



MINOR THESIS IN MUSIC THERAPY 2015

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Title: When home feels familiar but yet so foreign - the professional readjustment experiences of returning internationally-trained Singaporean music therapists.

Name: Eta L Lauw

Abstract: With no formal music therapy training available in Singapore, all Singaporean music therapists are trained in a socio-cultural context different from their home country, resulting in readjustment issues when they return. This phenomenological study comprising interviews with four Singaporean music therapists found that the music therapists' readjustment back to Singapore was marked by transition blues as they take on responsibilities of a professional with added reverse culture shock. Demanding work environments and resulting stress were common given the little recognition of music therapy in Singapore. The different socio-cultural contexts between country of training and Singapore also meant that clients sometimes responded in an unexpected manner and some music therapy approaches were less effective in Singapore. Hence, some music therapists struggled to fit their professional aspirations with the local environment. Yet, returning music therapists felt at home as they understood the social context. Embracing advocacy, finding supportive networks, being adaptable while finding ways to stay true to one's professional beliefs helped to overcome challenges of readjustment. While their experiences seem typical of returning sojourner music therapists from the Asia-Pacific, differences arise shaped by the cultural diversity in Singapore. To develop music therapy as a sustainable profession, Singaporean music therapists must continue to integrate their inherent knowledge of local culture, overseas training and practice wisdom.



Title: The experience of spiritual distress for three music therapists: A phenomenological microanalysis

Name: Asami Koike

Abstract: It is suggested that music and spirituality are intrinsically related and thus, music therapists may work with clients experiencing spiritual distress. At times, witnessing spiritual distress in others may spark the music therapist to experience spiritual distress themselves, thereby negatively affecting their wellbeing. However little is known about the music therapist's experience of spiritual distress. This phenomenological study explored three music therapists' experiences of spiritual distress as a result of their clinical work. Data was collected through single, in-depth and unstructured interviews and analysed through an iterative and recursive process of phenomenological microanalysis. Individual distilled essences as well as global meaning units were created to encapsulate the phenomenon of spiritual distress for the three participants. Findings revealed that participants' spiritual distress was unique and related closely to their personal spiritual beliefs. Spiritual distress also instigated participants to engage deeply with their spirituality. Lastly, subtle and overt resistance to expressing personal experiences of spiritual distress were noted. Exploring spiritual distress has implications for strengthening the spiritual coping mechanisms of music therapists, aiding their wellbeing. Furthermore, gaining a greater understanding of spiritual distress may assist music therapists to provide more competent and empathic spiritual care to their clients.



Title: Perspectives on Therapeutic Residential Care and How Music Therapy Might be Incorporated.

Name: Jessica Higgins

Abstract: There are currently no Registered Music Therapists working in Therapeutic Residential Care (TRC) in Victoria. This study aimed to understand how three managers at Berry Street describe current practice in TRC and how music therapy might fit in these settings. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcript data were analysed using phenomenological microanalysis. Through the recursive analysis process, three distinct global themes emerged: participants' views of the nuances of being an effective TRC worker; the ways that healthy relationships and empathy develop between TRC staff and young people; and finally, how musical opportunities could be embedded in TRC units and the benefits this would imbue. Participants gave examples of how some staff are already using music but require encouragement and expansion of ideas. A significant theme that emerged included how music therapists could encourage staff to think more consciously about young people's music listening and the meaningfulness embedded within the activity. Other themes included using music in the day-to-day life in TRC to assist with mood management, helping with transitions between tasks, and as a strategy to assist with routines. This project has important implications for music therapists wanting to work in TRC as specialist clinicians, consultants, and therapeutic music teachers.



