



# Interpreting assessment data in music therapy

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# Introduction

- Interpretation of assessment data in music therapy is a theme with not many publications in comparison with other topics regarding music therapy assessment.
- One of the possible reasons is the complexity of this topic and the multiple forms to present and discuss the theme.

# Introduction

- The purpose of this lecture is to present general considerations on interpretation of assessment data in music therapy and possibilities of interpretation based in three different music therapy theories.
- **Analogy in music therapy from Henk Smeijsters (2012)**
- **Narrative metaphor in music therapy from Lia Rejane Mendes Barcellos (2012)**
- **Morphological factors in music therapy form Susanne Bauer (2001)**

# *Stages to apply an assessment method in music therapy – a standard description (Gattino, in progress)*

- 1st. Assessment planning
- 2nd. Data gathering (audio or video, memory information, drawings, texts from the client, etc.).
- 3 rd. Data transcription (reports, music scores, drawings)
- **4th. Data interpretation**
- 5th Conclusions on the assessment.



# Work definitions of “interpretation” for music therapy assessment

- 1. the act of interpreting; elucidation; explication.
- 2. The meaning assigned to another's creative work, action, behavior, etc.

# First work definition for interpretation - **the act of interpreting; elucidation; explication**

- The music therapist search for possible explanations from the assessment data according to different views of the same information.
- There are multiple possibilities to interpret data to find out elucidations and explanations.

# Second work definition for interpretation - **the meaning assigned to another's creative work, action, behavior, etc**

- Bruscia argues that meaning arising in three aspects of music therapy: outcome, process, and communication.
- Meaning is that overall sense of purpose and fulfilment in life that clients hope to find as the result of therapy (this is meaning as outcome).
- Each client has to discover for him/ herself what will make life more meaningful. The therapist cannot simply give the client a "meaning" prescription (an interpersonal process of meaning-making through music).

# Second work definition for interpretation - **the meaning assigned to another's creative work, action, behavior, etc**

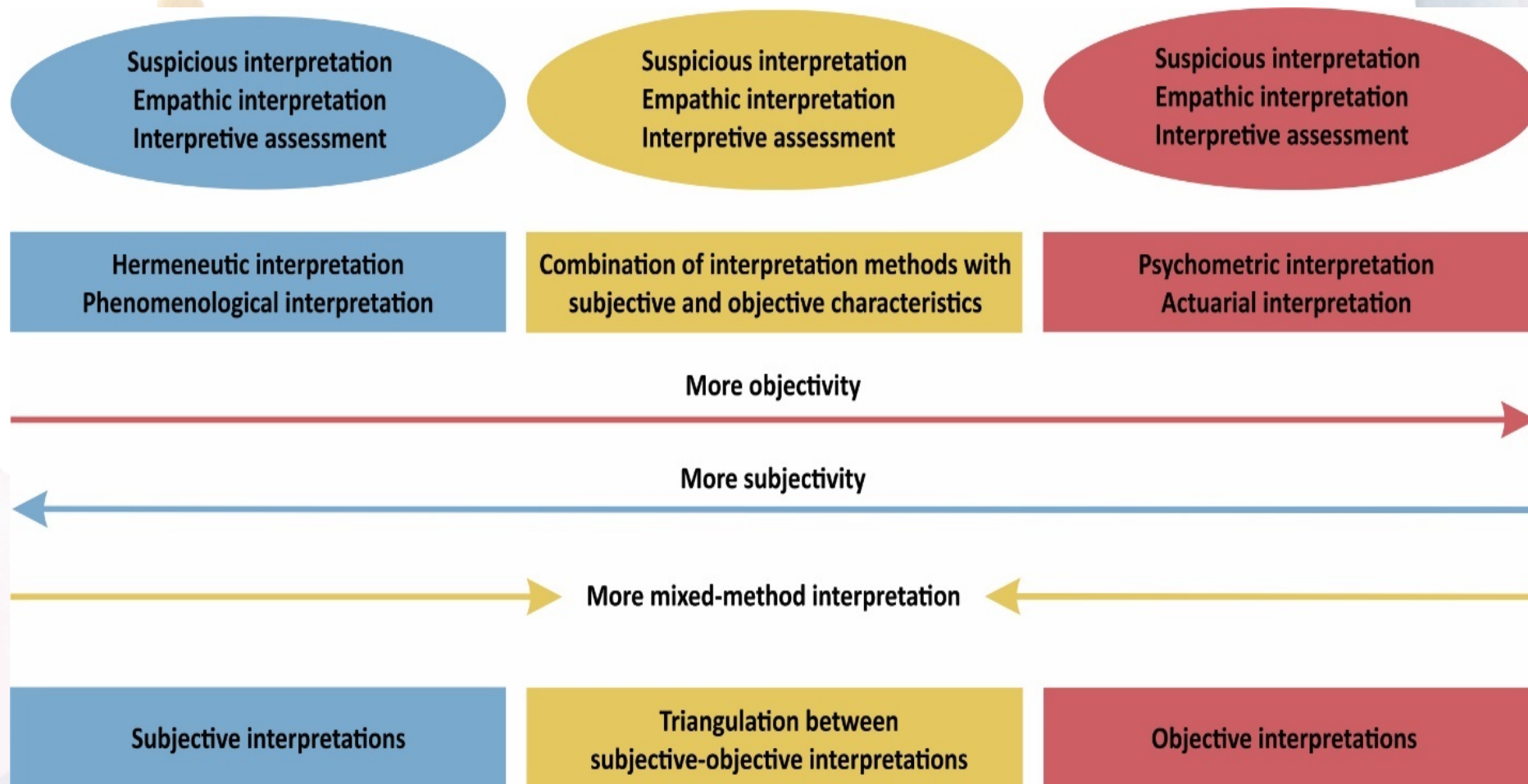
- **Meaning as “communication” is the area where the music therapist has to understand what the clients mean when they say or do/play something and the clients have to understand what we mean as well.**
- Considering the three aspects, the third is the main to be considered in this presentation.



