



School of Humanities & Communication Arts

Summer Scholarship Research Program 2021

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Project 40: Resilience and wellbeing in the context of music therapy teaching and practice.

Supervisor(s): Alison Short - a.short@westernsydney.edu.au
Principal Supervisor

Project Description

This proposed project looks at resilience and wellbeing as underpinned by meaning making and a broad sense of spirituality within music therapy teaching and practice. Within an ecological model of health, health is understood to comprise a wide range of factors including mind, body, spirit, family, community and environment. From a psychological point of view, the importance of meaning for existence and a broad sense of spirituality underpins mental health and wellbeing has been highlighted by writers such as Frankl (1946) and Jung (1970a, 1970b, 1971). Despite obvious links between music and spirituality, scant literature exists in the music therapy field about the role of spirituality and meaning-making in music therapy teaching and practice, although some specialised fields of music therapy such as the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music have made some inroads into applied practice in this area. For example, applying a belief system such as a Jungian framework to music therapy practice have been approached via research methods such as qualitative semiotic intertextuality. In view of the current context, a foundational scoping literature review is required to create a platform for further research and understandings.

In practical terms, the resilience and wellbeing needs of both students and practitioners related to their experiences within the COVID-19 pandemic have not been substantially investigated. However, during 2020, teaching resources were developed and applied to address changes in perceived student needs in the Master of Creative Music Therapy at Western Sydney University, and this included initiatives supporting the underpinning of reflective meaning-making within a broad spiritual framework. In order to further explore the impact of this initiative, this project will review both existing student feedback and also undertake follow-up interviews/questions (via Zoom and email) of graduates to elucidate further impact from student reports and any additional suggestions. Depending on remaining time available, relevant developmental guidelines for music therapy teaching and practice may be drafted. This proposed research project aligns well with the skills, interests and experience of Dr Alison Short as the principal supervisor, fitting well within the WSU research focus themes and industry needs for evidence-based research in Music and Music Therapy.

Project Aims

As noted above, this project aims to explore resilience and wellbeing as underpinned by meaning making and a broad sense of spirituality within music therapy teaching and practice, using existing frameworks within therapy and related contexts. Following a broad literature review of relevant search terms, this project then particularly seeks to investigate the impact of relevant teaching initiatives designed to support the mental health and wellbeing of music therapy students during the pandemic during 2020. Research questions include:

1. How were these teaching initiatives received by students?
2. What impact was perceived by the students, and
3. Have any positive impacts continued into their music therapy practice after graduation?

Lessons learned from both the literature review and the graduate follow-up activity will be consolidated if there is remaining time available, in order to support and inform industry applications.

Project Methods

1. The student will be supported to undertake a systematic approach to a literature review and will be provided with training and mentoring about how to do this. This will also include connection with the School Librarian and encouragement to explore and use the Endnote data management program; writing skills will be required to draft this written literature review report in the context of iterative feedback to the student.
2. The student will be instructed on qualitative research approaches to data collection and informed about all relevant aspects of ethics related to data collection. They will engage in implementing Zoom interviews and email questionnaires, manage the data collected; and undertake analysis depending on capabilities; and to do this they will be advised about simple thematic analysis techniques to apply to the data, within a collaborative research approach.
3. If time permits, consolidation of findings will promote integrative writing skills towards the development of guidelines and/or a draft written manuscript for peer-reviewed publication.

Opportunity for Skill Development

The student is expected to develop skills in:

1. Systematic approach to literature review, exploring relevant areas and keywords and bringing ideas together in an integrated manner
2. Experience of qualitative research, data collection and thematic analysis, including document review and interviews
3. Enhanced writing skills for final report and potential guidelines, including drafting of journal manuscript and increased understanding of issues to consider in approaching how publication occurs (choice of journal, requirements, submission process), subject to time available.

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

In addition to the skills listed as Essential Criteria, it would be preferable if the student has undertaken a previous literature review; and learning experiences from health or psychology units may be of benefit.

