

*Book Review***Music Therapy Research: Third Edition (2016).**

Edited by Barbara L. Wheeler; Associate Editor: Kathleen M. Murphy

Grace Anne Thompson¹¹The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia**Hardcover:** 758 pages | **Publisher:** Barcelona Publishers, U.S.A. | **Language:** English | **ISBN-9781937440886**

A greatly expanded, updated, and detailed description of objectivist and interpretivist research in music therapy, guided by the recommendations of a diverse group of experienced music therapists. The book begins with an introduction to the nature of music therapy research and its relation to theory and practice. Steps in doing research are then detailed, and the foundations and principles of objectivist and interpretivist paradigms are outlined. After methodological issues inherent in each paradigm are examined, individual chapters are provided for every type, method, and design of research that has been used in music therapy, all using the same outline. Finally, guidelines are given for reading, writing, and evaluating research.

Keywords: *music therapy, research*multilingual abstract | mmd.iammonline.com**Introduction**

The third edition of Music Therapy Research is the next instalment of inspiring research texts under the expert editorial direction of Barbara Wheeler. This third edition is even larger than the substantial second edition released in 2005, and introduces a collaboration with Associate Editor Kathleen Murphy. The availability of the third edition as an epublication is a welcome change, allowing more people to access the text at an affordable price or via online library subscriptions. Those who still like a hardcopy of textbooks continue to have access to a printed version, although be prepared to make room on your bookshelf to accommodate this large volume.

Reviewing a volume with 758 pages is a daunting task, and particularly when this 3rd edition is much more than a simple update of the 2nd edition. Hadley's [1] review of the 2nd edition noted that it was "really a completely different text - in size and content" (p. 137) from the 1st edition, and in the case of the 3rd edition I echo this sentiment. If you are wondering how much has changed, a simple glance through the table of contents will reveal that the material has been completely reshaped and refreshed. While both the 2nd and 3rd editions provide valuable introductions to the field of research and explore how to prepare for undertaking research projects, important contemporary considerations are added and expanded in the 3rd edition. Multicultural (Ch. 8, Kim & Elefant) and Interdisciplinary (Ch. 9, Magee & Heiderscheit)

considerations are particularly notable in the 3rd edition, reflecting the growing need for the researcher to consider how their world view or disciplinary view can be both a help and hindrance to the research process. These two chapters particularly reflect the growth and maturity within music therapy research, with Magee and Heiderscheit highlighting that "collaborating with people from diverse backgrounds introduces alternative epistemologies and thus encourages different ways of seeing the focus of interest" (p.85). In the 2nd edition, there were 6 preparatory chapters before the text went on to explore research questions, topics and design. In this 3rd edition, we are treated to 13 chapters that all discuss important aspects of preparation for engaging in research.

As a music therapy researcher, research supervisor and educator, I really enjoy engaging with ideas that explore our beliefs about knowledge and reality. Hiller's well-constructed contribution to the discourse about ontology and epistemology (Ch. 11) marks perhaps the most important shift in language that occurs in the 3rd edition. Rather than using the terms 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' principles, Wheeler & Murphy now adopt 'objectivist' and 'interpretivist' as their language of choice, with chapters 12 to 68 framed from these perspectives thereafter. Hiller sets the scene clearly and comprehensively, with an important and foundational take-home message captured by his assertion that "depending on a researcher's beliefs about what can be known (ontology) and how to approach coming to know it (epistemology), different decisions will be made toward designing an effective study." (p. 99). A key distinction is then made between methodology (research design) and methods (procedures for data collection). The 2nd edition terms of quantitative and qualitative spoke more to methods, with the methodology implied. However, this new language in the 3rd edition makes the epistemological distinction in a much clearer and precise

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way. However, old habits die hard so they say, and therefore it will be interesting to see whether researchers (experienced and/or novice) adopt this language or not. I hope that researchers will be inspired to be more transparent and articulate about their beliefs and values (and therefore potential biases) rather than the audience having to make assumptions based on a study's data collection methods. Personally, I struggle with the term *interpretivist*, as I feel it implies that *objectivist* research is not interpreted. Hiller explains that "objectivism holds that we may come to know the truth about reality through repeated observations of it in highly controlled situations." (p. 100). However, I feel it is potentially dangerous to imply that there isn't a level of interpretation that happens in all research which is linked to our beliefs and worldview. Nonetheless, having epistemology front and foremost is a welcome change, and I hope that this 3rd edition will inspire lively debate amongst researchers so that we continue to refine our communication and articulation of these important concepts.

This 3rd edition deepens and expands on important considerations for music therapy research. For students and novice researchers, the foundations, principles and preparatory considerations are clear and comprehensive. The music therapy research and practice communities will appreciate the way examples from our own discipline are woven throughout each topic and chapter. This integrated approach serves to provide an important link between what we actually do in our music therapy practice and how we might explain, understand, and extend that practice through research. All disciplines and professions need to be able to articulate to the broader community the contribution they make to society, whether that is about explaining the benefits, or mechanisms, or experiences that occur. The complex relationship between theory, research and practice in music therapy, and our beliefs about how each domain may (or should) influence another, are robustly debated within our discipline [2]. Wheeler herself identifies that research should be relevant to practitioners [3] and throughout the chapters the relationship between theory, research and practice is overt and thoughtful. Each author has provided practice and/or research examples to help the reader reflect upon and explore this relationship, with the diversity of practice across the life span and spectrum of health and wellbeing well represented.

Music Therapy Research, 3rd edition, is a mature and comprehensive text that will inspire and enrich researchers at all levels of experience. There is a wealth of information and deep reflection shared through chapters from leading music therapy researchers around the world. The chapter authors generously share their experiences and knowledge, and provide an abundance of literature to follow up for those keen to dig deeper. Congratulations to Barbara Wheeler and Kathleen Murphy for their high-level editorial skills that have resulted in an inspiring text for research development in music therapy.

References

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3. Wheeler B, Rickson D. The third edition of 'Music Therapy Research': An interview with Barbara Wheeler. *Approaches: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Music Therapy*. 2017; Advance online publication: 1-5.

Biographical Statement

Grace Thompson, PhD, is a registered music therapist and lecturer at The University of Melbourne. Grace has worked in Early Childhood Intervention, Special Education and Private Practice and currently her research focuses on children with disability in family-centred settings. Grace has presented at various National and International conferences and workshops. In 2014 she was Keynote speaker at the World Congress of Music Therapy in Krems, Austria, and at the Australian Music Therapy Association National Conference. Grace is currently President of the Australian Music Therapy Association and along with Stine Lindahl Jacobsen is co-editor of the book "Music Therapy with Families: Therapeutic Approaches and Theoretical Perspectives".