



DIDACTIC FOUNDATIONS OF A TECHNOLOGY FOR DEVELOPING STUDENTS' EMOTIONAL STABILITY AND REFLECTIVE COMPETENCE IN A MUSIC-THERAPY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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Abstract: *The article examines didactic foundations for jointly developing students' emotional stability and reflective competence in a music-therapy learning environment. A conceptual synthesis of eight contemporary sources informed a four-stage technology comprising emotional orientation, guided musical experience, reflective meaning-making and strategic transfer.*

Keywords: *music-therapy environment, emotional stability, reflective competence, music psychology, self-regulation, didactic technology, transfer.*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of higher education, a student's emotional stability and reflective competence can be viewed as two inseparable sides of professional preparation. In the pedagogical sense, emotional stability is not the absence of emotion but the ability, in a complex learning and communicative situation, to be aware of one's own state, to manage it and to continue goal-directed activity. Reflective competence, in turn, covers reviewing experience, understanding its causes, evaluating one's own actions and justifying the next decision. The music-therapy learning environment gains significance as a multimodal pedagogical space that makes it possible to activate these two processes simultaneously.

Contemporary research on music psychology in Uzbekistan addresses the links of music with aesthetic education, creative thinking, mental stability and motivation in learning [1, pp. 56–59]. In developing the professional competence of future music teachers, the integration of musical perception, pedagogical communication, empathy and music-psychological knowledge is singled out [2, pp. 1945–1949]. These views provide grounds for understanding a music-therapy session not as limited to “listening and relaxing” but as an educational technology that connects emotional perception, active expression, dialogue and reflection.

In Russian studies, the connection of music therapy with emotional and communicative processes has been investigated in various groups. Izotova shows that the use of musical means in a special psychological-pedagogical context may help develop empathy [3, pp. 317–322]. Kharina and Toporishchev analyze the relationship between music therapy and a comfortable psychological state [4, pp. 53–57]. These works are not transferred to university students as a ready-made “therapeutic outcome”; they are taken as comparative evidence explaining the pedagogical potential of musical activity in working with emotional processes.

Relationship and reflection are central categories in the international music-therapy literature. Silverman, through qualitative research, shows the formation of the therapeutic alliance in music therapy and reveals the importance of trust, collaboration and the process of relationship [5, pp. 90–116]. Schmid and Rolvsjord analyze how music-therapy students become reflexive practitioners through role-play [7, pp. 864–876]. From the standpoint of teaching methodology,

these results mean that emotional experience should not be left without reflection, while reflection must rely on real or modelled experience.

The aim of the study is the conceptual substantiation of a didactic technology for developing students' emotional stability and reflective competence in a music-therapy learning environment. The scientific novelty consists in proposing, in place of a linear model such as "music, positive state", a cycle of "emotional orientation, musical experience, reflective meaning-making, strategic transfer", and in defining for each stage the pedagogical task, the activity and the observable outcomes.

The link between emotional stability and reflective competence is dialectical in character. Reflection helps the student name emotional experience and identify its causes; the experience thus understood widens the possibility of consciously choosing a self-regulation strategy in the next situation. However, excessively intellectualized reflection may deny emotional experience, while reliance on feeling alone may leave the pedagogical conclusion vague. For this reason, the music-therapy learning environment must combine emotional experience, musical activity, dialogue and metacognitive analysis in balance. This balance forms the philosophical and didactic center of the technology.

The study places three questions at its center: under what didactic conditions does musical experience become learning material for emotional self-regulation; how does reflective activity pass from a mere exchange of impressions to competence; and how is the resulting strategy transferred to a new learning and professional situation? In answering these questions, pedagogical development is strictly separated from the outcome of clinical treatment. This delimitation is necessary not only for terminological precision but also for preserving the professional competence of the higher-education teacher and the safety of the student.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The article was constructed as a theoretical-pedagogical study. Eight published scholarly sources were selected purposively: two Uzbek scholars, two Russian scholars, two works from representatives of the English-language scientific school, and two foreign works by Norwegian-German and German-Austrian researchers. The main selection criteria were relevance to music psychology or music therapy, emotional self-regulation, empathy, reflective practice and professional preparation in higher education.

In the conceptual analysis, "emotional stability" was defined as functional self-regulation in pedagogical activity, and "reflective competence" as the ability to analyze experience and justify the next action; these are working definitions, not criteria for clinical diagnosis. Groarke and Hogan empirically distinguished functions related to affect regulation and well-being in order to measure the adaptive functions of music listening [6, pp. 1–19]. This work shows the need to take into account that the function of a musical experience depends on the listener's goal and context.

Linnemann and colleagues showed that time and context are important in the relationship between music listening and stress in everyday life [8, pp. 223–230]. For this reason, the technology does not accept the assumption that "any music always has the same effect". The pedagogical task was defined as noticing the student's individual response, giving him or her reflective language, and helping to choose a suitable self-regulation strategy.