Project 41: Netflix and the shaping of global cultural politics

Supervisor(s): Diane Colman - d.colman@westernsydney.edu.au
Principal Supervisor

Simon Burrows - s.burrows@westernsydney.edu.au
Second Supervisor

Project Description

- This Summer Scholarship project fits within the larger project Netflix and the shaping of global politics.
- The academic study of International Relations positions itself as a discipline that understands power and its effects on a global scale.
- As a global media outlet Netflix has considerable capacity to influence its audiences' ideas about the world through its streaming platforms.
- The initial project consisted of a pilot that established a simple database of Netflix Original Films, identifying a number of proxies including genre, setting, topic, framing etc.
- The database is now being transferred to the Heurist network to allow for greater collaboration and more effective analysis.

Project Aims

The project aims to:

- Create a richly structured, user friendly database capturing how international relations issues are treated in Netflix programmes;
- Provide analysis of the linkages between Netflix and soft power;
- Investigate the intertextuality between popular culture and world politics;
- Provide a gateway for future collaborations on the soft power implications of Netflix and other global streaming platforms.

Project Methods

Student participants will engage in the following processes:

- Data capture which will involve the collection of data from online sources and entering it in the database
- Data curation which will involve detecting and correcting any corruptions, inconsistencies or incompletions in the data
- Ontology development which will involve the standardisation and formalisation of terminology
- Data enrichment including the creation of tags which will contribute to discoverability and searchability of the database
- Interface development which will include formal (budgeted) training with the Heurist network

Opportunity for Skill Development

Student participants will develop skills in:

- Communicating in the digital age
- Engaging with a research-driven data management system
- Collaborating with peers and faculty
- Information retrieval and analysis
- Application of International Relations scholarship to real world issues
- Media literacy
- Teamwork
- Research design
- Globalisation

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

Student participants will require:

- An in-depth knowledge of principle International Relations theory
- Analytical ability
- Basic searching skills
- Propensity to think creatively, work consistently, thoroughly and with an eye for detail

Project 42: Database to enhance Japanese-Australian intellectual and industrial collaboration

Supervisor(s): Peter Mauch - p.mauch@westernsydney.edu.au
Principal Supervisor

Simon Burrows - s.burrows@westernsydney.edu.au
Second Supervisor

This project is in partnership with [Australia Japan Studies](#) & [Australia-Japan Foundation](#)

Project Description

This Summer Scholarship project fits within a larger project. Funding has been sought from the [Australia-Japan Foundation](#) for the larger project, which will create a publicly available bilingual Japanese-English database of funding applications received by the Foundation for [Australia Japan Studies](#).

Project Aims

The project aims to:

- Create a richly-structured, user-friendly, and bilingual Japanese-English database, using the Heurist network <https://heuristnetwork.org/> as a platform model
- Provide a gateway for future investors in joint Australian-Japanese ventures
- Make available to potential investors a range of collaborative Japanese-Australian technological-industrial-scientific-academic ventures
- Increase awareness of the Japanese-Australian relationship and strengthen the two countries' economic and strategic partnership by encouraging further expansion of their ever-increasing close bilateral ties.

Project Methods

The student will engage in the following processes:

- Data curation, which will involve
 - Detecting any corruptions in the FAJS data,
 - Identifying incomplete or inaccurate parts of the data, and
 - Cleaning the coarse data
- Develop an ontology, which will involve the standardization and formal characterization of terms
- Engage in data enrichment, including the creation of tags which will contribute to the better discoverability and searchability of content in the database
- Develop the interface, which will include some formal (budgeted) training with the Heurist network

Opportunity for Skill Development

The student will be participating in a transnational project that incorporates partners and participants from across Australia and Japan. In this way, the student themselves will participate in a project that is defined by communication in different societies, and by interactions between/among researchers from those societies. The student will therefore develop skills in cross-cultural and intercultural communication ---- skills which are essential in today's globalized world.