# Types of interpretation in music therapy assessment (Gattino 2021)

Suspicious interpretation	Empathic interpretation	Phenomenological interpretation	Hermeneutic interpretation	Actuarial interpretation	Psychometric interpretation	Interpretative assessment
- It seeks to interpret the information collected to find an explanation of what happened, understanding the possible causes and factors that influence the explanation of this fact or phenomenon.	- The music therapist focuses his or her interpretation from the way the data is presented, rather than "digging" further information from what has been found.	<p>- It is based on a process of constructing meaning from what is interpreted.</p> <p>- The central structure of experience in phenomenological interpretation is its intentionality, since it is being directed toward something, since it is an experience of or about some object.</p>	- Hermeneutic interpretation seeks the meaning of the phenomena evaluated from the different understandings that can be understood or "captured" about them.	- It is performed from the collection of quantitative data and is related to a purely statistical interpretation from the collected scores or measures.	- It is based on the interpretation of scores or measures according to psychometric fundamentals (mainly validity and reliability).	- Search for meaning from studying the data from a specific theory, construct, or body of knowledge.

# Decision tree for choosing the type of interpretation (Gattino, 2021)



# Explaining the interpretation model for assessment data in music therapy

- Main goal of the interpretation – inductive inference (objective interpretation), deductive inference (subjective interpretation) and abductive process (mixed interpretation).
- Main subjective interpretation methods – hermeneutics, heuristics and phenomenology.
- Main objective interpretation methods - quantitative descriptions, quantitative comparisons and hypothesis testing.
- Theoretical foundations – constructivism/social constructivism paradigm (subjective interpretation), postivism/postpositivism paradigms (objective interpretations) and pragmatism paradigm (mixed interpretations).



# Main objective interpretation methods

- Quantitative descriptions - summarizes features from a collection of information.
- Quantitative comparisons - compare differences, associations and casualties.
- Hypothesis testing - seek to prove or disprove theoretically true statements.
- In quantitative interpretations, normally the music therapist search in the literature or in his/her experience possible explanations about the analysis.



