionally, this study has helped me to become aware of counsellors who integrate Aboriginal traditional healing practices in their sessions, e.g. taking a client outside into nature, using an eagle feather, and using Medicine Wheel teachings for an integrative and holistic approach (Oulanova & Moodley, 2010). I, too, may partake in my own smudging before a session as part of my own self-care.

Lastly, this study has helped me to try and view myself and the music I create non-judgementally. I hope the acceptance of myself and where I am at with regards to my Aboriginal heritage will help me to be even more compassionate toward my clients who may struggle with similar themes. I hope to continue in this self-reflective work in the future to continue to understand what these discoveries mean for me and for my clients. The following quotation by Métis leader Louis Riel sums up this process for me, "My people will sleep for one hundred years, but when they awake, it will be the artists who give them their spirit back." I am one of these artists.

Professional Implications: Future Research

Initially my research included a subsidiary question: How might insights gained during engaging in the Aboriginal healing practice of smudging influence my development as a music therapist regarding self-awareness and cultural competence as they relate to me as a practitioner? Due to the nature of the research, it felt natural for me to focus solely on my primary research question. While this research brings up awareness around this subsidiary question it does not answer it. This study is not stagnant and is not limited to how long it took to complete this thesis. As I reflected earlier there is no timeline on identity, there is also no timeline on this research, and I will continue to engage with these questions and insights brought up through this study. Currently, I am keeping the possibility of further research in the back of my mind, perhaps in the future I will write about this initial subsidiary question.

Implications for Music Therapists

This study affirms the value of cultural heuristic inquiry, and could therefore motivate other music therapists to do this self-reflective work for themselves, to explore their ancestral roots and see what is there for them, particularly if they were not immersed in that culture growing up. Perhaps other music therapists who have roots in cultures with traditional healing practices could also engage and contribute to this dialogue.

My project may motivate more research that makes connections between music therapy and Aboriginal healing traditions, and/or other Indigenous healing practices; it is time that multiple voices other than those of male Europeans are heard. As many of our clients are of diverse cultures, including of Aboriginal ancestry, it is important that music therapists have the right tools and empathetic words to offer culturally-competent and ethical practice. Additionally, my study might encourage music therapy educators to involve specific music therapy practices that involve the greater community of worldwide Aboriginal healing traditions. Furthermore, my research might encourage educators to be more mindful of the ways they teach and/or include these practices.

In the Introduction, I wrote that in its definition of music therapy, the CAMT notes that music therapy has the ability to address the spiritual needs of clients. Given that the CAMT indicates that music therapy has the potential to address the spiritual needs of clients, it is essential that more research is done in this area about defining spirituality, and specifically researching Aboriginal healing philosophies and practices and the way they effect client spirituality.

Closing Thoughts

Prior to engaging in this study, I talked with elder Morning Star at Concordia University. She advised me "You are exactly where you need to be at this time." I found her calm presence and words helped me to feel at ease and I felt blessed into this work since that conversation. Since that talk, I recognized that I wanted to honor my grandfather's memory and my inner child through research. Now at the end of this research I feel my inner child was honoured through listening to her, allowing her to speak, and accepting what was she had to say to me.

Stepping into the unknown space of my identity for this study required bravery on my part, to keep going and to be honest in my reflections and experiences. I did not know what to expect upon starting this project: I hoped I would feel more connected to my Métis heritage; in some ways that desire was achieved, and in some ways it was not. In my journal I wrote about community reflecting who you are and that seeking after one's identity is not meant to be alone. Due to the nature of this research and the fact that it was individual, I had no Métis community around me. I'm hopeful that in the future I will be part of a community and thus I may feel more connected to this part of my heritage. The

data analysis procedure also brought up my complicated history with music. At times I loved studying music and at other times I hated it and I felt like the joy was taken out of it. I think honesty with oneself is the greatest gift we can give ourselves. It is with this hope that I do this work. I have realized that I have been taking for granted that clients will come to sessions, face their fears, and be open with themselves. This study helped me to empathize with my clients when they are invited in therapy to go places they might not necessarily want to go. This research also affirmed for me that I meet with my true self when I pursue places of dissonance, places of messy and jumbled places, and places of fear. Surely seeking out these places is the path to one's own healing. I look forward to continuing to reflect on what I've learned through this research and embracing my identity as both a musician and Métis music therapist. Now at the end of this study, I trust in elder Morning's Star's wisdom, I am where I need to be in this point in time.

