

The joyous journey



Sumathi Ramjee

Roll No. 22

Thank you

To

My students who made this journey a reality

The ABT faculty, Anand, Asha, Deborah, Zubin

Mrs. Sita Krishnamurthi, Deepika

Priya Padaki, Deepika

All the teachers and staff of Deepika

Vani Nagaraj, Vasantha and Savithri of IRC

My ABT colleagues

My parents and my family

My friends and well-wishers and

Every one bound by the universal thread of
consciousness.

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Introduction

Setting the context

“School going children in our country, come under a lot of stress because of the curriculum expectations placed upon them. A very high level of performance is expected from children. In every classroom there are children who underachieve. These children are often branded, labelled and segregated. Most of these children can be helped if their problems are understood and efforts are made to introduce methods of dealing with them within the school setting.

There are many reasons for these academic problems. Some children may be slow learners, some may have developmental disabilities, some may have behavioural problems and still others specific learning difficulties. These children begin to develop emotional problems because of repeated failures.

We at Deepika, give a unique education with several innovative methods to make that essential difference in the lives of children who have difficulties in learning.”

- From the brochure of Deepika

Deepika caters to

- children who have average and above average intelligence but have a specific learning disability
- children who have below average intelligence but can learn at a slower pace
- children with attention deficit and hyperactive disorder which is a severe handicap to learning
- children with high-functioning autism

Children who fall into these categories have specific age and capacity-based curriculum designed for individual needs.

Clarity of purpose

Deepika aims to empower the children who come into her fold. The school's vision is for holistic development of each child and my ABT project is directed towards "bringing all those concerned in alignment with their life purpose and connecting all concerned to creation's unlimited resources" through the medium of music, movement, drama and visual art.

Integration of ABT with the organisation's vision

Academic program consists of

- regular school curriculum redesigned to suit individual needs
- total personality development using spirituality as base
- programs to cultivate self-esteem and self-respect
- pre-vocational training

Personality Development program consists of

- meditation and prayer
- yogasana practice
- cooperative play
- music and bhajans
- circle time for value education

Therapeutic program consists of

- dance and movement therapy to facilitate body orientation, self awareness and growth
- art therapy to develop perception and self expression
- sensory integration activities to balance sensory awareness

Research Study Design

Needs Analysis

The chosen children for the ABT project were:

C

Bubbly and joyous with eyes that sparkle,
A good sense of humour and dauntless mettle;
“First in the world” in the ‘copying notes’ game,
Spreads so much fragrance befitting his name.

N

A beautiful soul with a soft mellow voice
Poise and grace are her favourite toys
Her nimble hands work with play dough so well
Creating sculptures that have so much to tell.

P

Spontaneity that drowns everyone else
Sincerity from deep within that tells
Of an integrity that has no match,
Is there any ball he cannot catch?

S

The image that conjures up in my mind
Is that of a gem you cannot easily find;
“There is no ‘Undo’ button in life” he says candidly,
“Who discovered the alphabet?” he asks wearily.

Vm

He came to us as a quiet child from Varanasi,
Who could communicate only in Hindi,
His hardworking nature has brought him progress,
His sincerity and talent will fetch him success.

Vv

Suddenly in class he comes up with the right answer
Surprising everyone, even himself and the teacher
When I told him “On the atlas look for Mississippi?”
His sense of humour replied, “Is there no Mr. Sippi?”

INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Name	Strengths	Needs
C 15 years	Good sense of humour, ability to laugh at himself, sincere, very good with rhythms	Self esteem, reading comprehension, maths skills, written expression, expressive language
N 15 years	Intelligent, good memory, helpful, written and spoken expression	Self esteem, adaptation to change, change attitude towards manual work, social skills with respect to teachers, peers and parents, paying attention
P 17 years	Sincere, truthful, simple	Self esteem, attention span, body coordination, reading comprehension, written expression, spatial orientation, time management
S 15 years	Intelligent, good sense of humour, good memory, truthful and frank	Ability to express emotions, self esteem, reading skills, attention span, reading comprehension, written expression, change attitude towards manual work and change gender bias
Vm 14 years	Hardworking, good memory, attentive, participative	Self esteem, body coordination, ability to express emotions, reading comprehension, language skills, logical and analytical skills, socializing with peer group
Vv 16 years	Sincere, never perturbed by emotions	Ability to express emotions, self esteem, body coordination, reading comprehension, written expression, time management

From left to right Vv, P, S, Vm, C and N



Therapeutic Objectives formed

The most commonly occurring therapeutic objectives that were chosen based on the needs analysis were:

Improve Attention span

Read with Comprehension

Propositions and Indicators formulated

The following were my ABT propositions:

I propose that ABT can improve **Attention span** in children with Learning Difficulties.

I propose that ABT can improve **Reading with comprehension** in children with Learning Difficulties

Indicators:

Attention Span:

- Pays no attention to what is happening during sessions
- Pays attention to the activity only when prompted (N, Vv)
- Pays attention to selective activities only (P, S)
- Pays attention to most of the activities (C)
- Pays full attention to all the activities of the session (Vm)

Reading with comprehension:

- Understands fully what is being read (N)
- Understands the gist of what is being read (S, Vm, C)
- Understands just a few words (P)
- Does not understand a word of what is being read by him (Vv*)

*The indicators were formulated well before the commencement of the project based on the students' performance during the last academic year. On testing the children just prior to the commencement I found that Vv came under the second indicator "Understands the gist of what is being read".

Review of Literature

Impact, Connections and Analysis of research findings with the propositions

Rhythm and Music:

This ability to sing words, even if one cannot speak them invariably gives pleasure, and a sense that one is not so devastatingly disabled.

When he speaks of the power of music, Oliver Sacks says “(music is) something that makes possible (if only briefly) that immensely complex neural and psychic integration that underlies the organization of a self.”

Oliver Sacks MD, Music and the Brain

It seems that rhythm is basic to humans at all stages of life, and it provides organization and structure in the environment. Rhythm is predictable in nature and therefore provides a secure pattern into which individuals can enter. It is through such structure and predictability that persons who have little internal organization can fit in conjoint efforts with others. It provides opportunities to “belong with others”....

