Training music therapy students is a complex task that is approached differently around the world. The music therapy profession is broad in its application, with qualified music therapists working in diverse contexts with diverse populations to meet diverse needs. Different countries emphasise different skills in their training programs and offer either undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications.

Clinical training is at the heart of music therapy degree courses. Placements (also known as practicums or internships) offer students the opportunity to gain experience with real people, and therefore students are required to put theory into practice and apply their academic knowledge. In this sense, what happens on placements integrates all aspects of course work and professional knowledge. The second edition of “Clinical Training Guide for the Student Music Therapist” could be seen as a compendium for students on placement. Within each chapter, there is an emphasis on professional competencies and developing skills in various aspects of music therapy program development; from planning, assessment and goal writing, to implementing music therapy techniques. At the end of each chapter, there are learning tasks to help scaffold student learning and support them to engage in personal reflection.

The second edition is a welcome update, and while the general structure of the first edition remains intact, new material is emphasised and expanded. Chapter 3 is one such new addition, titled “Essential Aspects of Becoming a Music Therapist: Education, Clinical Training, and Related Areas”, and highlights that this material is most relevant to the process of becoming a music therapist in the United States and meeting the competencies of the American Music Therapy Association. The authors are transparent about the need for students and educators in other countries to adapt the material within this text to suit local credentialing processes and approaches to practice. Music therapy scholars have recently highlighted the importance of understanding the constitutive, relational, contextual, temporal and corporeal features of music therapy practice in meeting health and wellbeing agendas (Stige, 2015). Therefore, the task of adapting and contextualising the material within this text will require careful planning from educators outside of the United States. It may be challenging for students alone
to understand how perspectives from North America are (or are not) relevant to their local communities.

In addition, some material from the first edition has been removed, most notably the changing behaviour section from Chapter 13: “Facilitating Client Responses”. The removal of this material is appropriate and highlights the challenge of providing a broad-based, comprehensive text for students. Behaviour Modification Therapy is a highly skilled area, and it is important for students to understand that they will need training, support, and supervision to implement these types of strategies in music therapy.

Overall, most topics are presented in highly condensed formats throughout the book, such as Yalom’s therapeutic group factors provided as a simple list on page 165. The breadth of material presented is useful in raising students’ awareness of the many theories that might inform music therapy practice and will hopefully provide inspiration for more in-depth exploration of the topics. For music therapy educators, the topics within this second edition provide starting points for discussions with students about all aspects of music therapy program delivery. With its accessible language, clear structure, and broad range of references and materials, students in various stages of their training are likely to experience this text as engaging and informative.

Reference