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Appendix A

Initial Codes- Journal Entry

May 12, 2015

When I first started playing the piano I felt like I was in Appalachian Springs the composition by Copeland. As I was playing it metaphoric like I was playing my life.	Music representative of my life Appalachian Springs
I felt glad to do smudging with cedar pine needles as I felt anointed and it helped me get in the right head space. As I was playing there was tension and it felt like a lot of questions swimming around in my mind.	Smudge- I felt anointed Questioning Tension
It's exciting to begin this research when else will I make time in my life to do this?	Sense of excitement
Improvising on piano felt very natural to me and the music seemed to flow out of me like a stream opening to a river. When I first began I imagined white space, open fields. When I ended I didn't really want to stop but it felt right.	Piano felt natural, Piano sense of home images music is a stream opening to a river
When I was pounding on the keys it felt really good to be in control to have the power. Marianne, last summer told me to act as I play piano piano, commanding and not sheepish or shy. More and more do I feel like I am home when I play the piano, especially a real piano.	Control Power
I had a chat with another Métis woman who looked like me. It was really cool to talk to her, she asked me if it meant a lot to me to look Aboriginal. I feel I am at a crossroads, how do I claim this part of me? Have I already claimed it by embarking on this journey?	Questioning Identity
Joseph Boyden, a Métis author said it's not about blood quantum it's about your heart, and that's what I think I need to follow now, my heart.	Follow heart

Journal Entry- June 16, 2015

I didn't feel I got in a very good smudge today but breathing in the smell felt purifying.

Smudge felt purifying

I wanted to play violin this morning but I wasn't sure where it was going to go. I felt a bit frustrated by it, limited by my open chords and I felt like a kid playing.

Frustration
Kid playing instrument

It was fun to play chords, especially the G and D together and I saw an image while playing of a two row wampum belt, perhaps expressing this journey a peace pact within myself.

Image- Two Row Wampum belt
Peace within myself

A peace pact that's the journey in my own personal therapy. Be kind to yourself, be gentle with yourself.

Peace with self
Be kind

Blessed are the peacemakers, Be kind to yourself, Be gentle with yourself, when you get angry

Peace
Self care

When I was playing violin I felt like I was a kid again, exploring the instrument felt refreshing. Studying music has made me hate and love music and now I feel like I'm figuring out how to nourish myself through music again.

Music as a child = nourishing
Questioning how to nourish with music
Studying music = changing relationship to music

I've had a lot of worries doing this work. Cultural appropriation articles popping up on my news feed, people lying about their race.

Cultural Appropriation

In the end I am not how others define me, but how I define myself. This is the thing that matters!

Worry about definition of self

One thing I loved about smudging at the NWSM was during smudging you put the smoke over your ears and your mouth, to not hear or say anything evil, and one of the prayers is that the Great Spirit help us against ourselves our own greatest enemy.

Great Spirit- Help me against myself
Prayer for self-care

Journal Entry- June 26/15

I smell the cedar on my fingers, and the smell still lingers in the house like I'm bathed in the cedar while I'm playing.

Bathed in the cedar
Peaceful
Self care

Improvising on accordion felt like a strange fit, my mind was pretty busy today while I was playing.

Busy mind while improvising

I kept thinking of certain chords or rhythms I have played before. I liked all the harmonies going on at the same time and the long drawn out chord.

Chords/Rhythms played before
Liking long drawn out chords

Today was less melodic and more like a soundscape of a sea unknown. I don't know if recovered is the right word but my last session was all about identity, and the music felt reflective of that messy, jumbled sound walking in the unknown.