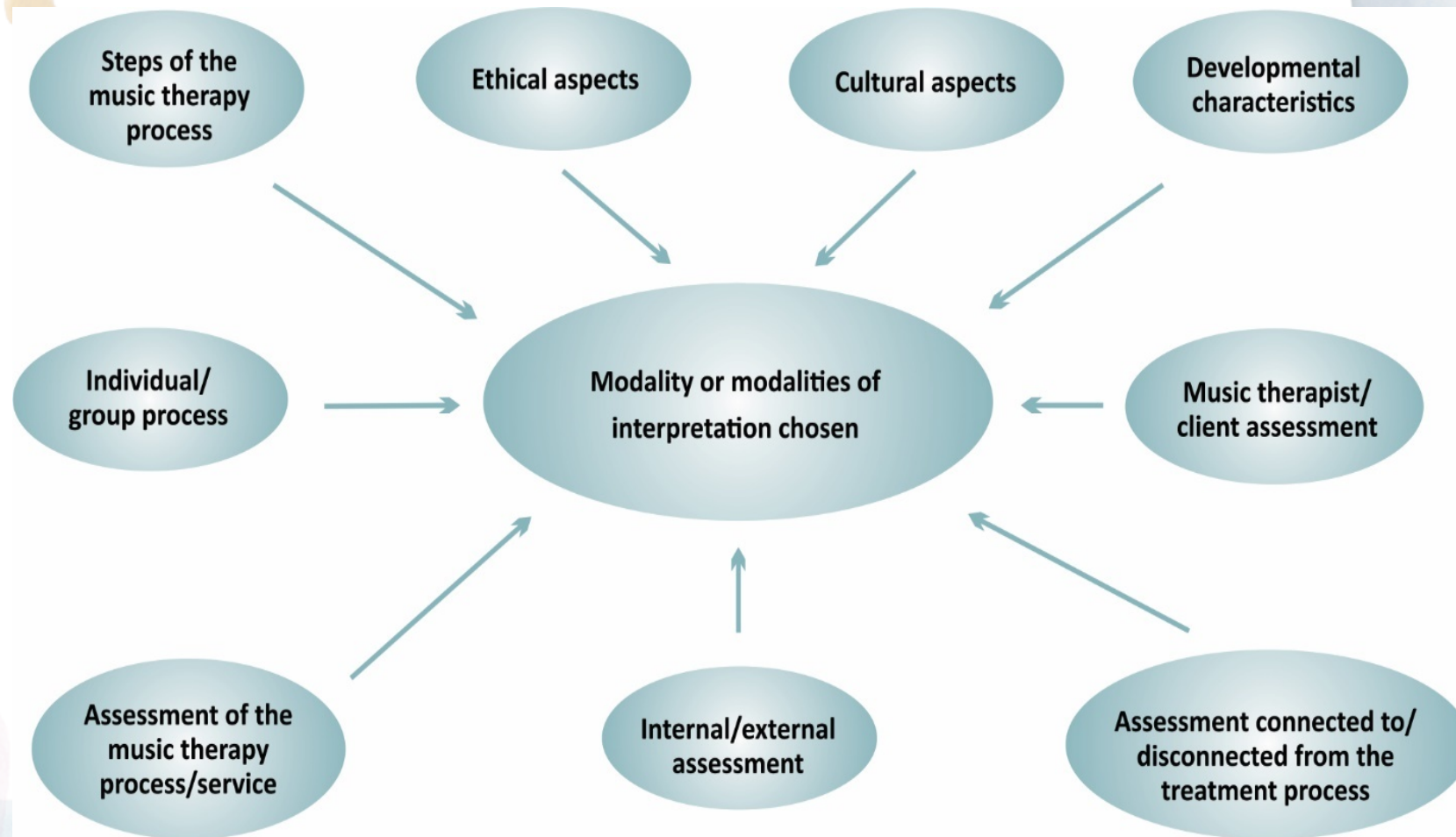
# Subjective interpretation methods

- Hermeneutics - seek to interpret meanings regarding a phenomena rather than seeking essences.
- Heuristics - the interpretation emerges from the first-person perspective (especially from the music therapist perspective), with the primary aim to comprehend the first-person experience with the phenomenon in question.
- Phenomenology - seeks to discover and describe the structure and meaning of a phenomenon that makes it intrinsically what it is—its essence.