The student will develop skills in:

- Engaging with new technology, and with a research-driven data management system (Heurist)
- Collaborating with peers and with faculty
- Information retrieval and analysis
- Media literacy
- Communication in the digital age
- Teamworking
- Research design
- Cross-cultural understanding

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

Knowledge of Japanese is not required. It is anticipated that participation on this project will, however, appeal to students with an existing interest in Japanese studies (broadly defined). Students completing majors/sub majors in the following specializations are especially encouraged to apply:

- International Relations and Asian Studies
- History
- Digital Humanities
- Languages and Linguistics
- Interpreting and Translation

It should nonetheless be noted that a methodological approach, propensity to think creatively, together with consistency, thoroughness and an eye for detail, are more important than disciplinary background or experience using databases, as full training will be provided.

Project 43: Simplify your life: does language processing drive language change?

Supervisor(s): Robert Mailhammer - R.Mailhammer@westernsydney.edu.au
Principal Supervisor

Laurence Bruggeman - L.Bruggeman@westernsydney.edu.au
Second Supervisor

Project Description

The project is part of a research programme that investigates whether the way we process languages influences how languages change. The main hypothesis this programme aims to test is whether lowering processing costs drives language change. This summer scholarship project will lay the groundwork for a future psycholinguistic and neurolinguistic investigation of this hypothesis. The summer scholar will help conduct an online experiment that investigates how speakers interpret certain ambiguous sentences (sentences with two possible interpretations). This is crucial for creating neurolinguistic experiments that measure processing costs, which, however, are not part of this internship project. The main outcome from this project are sentences for which we have theoretical predictions and empirical data on how these sentences are interpreted. These sentences will then be used as stimuli for future work, but they represent research outcomes in their own right.

The background for this project is work that shows that ambiguity, i.e. the possibility of having two interpretations of the same sentence, is crucial for language change. The reason is that typically one of the two interpretations is more frequent than the other. This is the conventional interpretation. If speakers select the alternative interpretation and this interpretation eventually wins out, language changes. One typical example is the going-to-future in English as in “I’m going to play the guitar”, which once involved physical going but now only means that you will do it in the future. Our hypothesis based on historical evidence from English and German is that the less favoured interpretation is chosen because an interpretation in line with the conventional meaning doesn’t make any sense, for example if the above sentence was said in a situation that couldn’t involve any physical movement. That is, to keep processing costs low, we re-interpret the sentence to mean something else, and that can be the beginning of change. It is theoretically possible to predict which combinations are hard to interpret and consequently prone to being re-interpreted but we need to know if speakers actually follow the theory, and this is what the internship is about before we can follow up with measuring the processing costs psycho linguistically and neuro linguistically.

Project Aims

The main aim of the project is:

To determine if theoretical predictions about the interpretation of ambiguous sentences line up with speakers’ actual interpretation.

Objectives:

- Create a list of stimulus sentences that implements the theoretical predictions of which interpretation would be more or less likely
- Build an online experiment in Qualtrics
- Run the experiment
- Analyse and interpret the results
- Write up results

Project Methods

- Review of literature on semantics, especially aspect
- Experimental design
- Recruitment using the SONA system
- Running an online experiment in Qualtrics
 - Details on the experiment:

This experiment is designed to experimentally test the theoretical predictions about the interpretation of ambiguous sentences developed theoretically and from the historical data. Forty-eight participants will be presented with a stimulus sentence (e.g., The car is being blown up) and six possible paraphrases, including two different variants of paraphrasing a coerced interpretation (e.g., ‘The car blew up with a series of detonations’, ‘It took some time for the car to be totally destroyed’), a reanalysed interpretation (e.g., ‘Someone is aiming to blow up the car at some point in the future’, ‘Someone is laying charges with the intention of blowing up the car’) and two decoy interpretations that, while close to a possible meaning of the critical sentence, do not match any of the intended interpretations (e.g., ‘Someone is driving the car with the intention of wrecking it’). Participants will be asked to choose the paraphrase that most closely matches their interpretation of the critical sentence. There will be 60 stimulus sets for each of the four test conditions, i.e. 240 sentences in total, divided into two lists such that each participant will make paraphrase judgements for 120 sentences.

