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Service Learning Within the Community Music Therapy Approach (CoMT): Implications for Music Therapy Education

Soo-Jin Kwoun [1] *

1 College of Health Professions, Maryville University of St. Louis, United States

*skwoun@maryville.edu

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Abstract

The paper explores service learning as one of the pedagogical methods for music therapy students in supporting them to become professionals who can adapt and practice a holistic approach. Community music therapy (CoMT) is proposed as a conceptual framework that can guide the development and practice of music therapy service learning projects. Accordingly, a case example is presented of music therapy student service learning project based from a CoMT orientation. More specifically, this example reflects on participation in the Creative Music Making program as a service learning project for music therapy students. Creative Music Making is an annual collaborative music performance project conducted by the Maryville University Music Therapy Program, St. Louis Symphony, and St. Louis Arc, a non-profit organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities. The paper outlines the details of the project and discusses the positive impact of the Creative Music Making project on the community participants, the over-arching community, and the music therapy students' personal and professional development.

Keywords: *service learning, community music therapy (CoMT), music therapy education*

Introduction

Higher education plays an important role not only in educating students to be knowledgeable and skilled in their field of choice, but also in developing responsible citizenship among students through community engagement and service (Jacoby, 2015). The emphasis on community engagement in higher education seems to be particularly relevant to music therapy. This is because music therapists should consider the total milieu of clients' lives for an effective and lasting change and thus should concern themselves with the institutional and social changes as much as individual clients' growth (Corey & Corey, 2011). Accordingly, the necessity for ecological interventions in music therapy practice and in training music therapy students for their social action as pro-

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fessionals has gained more attention recently in the music therapy field (Stige, 2015; Vaillancourt, 2012;).

Service learning, based on a long tradition of experiential learning that started with John Dewey's theory of experience and education, is a pedagogical approach that is designed to meet the students' learning goals through community service, while also mutually benefiting the community (Jacoby, 2015). In this regard, service learning can be a suitable pedagogy in music therapy education as it provides an opportunity for students to grow both in their therapeutic skills and civic engagement, while also contributing to meaningful social changes.

Krout (2015) noted the lack of attention given to service learning in music therapy education and asserted the benefits of community-based learning experiences in music therapy education. He pointed out the commonality between community-based learning experiences and community music therapy (CoMT), which implies that a project within CoMT orientation may serve well as a community-based learning experience for music therapy students. As one of the music therapy approaches, CoMT has been described as "context-sensitive and resources-oriented, focusing on collaborative music making and attending to the voices of disadvantaged people" (Stige, 2015, p. 233). Accordingly, the purpose of this paper is to outline the CoMT approach as a conceptual foundation for service learning in music therapy education and explore a student-led service learning project developed within the CoMT framework as a case example.

Creative Music Making is a service learning project conducted by the Maryville University of St. Louis, the St. Louis Symphony, and St. Louis Arc, a non-profit agency that serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It is an annual music performance project where participants from all three organizations cited above rehearse and perform together during a consecutive three-day program. In this paper, the details of Creative Music Making will be discussed alongside implications for using this performance-oriented music therapy intervention as service-learning opportunity for music therapy students, as well as a collaborative endeavor benefiting the community.

Service-learning in higher education

Jacoby (2015) defines service learning as "a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities for reflection designed to achieve desired learning outcomes" (p. 1). In service learning, addressing community needs is as equally important as ensuring student learning. In this regard, volunteerism and clinical education are not considered as service learning. Volunteer activities, for example, focus mainly on service and the recipients of the service without emphasis on students' learning. Service learning, however, should offer experiential learning experiences in collaboration with community partners, in which students can further engage or develop their understanding of academic course content (Butin, 2010; Jacoby, 2015). Practicum or internship classes, on the other hand, offer supervised clinical experiences in their field of study. Even though students are placed in the community for their clinical education-like practicum and internship, community development is not necessarily the focus of those field placements (Schelbe, Petracchi, & Weaver, 2014). In sum, service learning addresses community needs within an intentional curricular designed for students' learning outcomes (Jacoby, 2015).