Alicia Ann Clair, Professor and Director of Music Therapy at the

University of Kansas

“Even a person with severe dementia and or attention deficits can improve his attention level over time with rhythmic stimulation which can engage him spontaneously.”

Concetta M. Tomaino from “Music and Memory: Accessing Residual Function”

Music and art are universally appreciated and understood as effective media of expression and communication that exist in all cultures. Music affects us all in many ways, from being highly motivating and stimulating, to calming and relaxing. When used in therapy, music can reach even those resistant to other treatment approaches due to its accessibility, familiarity, feelings of security associated with it, its capacity to express the range of human emotion, as well as the joy of creating and being in music. Percussion and melodic instruments are used in an improvisational approach as they offer an array of sounds for expression. The therapist uses the unique power of music to foster communication and relationship with people living with special needs. Musical improvisation is a fundamental aspect of our interactive approach. New patterns of learning and neurological processes can be created, as well as stimulating sensory, cognitive and emotional development.

"Music is ancient. It speaks to all of us."

Clive Robbins, Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at NYU

Music therapists can support special education classroom teachers by providing effective ways to incorporate music into their academic curriculum.

Music therapy involvement can stimulate attention and increase motivation to participate more fully in other aspects of the educational setting.

American Music Therapy Association, Inc.

An examination of recent research studies in the area of music therapy among persons with ADD and ADHD provides growing evidence in favor of several music therapy techniques and protocols for the treatment and management of behavior and motor impulsivity problems. Music therapy services alone and in conjunction with other services, reveals a positive trend in terms of effectiveness. Furthermore, creative music making with a music therapist has not been found to over-arouse clients; and, as complementary service to neurotraining shows evidence of improved focus behavior in ADD subjects. The state of the evidence merits continued work to validate findings and contribute to the base of evidence on the topic.

Movement:

Chace went on to study at the Washington School of Psychiatry and to teach her theory of dance therapy. She believed that the communication of the dance fulfilled a basic human need, and her work provided insights into the relationship of movements and their therapeutic effect, how speech or narrative can assist in both group and individual settings, how rhythmic movement helps with organizing and clarifying processes, and how dance serves to unify a group. Children, who don't have the patience or attention span for other forms of therapy, can benefit from the openness that comes with expressive dance.

Marian Chace, ADTA

The mental acuity needed to perform postures and series of movements can result in better gait, balance and coordination as well as enhancing cognitive skills, motivation and memory

Dance Therapy — How it works & when to use it

If we look at it from another perspective, adolescents not only remove themselves physically from others around them but they also remove themselves from their own bodies. The mind/body connection is altered and sometimes broken. Feelings get all tangled up and anxiety rears its ugly head. What is there to do? Tweens and teens often watch TV, argue with everyone at home, wear large clothing, eat more and sleep more. In short, they act in ways to avoid judgments from the outside world, and in turn they often neglect themselves. What could possibly reconnect such adolescents with their bodies and help them regain their childhood spirit, without feeling totally out of control? Dance!

Dance— A Path to Self-Esteem

Exercise with a purpose for tweens and teens.

by Anna Lederfeind

PARENTGUIDE News January 2006

Expressive arts (art, music, dance and dramatics) provide content for literacy development. The arts not only provide important content but also serve as a vehicle for developmental learning for children of all ages and abilities. The expressive arts offer important opportunities for expression, problem-solving, and social development. Through participation in expressive arts, children of all abilities can make great strides in the processes of understanding and creating symbols and developing their own personal iconography, both of which are critical to communication and literacy development.

Visual Art:

Masks can be a very powerful means of communication and form of hiding our true self and identity. We all wear many masks in our daily lives, the masks we present at work, to our friends, family, partner, child are all very different. These masks are in a sense invisible but so familiar. There are times when we choose to remove these masks, such as during a therapeutic session, or when we've had too much wine or sampled other forms of drugs, then we reveal the masks we keep so well hidden. In making our own masks we can make visible those many sides of ourselves we keep so very private. Mask making is therefore an amazingly powerful way of unlocking our inhibitions and allowing the varying sides of ourselves to emerge.

Clay therapy: Its tactile immediacy and ability to touch feelings and emotions so speedily is what gives clay its effectiveness in art therapy.

"Art Therapy gives me a different perspective of myself. My doubts and worries become so much less important. New possibilities show themselves to me I learn to accept myself as I am, to live in the moment, not in the past or in the future. To blossom within and to use this new found energy in a loving way in the outer world"

"Art Therapy enables me to access images that no amount of talking can bring me to.

It helps me gain a far greater and deeper understanding of myself and is a way of expressing cut off and painful feelings that until now have had no voice. It illuminates some of the dark shadows of my mind and soul and helps me find within them powerful symbols of nurturance and protection. It gives voice to those parts of me that are beyond the reach of words. Black and red figure with daggers: This is about feeling very deeply hurt: the red means pain but also aliveness, black is the opposite - numbness and deadness. This could also be the rage about being so deeply hurt."

Vicky Barber's Art Therapy

I am frequently asked the question, "What is Art Therapy?" I would first like to say what Art Therapy is not. It is not arts and crafts. It is not product oriented. It is not purely recreational activity. It is process oriented, it is self-expressive. It is therapeutic in that it is multi-sensory, involves visual-perceptual skills, requires coordination and fine motor control, teaches people to use objects purposefully, to follow directions, and build communication skills. It allows people to work at their own pace and skill level and ultimately builds self-esteem.

*Chriss Berk, Masters in Art Therapy from Hahnemann University in Philadelphia, PA
Arts in Therapy Network, An International Community for Creative Arts Therapists*

The structure in music and rhythm has definitely helped my children become more organized and structured in their day to day lives. Rhythm has led to increased attention spans and has created new patterns of learning. Movement and dance have played their part in enhancing cognition skills and memory. For adolescents to regain their childhood spirit, movement has been a prime motivator. Mask making has helped unlock deep-seated inhibitions and clay therapy has been an effective way of tactile expression.

Research Methodology

Significance of the methodology used

Triangulation was achieved by using three different perceptions for data collection.

The following were the sources:

- ✓ Therapist's Notes
- ✓ Feedback from the teacher in class and the observer in the ABT session
- ✓ Video recording

The data driven method was adopted so that a pattern could be established from the collected data. This led to inductive conclusions, which could be verified using the video recording.