# Explaining the interpretation model for assessment data in music therapy

- This is a dynamic model, since it is possible to connect different methods of interpretation and different paradigms.
- As a dynamic model, it considers a spectrum of possibilities regarding multiple perspectives of interpretation.
- The model considers the influence of four the factors suggested by Isenberg-Grzeda (1989) in the interpretation of assessment data in music therapy: music, institutional context, music therapist's philosophy (beliefs, reflections and theoretical foundations), and population.

# Factors that influence the choice regarding one or more interpretation modalities (Gattino, 2021)





# Music therapy theories chosen for this presentation

- Considering a broad perspective, I have chose three theories that cane be applied for different populations, philosophies, institutional contexts and understanding about the music (Isenberg-Gzerda, 1989).
- **Analogy in music therapy from Henk Smeijsters (2012)**
- **Narrative metaphor in music therapy from Lia Rejane Mendes Barcellos (2012)**
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# Analogy in music therapy

# Analogy in Music Therapy

- Music as an analogy in music therapy was structured by Henk Smeijsters and is based on two concepts.
- Vitality affects (Daniel Stern) and central awareness of Antônio Damásio.

# Vitality affects

- They are “existing qualities of sensation that do not fit our lexicon or taxonomy of existing affections.
- These indefinable qualities are best captured by dynamic, temporal, kinetic terms, such as "arising", "disappearing", "passing quickly", "explosive", "growing", "decreasing", "exploding", "prolonged".

# Vitality affects

- The vitality affects felt by the baby are expressed by dynamic forms that are composed of musical parameters.
- Intensity (between pianissimo and fortissimo), modulations in the intensity (increasing and decreasing), accents (staccato sforzando, legato), phrasing arcs, tempo (allegro, andante), changes in tempo (ritardando e acelerando) and rhythm.



# Core self

- Core self is a level of consciousness facilitated by the neurological structures that are present in most animals and allow you to be aware and react to the environment.
- It refers to non-cognitive, non-verbal, felt and intuitive awareness.

# Analogy in Music Therapy

- In summary, the analogy in music therapy has the function of portraying internal states that occur through time, manifested through music.
- In this way, what the patient manifests through music is a reflection of how he is internally.
- There is an equivalence between the expression of musical forms and the form of internal experiences about what the patient feels, thinks or acts.

# Analogy in Music Therapy

- The analogy does not refer to the associations, images, memories, or thoughts that one has when listening to music.
- Analogous manifestations occur through the central consciousness and therefore are instinctive and reflect subconscious feelings.
- There is no way to perform a musical expression without the presence of implicit feelings.





# Narrative metaphor in music therapy

# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)

- Metaphor as a possibility create meanings for the client's musical narrative.
- The client's narrative is based on his/her life, clinical and sonorous-musical history and would be sung / played / acted to express his/her external world.

# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)

- The more the listener forgets himself/herself, the more deeply what is heard is recorded in him.

Music can be used as a means of expressing the internal world and as the possibility to make sense of it.



# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)