Messy jumbled identity

Music reflects the unknown

I felt annoyed that I couldn't change the sound of the accordion to make it less bright. I think that's why I liked the low earthiness of the chords on the chord side of the accordion today.

Appreciating the accordion's low earthiness

I'm leaving in 2 days and I feel a lot of restraint, it still feels like a dream moving out, having my own flat, eventually getting a new pup, it's all very grown up.

Restraint within myself
Busy mind
New

Journal Entry- Sept 30, 2015

While playing oboe, it flowed, I visualized notes to play and had my eyes closed. It felt like a question. Urgency to playing. There was an established melody line A B C E F. I remember thinking No judgement.

Flowing oboe playing
Urgency to playing
No judgement

The smudge felt good, peaceful, calming, grounding. The cedar was hard to smart smoking today. I felt like being in the in between state of not knowing allowing myself to be there, no judgement. Let whatever needs to come out, come out.

Smudge peaceful, grounding
Acknowledge and acceptance of the in between state

Let whatever needs to come out, come out

I liked the sweetness of the oboe sound, it felt like an outer body experience. Felt authentic to play oboe. It's like an old friend that you come back to.

Felt authentic to play oboe
Oboe = old friend that I came back to

Urgency in playing. Urgency in myself. Project feels like stepping into the unknown. Honor grandpa wanting to stand up for myself and inner child.

Stepping into unknown
Sense of honoring self and grandpa
Wanting to stand up for myself

I used shell as a vessel from PEI that I got on a trip with my sister and mom. Perhaps symbolizes connections to family and new roots growing here in the east coast.

New Roots in personal life

Yesterday a client and I had a connection while I played oboe. She kept playing drum while I played oboe and improvised. She was looking at me a lot and seemed in awe of the sound. It felt really nice to offer an aesthetic experience and to connect with my primary instrument.

Oboe and connection with client

Beauty=aesthetic experience

You never know how a client will react, to oboe or another instrument. It feels honoring and special to play.

Honoring

Journal Entry- October 19, 2015

Uninhibited joy. Felt like I've never played like that before, wasn't aware of the key I was playing in.	Uninhibited joy in music Freedom in music, unaware of key
Appalachian Spring, Aaron Copeland. I followed my instincts. I felt joyful while playing. I felt calm as I took my first inhale of cedar.	Follow my instincts Feeling joyful while playing
Seeking after ones' identity is not mean to be done alone. Surround yourself with beauty and you will become it.	Importance of others in finding ones identity
Knowing music improvisation if powerful for me. I feel like it really reflects what's going on for me. There is an inherent longing in my soul for beauty.	Improvisation=self care, powerful Improvisation reflective of my true self Longing for beauty
Surround yourself with light and you will become it. No one can tell you who you are, you have to decide, claim it, become one with it.	Surround yourself with light Identity, claim it, become one with it
I enjoyed singing, I felt very grounded and earthly. It felt natural for me to use my voice.	My voice- natural, grounding

Reflection on Improvisation #1

Open searching
Reminiscent of Appalachian Springs
Steady with movement
Felt calm, bit unsure of where I'm going
Tension and release
Trust in the process
Music wanting to find resolution
Dissonance, friction, unchartered territory
Celtic Lilt- Back to my roots where I feel connected

Music- Open, Trust in the process
Celtic roots connected

Music wanting resolution
Dissonance
Unknown territory
Celtic- Roots, Connection

Confident sound as if saying "LISTEN"
Sounds like "fight of the self"
Child like humor
No definite ending

Confident
Listen to self
Music represents inner fight
Child like humour in playing

Reflection on Improvisation #2

Isle of Skye
Experimental
Like a baby learning to walk
Unsure footing
Métis fiddling
Persistent
Testing the waters
Acceptance with where I'm at
Not sure how I want to sound but I'm doing what I can with what I have
Tension and release
No definite ending

