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OUTWARD-LOOKING

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In a university context, especially within higher specialization studies, reading competence stands as an essential tool for knowledge construction. Reading, as a reflective exercise, serves as a means to organize ideas, imperative for constructing a cognitive map. This mapping of thoughts emerges as a product of an inherent thirst for learning. Intentional reading, driven by a thirst for inquiry, expands the frontiers of comprehension. It acquaints us with the contextual landscape of study, enabling us to navigate novel propositions, and deepens our understanding of diverse knowledge domains through a comprehensive perspective.

Over the past 15 years of teaching experience, a growing resistance to specialized reading among students has been observed. To some extent, this resistance appears linked to the proliferation of concise narratives and the immediacy cultivated by social networks. Content alignment with the microwave logic prevails, wherein a dish is prepared and consumed within minutes. The cultivation of time efficiency and the simplification of endeavors have infiltrated our daily activities, significantly impacting complex tasks like study and research, which necessitate strategic vision, sustained focus, and perseverance.

This phenomenon is also mirrored in the execution of final master's projects. For students, this experience tends to be arduous and stressful, largely due to their lack of substantial research skills in terms of accessing, processing, and synthesizing information. This issue does not stem from constraints in accessing databases or a shortage of resources and research methodologies, but rather from a deficiency in adept reading skills and the ability to manage substantial volumes of information. In various educational tiers, there is a gradual diminishing of cognitive loads, driven by pedagogical leniency. Concepts are streamlined, arguments are distilled to a point where intricate data is omitted. However, this facilitation process comes at the cost of cognitive development, specifically the capacity for intellectual digestion. Thus, expecting students to competently assimilate, analyze, and process intricate intellectual nourishment is an unrealistic aspiration.

Similar observations are evident in a study on the reading habits of university students in Spain and Portugal conducted by Yubero and Larrañaga (2015). Their findings reveal a considerable number of students lacking a penchant for reading,

nor do they engage in voluntary reading. In parallel, Cardoso, Bobadilla, and Pérez (2018) indicate that 66.7% of students read less than one hour weekly, while 77.8% dedicate less than an hour daily, and 72.2% do not peruse documents recommended by their educators. More recently, Suárez et al. (2023) reiterate the persistence of this trend. Furthermore, the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sports' reading milestones barometer (2012-2022) highlights a thriving leisure reading culture (68.4%), with only 22.6% engaging with materials for work or studies. These statistics underscore the significant work required within the realm of postgraduate studies. Specifically, within the domain of music therapy, aspiring to elevate the professional stature in Spain to that of our continental counterparts, if not matching our American colleagues, necessitates a heightened proficiency in reading comprehension and research.

Knowledge doesn't arrive like Amazon packages; it necessitates departing from the familiar, stepping out of comfort zones, and embarking on a quest for it. The alchemical process of transforming the unknown into elucidation is ignited by the urge to dispel the fog of uncertainty. This dynamic involves navigating through the thoughts curated by others and assimilating them into our personal intellectual framework. These constructs are often not conveniently within arm's reach; instead, they reside on the higher shelves, awaiting our reach.

Within the realm of national music therapy, the landscape often exhibits rough-hewn ideas derived from the realms of gray literature. This phenomenon accounts for the dearth in scientific output, the scarcity of internationally acclaimed professionals, and the subsequent underwhelming evaluations of our discipline. In the absence of intellectual rigor, our standing cannot equate to that of our Swiss, Norwegian, Austrian, Slovenian, or British counterparts, to name a few neighboring references.

In the context of the Music Therapy Master's program at UNIR, internal quality surveys consistently echo a recurrent sentiment: the requirement for copious reading proves demanding and time-consuming. This outcome, though seemingly daunting, denotes a positive indicator of the program's rigorous standards and the student body's dedication to learning. Our pedagogical approach mandates traversing the valley of reading to ascend to the peaks of robust learning outcomes. The entire syllabus is accessible on a digital platform and is elucidated through virtual face-to-face classes. Without engaging with the materials from the twelve subjects and the supplementary content from the remaining nine, executing assignments effectively and, undoubtedly, succeeding in examinations becomes an insurmountable challenge. Therefore, an in-depth engagement with the practice of this discipline necessitates a profound intellectual immersion. Reading serves as the gateway to exploring an extensive catalog of crucial arguments indispensable for acquiring therapeutic proficiency. This material, composed in Spanish, is sourced from principal reference manuals; however, an exploration beyond these boundaries is imperative. Venturing into the origins is vital; keeping abreast of the latest publications by foreign colleagues is essential.

Limiting oneself solely to publications in the Spanish language constrains the conception of the profession, akin to the reductive notions of nationalism that, by amplifying the autochthonous, presume exclusivity over what also exists elsewhere. Beyond our borders, a wealth of books and specialized articles demands attention. These publications result from years of intensive study and research, thereby embodying a refined developmental experience.

The epicenter of production predominantly emanates from the Anglo-Saxon realm, thereby posing the first hurdle. Aspiring recognition within this therapeutic arena necessitates mastery of the English language. Whether one likes it or not, dominion is established by those who first claim the territory and subsequently safeguard it. This dominion is a product of a long-standing tradition stemming from the 18th century—founded on the exploration of the therapeutic dimensions of music—an exploration nurtured in the United States. The contemporary face of music therapy, evolving through the mid-20th century, adheres to the highest training standards. Consequently, the foremost academic and scientific publications are predominantly articulated in English, adopted as the lingua franca by the global community of music therapists, analogous to other realms of knowledge.

In addition to the academic materials proffered to UNIR's master's degree students, who are recipients of the research journal in music therapy, *Misostenido*, it is our collective duty to bridge the gap between our international colleagues. To be an integral part of this global symphony, mastery of the universal tonal language is indispensable.

Akin to orchestrating a musical piece, one must harmonize the score, adapting it to resonate with individual instruments, all the while preserving the unique timbre. No matter how intricate the labyrinth of language may seem or how extensive the current repository of publications, deciphering the avenues of ongoing research and their interconnections is indispensable. Initiating practice devoid of acquainting oneself with the seminal works of Ruud, Aldridge, Dileo, Pavlicevic, Baker, Gattino, or Wheeler, among others, would be akin to embarking on a journey unprepared, as their perspectives enrich our own.

Beyond the fact that all the articles we publish are written concerning studies from various international contexts, we will publish this fifth issue in a bilingual version. It signifies our distinct commitment to standardize the management of this language. Furthermore, we will present reviews of the most pertinent books to introduce the foremost authors in the global context. This expansion of the scope of our perspective will enable us to learn from experiences that will contribute to the consolidation of the profession in Spain. The former linguistic reservation no longer holds relevance.

Lastly, this linguistic immersion is imperative to avoid exclusion from the proposed lines of work at the 17th World Congress of Music Therapy scheduled in Vancouver for the upcoming three years, as well as the goals outlined by the World Federation (WFMT). As indicated by Mercadal (2023), its honorary president until this year, these objectives encapsulate music therapy and avalanches, attention to emerging gender diversity, and interdisciplinary collaboration. This final point is pivotal to our growth and education. We strongly recommend reviewing the conference proceedings book to comprehend the current scientific research directions. These proposals warrant contemplation, study, and pragmatic exploration to effectively address the societal challenges of the twenty-first century with the transformative capabilities of music as therapy. Remaining on the sidelines is not a viable option.

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