

# **Literature Review of Music and Flourishing**

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8-Week Project

## **Literature Review of Music and Flourishing**

The research topic I intend to focus on is centered around exploring the intersections of music and well-being. Well-being is such a vast topic, but it is well defined and explored in the book *Flourish* by Martin E.P. Seligman (2011). Seligman defines well-being in terms of positive psychology, emphasizing the positive influences in one's life rather than the negative. Within the realm of positive psychology, Seligman develops a model known as PERMA. This acronym stands for Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement. These five elements are what he believes are the fundamental factors in sustaining a happy life that is authentic and encourages a positive psychological well-being. I intend on researching the bridges between music, positive psychology, and ultimately examine how they interplay with overall well-being. This topic is valuable to explore as the importance of mental health gains awareness within society, and is actively present in all of our lives. More than ever, our society has begun to emphasize the importance of prioritizing mental health and stability. Music has the ability to impact individuals in their everyday lives and is largely a part of many individual's routines. Therefore, the interplay between music and well-being is something that is imperative to look into. Because of the large influence music has in our culture, the influence it has on our mental stability and happiness is crucial to understanding how to better our mental health and live more fulfilling lives. This proposed project would be a way to combine my two academic interests and encourage the interdisciplinary approach that the university strives for. It would not only be an enriching experience to immerse myself in a research setting with two disciplines I am extremely passionate about, but also be an opportunity for me to research a psychological construct that is influential to our understanding of mental health.

The proposed project will begin with an annotated bibliography. By completing an annotated bibliography, I will become more familiar with research literature, work on my synthesizing skills, and expand my thinking through the past work of others. This research would allow me to become familiar with music education and psychology journals, as well as journals that focus specifically on music and psychology. This would advance my understanding of how to read research articles, how to draw conclusions from them, and how to connect various sources to support my larger focus of music and well-being. As a result of this process, I will ultimately write a literature review following the completion of the annotated bibliography. The literature review would allow me to pursue the interdisciplinary approach mentioned previously by branching together education, music, and psychology. These writing projects would allow me to truly engage with the writing process. I would begin with reading and annotating sources, followed by organizing an annotated bibliography, then forming an outline of the research within my literary review, and finally go through a revision process with numerous drafts. These skills would allow me to enhance my understanding of the writing process as I would be working closely with research studies and my own writing consistently.

I propose that I will complete a literature review of these sources that will eventually become part of a senior honors thesis. I intend on pursuing a senior honors thesis, and these projects would serve as a foundation for that thesis. My intended thesis would involve music and psychological well-being among children. I hope to conduct some field work with measuring children's well-being in an educational setting. This could be operationalized through facilitating a composition or performance activity with students and then using a scale to measure their well-being following the activity. In terms of educational goals, this project would propel my process in crafting an honors thesis. The honors thesis is a goal of mine in order to be able to fully immerse myself into my studies beyond the classroom. I also think that I would highly benefit

from the opportunity to work one-on-one with a professor, in this case Dr. Nicholas Roseth. I have found success in my past educational endeavors in regards to music and psychology, but I have never been given the opportunity to work one-on-one with a professor. I believe that this mentorship would allow me to consider more critical thinking in my academic pursuits, which would be imperative in creating the foundations for my honors thesis.

My academic experience has prepared me to take on this research project, as my previous studies pertain to these interests. In terms of psychology, I have taken Introduction to Psychology, Educational Psychology, Psychological Statistics, Introduction to Research Methods, and Developmental Psychology. Each of these courses has taught me valuable information on the concepts of psychology, research methodology, child development, and psychology in terms of an educational setting. This coursework has fostered my interest in my proposed research topic, as well as taught me how to properly conduct credible research. In terms of music, I have extensive experience in and out of the classroom. My musical endeavors began at the age of ten when I started playing the cello. From there, I was immersed in an ensemble setting and eventually private lessons throughout my childhood and adolescence. In my high school education, I was enrolled in a program known as the Visual and Performing Arts program. This experience fostered my passions for music and is what propelled me to study music in my higher education. Through the university, I have enrolled in numerous music courses, focused on my studies with the cello professor here, and participated in ensembles. My coursework has ranged from music history to theory to a cultural examination of music. Additionally, I decided this past semester to take on a second studio lesson in piano to further expand my musical world. I have developed a deeper understanding of music through my academic and personal endeavors. In pursuing a B.A in Music, I have been given the freedom to study music in terms of what interests me. This has been such a unique experience because my educational experience has had flexibility and allowed me to be an active musician through my studies. With psychology and music being my two declared majors, I see the ways in which music has aided my growth and development as a person. Music is a huge part of my identity and I truly believe I would not be the person I am today without it. I firmly believe that my mental well-being and stability has been influenced by the presence music has in my life. This personal experience is partly what has fueled my interest in this topic to begin with, and my personal motivation is a strong contributing factor to my future success in this project. Through my academic experience and interests and my personal experience, I believe that I would find success in the Emerging Scholar project.

I have not been involved in any previous publications or received funding for a project. However, I am currently assisting Dr. Andrea Halpern in a task for her current research project. I am currently scoring the results of a standardized vocabulary test for her, as a part of an auditory imagery task. The scoring involves sorting through definitions of a series of words participants responded to and scoring them on a scale from 0-2. This assistance in her research has allowed me to familiarize myself with Excel, which has been a highly beneficial skill to learn in a hands-on setting. Her research pertains to auditory imagery, or what is happening cognitively when you hear a tune. Working with her has given me a glimpse into the world of research and has helped sparked my interest further in pursuing this project.

The mentorship relationship that Dr. Nicholas Roseth and I will have will not only be educational, but also enlightening. He and I will meet at least once a week, which can be either in-person or over Zoom. In addition, we intend to communicate via email to allow for further questions, discussions, and mentoring outside of our scheduled meetings. We intend to work for

the eight-week period this upcoming summer, as we both have open availability. However, we hope that this project will allow for our mentorship to continue further. With my aspirations of striving towards an honors thesis, our relationship and communication are anticipated to continue as I go through the remainder of my undergraduate education. Dr. Roseth will be able to aid me in finding research beyond databases, to foster conversations surrounding the writing process, to teach me about reference managers to manage sources, and to help guide me in my pursuit of the honors thesis ultimately. His research interests include instrumental pedagogy, diversity studies, music teacher education, educational policy, sociology of music, and nonverbal behaviors in teaching and learning. He also has several research publications related to well-being and music. With this previous research, it serves as evidence that his and my interests line up considerably. Thus, our mentorship will be one that is successful as we have open availability, many methods of communication, and are eager to dive into these areas of research together.