While limited research is reported on service learning in music therapy education, there has been ample literature regarding the positive impact of service learning on students' development in allied health professions, which implies potential benefits for music therapy education. Service learning has, for example: helped art therapy students to increase their critical thinking skills and awareness of social justice (Feen-Calligan, 2008); enhanced physical therapy students' clinical skills in relation to the professional competencies (Nowakowski, Kaufman, & Pelletier, 2014); deepened understanding of the course materials among undergraduate nursing students (Stallwood &

Groh, 2011); developed multicultural counseling competencies of counseling students (Burnett, Hamel & Long, 2004) and, aided social work students in gaining a better understanding of the impact of social and political situations on clients' lives (Belliveau, 2011).

In contrast to students' learning outcomes, research on community benefits is significantly lacking. The paucity of the research pertinent to community experiences may be due in part to methodological problems in such research (Cruz & Giles, 2000; Reeb & Folger, 2013) but may also be a result of an imbalanced focus among some service learning projects. For example, critics of service learning often posit that service learning projects are developed and implemented mainly for the students' learning without consideration of community needs (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). The fact that many service learning projects are often initiated solely by the university faculty without collaboration with community partners can be one explanation for this. This might reflect the nature of some of service learning projects where the community becomes the recipientof a service, rather than a partner (Beran & Lubin, 2012; Stoecker & Tryon, 2009). The unexplored impact of service learning on a community may indicate the challenges of developing service learning that benefits both students and communities meaningfully (Stoecker & Tryon, 2009).

In addressing these challenges, Reeb and Folger (2013) suggested the need for adapting a theoretical and conceptual framework that will guide service learning practice, outcome measures, and research. The question is, then, what would a good theoretical or conceptual foundation for music therapy service learning projects look like? In the next section, this paper will examine CoMT as one potential conceptual framework for informing the development and implementation of music therapy service learning projects.

Community Music Therapy (CoMT)

Community music therapy is a cultural and context-based approach aiming for therapeutic changes in both individual clients and the whole community (Stige, 2015). CoMT approaches can be characterized by seven features: participatory, resource-oriented, ecological, performative, activist, reflective and ethics-driven, which is summarized as an acronym PREPARE (Stige & Aero, 2012). The ecological quality of CoMT emphasizes that therapy cannot be practiced without consideration of social, cultural, and political situations of the clients and that consideration of the total milieu of people's lives is necessary in music therapy practice. This notion is closely related to the activist quality of CoMT, which acknowledges that individual problems or vulnerability result from limitations of social systems, and that action for change should be pursued. The CoMT approach, therefore, involves addressing social injustice and human rights violations, and together these are understood as the ethics-driven quality CoMT approach.

The ecological, activist, and ethics-driven aspects of CoMT are manifested through its performative and participatory qualities. The performative quality is based on the idea that music is something we create or perform, rather than an object. Also, being performative with music means performing oneself through music, and by doing that, there is the potential to influence and build relationships with others. Performative qualities of CoMT therefore imply the possibility of using music or music making in a proactive way for social changes including promoting justice, health, and wellbeing. The participatory quality of the CoMT approach emphasizes the importance of democratic and collaborative participation among all participants. Aligned with this, the resource-oriented quality of CoMT questions whether community or social resources are equally accessible to all members of the community. It also focuses on building resources within individuals and the redistribution of social and community resources to the community members. Therefore, in CoMT practice, music therapists are called to be reflective not only on outcomes for the clients but also for the implications of practice on whole ecological systems. Finally, the reflective quality of the CoMT values

the reflections of all participants, including music therapists, community partners, and clients, and aims to include all of these reflections in ongoing dialogue about a specific project or program (Stige, 2015; Stige & Aarø, 2012).

The principles outlined above indicate that the CoMT approach can be a good theoretical framework for service learning in music therapy, as it contains both a focus on addressing social issues and equal participation by all involved. Service learning, especially in health professions, is "directly in line with the core public health values of social justice and serves as a venue to strengthen community-campus partnerships in addressing health disparities through sustained collaboration and action in vulnerable communities" (Sabo, Zapien, Teufel-Shone, Rosales, Bergsma, & Taren, 2015, p. 38). Mitchell (2008), however, pointed out that it cannot be assumed that all service learning projects address community needs or lead social change effectively, implying the importance of careful planning and facilitation of service learning activity. The next section of the paper outlines how Creative Music Making, a service learning project based on a CoMT orientation, was planned, organized, and facilitated to benefit both students and the community.