Title: Neo-colonialism in music therapy: A critical interpretive synthesis of the literature concerning music therapy practice with refugees

Name: Rachael Comte

Abstract: This paper presents the findings from a critical interpretive synthesis that explored the assumptions influencing music therapists writing about their work with refugees. The music therapy profession appears to be uniquely suited to address the healthcare needs of the refugee population by transcending cultural and language barriers which often mitigate access to other services. However, when working with individuals characterised by trauma and whose identities have been dictated by political power, it is essential that music therapy practices oppose these forces and provide opportunities for empowerment. Therefore, eleven papers describing music therapy practice with refugees from the international literature were examined and interrogated to determine the assumptions embedded within the language used by music therapists. The synthetic construct of a ‘neo-colonialist music therapist’ emerged from the data and informed subsequent analysis. The concepts of ‘refugees as a homogenous group defined by a dominant narrative of trauma’, and ‘musical improvisation as a universal language’ appeared to be influential in the ways music therapists were reporting on their work. These findings are discussed along with considerations for a music therapy practice that promotes empowerment and advocates for the voices of the refugee population.



Title: Changes to Music Therapy Education in Australia: Interviews with Three Registered Music Therapists

Name: Caitlin B. Bull

Abstract: This paper explores how the change from Bachelor and Post-Graduate Diploma to Master's only Music Therapy training in Australia has affected Registered Music Therapists (RMTs) in the country. Three female RMTs with three different qualifying degrees and graduating dates spanning more than two decades participated in semi-structured interviews which were analysed using an adaptation of David R. Thomas' Inductive Coding method. The four general categories that stemmed from this analysis were "Employment", which detailed how different levels of qualification may be impacting upon RMTs' employment conditions; "Prestige", which documented how different degree levels influence people's opinions of RMTs; "As a profession we need to develop", which explored the urge to complete further research and/or study, and "We should pay more attention to the education", in which participants specified the direction they think Australian Music Therapy education should take. These results suggest that the Australian Music Therapy Association (AMTA) may need to: provide more education to potential employers to inform them of the actual instead of perceived differences between RMTs with different qualifying degrees, to avoid non-Master's qualified therapists being unfairly excluded from jobs; and conduct further research into Post-Graduate study options desired by RMTs.



Title: Exploring the Music Therapist's Use of Mindfulness in Practice

Name: Brooke N. Medcalf

Abstract: Despite the extensive research that demonstrates the efficacy of a mindful approach when working therapeutically, to date, there is limited literature that investigates its integration into music therapy. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the experience of four music therapists who incorporate mindfulness-based techniques into their music therapy practice. Data was collected via one on one Skype interviews with each participant, which were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. These interviews were analysed using the method of phenomenological microanalysis from which, five global meaning units emerged capturing the fundamental elements of the participants' experience. These include "the integration of music and mindfulness", "client empowerment", "the benefits of the practitioners personal relationship with mindfulness", "positive client outcomes" and "the parameters of a mindful approach". These findings contribute to further knowledge regarding the practical application of mindfulness into music therapy, enabling a deeper understanding of its benefits to the client and practitioner alike. Nevertheless, they highlight the importance of maintaining an awareness of its parameters with relation to the client's unique circumstance. Developing insight into this phenomenon offers the music therapist an opportunity to expand their tool kit should they consider its use in practice and, as these findings suggest, it may contribute to the growth of therapeutic skills.



Title: How do music therapist's describe a meaningful experience they had with an older adult who had dementia?

Name: Laurel Parkinson

Abstract: Longer life expectancies have caused a rapid increase in dementia worldwide. To date there is no cure for this disorder and a lack of effective interventions, has put pressure on health-care systems leading to a global economic, health crisis. Current treatment usually involves pharmacological interventions but there are concerns about their efficacy and safety. The necessity to find effective non-pharmacological interventions has become evident. Music therapy is a non-pharmacological intervention that is particularly suitable, it has the potential to reduce behavioural disturbances and improve the mood of people in all stages of the disease. Despite the advantages there is a lack of research about how and why music could enhance this populations quality of life. This qualitative study was developed to gain insight into the musical experiences of an older adult with dementia, through the perspectives of music therapist's, for the purpose of understanding how and why music can have a positive effect on their life. Participants were recruited, interviewed, recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed using phenomenological microanalysis (Creswell 2009; McFerran and Grocke 2007). Three key themes were identified (1) music is the catalyst for a meaningful experience (2) the musical experience enhances the patient's quality of life and (3) building a meaningful relationship through the use of music. Study findings demonstrated that the music therapist's felt they were able to deeply connect with the patient, through music, and provide them with a positive, meaningful experience that enhanced their quality of life. Secondary findings were (1) treating the patient with unconditional positive regard (2) the provision of an opportunity for carers/family to see the patients strengths (3) professional growth, for the music therapist. Study results highlight the potential of music therapy to provide a positive experience that enhances the quality of life of older adult's with dementia which could reduce reliance on pharmacological treatment and lessen carer burden ultimately creating a positive impact on their environment at home or in an aged care setting.



