Guitar Skills for Entry-Level Music Therapists: What’s Taught and What’s Not
By: Matt Logan, MA, MT-BC

Research Questions
1.) What curricular options, course formats, and instructor qualifications characterize instructional guitar courses in AMTA-accredited music therapy programs?
2.) Which guitar skills receive the most emphasis in foundational guitar instruction programs?
3.) Which guitar skills, according to clinical training directors, are most important for an incoming intern to possess?
4.) According to clinical training directors, what are the most commonly observed guitar skill deficiencies among incoming interns?
5.) Do music therapy program directors design guitar instruction to address the needs of particular populations or techniques for specific methodological approaches?

The Survey
Participants: Academic program directors and clinical training directors (internship supervisors)
Response Rate: 54% and 56%, respectively

The Results
• 60% of academic programs require 2 semesters of guitar instruction, 25% require 1 semester
• Almost 70% teach guitar skills in a music therapy-specific class, as opposed to a general guitar class
• Top 10 skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professors</th>
<th>Supervisors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Singing w/strumming accompaniment</td>
<td>Tuning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic strum patterns</td>
<td>Singing with strumming accompaniment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play without looking at hands</td>
<td>Basic strum patterns</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic open chords</td>
<td>Play without looking at hands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuning</td>
<td>Basic open chords</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sing with finger-picking accompaniment</td>
<td>Transposition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic finger-picking</td>
<td>Basic finger-picking</td>
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<td>Transposition</td>
<td>Singing with finger-picking accompaniment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bass note strum pattern</td>
<td>Bass note strum pattern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capo for transposition</td>
<td>Capo for transposition</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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• Most common deficiencies: Strumming patterns (48%), Barre chords (28%), Stylistic playing (18%), Finger-picking (18%), Transposition (17%)

• Most programs tailor instruction so that students may serve a variety of populations

Conclusions
• Academic programs are evolving to better meet instructional needs
• Professors and internship supervisors are mostly in agreement regarding which skills are important
• Professors would like more time to teach
• Internship supervisors want students with more skills

Instruction recommendations
Download from: musictherapysource.com/AMTA2013

Contact:
email: matt@musictherapysource.com     phone: 515-491-6068

References


