

Discovering Resources and Opening Doors

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Library Research Essay

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This year I completed, what has proven to be my most personally meaningful and involved research project. I am a second year graduate student in the family nurse practitioner program, and this research was completed for a year- long core requirement on research methodology, theory and application. My area of interest has been to investigate the benefits that music may have on patients in healthcare who are suffering and are experiencing pain. The research proposal that I completed in the 2013 spring semester, titled, "Exploring the Effects of a Longer Music Listening Session on Reducing Postoperative Pain", was a cumulative project that preceded an extensive literature review completed in the fall. Collecting the research used to build the proposal required many hours of library utilization on site at the library and at home. It was exciting to realize the availability of resources and my gratitude to the library for their helpfulness is overwhelming.

As a returning graduate student, I had not sought in depth library services for quite some time. My library initiation began with an informative library class that introduced me to some very useful information regarding how to search the library databases. I used many of the databases such as MEDLINE/Pubmed, CINAHL, the Cochrane Database, as well as the journal, *Music Therapy Perspectives* during my search and often used helpful techniques introduced in that class, such as how to apply limiters, use operators and MeSH terms to expand my searches, and how to create files to organize my research findings in a Refworks account. Often, I have had questions regarding how to access articles on certain topics, such as musical entrainment, that was not easily isolated within the library's databases and holdings, and the library staff proved to be indispensable. Furthermore, the staff

kindly gave me a tutorial on how to access older information via microfilm. This proved very helpful when I wanted to consult an older nursing article describing a theoretical framework that supported the use of adjunct therapies such as music to reduce pain and was able to gain access to it on microfilm.

The interlibrary loan department proved to be of invaluable assistance to me with my research proposal as well in obtaining articles from journals that the library did not possess. This was particularly useful to me when I was doing research from my home. Occasionally I even utilized the library's texting service when I encountered search questions, which proved helpful and convenient too.

In addition to their dependable processing of journal requests, I was able to obtain some useful music therapy books through interlibrary loan and a very informative thesis titled, "Comparison of the Effects of Relaxation and Music on Postoperative Pain" by Marion Good and Patricia Long. A very memorable moment came in regards to this thesis. It had been near the end of the fall semester and I inquired as to whether I could renew the thesis because I wanted to continue to read it over winter break and to consult it in the spring semester for my research proposal. I was sent to speak to the staff in the interlibrary loan department and they kindly said that I would not be able to renew the thesis because it could only be borrowed for a certain period of time. I left, understanding, but disappointed. A short time after I left I received an unexpected email from the staff at the interlibrary loan office informing me that they had found the thesis online and provided me with the website so that I could access it! I had not been aware that some theses were published with free access online. That was a wonderful and

valuable piece of information to obtain in regards to gathering research. In addition, I was so moved by the dedication of the staff and by their efforts to help me. Their unexpected gesture of kindness was truly appreciated.

For me, this research project has been a journey of learning and growth. The library and its boundless resources, both data-based and human, have facilitated new understanding, and for that I am very grateful.