Opportunity for Skill Development

- Literature review
- Introduction to lexical semantics
- Experimental design
- Qualtrics, Excel
- Statistics
- Academic writing
- Academic publishing

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

There are no essential skills, but a background in linguistics, basic IT and statistics would be good.

Project 44: Library Rules and Library Membership in Eighteenth-Century Britain and America

Supervisor(s): Simon Burrows - s.burrows@westernsydney.edu.au
Principal Supervisor

Peter Mauch - p.mauch@westernsydney.edu.au
Second Supervisor

Project Description

This Summer Scholarship project fits within a larger project based at the University of Liverpool (UK), on which Western is a major research and digital development partner. The project has received 1M GBP from the British Arts and Humanities Research Council and involves 9 universities and 9 impact partners including the State Library of New South Wales.

Project Aims

Understanding of databases and proficiency in their use and creation are increasingly important to humanities researchers and in many work contexts. This project aims to equip a summer scholarship student with experience of planning and executing a database-driven research project as part of a large international research team.

The project does NOT require computer programming skills or database experience. Instead it uses the Heurist opensource database platform <https://heuristnetwork.org/>, which is a user-friendly purpose built platform for Humanities research, and the student will be given a full training in its use.

The project aims to:

- Provide training for a summer scholarship student in project and database design; developing a research ontology; data cleaning and data entry protocols; data analysis; working as part of a research team; and report writing.
- Design, develop, populate and annotate a sub-section of the Heurist database of subscription library holdings and borrowings that is being developed as the main output of the University of Liverpool based AHRC project on 'Libraries, Communities and Cultural Formation in the British Atlantic'. The sub-section for which the student will be responsible will concern the rules of around 50 libraries that are currently extant and available in OCR digital form.
- Analyse the library rules as recorded in the database, to search for commonalities and divergences around issues such as membership rates and rights, library fines, social inclusiveness (eg. Whether women members are allowed)
- Prepare a publication on findings, whether in the form of a blog post on the project website, a conference paper, or an academic article

The project is a bolt on enrichment of the 'Libraries, Communities and Cultural Formation' database, and goes beyond the deliverables promised to the AHRC in the project's grant application. The student will be given full credit for their work as one of the authors and designers of the database.

Project Methods

Using the Heurist database platform, the student will engage in the following processes:

- Designing data-structures within the existing Heurist database to house and analyse data on library rules and link that data to other entities within the database (eg. Records concerning the Libraries)
- Developing an ontology (or specialised vocabulary), which will involve the standardization and formalization of a set of terms to characterize different aspects of library rules
- Data curation, which will involve manual correction and preparation of OCRd text of library rules prior to ingestion into the database
- Uploading of curated data, whether direct upload or through cut and paste
- Data enrichment, to tag the data to aid discoverability and analysis, by applying the ontology
- Data analysis in order to prepare a report on rules and membership in eighteenth-century subscription libraries

As note above, no computer programming knowledge is required for this project, and full training in the use of Heurist and digital humanities methods will be provided. Further, Professor Mark Towsey of Liverpool University (UK) has agreed to act as an external consultant to the project.

Opportunity for Skill Development

The student will be participating in a transnational project that incorporates partners and participants from Australia, the UK and the United States, working with database technologies. In this way, the student will have responsibility for a discrete sub-project as part of a wider team. The student will therefore develop a variety of skills valuable both in research environments and non-academic workplaces.

The student will develop skills in:

- Engaging with new technology, and with a research-driven data management system (Heurist)
- Collaborating with peers and with faculty
- Information retrieval and analysis
- Media literacy
- Communication in the digital age
- Teamworking
- Research design
- Academic report or article writing

Students are required to have the following skills/meet the following pre-requisite(s) to apply

Basic competency in using computers. Whilst applicants from any disciplinary background are welcome to apply, the project is expected to appeal to, and preference may be given to students majoring or sub-majoring in History, English or Communication or with a demonstrable interest in Libraries or Digital Humanities.

It should nonetheless be noted that a methodological approach, propensity to think creatively, together with consistency, thoroughness and an eye for detail, are more important than disciplinary background or experience using databases, as full training will be provided.