Personal Reflection of Honors Thesis Process

The process of this honors thesis has been a long, but rewarding one! I have learned a lot about the procedures involved in doing research, and all of the detail work that goes into creating a study, following through, and then knowing what to do with that data!

To begin, our thesis group started talking about doing research in the fall of 2016, so altogether our thesis was a two year process. We really struggled with deciding a research study that would be meaningful to our major, meaningful to us, actually doable by undergraduates, and also hadn’t been done before. There were so many factors brought into the topic itself that I had never thought of before. It got to the point where I did not really want to do research anymore, I just wanted to pick an easy subject and get my honors thesis over with! However, right at the brink of deciding not to do research, we came up with our current study, and it was interesting and achievable for all of us! This debate taught me that deciding what to do for research is more complicated than I thought! There is the need for research in so many areas, especially in the field of music therapy. However, it is difficult to find a topic unique that has not been done, or to find a topic that will be meaningful to the field.

Almost all research is done with a research team. I felt that doing a group thesis adequately prepared me for that experience in the real world. I have done group projects with the three others on this thesis before, so I knew that we would work well together. Overall, I had a very positive experience with this group. However, there was some difficulty in assigning due dates for ourselves, making sure people did not procrastinate, and agreeing on formatting or issues within our paper. It is difficult when people are so different. Some of us liked to write and have things done ahead of time, while others procrastinated and did not have their work finished until the night of. I was one of the people that liked to work ahead and have things done, so it was frustrating to me when at the last minute some group members had questions, or it seemed like they would not be able to fulfill their end of the paper. I
assume that it is like this in the real world! People’s lives are busy and different, so working on research comes at varying times for all group members. Ultimately everything was able to be completed, and it all worked out.

As far as research goes, I enjoyed doing the research, but I’m not sure if I am cut out for it on a bigger scale. Research in the field of music therapy is very dominant and necessary for our field to move forward. I understand our need for our field to further its validity through research, but I’m not sure if I’m the person for it! I enjoyed the opportunity to do research, and have learned so much about the background involved! However, clinical work excites me more than research. I have learned that my place in music therapy is in the field working with clients, rather than doing research. I think both sides are valid, but I prefer working with people in the clinical setting.

I really enjoyed my research topic of flow. I had heard of flow from a psychology music course before, but did not fully understand the topic. This research study has made me so interested in the concept of flow! Whether people realize it or not, flow is achieved through many different circumstances in life! Learning about flow will help me in my clinical work as a way to help clients achieve this state of being. Being in a state of flow enriches our lives to make activities meaningful.

In conclusion, I’m grateful for my experience with my honors thesis. It has taught me how to persevere through ups and downs of research, and has shown me the background process of research. It had never before been brought to my attention the work effort that goes into creating a research study, analyzing the data, and then writing the study in an article. I’m glad for this experience and hope it helps to make me a better clinician in the future.