Data Collection sources, protocols and formats used

Reading comprehension tests were conducted before commencement of the ABT sessions. During the sessions, a test was conducted and at the end of all the 24 hours of ABT, a test was conducted. During class hours, reading comprehension was noted when the students were reading from their textbooks.

Attention span was observed during all the ABT sessions and during classes that the students attended. Feedback was taken from the co-teacher who handles the same set of children for academics. Drum sessions and games involving listening skills and response time conveyed a lot of information on the improvement in attention span.

Although the project started off with the therapeutic objectives of Reading Comprehension and Attention Span, other data sources involving visual arts like painting, play dough conveyed the holistic therapy that the students had undergone. Metaphors during sessions conveyed the state of transition of the students. Choice of character in a drama before the start of the ABT sessions and the change in choice after a few sessions spoke volumes of the therapy undergone. Performance in class showed the change in the children.

Summary of Session Record sheets

Session No.	Objective	Theme
1	Attention span	Secular India
2	Sequential Memory	Rain
3	Punctuation	Punctuation marks
4	Response time	Jungle
5	Audio Memory	Rivers
6	Sequential Memory	Birds
7	Listening skills	Friendship
8	Visual Memory	Colours
9	Listening skills	The Seven Wonders
10	Sequential Memory	Fundamental Rights
11	Reading Comprehension	Terrorism
12	Memory	Writs
13	Response time	War
14	Focussing skills	My Reflection
15	Vocabulary building	Fire
16	Audio Memory	Deepika
17	Pattern Recognition	Patterns
18	Attention span	Robots
19	Awareness	Links

Session 1:

S, P, C and Vm took part in every activity of the session but I had to pay attention to Vv, only then he participated. N too participated only when paid attention to. She held herself back in the first session.

Session 2:

Singing the Kannada song

C	No problem in recollecting, has good knowledge of Kannada too
N	Did not attempt at all saying she could not recollect the song at all
P	Difficulty in recalling the sequential order of the song and needed help
S	Difficulty in recalling the sequential order of the song and needed help
Vm	Did not make a single mistake in the song although he does not know Kannada
Vv	Replaced a few of the words, conveyed the meaning correctly

Reflections:

- ✓ The camera needs to be positioned correctly before start of session.
- ✓ A thank you to be done at closure
- ✓ Vm becomes very confident after a movement session.

The spot metaphor

The story created by the children went like this. A dancing peacock, was happy in its place, heard the warning signs from the sound of thunder, got pelted by hailstones and was knocked out. He was revived by the sunlight when the clouds moved away. It was the therapeutic journey of the group that I could visualize with the story.

Session 3:

While making the visual image of each punctuation mark, the following was the observation.

C	Exclamation mark	Used blue coloured paper for filling up the and did a very neat job
N	Question mark	Creativity in cutting out the paper in different shapes and completely involved in her work
P	Full stop	Used whatever colours where close to him and completed it for the sake of completing it
S	Open quotation mark	He drew out the quotes very beautifully and patiently went about cutting thin strips to create a fully filled picture
Vm	Colon	Used blue and green and did a very involved job
Vv	Comma	Drew out the comma quite well and used red to fill it up

There was a metaphor in the choice of punctuation marks although lots were drawn while choosing the mark.

C loves excitement and wants action. (!)
N does not reveal all of herself (?)
P puts a full-stop to himself and does not believe in himself (.)
S starts thinking of something elaborate , but gets confused on the way (“
Vm waits for someone else to take the first step (:)
Vv pauses, takes a while to do the work even when it comes to answering questions in class (,)

During the game played with the punctuation mark:

	C	N	P	S	Vm	Vv
Responded correctly immediately	√	√				
Took time to respond and was right always				√	√	
Responded immediately but made mistakes						
Took time to respond and made mistakes			√			√

Reading with punctuation in class:

	C	N	P	S	Vm	Vv
Reads with correct punctuation		√				
Sometimes misses a punctuation mark	√					
Misses it first, then realises his mistake						
Misses marks and does not realise			√		√	√
Reads with no punctuation at all						

Reflections:

- √ Shoes to be removed for all sessions for complete grounding

- ✓ More time for art-related activity
- ✓ Time factor to be taken into account so that children are not too tired by the end of the session

Session 4:

Vv and N were very participative and all their inhibitions dropped, as they became a part of the synergy that was developing. At the end of the session we sent out energy to a family that had lost their six-year-old child in an accident. Energy of gratitude was then sent out to all our own families, friends, teachers and acquaintances. It was a beautiful moment with all of us sending out collective energy.

Reflections:

- ✓ Create a border using the mats so that nobody is out of the camera range
- ✓ Work on P for bringing about volume control while using the drums

Session 5:

S's associations are very unique. He brought out the similarity between a waterfall and a dam, the first one being natural and the latter man-made.

The story of the river started with the sun melting the snow in the Himalayas. Vm continued by saying it flowed. S said it went gushing down the mountains, feeding plants, trees and animals. C became the waterfall as the water gushed down. P encountered a dam built by people (a reference to limitations set by expectations of people around him?) S helped him by saying the water would erode the dam. Vv elaborated that the water would swell along the banks and drown people, villages roads etc. Children and animals would play in the water. Now the river had reached the sea. None of them felt good about joining the sea and losing their own identity. But after a while they would make peace and join the sea (their own frustrations while going through teenage?)

The meditation that followed was about overcoming all obstacles and then joining the sea. For me it was a journey of dissolving the ego and becoming one with the universe.

During the game of Kothi-Koli (an audio response game)

	C	N	P	S	Vm	Vv
No mistakes						
Few mistakes	✓	✓			✓	✓
Many mistakes			✓	✓		
Always wrong						

Reflections:

- ✓ All the children to be reminded to be patient with those who take more time to come up with an answer.

Session 6:

Vm's response was much faster than usual. Vv and N were very participative. Vv finds it difficult to keep the pace in any beat. He tends to go out of sync with the rest of the group. But he suggested a very interesting step for P to do.

Reflections:

- ✓ C finds it very difficult to sit still during a meditation.