Confidence

Baby learning to walk
No ending

Celtic- Isle of Skye
Unsure of how I want music to sound

Reflection on Improvisation #3

Difficult to understand
Unsure footing then gains trust
Open octaves- reflective of open space
Sounds like the anxious self
Abrupt end

Acceptance

No ending

Reflection on Improvisation #4

Earthy, Primal, out of the depths
Mourning and beautiful- call and answer
Lot's of movement
Unafraid of dissonance
Chant like and repetitive
Return to roots- searching
I feel like I've grown into my musicianship listening to this
I had a flashback of my 18 year old self not wanting to make "ugly" sounds
Follow the path see where it goes
Sit In It
Allow self to explore, Allow self to create, Limitless
Abrupt end

Earthy

Music- unafraid of dissonance

Acceptance with self
Growth as a musician

Expanding perception depth of what sound/music is

Acceptance
Allow self, Limitless

Reflection on Improvisation #5

Organ like, expansive, exploring dissonance
Sounds like things under the surface ready to come out
Beauty in the journey, the uncovering
Beauty in the journey, Beauty underneath, Struggling to get out

Acceptance with exploring dissonance, Open Space

Beauty in the journey
Beauty underneath
Struggling, coming to the surface

I remember feeling 'This is important'
Search out the places of dissonance and you will find truth
Voice- warm and grounding
I trust what is going on
There is truth in my voice
Uninhibited- Voice acts as internal dialogue as if I'm soothing and reassuring myself with my voice
There is depth here, Ancient and Primal

Dissonance= places of truth
Truth in my voice

Trust

Depth in improvisation
Ancient and primal

Appendix B

Axial coding

Music representative of my life Appalachian Springs Control Power Tension Frustration Music=home Piano felt natural, Piano sense of home Flowing oboe playing Urgency to playing No self-judgment Oboe and connection with client Oboe = old friend that I came back to Felt authentic to play oboe Improvisation reflective of my true self	Music, piano sense of home No judgment Oboe= old friend, authentic Improvisation= true self
Expanding perception depth of what sound/music is Studying music =changing relationship to music Chords/Rhythms played before Liking long drawn out chords Expanding perception depth of what sound/music is Growth as a musician New Roots in personal life	Changing relationship with music Growth as musician
Smudge felt purifying Bathed in the cedar Smudge- I felt anointed Smudge peaceful, grounding	Act of smudging
Follow heart Importance of others in finding ones identity Identity, claim it, become one with it Celtic- Roots, Connection Celtic- Isle of Skye Celtic roots connected	Identity, importance of others Celtic Identity
Questioning Identity Worry about definition of self Questioning how to nourish with music Messy jumbled identity Music represents my life	Questioning

Sense of excitement Busy Mind Restraint within myself	Excitement
Stream opening to a river Two row wampum belt	Images emerged from Improvisation
Kid playing instrument Music as a child = nourishing Baby learning to walk Child like humour in playing	Child self Music full of humour, nourishing
Wanting to stand up for myself Confidence Listen to self	Confidence
Peace within myself Be kind Great Spirit- Help me against myself	Peace
Prayer for self-care Improvisation=self care, powerful	Self-care
Acknowledge and acceptance of the in between state Let whatever needs to come out, come out Follow my instincts Acceptance with exploring dissonance Self Acceptance	Acceptance
Music reflects the unknown Stepping into unknown Unknown territory	Unknown
Sense of honoring self and grandpa	Honour with research
Beauty=aesthetic experience Beauty in the journey Beauty underneath Struggling, coming to the surface Longing for beauty Surround yourself with light	Beauty and longing
Uninhibited joy in music Freedom in music, unaware of key Feeling joyful while playing Identity, claim it, become one with it	Joy in music

Music- Open, Trust in the process
Music- unafraid of dissonance
Music wanting resolution
Dissonance

Dissonance= places of truth
Truth in my voice

Ancient and primal

Trust

Dissonance

Truth

Ancient and primal