Creative Music Making

Project Description

Creative Music Making began in 2009 as a service learning project for students of the Maryville University Music Therapy Program. It was created in partnership with the St. Louis Symphony, as a part of the St. Louis Community reach-out program and with St. Louis Arc, a non-profit organization that serves individuals with developmental disabilities. The partnership has been sustained since then, with programs conducted annually. The purpose of the project has been: to give St. Louis Arc participants the opportunity to share their musical talents and self-advocate to the community, for the symphony musicians to play music and interact with community members who are not their typical concert audiences, and for the music therapy students to serve the community by engaging in the experiential learning experience.

The Creative Music Making project is composed of 2 days of musical rehearsals and a final concert taking place on the evening of the third day of the project. Creative Music Making is not a credit-bearing course for music therapy students, and therefore participation from students is on a voluntary basis. Participation in the program is also voluntary for the Arc participants and St. Louis Symphony musicians. The details and logistics of the rehearsals and concerts are usually planned several months ahead by staff from St. Louis Arc, a director of community programs of St. Louis Symphony, and Maryville University faculty members. The rehearsals use the Arc spaces. The symphony concert hall or the university auditorium has been used as a venue for the concert.

A music therapist is appointed by Maryville University as responsible for leading preparation meetings for the students, organizing the overall schedules of the rehearsals, and providing supervision via small group meetings as necessary. This appointed music therapist also oversees the project more broadly, along with music therapy faculty members, the director of family support at St. Louis Arc, and the director of the community program at St. Louis Symphony.

The concert is composed of three small group presentations. Each group usually consists of 10 to 15 Arc participants, eight to 10 music therapy students, and two symphony musicians. To be able to prepare the group music making and performance properly, there are three or four preparation meetings by and for the music therapy students in the spring semester before the concert. In this project, music therapy students are asked to take on leadership roles for the small group meetings and are instrumental in creating the seven to 10 minute performance segments with all participants. The roles of the lead music therapist and music therapy faculty in the preparation of meetings are minimal. Under guidance from the therapist and faculty, the students brainstorm and initiate the program plan for their small groups. The students are responsible for

finding ways for the participants to play and perform together and working with diverse experiences of playing music among participants, ranging from professional performance skills to limited or no musical experience.

As mentioned, each group comes up with a seven to 10 minute performance piece that suits the theme of the concert of the year. Each group's music performance consists of playing instruments, dance/movement to the music, or group singing. The symphony musicians play a tremendous role in enhancing the quality of music performed and lending professionalism to the concert. They accompany the songs sung or played by Arc participants, improvise and play with music therapy students and Arc participants, or add sound effects to the group's instrument playing or singing. Each year, the concert has been received by the audience with great enthusiasm. The comments from the audience, including family members and friends of the participants, affirmed their enjoyment and appreciation.

To understand the participants' experiences with this project better, the present author sought to explore entries in the journals of Maryville students participating in the project from 2012-2014. Seven journals from students who signed the informed consent form were collected, and their entries were used to inform this paper. A written survey was also conducted with family of the 2014 Arc participants and staff, as well as 2014 symphony musician participants. Due to literacy challenges among some Arc participants, responses from them were not included in the data collection. One staff from Arc responded to the survey and 5 out of 6 symphony members from the 2014 participants returned the survey. The data collection was approved by the Maryville University Internal Review Board (#13-69). Using this data, the next section of the paper offers reflections on the program in regards to how key concepts of service learning, community benefits, and students' learning are manifested through a CoMT project like Creative Music Making. This author participated in the project as a faculty member and her own experiences and observations are also used to inform the discussion below.

Creative Music Making and its impact on community

The impact of Creative Music Making was evidenced first and foremost through witnessing the Arc participants' positive experiences with it. The Arc participants' affirmative verbal statements, facial expressions, and body demeanors during and after the rehearsals and concert indicated an overall sense of pride, satisfaction, and perception of achievement. One of the Arc staff (Staff member A) stated in the post survey that, "It is one of the highlights of the year for many people I support. In fact, I just saw Creative Music Making on the short list of successes that people identified for themselves over the past year."