Session 7:

P was able to modulate the sound level on his drum. Vv's loosening up was obvious with him opting to hug and show friendship rather than play on the drum. N let herself go completely while doing a "happiness" drumming session. Vm loved to play to the beat of a song in the background. S prefers to play a very simple beat. C is completely at home with the drums and is very creative while creating rhythms.

Reproducing the beat that their partner plays:

	C	N	P	S	Vm	Vv
Exactly the same	√	√		√		
Slight difference in tempo			√		√	
Vaguely similar						√
Unable to copy						

Reflections:

- ✓ Vv opened up and told us what all his difficulties were
- ✓ I need to pay attention to Vv when he does movements otherwise he does not do it.
- ✓ Find other ways of grounding and calming instead of meditations

Session 8:

The children were contributing to the visualization by giving their own suggestions. Starting with stepping on violet flowers, then moving the flowers with our hands so that we did not crush them, walking on indigo coloured stones (S said it hurt, so we made them rounded pebbles), C suggested the blue ocean, S wanted to run away from the high waves but N wanted to jump over them, S suggested the green grass on which we walked, caught a little insect and then passed it on very carefully. N's nurturing nature was in the forefront while handling the insect. P threw the insect away. As we came to yellow, C sang the "yellow yellow dirty fellow" ditty so we sat on yellow buffalos. I was wearing yellow, so N with a hint of mischief said that I was the buffalo!. We plucked orange carrots, washed them and ate them, we were going to feel the red roses and C reminded us of the thorns, but he added that even if it hurt us, we would bleed "red" colour only.

A lot of laughter and fun with the colour game, with P having some difficulty in remembering which corner had which colour.

The painting session revealed a lot as is shown in the painting inserted below.

C first asked for a picture to copy and when I did not provide one, he started with a band of colours and was very focussed. His second painting was that of a head of a flamingo.

N started with using black and her confusion cleared after the first painting and was it the beautiful peacock that was trying to emerge?

P started with vertical stripes and then moved on to horizontal patches. Did not worry about mixing one colour with the other, but wondered why he was getting the colour of "mechanic's grease" all the time.

S started with a lovely backdrop and started creating a tree in the forefront. Soon he changed his mind, but the work continued to flow and as an afterthought he added a few buildings. He took care however to remove all traces of the mistakes he had made earlier. (a reference to the past when he went a bit astray in school?)

Vm used every colour of the rainbow making horizontal bars and was very confident that his work was beautiful.

Vv used only red colour and said that he could not think of any other colour.

Reflections:

- ✓ S said “P for P and P for Purple”; a great step for one with dyslexia.

Session 9:

Vv is a lot more spontaneous during the sessions. N let herself go by screaming as loud as possible. They are aware of difficulties that another is facing and on their own walk up to the person in trouble to help out. C offered to help Vm take out the djembe cover and S offered a chair for me near Vv as I helped him play.

Reflections:

- ✓ At the start of the session, a reminder of the rules has to be given.

Session 10:

N’s expression of emotions was very authentic (fear and sadness). Each Fundamental Right was enacted. N chose to be the Brahmin and Vv chose to be the Untouchable. She held her nose as Vv passed by and walked disdainfully away. To depict the Right Against Exploitation, Vm chose to be the one to exploit and P chose to be the exploited. From his usual choice of meek roles, this was a drastic change. N offered to be a Hindu in representing each religion and P had a field day doing a Bhangra beat. The story enacted for Constitutional Remedies flowed naturally as they took on roles easily.

The rules had to be repeated for them to give time to Vm and Vv.

Reflections:

- ✓ All of them remembered the sequential order of the Fundamental Rights
- ✓ Vm took on a powerful role

Session 11:

S had a difficulty in reading the word “sadness” while all the others did not have any difficulty. Vm had a difficulty in understanding the word “march past” so his word was changed.

C	Anger
N	Injury
P	Bomb blast
S	Sadness, fire
Vm	March past, gun
Vv	Was not present

While reading the sentences they did not have any difficulty.

During the game “I am awake, alert, enthusiastic”, none of them made any mistakes in the actions. Energy levels were lifted with this game.

P did a very good job of spontaneously creating a song in Kannada on Terrorism which was sung in the same tune as “I hear thunder”.

Reflections:

- ✓ While waiting for Vm to answer, P mentioned that not giving him a chance was a form of terrorism!

Session 12:

P was very enthusiastic in creating a tune for the shortened version of the writs. N was hesitant initially but soon created an interesting one. Vm required a lot of time and suggestions after which he was able to do it.

Initially, S was hesitant but soon volunteered after Vv was praised for his spontaneity. While dramatising each writ, the one that evoked maximum laughter was P climbing on the showcase almost touching the roof to represent a higher court of law!

At the end of this the children were all wanting a sitting down game, so we played this game of squatting on the floor and creating a beat with our palms on the floor. The same beat was passed around and anyone could change it whenever they wanted.

Then the direction too would change. It had a very calming effect on them. P had some difficulty in directionality and C had not understood the game properly but all the others were very good. Vv did not make a single mistake and Vm, S and N too were always on the dot.

A quiz was conducted in class after this session:

Name	Quiz marks
C	4
N	7.5
P	4
S	8.5
Vm	6.5
Vv	3

Session 13:

The session was held outdoors and that day nobody wanted to be indoors. Vm took quite a while to think of a word and with a lot of suggestions came up with the word 'soldier'. We chose 3 words sword, soldier and smoke for the "Dog and the bone" game. Sword and soldier were a bit confusing for S. Vv was quite intent on the game and won his team some points too.

An interesting discussion followed during the closure on the kinds of wars that happen at home. Even Vv spoke out about the fights he has with his father on the kinds of shirts he buys for him. Vm too has fights with his sister on the use of the computer and this surprised everybody. Throughout this discussion all of them paid complete attention to what the other was saying.

The reflective meditation was about the personal wars we fight with ourselves and S quietly whispered "There is no 'Undo' button in life."

Reflections:

- ✓ P was a little upset with having it outdoors as other teachers were watching, so I need to restrict the audience.

Their attention span has improved considerably in the classroom and this is evident with the number of times associations are made in the session with what is being taught in class.

Session 14:

All of them experimented with the mirrors on the floor and felt very good looking at themselves. They all liked what they saw in the mirror.

The mask making was very interesting as can be seen in the pictures below.

