

APPLICATION FOR MAJOR
INDIVIDUALIZED MAJOR PROGRAM
BINGHAMTON UNIVERSITY
HARPUR COLLEGE

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Faculty Sponsor: Prof. Artiste
Proposed title: Art Therapy

Brief description of major:

The structure of the Art Therapy major is based on three disciplines: Psychology, Human Development and Studio Art. A strong emphasis in Psychology and studies in therapeutic methods are the foundation for this major. The target population tends to be the young or those for whom non-verbal expression may be the only means to work out complex issues. Human Development brings course work needed to understand the complexity between the art product and the patient's developmental level, particularly early childhood and adolescents. Studio Art is the media by which issues are described and addressed. To effectively utilize the various art forms, formal training is required. These course offerings would come directly from the Art Department with emphases on Studio Art. It is the melding of the three disciplines and the core course that is the degree program for Art Therapy.

Signature: Baxter D. Bearcat



Date: 12/8/04

**Individualized Major Program
Art Therapy
December 8th, 2004**

**Part III
Goals**

As a junior at Harpur, I declared Psychology as my major. One of my reasons for going into Psychology has to do with an inspirational teacher; another is a desire to help others achieve a healthy mind. Some factors, however, were triggered by personal insight, real life experiences with younger children, and the results some of my peers have had with Art Therapy. It is my understanding that Psychology has many applications, ranging from therapy, to understanding how we learn, and even to animal behavior. My interest in Psychology is to provide therapy, especially to children. I am focused on Expressive Art Therapy as the means to this therapy because children often have difficulty expressing and working out complex issues using more traditional verbal methods.

I foresee my future in caring for children and adolescents in need. For young children and many adolescents I believe the creative process is a strong mechanism to promote healing. The core of this idea came from a number of sources. First, I read a powerful account of a patient for whom art therapy had a profound impact. In further readings from the American Association of Art Therapy, I learned about the use of expressive therapies such as art and music to help both in- and outpatients. On the personal side, I was involved in therapy that used sculpture and poetry to resolve issues more effectively than by using traditional methods. In working with young children in pre-K environments, I have witnessed art as a form of playful expression that seems to come very naturally with children. I wish to draw upon my own talents in painting and sculpture as a professional strength. Art, I feel, can reach those who would not

otherwise be able to verbalize their issues, providing early intervention and a path to treatment. My plan is to become an expressive art therapist working with young children in an outpatient setting, incorporating my talents in the arts.

The structure of my IMP major is based on three departments: Psychology, Human Development, and Studio Art. In understanding that to be a therapist, one must go beyond the undergraduate program, I have reviewed a few graduate programs. Most require a strong background in Psychology. For those therapists working with children and utilizing expressive art therapy, they require a concentration of Human Development course work and Studio Art. Within Psychology I believe that 24 credits of course work will provide a firm foundation. The courses I have chosen are Developmental (PSYC-220), Behavioral Disorders (PSYC-223), Conceptualization of and Interventions for Child Disorders (PSYC- 476), Statistical Analysis (PSYC- 234), and Research Methods (PSYC- 344). From the department of Human Development there will be three courses which I believe are an adjunct to Psychology. The three courses are Adolescent Development (HDEV-306), Theories of Human Development (HDEV-326) and Theories/Skills of the Helping Professional (HDEV-441). I believe that adolescent development is a necessary compliment to the Psychology Developmental course, as my focus is more with children and early adolescents. The Theories in Human Development provide the cultural and social aspects that I need as a foundation for interpretation of art from a diverse population. The last Human Development course, Theories and Skills, I believe should be essential for a student wishing to be a therapist. Expressive therapy relies heavily on the studio arts. The graduate school programs that I reviewed, namely Drexel University and Lesley University, assume that the student has the fundamentals in art prior to graduate school, as the graduate school's focus is more on course work in therapies. While I may have the talent, I lack

the formal training in the studio arts. For this reason I have included in my IMP major 20 hours of Studio Art: Drawing (ARTS-171), Sculpture (ARTS-230), Painting (ARTS-240), and an Independent Study (ARTS 397). It is a focus on the strengths of all three departments' that make up my IMP: expression through art, understanding what developmental level the child is capable of, and proper psychological identification as well as a course of treatment.