Several reasons emerged for how the Creative Music Making project was able to foster the Arc participants' self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. During the two days of rehearsals, Arc participants engaged in a collaborative music making process where they were given many choices and leadership opportunities. For example, the Arc participants chose the instrument of their choice to play or volunteered for activities in which they could showcase some leadership. Those who wanted to sing a solo had that opportunity. The Arc participants who brought their own instruments had a chance to play a solo or duet with music therapy students. Some of the Arc participants were leaders for the movement activity, while people who knew how to read volunteered to narrate. Most importantly, all participants of this project - the Arc participants, the symphony musicians and music therapy students were treated equally as fellow musicians during the rehearsals and concert. Considering that collaborative relationships established in music performance can foster self-respect and dignity among participant musicians (Aigen, 2014), the confidence observed among the Arc participants should be explained by their successful participation in a democratic music making process during Creative Music Making.

In relation to the sense of success felt by the Arc participants, the concept of 'identity work' proposed by Stige, Ansdell, Elefant and Pavlicevic (2010), should be noted. Stige et al. stated that,

> CoMT practice can often be thought of as 'identity work' where identities are being generated and performed - with limited identities being extended, new identities being claimed, and negative identities being discarded and replaced. Through musicking, all kinds of identity shifts are affected - in some instances these change the lives of those whose individual identity risks being dominated by collective, public labeling (be it mental illness, physical disability, senior citizen, or young criminals). (p. 289)

This 'identity shift' is also witnessed in Creative Music Making where the Arc participants are seen ascapable and creative musicians rather than persons with disabilities. Music therapy students also play a crucial role in this. The Maryville students created music making opportunities that matched each Arc participants' level of functioning, and ensured that musical and non-musical accommodations were provided if necessary for their successful participation. Through a success-oriented music making approach, where everyone participates in the music making process using their abilities and strengths, the Arc participants not only experience personal competency but also have an opportunity to share that with the fellow musicians and the audience during the rehearsals and at the concert. This is well-reflected in one of the Arc staff's comments in the post survey:

> I believe Creative Music is a benefit for everyone involved, not just individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It's important for people to be perceived as competent, contributing members of a community and, in this program, that is exactly what the Maryville students, St. Louis symphony musicians, and community members see when we (Arc participants) perform. (St. Louis Arc staff member A)

As this staff member states, a crucial element of this project is that it provides an opportunity for the audience to witness the capabilities of Arc participants, which may lead to perception or attitude changes toward individuals with developmental disabilities. This aligns with the activist and ethics-driven aspects of CoMT (Stige et al., 2010).

Concerning the impact of public performance on the audience, it will be worth noting the contact theory, initially proposed by Gordon Allport (1954), cited in Seaman, Beightal, Shirilla, & Crawford, 2010). Contact theory affirms the importance of the face-to-face interactions in cross- group exchanges to reduce prejudice and nurture appreciation of diversity among group members. In other words, this theory suggests that direct interaction between cross-cultural groups positively contributes to the group members' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors toward each other as long as the shared experiences are planned optimally (Seaman, Beightal, Shirilla, & Crawford, 2010). As shown with Creative Music Making, a concert of this sort can create an opportunity for positive interactions between the participating musicians and audience through a shared music experience. Contact theory explains the possibility of changes among audience members when they are engaged with the marginalized population through such performance initiatives.

Another identified benefit of Creative Music Making for the Arc participants was that it enabled them to interact with different groups of people during the rehearsals. Curtis and Mercardo (2004) pointed out that people with disabilities often interact with groups that share the same 'disabilities' without establishing many true friends. Accordingly, the authors propose a community music performance intervention as one way to offer community engagement and friendship among different groups of people. Creative Music Making is a good example of this. Many of the Arc participants are returning members who have participated in Creative Music Making several times. Many of the symphony musicians and Maryville students participated in the project more than once. The Arc participants, St. Louis Symphony Musicians and Maryville students often develop genuine bonds during the 3 days of the project and enjoy their annual reunion. Even though it is a 3-day project, the fact that it occurs annually seems to

help participants build relationships over the years, providing an opportunity for positive anticipatory interaction across different groups of community members.