C made what he called 'devil' mask. He was very sure of what he wanted and went about making it without worrying about what anybody else was doing.

N made one with full lips and sophisticated eyes and a few uncommon feathers. She did not say it was boring and wanted to know why I was asking them to make one.

P usually stops with minimal work and then asks me what to do. But today he went on to decorate the mask with feathers until all the others too had finished work.

S made a beautiful mask with a lot of unconventionality conveying the frustration that he sometimes feels because his parents are old fashioned. But his strokes were all very well defined conveying his self-confidence and there was no confusion in his mind as to what he wanted to portray.

Vm made a very simple one with a few religious symbols and wanted to use very thin sketch pens without making a dark impact on the mask.

Vv took a paper plate and scribbled blue all over. Then he told me he wanted to depict 'fire'. It seemed as if he wanted to show the fire inside him but it came through with 'blue' colour, just as he does not portray any strong emotions. I gave him another mask to create and although the mask looked very sad, he used many other colours.

We see that in class also with the number of times he raises his hand to answer a question or even just to comment on something that strikes him.

Vm suggested a step movement for the dance and C too suggested one and the we decided to close session listening to the song "Main Aisa Kyu Hoon".

Reflections:

- ✓ I should use "Fire" as the theme in the next session

Session 15:

Vm conducted the Body Warm up session very confidently. We enacted the story of the 2 frogs and C and S enjoyed it immensely.

They created a story using the words matchstick, cigarette, volcano, sun and rocket.

During the reflection P felt the story was for him. He was the frog who heard everyone shout "You can't, you can't" and so did not attempt to jump out of the pit of fire.

Reflections:

- ✓ The ABT session should not be conducted in the room that it was done in, as the space is very cramped and there is not much fresh air there.

Session 16:

We had the ABT session in the backyard of the school and energy levels were very good there. The game of humming a song and asking the others to recognise the song was interesting. N is usually very hesitant to sing in public but hummed two songs without realising it. P was very good at humming as well as recognising. All the others very easily came up with options except Vm who took some time and Vv who took S's help.

We had composed a poem in class about "Deepika" and we decided on a tune for the song. Creating the poem was very interesting with them coming out with similar sounding rhyming words. N said we should give it a simple tune that everyone could sing easily and P suggested "Jingle Bells" A beautiful melody was created with the words "cool, cool, cool, cool..." , etc forming an echoing chorus.

Deepika, Deepika, Deepika is my school

Where all the students are cool, cool, cool, cool, cool, cool

Our uniform colours are yellow and brown,

We go to school in Bangalore town, town, town, town, town, town.

What I like most about my school

Are the classes that are “dhool, dhool, dhool”

As a closure I gave them all playdough and asked them to create what they wanted. C learnt to make a dog, S made a lamp, Vv very effortlessly made a flower with a long stem. Vm created a face, a trishul and a cross.

N started off making a little boy sitting on a chair and raising his hand with an open book and a pen in front of him. She made a blackboard in front of him and a small school bag and said all this represented Murtaza (a classmate). Then she made a tiny little dog that was short and long (just like her dog Brandy who had been put to sleep the week before) and a bowl with a bone on it and told us all it was “Heidi” our school dog who is a St. Bernard. The whole process of working with dough was a catharsis for all. For N it was such a complete experience that she asked me why we could not do this everyday. S asked me a profound question, “Who discovered the alphabet?” which set me thinking on why we insist on reading and writing when that is so difficult for them to do.

Reflections:

- ✓ I should get N to paint her doggie and create a sort of memorial so that it creates a closure of Brandy’s physical form.

Vv’s father had come for a meeting and gave me feedback on his social skills and how he is very participative in conversations with people, something he never used to do before.

Session 17:

All of them created patterns easily with the tangrams. C, N, S and Vm had no difficulty at all in copying the tangram pattern that I had made. Vv took time but could copy it on his own. P found this exercise very difficult.

On asking them to do the same using building blocks all of them did not have a problem including P.

Then they were asked to create anything on their own.

C made different kinds of guns, N made a kitchen stove (she used to be very averse to cooking about 6 months ago and this is a welcome change of attitude. S and Vm made buildings and Vv made an uncomplicated tower. P took time to finish the earlier activity. We made one creation using all that was made.

Table showing how well they can copy patterns:

C	Very good
N	Very good
P	Unable to copy
S	Good
Vm	Good
Vv	Fair

Reflections:

- ✓ The attention span of the whole group has improved remarkably.

Session 18:

The drum session was very exciting with sculpting done forming two groups. One half did a part of the beat while the other completed it. C, P and S enjoyed the interaction.

Attention Span during the game:

C	Very good
N	Very good
P	Fair
S	Good
Vm	Good
Vv	Good

During the game of calling out words and waiting for the group to drum, S sounded out 2 phonetically similar sounding words, which was quite a surprise. ABT has definitely helped his audio perception.
Vm suggested very easily a movement for the drum session game.

Reflections:

- ✓ N wanted to know about my school days on whether I played pranks in school and so on.

Session 19:

The whole exercise of walking in a pattern along the hall was done with a lot of awareness. The chain-chain game was introduced as a need of the hour as S was feeling cold. N played like a child during the game. Taking your blind partner through a maze brought interesting reactions from them. S said he liked that interaction very much.

While creating the railway station, market and airport, Vm and Vv took hardly anytime to decide on what they were going to do. Vm chose to be the plane in the airport.

In the market scene, Vv started selling snakes and crabs and there was chaos created with his snakes and crabs running away.

The closure involved making paper links with different colours and joining each ones section with the others' using a golden link. N said it was "friendship" that linked them all together.

Project Impact

Key findings

Milestones achieved

C

C's attention span has definitely improved as can be seen in the classroom sessions. He is able to answer revision questions of the previous day's class quite easily. His expressive language has improved as he takes keen interest in class. His self-esteem has received a boost after the ABT sessions

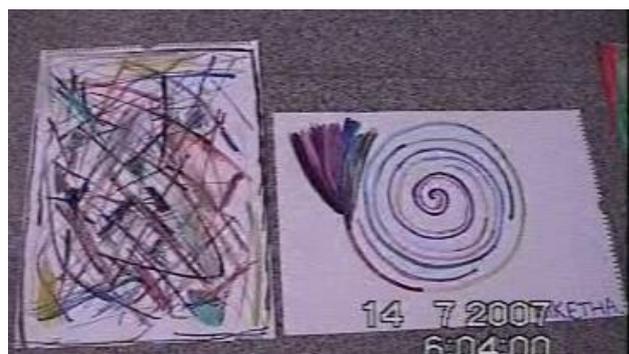


N

Last year N refused to be a part of the ABT group and I was not too keen on taking her in as she had this attitude of treating everything around her as "boring and uninteresting".