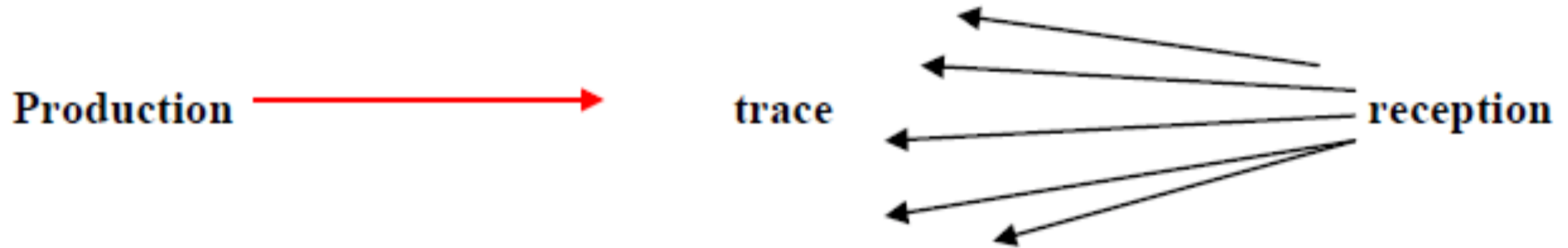
- Due to its polysemic nature, music can adapt or carry the meaning that the client wants or needs to express.

It can be “in place” of what the patient wants to express, that is, the music can carry the effect of a metaphorical sense of its expression.

# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)

- The theoretical constructions about music as a metaphor in music therapy were grounded by Barcellos in the Tripartite Model of Molino / Naittez.
- Metaphors can refer to aspects of lyrics, melodies and harmonies, for example.

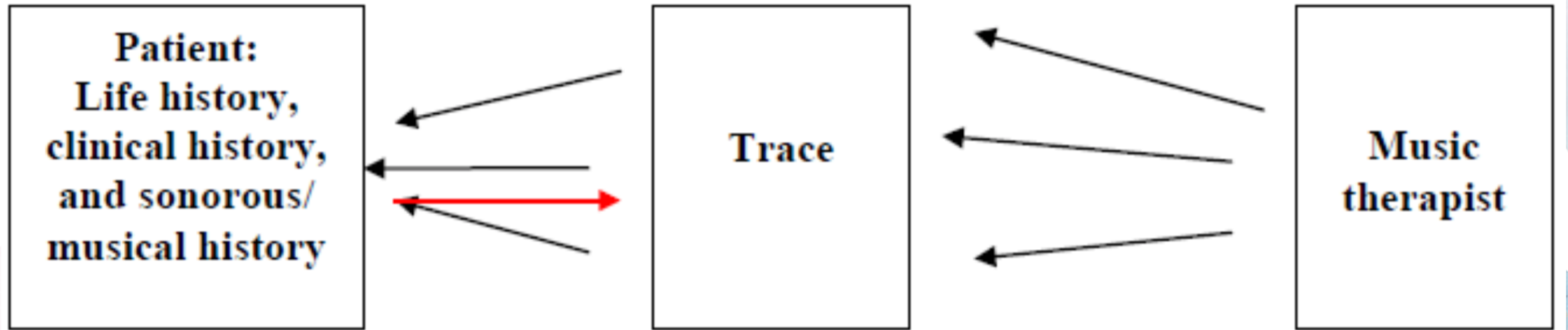
# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)



Barcellos, L. R. (2012, October). Music, meaning, and music therapy under the light of the Molino/Nattiez Tripartite Model. In *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy* (Vol. 12, No. 3).



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# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)

- All human action and production leave material traces that are accessible to the senses.
- These traces are the clues through which there is the possibility to build the character of the narrative and have a material reality, a form, constituting itself as a trace.
- They are symbolic forms because they carry meanings for those who produce them.

# Narrative metaphor in music therapy (Barcellos)

- Metaphor as a possibility create meanings for the client's musical narrative.
- The client's narrative is based on his/her life, clinical and sonorous-musical history and would be sung / played / acted to express his/her external world.





# Morphological gestalt factors in music therapy

# Morphological gestalt factors in music therapy

- The morphological gestalt factors is a theoretical system for interpreting musical improvisations and it was created within the Morphological Music Therapy approach.
- The morphological music therapy is a adaptation of the morphological psychology to the music therapy field.

Bauer, Susanne (2002). La Musicoterapia Morfológica [The Morphologic Music Therapy]. Unpublished paper presented at II Jornadas Colombianas de Musicoterapia [II Colombian Music Therapy Journeys], Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá.