Art, I believe, is a worthwhile method for children to express their feelings and troubles. For those children lacking social and verbal skills, I feel that art therapy will help them learn about themselves, connect with their emotions, and continue to grow in a healthy positive direction. What touched me so deeply about this field was reading about an art therapist who worked with an introverted young girl and discovered the emotional and physical abuse that was secretly ensuing at home. The therapist was able to examine the girl's drawings and discover what lay beneath the surface, thus making a connection and freeing the girl from the secret frightening life that she was living. This story hit a cord in me because I want to be able to help young children with their problems. As a growing, developing, young woman I have seen how different types of therapy have impacted children in unique ways. I would love to learn the skills of listening to children through their art work and understanding the process by which children develop in order to help them through issues. It is through this IMP, bringing together studies from the three departments, that I feel I can put together the courses I need in order to go forward into graduate work in Expressive Art Therapy to achieve my goals.

Part IV

Courses which will constitute my major

ARTS 171, Drawing (4 credit hrs)

ARTS 230, Sculpture (4 credit hrs)

ARTS 240, Painting (4 credit hrs)

ARTS 397, Independent Study – mosaic media (4 credit hrs)

PSYC 111, Introduction to Psychology (4 credit hrs)

PSYC 220, Developmental Psychology (4 credit hrs)

PSYC 223, Behavioral Disorders (4 credit hrs)

PSYC 243, Statistical Analysis and Design (4 credit hrs)

PSYC 344, Research Methods in Psychology (4 credit hrs)

PSYC 476, Conceptualization of, and Intervention for, Child Disorders (4 credit hrs)

HDEV 306, Adolescent Development (4 credit hrs)

HDEV 326, Theories of Human Development (4 credit hrs)

HDEV 411, Theories/Skills of the Helping Profession (4 credit hrs)

Part V

Annotated Course List

ARTS 171, Drawing (Taken in the Future)

This course will allow me learn different techniques of basic drawing. It will allow me to explore different tools and types of media.

ARTS 230, Sculpture (completed)

This course will allow me to create and develop human figures in action. This will help me learn about using both water-based clay and plaster and allowed me to work with carving materials, picks, drills, hammers, files, and plaster cast molds.

ARTS 240, Painting (Taken in the Future)

This course will allow me to get to know my capabilities and limitations with painting. I will be able to explore a different form of media and learn how to use specific techniques to portray my emotions and energy. This art class is important to take because I would like to use it in my practice some day.

ARTS 397, Independent Study – mosaic media (Taken in the Future)

After consultation with an advisor, I hope to put both my drawing skills and my mosaic ability together to create one or two portraits. I will draw my idea first and then use magazines as the media that brings life and color to the portrait. I think this is the type of art process and work that I will implement during therapy.

PSYC 111, Introduction to Psychology (completed)

This gave me a broad background in the fundamental concepts and methods used in psychology, to date. I learned about different behavioral disorders, types of therapies, and about the nature of our brain and its effect on ourselves.

PSYC 220, Developmental Psychology (Taken in the Future)

This course will help me understand the human process - social, biological, and cognitive development. This will give me insight into the courses I will be taking during graduate school.

PSYC 223, Behavioral Disorders (Taken in the Future)

This course will help me classify and understand different types of behavioral disorders. This course is of great importance because eventually I would like to help children learn about their own behaviors and if possibly make changes that would be healthier for their lives.

PSYC 243, Statistical Analysis and Design (In progress)

This course will give me a greater understanding of how researchers and psychologists use a hypothesis and develop tests and analyze data to show their findings. This course will help me understand how to read important studies that could help me with a client in the future.

PSYC 344, Research Methods in Psychology (Taken in the Future)

This course will better my understanding of how to research and write a report about my findings. This may be helpful when I am writing up my report on a child after an appointment.

PSYC 476, Conceptualization of, and Intervention for, Child Disorders (Taken in the Future)

This will teach me how to assess how treatment is working for a child. This may be of vital importance if the child is not responding well to one form of art therapy. It may be necessary to use a different type of media or another technique and this course will help me analyze how my therapy is functioning in the child's life

HDEV 306, Adolescent Development (Taken in the Future)

This course will greatly increase my knowledge of child development, which will allow me to get a better sense of where the child is compared to others their age. I see this as particularly helpful when I am looking for any unusual sign or signals that the child is expressing through their art. This can help me pinpoint the child's areas of difficulty and perhaps lead to positive changes in the child's own development.

HDEV 326, Theories of Human Development (Taken in the Future)

This course will allow me to get to know the human experience across social, cultural, and historical periods. This may increase my understanding of how and why professionals use particular treatment techniques and will help determine the methods I use in the future.

HDEV 411, Theories/Skills of the Helping Profession (Taken in the Future)

This course will help me develop my own professional skills which will aid me in my work with others in the future and create a practice where all workers are functioning in unison to provide people with the care they need in a positive, happy environment.