Session	Observations
1 and 2	No involvement in activities
3	Started getting involved while creating the punctuation mark
7	Fully expressive doing a "Happiness drumming"
8	Wanting to jump over the waves to overcome it (willingness to change)
8	Her 2 paintings reveal a transition
10	Authentic expression of emotions of fear and sadness
12	Spontaneously creating a tune
14	Creating a beautiful mask with complete involvement
16	Humming tunes for 2 songs without her knowledge although she wanted to do her part only at the end
16	Creating playdough items as a catharsis for her trauma after her dog's passing away
17	Creating a kitchen stove using building blocks although she used to hate anything to do with kitchen work
19	Playing games whole heartedly, evoking the child in her

Session 8



Session 14



P

Session	Observations
5	Copying S in the action games
5	Talks of the dam on the river, like the obstacles he creates in his life
11	His creativity in making up the song about terrorism
13	His complete attention while the others were talking
14	His complete involvement while making the mask
18	His attention span has increased considerably especially during drumming sessions

Before ABT



Session 8



Session 14



His attention span in class has improved and he is able to answer questions in class. He does not repeatedly say, "I can't teacher" as he used to do.

S

Session	Observations
5	Poor audio perception in the game Kothi Koli especially while using similar sounding words
8	While painting, he started off trying to create a tree in the foreground, then changed his mind and created something different and added buildings as an afterthought
8	He could joke about "P for P, so P for Purple" as that was P's colour in the colour game. Accomplishment for one with dyslexia
14	While creating the mask he was very sure of what he was doing

13	Slightly better performance in Dog and the Bone game when similar sounding words were used
18	He now is able to suggest phonetically similar sounding words while doing the Call and Response game with the drums

Before ABT



Session 8



Session 14



Vm

In one of the earlier ABT sessions during my Pilot project, Vm chose to be a deer in a drama.

Session	Observations
1	He was unable to keep to the rhythm that everyone else was playing
2	Chose to be a peacock dancing in the rain
4	Vm chose to be a snake in the animal movements game. Although he took time, he came up with a good beat for the group to follow
6	His response to creating a movement was very quick
7	In the Call and Response game, he would change the tempo of the beat slightly while responding
8	His painting used every colour of the rainbow
10	Vm chose to be the "exploiter" in the drama
11	Vm had difficulty in comprehending what he was reading
13	He spoke of the fights he has with his sister over the use of the computer
14	He conducted the Body Warm up session very confidently. He took the initiative to suggest a step for the dance movements
17	Very quickly he created a design using the tangram
19	His spontaneity in deciding to be an aeroplane in the airport scene

On 29th Aug I heard Vm socializing with N, (talking about having UNO cards at home) something he was quite hesitant to do.

Before ABT sessions



Session 8



Session 14



Vv

Session	Observations
1 to 3	He participated only when focussed on, there was no spontaneous participation
4	He chose to be the monkey in animal movements
5	He could not recollect the sequence of sounds that had been created by each one of them
5	In his part of the river story, he said that people would drown in the river but children would play in the water and animals would swim
6	Poor motor coordination in the step and clap game
6	He spoke of the difficulties he faces during the session
7	He spontaneously went and hugged S to show his friendship
8	He could not think of any other colour but red for the painting
10	He had no qualms in being the untouchable in the drama. On his own he chose to be the policeman in court and called out for the witness
12	Enthusiastic participation in the session
12	During the game of playing a beat with hands on the floor, he did not make a mistake even once, he was so attentive
13	Openly talking about his differences with his father when going shopping for clothes
14	The mask creation with a range of colours in the second one
16	He found it difficult to think of a song to hum
16	Very easily he created a flower with a long stem
19	In the market place he surprised us by suggesting he would sell crabs and snakes!

In class his participation is 100%. He listens paying full attention and gives answers when we least expect him to, of things he has learnt even a year back. His reading comprehension has improved considerably.

His father too mentioned that his social skills these days are very good and that he participates in conversations with other people too.

Before ABT started



Session 8



Session 14



Analysis of Propositions of Individuals/Group

Substantiate with linkages to theory

C sometimes gets distracted during class, but during a drum session, a drama session and a game, all his attention is on what is happening around and he is completely in the moment. In class he pays full attention to what is happening and despite his difficulty with spoken English he manages to answer all the questions asked in class. His reading comprehension is still the same as it used to be.

N's involvement in the school has changed. Her bonding with her peers and her acceptance of them all is remarkable now. Even with the other teachers her social skills have improved and she interacts with everyone without a bias. The friendship bond that has been formed among all the ABT students is a beautiful one. She is sensitive to the others in the class and when she has a genuine problem with any of the other children in the school, she ensures that we tackle it in such a way that we do not hurt the child in any way. She appreciates the power of an intent and makes profound observations in class and at home and discusses it with us.

The change in **P's** attention span shows what rhythm can do for helping children with an attention deficit. Despite his spasticity, he is able to be in complete sync with a rhythm that is being played. Especially when it a duet between him and another, he plays with great enthusiasm and does not miss a beat. **P's** attention span in the classroom has improved, but his reading comprehension has not undergone much change.

S's attention span has undergone a lot of change and his commitment to his school lessons have brought a change in his academic performance over the past 2 weeks. Prior to ABT sessions, he would refuse to read aloud in class afraid that he would cut a sorry figure but now with some coaxing, he agrees to read. Reading comprehension has improved considerably. His involvement in class activities involving manual work has undergone some change for the better.

Last year **Vm** was able to answer straightforward questions but this year he is able to answer questions that are not directly from the notes given to him. He is able to infer from the notes and put down the correct answer implying that his reading comprehension has improved. His self-confidence has increased very much and his need for approval has reduced. Last year he would always ask how his work was, waiting for us give him an approval, but this year he does not do that in class or the ABT sessions. But when praised, he is very happy with it.