The methods included conceptual synthesis, didactic modelling, category analysis and identification of limitations. Because no new empirical experiment was conducted, no statistical

effectiveness indicators are given in the results. The proposed technology is a theoretical model for further experimental validation in the higher-education setting.

Four criteria of didactic consistency were applied in designing the technology: purposefulness, meaning that every musical activity serves a defined competence; learner-centeredness, recognizing the student's choice and individual response; reflective closure, meaning that experience is not left without interpretation and conclusion; and transfer orientation, meaning that the outcome of a session is expressed in a plan for carrying it over to a subsequent situation. These criteria were used to turn the theoretical concepts in the sources into verifiable elements of lesson design. Research showing that the adaptive functions of music listening are tied to different goals supports this contextual approach [6, pp. 1–19].

In the cross-source comparison, differences in population and situation were separately controlled. For example, an empathy-related result in a special psychological-pedagogical group [3, pp. 317–322] or the therapeutic relationship in an adult mental-health context [5, pp. 90–116] were not transferred directly to university students as effects. They were used only as a comparative theoretical basis showing that emotional contact, trust, reflection and relationship are factors to be taken into account in pedagogical design.

RESULTS

On the basis of the analysis, a four-stage didactic technology was developed. The first stage is emotional orientation. At the beginning of the lesson the student marks his or her current state in a brief verbal, graphic or scale form; the teacher plans the intensity of the task and the form of participation without treating this information as absolute. The task of this stage is not to “fix the state” but to become aware of it and create a starting point for the subsequent musical experience.

The second stage is guided musical experience. Students are engaged in activities such as listening, responding with voice or rhythm, improvisation, musical dialogue, and expressing a chosen image through movement or a short text. The type of activity is adapted to the didactic goal and the student's participation preference. Local studies linking music psychology with professional competence show the need to develop musical perception and pedagogical communication together [2, pp. 1945–1949].

The third stage is reflective meaning-making. After the musical experience, the student names his or her response, links it to musical features, listens to other interpretations in the group and reconsiders his or her own conclusion. Schmid and Rolvsjord's results on training reflexive practitioners show that the connection between an experiential situation and reflection deepens professional learning [7, pp. 864–876]. Reflection is therefore an independent stage in the technology, and omitting it leaves the musical experience didactically “unclosed”.

The fourth stage is strategic transfer. The student identifies which strategy was effective or ineffective for him or her, plans in which situation it may be used, and re-analyzes the result in the next session. Groarke and Hogan's concept of adaptive functions supports the need to name the purpose of using music explicitly [6, pp. 1–19]. Thus, “I listened to music” is not an outcome; the link of “for what purpose, which musical activity, what response and what next strategy” forms the didactic unity of the outcome.

The developmental mechanism of the technology is seen in organizing emotional and reflective processes not in parallel but as a cycle of sequential mutual conditioning. The emotional response provides material for reflection; reflection turns the response into a conscious

strategy; and the strategy increases the capacity for self-regulation in the next situation. This circulation strengthens the student's professional agency, because he or she begins to see his or her own state not as something "the teacher manages" but as a personal resource that can be managed through analysis and choice.

A pedagogical facilitation protocol was developed for the technology. It comprises five actions: 1) opening the purpose of the activity in simple, neutral language; 2) offering at least two alternative forms of participation; 3) observing rather than over-commenting during the musical process; 4) conducting reflection after the experience in the sequence "what was noticed, what was it linked to, what did I understand, what will I do next time?"; 5) recording the individual strategy at the end. The protocol places the teacher in the position of a facilitator who structures the student's process of understanding, not an expert who interprets the emotional response for him or her.

Observable didactic indicators were set for each stage. In emotional orientation: differentiated naming of the state; in musical experience: purposeful continuation of the chosen activity and, if necessary, changing the method; in reflective meaning-making: linking the musical factor, the personal response and the causal explanation; in strategic transfer: drawing up a plan of when and why to apply the method. These indicators observe not the "positive/negative" content of feeling but the student's skill of consciously working with his or her own experience.

An important result of the technology is the distinction of two levels of reflection. The first level is descriptive reflection: the student describes what happened in the experience. The second level is transformative reflection: the student separates out causes, reconsiders his or her earlier assumption and changes the strategy of subsequent action. That the process of becoming a reflexive practitioner through role-based experience has been studied among music-therapy students shows the importance of the link between experience and professional reflection [7, pp. 864–876].