Title: Integrating Music Therapy and Teaching Roles in Australian Schools:
Five dual-trained teachers-music therapists' experiences integrating their roles as
teachers and music therapists in Australian schools

Name: Netanela Mizrahi

Abstract: This research drew meaning from five in-depth, open-ended interviews with dual trained teachers and music therapists on their experiences integrating roles as teachers and music therapists in Australian schools. Phenomenological microanalysis (McFerran & Grocke, 2007) of this data revealed rich meaning through individual, significant and common experiences, when integrating roles of music therapy and teaching in Australian schools. A literature review explored current and historical perspectives of Australian schools and curricula, music use in schools *as* music education, music *in* education and school-based music therapy programs. Literature on integrated teacher-music therapist roles beyond Australia was reviewed and potential areas of congruence critiqued. The study revealed that an integrated role was experienced as valuable to student learning and wellbeing as well as for increased efficacy in professional practice amongst these practitioners and their colleagues. Participants emphasised a need for accessibility of professional language between disciplines. The Australian school as both a human and environmental setting for pedagogy and therapy was described both for its challenges and limitations, as well as its opportunities for impacting on student learning and wellbeing. Identity construction within a dual role was revealed as a common challenge amongst the research participants.



Title: □Coming back to the music: How three music therapists described their use of music in their personal lives and professional practice.

Name: Nicholas Ogburn

Abstract: This study aimed to present the results of 3 registered music therapists (RMTs) who described their uses of music in their personal lives and also their professional practice. Any relationship between the therapists' use of music in their personal and professional uses was sought and explored. There has been a lack of literature acknowledging the presence and possible influence of music therapists' personal use of music in non-clinical contexts. Participants were RMTs with a range of working experience, currently practicing in Australia. Through individual interviews, rich, personal and in-depth descriptions of personal uses of music created the data for this study. Phenomenological micro-analysis was utilised to distil the data to its essential meaning. Results indicated that RMTs personal uses of music were reflected in their practice at times. The results diverted from the study's aim and illustrated the significant meaning and personal benefits that participants gained from their personal uses of music. Personal value was assigned by the music therapists to their personal uses of music and these values were also reflected in their music therapy practice. Interviewees also identified how working as an RMT had an impact on their personal use of music.



Title: Giving and Gaining: Experiences of Three Music Facilitators on Working and Musicking with Asylum Seekers in Australia.

Name: Sil Jin

Abstract: There is a significant body of multidisciplinary literature raising concerned voices to the violation of human rights and the deterioration of mental wellbeing among asylum seekers in Australia. However, there is little research in reporting how the recuperative work is being done with the population which limits the generation of resources in music therapy practice and research. The current study aimed to investigate the experiences of three music facilitators (comprised of two music therapists and a volunteer musician) in working and musicking with asylum seekers in Australia and sought to explicate their lived experience from a phenomenological perspective. Verbatim transcription of interview data was collected from three semi-structured interviews conducted on Skype which was used for the phenomenological analysis. Three global meaning units were identified which included: (1) gaining personal benefits from the experience, (2) giving agency and (3) building a Bandship. The findings contributed an insight into the issues of cultural competency and sensitivity, impact of the work such as vicarious traumatisation and vicarious resilience and role of music and performance.



Title: A case for music therapy in therapeutic music interventions with women with postpartum mental health concerns.

