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Functional music therapy and learning challenges in school

Disa Kneck-Moller

Åbo Akademi University, Finland

Functional music therapy, or shortly FMT, is a form of therapy used in medical rehabilitation. It is a neuro-muscular motion therapy aiming to develop the brain by stimuli from muscles and nerves. FMT is used in a large spectrum of disabilities and brain damages but also as a support method for children with learning challenges in reading, writing and mathematics and concentration problems. The music consists of custom composed melodies, a.k.a. musical codes, guiding the client in his/her playing. The therapist plays an acoustic piano and the client is offered a flexible array of percussion instruments, mainly drums and cymbals and some wind instruments. Functional music therapy addresses human primary functions based on perception, breathing and body control. It is a non-verbal treatment where the musical codes facilitate, activate and substantiate the person's actions and enhance desirable motion patterns. The individual spontaneous movements give direct access to sensomotorical areas in the brain, circumventing any verbal or intellectual processing. The goal with FMT is to raise a person's level of functionality by creating possibilities for his/her own reaction, action, thought and planning. A child's development is intimately connected to movements and motion. I also wish to establish which basic functions and motion patterns are important to have obtained in order to achieve school maturity.

Biography

Disa Kneck-Moller is a Functional Music Therapist from Musikterapi-institutet i Uppsala (The Institute for musical therapy in Uppsala) in Sweden. She also holds a Master's degree in Music Science, Psychology and Pedagogy at Åbo Akademi University and a Bachelor's degree in Classical Guitar from Turku Conservatory of Music. Since 20 years, she is working as a Functional Music Therapist with children, youths and adults. She is also working on a Doctoral thesis as a Post-graduate student at Åbo Akademi University.

disapost@gmail.com

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