Table 1. Didactic matrix of the technology for developing emotional stability and reflective competence

Didactic stage	Leading mechanism	Student activity	Observable pedagogical outcome
Emotional orientation	Becoming aware of and naming one's state	Brief self-check, metaphor, choosing a colour or word	Distinguishing and expressing one's state
Guided musical experience	Musical-emotional activity	Listening, rhythm, improvisation, musical dialogue	Active participation and trying out self-regulation strategies
Reflective meaning-making	Metacognitive analysis	Debrief, journal, comments in pairs	Identifying causes, comparing interpretations
Strategic transfer	Carrying over the strategy that has been understood	Personal plan, situation scenario	Planning the strategy for a new learning or

Didactic stage	Leading mechanism	Student activity	Observable pedagogical outcome
			professional situation
Re-reflection	Renewing the cycle	Reviewing the outcome in the next lesson	Stable self-regulation and a reflective habit

DISCUSSION

The ontological basis of the proposed technology is seeing the human being in the unity of emotion and thought. In the educational process, feeling is not opposed to rational cognition; it is the layer of experience that shows the subjective significance of a situation. The pedagogical value of the music-therapy environment lies precisely in the possibility of turning this experience into safe activity and then conceptualizing it through reflection. Oytorayev's analysis, which links music psychology with aesthetic education, mental stability and creative thinking, supports this integrative view [1, pp. 56–59].

From an axiological standpoint, emotional stability is not equal to the demand to “always feel positive”. The pedagogical goal is not to suppress a negative or complex feeling but to identify it, express it safely and manage it in a way suited to the learning task. Results on developing empathy through music in special groups show the potential of music for emotional contact [3, pp. 317–322], but they are not generalized as direct results for university students. This methodological limitation is important for preserving the evidential honesty of the article.

The relational factor is also central. Silverman studies how an alliance based on trust and collaboration develops in music therapy [5, pp. 90–116]. In a pedagogical context the “therapeutic alliance” cannot be transferred exactly, but its main lesson is that the effect of musical activity does not occur outside the teacher-student relationship. Criticism, coercion, or reflection turned into an assessment of the student's emotional response may restrict open expression. The teacher's language should therefore be neutral, explanatory and allow choice. Kharina and Toporishchev emphasize the possibilities of music in creating comfortable psychological conditions [4, pp. 53–57]. At the same time, Linnemann and colleagues show that the link of music with stress depends on time and real context [8, pp. 223–230]. From these two directions it follows that, in the didactic technology, repertoire should be managed not on the idea of “universal effect” but by giving the student a certain degree of choice, observing the individual response and, if necessary, changing the type of activity.

Until the technology has been empirically tested, no firm conclusion is drawn about its effectiveness. In subsequent research it is appropriate to develop valid indicators for emotional self-regulation and reflective competence, and to use a pre-post design, a comparison group, qualitative analysis of reflective texts and delayed measures. The professional boundary between a pedagogical session and clinical music therapy should also be clearly defined in the educational programme.

The cultural context of repertoire and musical activity is of particular importance. The same piece may evoke a completely different response in different students because of personal

memory, aesthetic taste or cultural experience. For this reason, the teacher views musical material not as a “stimulus that brings about a predetermined emotion” but as an open didactic resource for meaning to arise. Findings on the dependence of the relationship between everyday music listening and stress on time and situation [8, pp. 223–230] reinforce this contextual position. The possibility of choice and an alternative activity help preserve the student’s autonomy.

Reflective openness also has a limit. An educational session must not become a space for compulsory disclosure of the student’s personal life. The teacher organizes reflection through questions tied to the learning process, such as “which musical or activity factor in this task affected your participation?”, rather than demanding a deeply personal explanation such as “why do you have such a feeling?”. If a strong psychological need beyond the educational scope becomes apparent during a session, the professionally correct course is not to attempt to treat it within the lesson but to follow the institution’s procedure for appropriate professional help. The epistemological advantage of the technology is that the student is not compelled to find a single “correct” interpretation of his or her emotional response. He or she argues for the link between observation, musical feature, context and his or her own experience. This approach builds pedagogical knowledge not as a ready-made definition but as a reflective construction grounded in experience. Silverman’s qualitative study, which emphasizes relationship and collaboration [5, pp. 90–116], likewise shows that context and relationship are inseparable in studying subjective experience; in education this principle serves to recognize the student’s voice as one of the legitimate sources of methodological decisions.

CONCLUSION

The music-therapy learning environment has the didactic potential to develop students’ emotional stability and reflective competence together, provided that musical experience is systematically linked with purpose, reflection and transfer. The proposed four-stage technology combines emotional orientation, guided musical experience, reflective meaning-making and strategic transfer into an integral cycle.

The practical significance of the model lies in forming the student not as a passive recipient of emotional influence but as a subject who understands his or her own state, consciously selects a musical means and turns experience into a professional decision. At the next stage, the technology should be empirically validated and its stability tested across different fields of study, courses and session formats.

As practical support for the didactic technology, an emotional self-check card, a bank of alternative musical activities, a matrix of reflective questions, a teacher observation rubric and a strategic transfer sheet are proposed. These tools serve not to assess the student’s feelings but to structure the process of self-awareness and self-regulation.

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