

A Complementary Form of Speech/Language Intervention: Can Music And Movement Help Children With Communication Disorders?

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Thesis abstract: This investigation reports on the evolution, features, processes and outcomes of a devised complementary treatment approach, one combining traditional speech pathology treatment strategies with the structured use of music and movement, for children with communication disorders. Qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry were used, including case study, an adapted form of ethnography, and grounded theory methodology combined with an empirical single case design incorporating a multiple baseline (across behaviours). Exploration 1 of the investigation involved the development, application and evaluation of the complementary treatment approach. Sources of data from four cases included profiles from pre- and post-treatment measurements, responses to inter- and intra - session measures (including responses to probes, as well as documentation of treatment strategies and responses), videotapes of treatment sessions and responses to parent questionnaires. For Exploration 2 of the investigation, data collection was attenuated and amplified. More information regarding application of the complementary approach was obtained via 15 further case studies of participants involved in the complementary music, movement, and communication treatment context. Furthermore, Exploration 2 included abridged investigations of four children who had participated in standard treatment. The purpose of inclusion of these cases was to obtain another perspective from which to view the devised complementary treatment strategy. For all cases from Exploration 2, documented and analysed clinician reflections on sessions contributed further information to this investigation. In total, 23 cases across Explorations 1 and 2 are presented. The Computer Assisted Speech and Language Assessment (CASALA) and the Computerised Profiling Program (CP) –Language Assessment, Remediation and Screening Procedure (LARSP) were largely pre- and post- treatment measurement tools for determining speech and language progress. Parental responses to pre- and post- treatment questionnaires provided another means of considering experience of such a treatment approach. Line-graphs provided a view of relative treatment effects on an inter-session level. Nodes and categories created through primarily open coding of text (from clinician reflections on sessions), and systematised using NVivo software, provide still another view of responses to, and progress within the context of treatment, and especially highlight treatment process. Qualitative inquiry and evidence illustrate treatment process, practicability and positive outcomes in relation to a number of parameters, for the majority of cases. Overall, the study establishes support for integrative, multi-modal treatment, taking into account kinesics, proxemics and rhythm as well as a facility for altering treatment formats to include different phases. Moreover, findings highlight the need for consideration of trans-disciplinary and interdisciplinary practices.

Bev's thesis can be accessed through the La Trobe University Library.