# Morphological gestalt factors in music therapy

- The morphological music therapy understands psychic life as an uninterrupted sequence of self-absorbed contexts of action, units of action, or units of experience.
- Each unit has its specific Gestalt (meaning), its internal dynamics, its balance between the internal forces that characterize it.

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# The morphological gestalt factors

- In morphological psychology, the gestalt factors represent the theoretical framework for the analysis of any observable phenomenon
- They are understood according to a unit of action or experience: the patient's symptom, family history, illness, work relationships, etc.
- The psychic Gestalt is a closed complex, which can be perceived by oneself and by others.
- Psychic experiences and behaviors are intertwined "taking shape."

# The morphological gestalt factors

- The psychic, as Gestalt, is only understood taking into account the simultaneous actions of psychic factors.
- **This Gestalt is structured and organized through the following six basic categories, called gestalt factors: *Appropriation, Transformation, Effect, Ordering, Deployment, Tool.***

# The morphological gestalt factors

- These six factors participate in each unit of action.
- There will be one of them, which due to its greater presence and action, will be the starting factor, the one that dominates the Gestalt in its entirety.
- The six factors are mutually conditioning, stimulating, - and limiting.
- Through them, the phenomenon of origin (starting point of all creation), polarity (the union between opposites that condition each other) and metamorphosis (as an eternal process of formation and transformation) will be present.

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# The morphological gestalt factors in music therapy

- If a musical improvisation is a musico-psychological Gestalt, then the same laws as the Gestalts and units of action and experience analyzed above must reign in it.
- Gestalt factors, the concepts of phenomenon of origin, polarity and metamorphosis must be present in it.
- **The six gestalt factors in music therapy: *Appropriation, Transformation, Effect, Ordering, Deployment, Tool.***

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# The six morphological factors applied to the music therapy context - **appropriation**

- It is the way the client approaches the instrument, the way she/he takes it and affirms it.
- The desire to have it or the inability to leave it.
- It is how patients receive, retain and assimilate the musical material of the therapist, and if they manage to Drop" and share your own melodies or rhythms.

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# The six morphological factors applied to the music therapy context - **transformation**

- It is reflected in the ability to change the instrument, in the desire to try one or the other during the session.

# The six morphological factors applied to the music therapy context - **effect**

- Depending on the selection of the instrument, its timbre, its shape and how the client plays it, a greater or less musical and psychological presence is achieved.



# The six morphological factors applied to the music therapy context – **ordering**

- It is related to the ability to create order and structure (harmonic, rhythmic and melodic sequences, divisions and subdivisions, repetitions, echoes etc.).



# The six morphological factors applied to the music therapy context – **deployment**

- It is "the look forward".
- Going beyond what is established, dreaming, fantasizing and walking away.

# The six morphological factors applied to the music therapy context – **tool**

- It relates to everything that is work and effort.
- Motivation, the will to play, the desire to try something new, insisting in an musical action.
- Signs of improvement and development, of personal growth and search for firmness.
- The client learns to choose the most appropriate instrument to express one or the other theme, he/she is master of the situation.

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# The six morphological factors

- **Appropriation:** The logic of this factor follows the idea of possessing, having, appropriating something, acquiring; also drop and leave. In its consistency it is described as solid, hardened, dense, sticky.
- **Transformation:** Logic consists of dissolution, restructuring, construction. Its consistency is rather liquid, soft, amorphous.
- **Effect:** logic is the idea of submitting, influencing, having an effect on something or someone, doing to obtain, manipulating.
- **Ordering:** logic consists of ordering, structuring, looking for proportions, creating simple and complex shapes, systems, routines, repetitions and variations.
- **Deployment:** The logic is to have desires, fantasies, dream and idealize, go beyond experience, project and show.
- **Tool:** The logic is in stability, identity, knowing consequences and limits, knowing your own abilities, it is reflected in effort, work and commitment.



# Final considerations

- Interpretation of assessment data is the basic foundation of the music therapist practice.
- The clinicians needs to discuss more about this topic in their practice.
- There are many possibilities to explore this topic in a future research.



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# Thank you!

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