Arc participants are not the only ones who benefit from this interaction. The St. Louis Symphony musicians responded in the 2014 post survey that interacting with their fellow musicians, the Arc participants, and the Maryville students was the most satisfying experience of the project for them. One wrote that, "seeing the joy of the participants in the project was a rewarding experience," and Musician Two said that, "watching the reaction of residents from Arc and their families during the performance" was a highlight for her. Another musician stated, "It has been rewarding, and I'm pleased to be part of it," as was, "watching the enthusiasm of the Arc participants, and the engagement of the Maryville students." Musician Four wrote, "talking with participants, seeing the joy that making music brings to them," and Musician Five offered that the "The joy and pride that some of the participants showed at the performances" was his rewarding moment.

These responses are meaningful as they show that Creative Music Making provides an opportunity for the symphony musicians to reach out to people with disabilities and that they enjoy getting to know and play with them. The symphony's participation in the Creative Music Making project aligns with contemporary symphony practice, where symphony musicians are often asked to be involved in their community in a variety of ways outside of concert call, such as being part of the education programs or creating music programs for local communities. There are some practical reasons for this, as a symphony's community engagement seems to enhance advocacy, marketing, and sustainability of the symphony (Ramnarine, 2011).

Beyond these practical reasons, Ramnarine (2011) argued that community engagement provides an opportunity for symphony musicians to contribute to community development as well. For example, in Creative Music Making the symphony musicians bring a high quality of music and performance opportunities to the Arc participants who otherwise might be excluded from such experiences. Considering that participating in the arts is one key way to be part of one's own community, and those opportunities are often limited for individuals with disabilities (Shiloh & Lagasse, 2014), St. Louis symphony musicians advocate social inclusion by interacting and performing with the Arc participants. As one of the symphony members stated in the survey, "Music in general, but also performing music in particular, is for everyone!" This response sums up how resource-oriented features of CoMT are well-rooted in Creative Music Making.

In sum, the characteristics of CoMT manifested in Creative Music Making ensure that the community partners benefit from this project through fostering changes within themselves and in the community. In addition to these community outcomes, the Creative Music Making project provides an excellent learning opportunity for the music therapy students. In fact, regarding service learning, Stoeckcer (2016) stated that "Without a deep focus on student learning, there is no quality service" (p. 164). Accordingly, the next section of the paper will examine the music therapy students' personal and professional development from their participation in Creative Music Making.

Creative Music Making and its impact on music therapy students' growth

Enhancing students' clinical skills

Service learning is based on the notion that students require experiential learning to grow professionally and personally by applying what they learned in didactic class settings to address the needs of a community (Jacoby, 2015). As Norvell (2016) found in an independent exploration of Creative Music Making, as community music performance project, it provides an experiential learning opportunity for music therapy students to practice the music therapy skills learned in classes. Regarding this, one of the students who participated in the 2012 Creative Music Making stated in her journal,

> Creative Music Making is a unique music therapy experience. You don't really have enough time to fully develop goals and objectives for each client, and create interventions to try to achieve these goals, but I still found myself making basic short-term goals for clients that I spent more time with. No matter how long you will have them as a client, I guess the therapist side of you just wants to see them improve and make progress on behaviors you have observed. (Student A)

Creative Music Making is less structured and less supervised than practicum classes and allows the students to take on authentic leadership roles in the groups. It demands deeper critical thinking, complex problem-solving skills, and flexibility in their thinking and action. The students have to organize and create the music performance with the group members from nonverbal to verbal, from ambulatory to needing physical assistance to play the instruments, and from no background in music training or music experience to adjusting to the caliber of the symphony musicians. As the quote above shows, students have to actively and flexibly think about strengths and recourses that every participant brings to this project to create music and perform together. Another student reflected on this, stating:

> It was interesting how our thought-out plans unfolded in real life. We had divided everything so nicely into segments and declared what the group would do during each segment. Very soon Monday morning, it was evident that plans never go as planned, and you must be ready to make changes to the schedule. I have been learning this concept in practicum this semester, but this was flexibility on a much bigger scale. Although we did not follow our schedule as planned, I think that we still achieved everything that we had hoped for with the group. (Student B)

The students' reflections concur with the faculty observations from each year. The music therapy students seem to be greatly empowered by their participation of this service learning project. The sense of self-efficacy among student participants was noticeable by the last day of the project. The increased confidence in interacting with the clients as well as planning and implementing the sessions are often observed in the following practicum sessions after the Creative Music Making project. Besides its positive impact on junior or senior students, the endeavor benefits the first year students as well, which will be detailed in the next section.