Name: Natalie Clara Oliveri

Abstract: Maternal mental health is an issue the world over, with 10% of women in developed, and 13% of women in developing countries experiencing postpartum depression. Music therapy is a drug-free, safe clinical intervention, which is applied by a professional music therapist. It can be used to address emotional and behavioural disorders. The delicate balance required to treat a woman who has a new baby is one that requires therapeutic sensitivity and consideration of individual and didactic needs. This descriptive review reveals the methods and outcomes of therapeutic music interventions with this population: music listening (27.5%), infant directed singing and lullabies (18%), group music activities with (18%) and without (27.5%) babies and music activities with individual dyads (9%). Furthermore, a synthesis of the therapeutic nature of interventions that occur outside of the music therapy discipline has been developed. The review reveals differences between using music in experimental or clinical contexts uninformed of the 'therapy' aspect of music therapy and what makes music therapy administered by a registered professional unique.



Title: Defining Music Therapy in Hong Kong: A Survey Study

Name: Ching Nam Fung, Yuki

Abstract: Music therapy is a new profession in Hong Kong. Although there are many international definitions, none of them are applicable in the Hong Kong context. The research question of the study was ‘what is a definition of music therapy that would be acceptable to Hong Kong music therapists’. Eleven Hong Kong music therapists were asked to provide a definition of music therapy in the Hong Kong context on Survey Monkey. Based on the most frequently-used words and consistent themes, the final definition generated was *Music Therapy is a profession which uses music to achieve physical, psychosocial, behavioural and cognitive goals or to improve one's well-being. In Hong Kong, MT is widely used with the young and the elderly.* The results suggest that the participants’ therapeutic frameworks did not associate with the way they explain music therapy. It is possible that the way Hong Kong music therapists explain music therapy is influenced by the trend of how other associations define music therapy and the outcome-driven culture in Hong Kong. However, whether or not therapeutic relationship should be emphasised was controversial. Thus, more research is needed to investigate the importance of therapeutic relationship in the Hong Kong context.



Title: Journaling our own way: A survey of the journaling practices of Australian Registered Music Therapists.

Name: Bryan Anderson

Abstract: Despite there being a great deal of research into the benefits of journaling amongst student populations, there is very little information available about the use of journaling as part of a person's professional practice, or in how someone may change their journaling practices to better suit their situation or personality. An online survey was conducted of Australian Registered Music Therapists (RMT) and the results were analysed. A very low response rate suggested that journaling was not a common practice amongst RMTs and that it was most commonly practiced by newly registered therapists. The findings also demonstrated that there was a very diverse range of experiences amongst the respondents, including journaling techniques that were rarely examined. There was also a lack of adoption of the structured journaling techniques that were most commonly examined in literature. From these findings and supported through previous research a number of recommendations were made for people that were struggling to connect with journaling and examples from the author's experience were used to demonstrate these recommendations.



Title: A Qualitative Interpretive Meta Synthesis (QMIS) of Music Therapy Clinical Case Studies Describing Working with Adult's Family□

Name: Hsin Pei Pearl Huang

Abstract: This Qualitative Interpretive Meta-Synthesis (QIMS) develops a deep understanding of working with adults' family through synthesising and interpreting narratives from the most recent clinical music therapy case studies. It is understood from the literature review that family is an important therapeutic medium for all types and ages of clients. However, only children's music therapists attempt to discover family participation in a deeper level. There is a lack of focus on adults' family participation in music therapy. After researching, there were five clinical case studies selected as main data for comprehending the research problem. Twenty studies were referred as supplementary data for supporting and challenging the researcher's interpretation.

QMIS is applied as research method for abstracting different music therapy authors' point of views and combining direct quotes from literature. QMIS equally allows the original voices from music therapy authors and the researcher's interpretation being understood authentically. Through QMIS, the research is able to organise and present a bigger picture regards to the research problem in this project. In addition, Critical Interpretive Synthesis (CIS) was also being applied to the investigation of family-centred policy from clients' and their families' perspective in music therapy. Initially, this project was hoping to apprehend adult family members' perspectives from critically reviewing literature. However, the data analysis showed limited evidence to family members' real voice. This project eventually being guided to introducing adults' family practices that were differed from children's.

Several key findings indicate some distinctive characters of adult's family music therapy including the level of independency of each adult client, negative family influences from client's past and the aesthetic use of music as catalysts for positive family participation and relationships. Lastly, it is also suggested that the application of family-centred policy for adults' music therapy is still questionable.