ABT sessions have brought about a change in **Vv** with his reading comprehension being much better now. His attention span is much longer and his overall performance in academics too has improved remarkably. He has shown maximum change with the ABT sessions with his whole personality having undergone a change. He puts in more effort in his academics and his general awareness is very good. He is not as forgetful as he used to be during the last academic year and his memory skills have improved.

Project Summary / Conclusions

My Inferences of the whole Project

The effect it had on me, about everyday being an ABT session and discovering the difference between days that were like an ABT session and days that were not. I understood the power of an intent and the flow of energy when I let it flow with inner peace. My state of consciousness has a profound impact on the day's events. Looking back there were a few sessions that had me with low energy when interferences had not been cleansed and my clients would ask me to stop the session.

The clients were my guiding factor and each day created a theme for itself and situations led to the creation of different methods of artistic communion. All I had to be was aware of the situation and facilitate accordingly. At times they would tell me what was most needed in the situation.

Even now in class, the events decide on the flow of the class. If there is an issue to be tackled, events happen in such a manner that we get an opportunity to talk about the issue without having to introduce it on our own.

Our morning brain gym exercises, surya namaskar and pranayama are like the standard rituals of a session followed by a meditation where the reinforcement of the intent happens. Our Artistic Communion starts with the reading of the headlines of the newspaper after which we progressively move to the Focussed Creation. Our classes of concentrated work happen till lunch and then we start the closure for the day with notes writing, quiz work, drumming, movement, music or drama.

I need to continue the project and see its effect over the whole year. I need to take feedback from parents too and enrol them into the project so that holistic development happens on all fronts.

Significance of ABT with the population

ABT is a very safe platform for the children to perform without the fear of failure. This led to a form of expression that was very therapeutic.

Children do not voice out their innermost fears, doubts and misgivings. We only have to extrapolate from what is exhibited in the form of behaviour, and work towards therapy. Just accepting them and loving them for what they are irrespective of their behaviour goes a long way in therapy. Being non-judgemental, non-reactive and being able to go behind the façade of unwanted behaviour takes one towards therapy.

Having been through a phase in life where they have not achieved in terms of academic excellence and have been branded in school puts our children under a lot of pressure. Arts is the only media through which we can reach out to them and bring about holistic development to restore their damaged self esteem.

Suggestions/Insights that can further ABT

- ✓ Have courses in other cities for trained ABT therapists
- ✓ Personal development modules for all teachers in Special Ed schools
- ✓ Workshops for Management personnel in schools so that they experience the effect of ABT
- ✓ Collecting research material from all the participants for publishing a paper
- ✓ Introduce ABT for mainstream schools as a therapy for stress related problems

Similar such programs are undertaken to prove the effectiveness of Arts Based Therapy: Arts for Healing is beginning an exciting journey to empirically determine the effectiveness of Integrative Arts Therapy for children with pervasive developmental disorders such as autism. To accomplish this goal, we have contracted with Mount Sinai School of Medicine, and together will work towards an understanding of the benefits of creative arts therapy upon the behavior, communication and social interaction of children with these disorders. This is a vitally important undertaking, considering the deficit of empirically-validated treatments for autism and pervasive developmental disorders. The long term goal of this project is to be able to document the effectiveness of Integrative Arts Therapy and disseminate this treatment to providers and organizations that work with children with special needs, for the betterment of their functioning and well-being.

Appendix One

Detailed SRS documentation

Not to be Redistributed

Summary of Session Record Sheets

Session No.	Objective	Theme	Ambience	Artistic Communion	Focussed Creation	Closure
1	Attention span	Secular India	A song about different religions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Om, Amen and Ammen chanting 3. Walking to the beat of music and freezing to a stance for Om, Amen and Ameen 4. Playing on the drums whatever pulse is given by each one 	Each group of 2, beats the drum whenever their chant is called out	Steady heart beat rhythm Reflection with eyes closed
2	Sequential Memory	Rain	Water kept in a large container in the middle of the room, music of falling rain played in the background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Learning the Kannada version of the song "I hear thunder" 3. An action relating to a word associated with 'rain' 4. Simple sequential movements involving footwork 	Story is created using the 'rain' related words and then enacted	A quiet reflective meditation as it continued to pour outside
3	Punctuation	Punctuation marks	Visual pictures of punctuation marks put up on the wall	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Walking at various speeds, on toes, bent knees, on heels, 3. Making punctuation mark pictures using a collage of coloured paper 	Movement game using the punctuation marks as cues for different movements	Doing a visual recall of all the punctuation marks and their significance
4	Response time	Jungle	Pictures of animals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Animal walks and jumpa 3. Playing the drums to the music that's being played 	Call and response game of a jump or movement of an	Slow rhythmic beats on the drum leading to a soft rumble, meditation to send

Session No.	Objective	Theme	Ambience	Artistic Communion	Focussed Creation	Closure
					animal that elicits a response with a beat on the drum	out energy to the family that had lost a 6yr old child, gratitude sent out to everyone
5	Audio Memory	Rivers	Music of water being played in the background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Chakral sounds 3. Creating sounds relating to water 4. Sounds relating to the flow of a river were created by each one 5. 4-beat rhythm created by each one of them using sounds from the mouth 6. The game Kothi-Koli was played 7. A sound is made and a particular movement has to be made 	The story of the river from its origin to the confluence at the sea	Meditation to music taking us through the river of life
6	Sequential Memory	Birds	Music of chirping birds being played	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Simon says (using bird movements) 3. Footwork alternating with claps at regular intervals 	Movement choreography for the music being played from Global Spirit	Listening to meditative music
7	Listening skills	Friendship	Friendship bands tied for each other	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Making different vowel sounds 3. Drumming to different songs 4. Each person makes a rhythmic phrase and they all repeat it together 	One partner does a beat, the other repeats it and they all play it together, they sing a song that goes with the	Chakral songs in a familiar tune, Bramari pranayama