Providing pre-practicum experiences

Service learning can play an important role as pre-practicum experience for health profession students (Barbee, Scherer & Combs, 2003; Havlik, Bialka, & Schneider, 2016; Jett & Delgado-Romero, 2009). The literature in counseling education, for example, demonstrates that service learning can provide an opportunity to practice basic counseling skills and witness social injustice, preparing students for practicum classes (Havlik, Bialka & Schneider, 2016). Pre-practicum service learning can also provide community networking opportunities as well as expose students to a variety of professional counseling activities (Jett & Delgado-Romero, 2009).

As previously reported by Norvell (2016), similar outcomes were also found for first-year students who participated in Creative Music Making projects. Since the Creative Music Making project is offered annually, the Maryville University Music Therapy students have opportunities to participate in the project several times during their time in the music therapy program. Music performance is a group activity by nature, which provides ample opportunities for novice students to learn from the senior students. In fact, in Creative Music Making, the freshmen, newly transferred, or the first year graduate students mainly observe the work of senior students the first time they participate in Creative Music Making and gradually take leadership as they progress in the program. One of the freshmen who participated in Creative Music Making in 2012 shared this in her journal:

> Having the opportunity to be a part of Creative Music Making as a freshman was an amazing experience! Being a freshman, the experience provided a great first hands-on experience to watch the music making process. I learned from watching the older students who

> incorporated many ideas into one 10-minute segment which followed together, how to interact with the clients, how to be positive in every situation, how to teach the client at their level. I believe this is an experience that I will be able to look back on and use techniques I observed in my future as a music therapist. I also greatly enjoyed working with this population. (Student C)

The value of Creative Music Making as pre-practicum experience is affirmed by the senior students, as one of the seniors reflected:

> This was a good chance for some of Creative Music Making veterans to see some of the new music therapy students blossom, or step up to the plate and involve themselves in music therapy. I know that last year when I participated for the first time I thought that it was an excellent early music therapy experience; you get to work alongside experienced therapists, other students with more experience, and students at the same level that you are at. You get to sit back and observe if you want and just be an extra set of hands or jump right into the action and take the lead. (Student D)

In addition to its benefits for preparing students for future clinical coursework, pre-practicum service learning provides novice students some insights into their profession and the skills required in their field. Gehlert, Graf, & Rose (2014) suggested that pre-practicum service learning can function as a gatekeeping practice where the students confirm and dispute their profession choice through their exposure to their field in real-life situations. This seems particularly imperative, given that practicum and internship classes are often incorporated at the end of the students' training (Norvell, 2016). Relating to this, one of the first year graduate students shared in her journal,

> It was awesome to see so many people from our music therapy program involved and coming together for a common purpose. This really supported my thought and feelings toward our profession and only made me more excited to be a part of it. (Student E)

Offering opportunities for students' leadership development

In addition to development of skills and preparation for the clinical course work, empirical studies support the notion that student-led community projects re a great means for students to practice and develop leadership skills (Groh, Stallwood, & Daniels, 2011; Midgett, Hausheer, & Doumas, 2016). The Creative Music Making project requires initiative and leadership from the students, which prompts faculty to contemplate the types and styles of leadership they would like to nurture among students.

Interestingly, servant leadership, which was initially proposed by Greenleaf (2002), was mentioned by the scholars both in CoMT and service learning (Jacoby, 2015; Vaillancourt, 2012). Greenleaf stated that servant leaders are those who ensure that "other people's highest priority needs are being served [.] Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p.27). In other words, this is a type of leadership concerned with empowering others and encouraging them to fulfill their own potential.

Servant leadership seems particularly relevant when facilitating a project like performance-oriented music therapy in the community. Turry (2005) made a valid point, however, arguing that the performance experience can be counter therapeutic to clients if the therapists consciously or unconsciously try to meet their own needs, such as validation or recognition through the clients' performance. As Turry stated:

> There is the danger of exploitation as the therapist benefits from the client's public activities [.] Under the guise of helping the client or promoting the field, a therapist may be unconsciously acting out his or her own hidden agenda such as self-promotion, the need to feel important or the need for recognition and acknowledgement. He or she may want his or her music to be heard and manipulate the patient's participation in order to achieve this end. (para. 1)

Putting the clients' needs first should be a professional virtue that any music therapy student learns at school, if not possessing naturally. In Creative Music Making, the stu-

dents experience creating an event as a genuine showcase of talents by fellow musicians, through which students learn to examine their own motivations and make sure that their own needs do not hamper the therapeutic process. In this way, the performance-oriented service learning project provides a meaningful experiential learning opportunity where students practice leadership which focuses on helping others reach their potential.

CoMT as a teaching medium for civic engagement

One of the goals of service learning is to develop students' civic engagement. Civic engagement is defined as "acting upon a heightened sense of responsibility to one's communities through both political and non-political means" (Jacoby, 2015, p.3). The literature has supported that service learning is an effective pedagogy in developing the capacity of students in civic engagement, including the sense of social responsibility and social justice (Eyler, 2002; Groh, Stallwood & Daniels, 2011; Wang, 2013). Eyler (2002) attributed a guided reflection as an instrumental part of a successful service learning project. According to Eyler, the guided reflections from service experiences can foster development of advanced cognitive skills that enable students to develop a deeper understanding of social problems and conduct themselves in dealing with complex social issues.

Active reflection is also a key component of the CoMT approach (Brown & Schmidt, 2016; Stige, 2015). Stige, Ansdell, Elefant, and Pavlicevic (2010) asserted that reflection in CoMT should regard not only therapists' actions, emotions, and thinking on the therapeutic work with their individual clients but also "the wider influences that Community Music Therapy practice has in the socio-cultural community" (p.283). Surely, a community performance project like Creative Music Making provides ample opportunities for deeper reflections on the students' growth in civic engagement and the impact of the service activities on social change throughout the course of the project. During preparation meetings for the Creative Music Making project, for example, it was discussed that participating in performance opportunities such as choir, marching band, and orchestra experiences must have been limited to the individuals with disabilities and that in retrospect Creative Music Making offers the clients with disabilities an opportunity to perform at a concert and invite their family members and friends. A project like this can help music therapy students reflect on how music therapy can contribute to equal access to community resources.

The preparation meetings and music therapy classes after the concert are also an excellent time to reflect with the students and discuss the root causes of problems or issues such as marginalization or social exclusion. This can further develop into a discussion of the role of music therapists in social justice or the social situations that music therapists may proactively act upon. It can provide an opportunity to ponder and discuss how interventions like a music performance group can contribute to advocacy or positive social changes. The reflection can be extended to discuss the skills that the students need to acquire for outreach or education of community members. Through this, the ultimate goal of educating students to be better citizens and therapists can be achieved. As reflected in one of the student's journals: "Overall, it was an incredible experience. As in most music therapy settings, you try to help the clients improve on certain behaviors and the clients inadvertently teach you how to be a better person." (Student F)

Conclusion

The paper explores Creative Music Making, a service learning project developed using a CoMT orientation and how it most meaningfully serves both music therapy students and community. In many ways, what CoMT pursues is parallel with the visions of service learning in higher education. Not only do both focus on the social responsibilities of all stakeholders, but also the emphasis on the ecological interventions in CoMT

practice is also well-aligned with the call for higher education to facilitate student and community civic engagement.

Creative Music Making is a satisfactory experience for involved faculty as well, witnessing students' growth and their impact on creating positive community changes. This paper should aid music therapy educators in search of meaningful service-learning projects that will serve both the students and the community. Developing a service learning project that will mutually benefit students and community may not come easily. The following student's reflection, however, seems to indicate that it is a goal worth trying and striving to continue:

> Watching their faces light up as they perform and share the music that they faithfully rehearsed for the last two days is an experience that I would not ever want to miss. Observing them soar on their musical wings of freedom makes all our efforts, time involved, miles, years of preparation worth-while. (Student G)

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