Session No.	Objective	Theme	Ambience	Artistic Communion	Focussed Creation	Closure
					rhythm	
8	Visual Memory	Colours	Coloured objects covering every colour of the spectrum kept in the middle of the room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. A visualization and movement sequence of going through all the rainbow colours 3. Game of 4 corners using the colours as cues to go to a particular corner (showing the colour, calling out the colour, calling out the starting alphabet) 4. Balls of different colours kept in the middle of the room, each one has to collect all of their own colours one by one as fast as possible 	A painting using the colours of their choice	Colour meditation of watching a sunset, and then the night sky and making a wish looking at a shooting star
9	Listening skills	The Seven Wonders	Pictures of the new seven wonders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Voice work in different volumes 3. Voice work in different pitches 4. Learning to play the heart beat and Park rhythm 	Each one facilitating a session by giving a pulse for the group to play on the drums, showing volume change and a stop	Buzzing sound made during each exhalation 3 times, a short meditation focussing on each of the 7 wonders that the children in the class themselves are stop
10	Sequential Memory	Fundamental Rights	Colourful chart of all the Fundamental Rights listed out	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Walking at different speeds 3. Newspaper roll game 4. Freezing to a stance conveying 	Enacting out each Fundamental Right in drama	Meditation followed by Bramari pranayama

Session No.	Objective	Theme	Ambience	Artistic Communion	Focussed Creation	Closure
				various emotions like fear, sadness, bondage and freedom	form	
11	Reading Comprehension	Terrorism	Pictures and Newspaper headlines on Terrorism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. The game “I’m awake, alert, enthusiastic” played with actions 3. Each one given a word to read and they had to act and show 4. An action song created and enacted (based on Nanage Gudugu Kelasthu) 	Each one gets a sentence to read which is a part of a story. They enacted out the story	Reflection on “how do we counter terrorism?” Bramari pranayama and a meditation to bless the world
12	Memory	Writs	They bring with them the writs that were written out in class	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Chakral sounds 3. Different types of walking that are called out 4. Making a rhythmic intonation for the 5 writs 	Each pair enacts out each writ Game involving calling out the writ and they having to enact it with the partner	Sitting on the floor and playing the game involving copying a beat that is played by the sitting next to you
13	Response time	War	Music form the movie Lakshya	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. March past to the beat of music 3. Words related to war are suggested and all of them enact it 4. Dog and the bone game using these war-related words 	Each word’s action is decided upon and once the word is called out it has to be enacted immediately (similar to rabbit –elephant game)	Reflection on “Wars at home”, meditation on personal wars with themselves while going through guilt, Bramari
14	Focussing skills	My Reflection	Mirrors on the floor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Discussion on the reflection of 	Making masks for themselves	Listening to the song “main aisa kyu

Session No.	Objective	Theme	Ambience	Artistic Communion	Focussed Creation	Closure
				themselves	using colour, feathers etc and dancing to music wearing the mask	hoon”, Bramari pranayam
15	Vocabulary building	Fire	Lighting camphor and a perfumed candle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Discussion on Fire 3. Suggesting words relating to fire and enacting them out 4. Story of the 2 frogs falling in a pit of fire enacted 	Creating a story linking all the words that were suggested	Dancing to rhythmic music, quietening down listening to the music of rain, reflection on the story of the frogs
16	Audio Memory	Deepika	Brochures of the school laid out	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Chakral sounds sung to the tune of Saregamapadanisa in different volumes and pitches 3. Each one hums a tune and the others figure out which song it is 	Giving a tune to the poem on Deepika school that was created in class	Creating things with playdough
17	Pattern Recognition	Patterns	A Tangram pattern created and placed in the middle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Each one creates a tangram pattern 3. Following a movement sequence 	Building blocks used to create a model that has been created already and then creating one of their own and putting all the creations together to make	Colour meditation

Session No.	Objective	Theme	Ambience	Artistic Communion	Focussed Creation	Closure
					one	
18	Attention span	Robots	Robots created out of building blocks and placed in the middle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups (like robots) 2. Call and response game with the drums 	Game involving hitting the drum when an action is performed, when a word is called out, when a particular sound of an alphabet is made	Heart beat rhythm played on the drums, then a soft rumble and then the Bramari pranayama
19	Awareness	Links	Chain of colourful paper links kept in the room	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Body Warm ups 2. Walking to the rhythm without stepping on the lines on the floor 3. Walking to the diagonally opposite square only 4. Leading my blind partner through a maze 5. Partner to partner interaction game with eyes closed 	Spontaneously building a scene of a railway station, a market and an airport	Creating a chain with paper links and joining them all together to create one chain

Time Logistics

Session No.	Date	Attendance	Session time
1	18/6/07	6	1 hr
2	22/6/07	6	1 hr
3	26/6/07	6	1 hr
4	2/7/07	6	1 hr
5	3/7/07	6	1 ¼ hr
6	6/7/07	5	1 hr
7	10/7/07	6	1 ¼ hr
8	13/7/07	6	1 ½ hr
9	16/7/07	6	1 ½ hr
10	17/7/07	6	1 ½ hr
11	20/7/07	5	1 ½ hr
12	24/7/07	6	1 ½ hr
13	27/7/07	6	1 ¼ hr
14	30/7/07	6	1 ½ hr
15	31/7/07	6	1 hr
16	3/8/07	6	1 ½ hr
17	6/8/07	6	1 ¼ hr
18	7/8/07	6	1 ¼ hr
19	8/8/07	6	1 ¼ hr

Total time: 24 hours

References

Music:

Global Spirit by Karunesh
Heart Chakra Meditation by Karunesh
Relaxation & Meditation with Music and Nature by Distant Shores
Classic Fantasy
Open Sky by Anugama
Silent Joy by Anugama
Inner Sanctum by Aeolia
Like the Ocean by Cherubin
Kannada folk songs
Hindi film music
Usha Uthup's Rhyme songs

Books:

My Body My Wisdom by Tripura Kashyap
ABT Certification Course material
Brochure of Deepika
Document prepared by Mrs. Sita Krishnamurthi, Founder and Principal of Deepika
Clinical Applications of Music in Neurologic Rehabilitation by Concetta M. Tomaino

Internet sites:

Vicky Barber's Art Therapy
<http://www.vickyb.demon.co.uk/index.html>

Clive Robbins, Nordoff-Robbins Center for Music Therapy at NYU at
<http://education.nyu.edu/music/nrobbins>.

<http://www.musictherapy.org>