Research Methodologies in Music Education

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Edited by

Kay Ann Hartwig

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

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Dr Kay Hartwig is the Director of Internationalisation and Senior Lecturer in music and music education in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Griffith University. She has taught music from preschool through to tertiary levels in various settings. At the university Kay teaches both undergraduate and graduate level programs and supervises a number of doctoral students. As the Director of internationalisation Kay works closely with international students in education and is involved in collaboration and partnerships with universities globally. She is the current national President of the Australian Society for Music education and has been the Australian and New Zealand Association for research in Music education secretary for many years. She has been the conference convenor for a number of national and international conferences. Kay's research interests include investigating quality music education programs at all levels – school and university; sustainable vocal health for music teachers; and researching the experiences of international students during their study especially during the practicum placement. She is a member of the editorial boards of international and national refereed journals.
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Dr Ron Morris, speech therapist, audiologist and counter tenor, initially graduated from the University of Queensland in 1985 with an honours degree in speech therapy and audiology. It was during that time that he commenced singing studies at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and singing with St Stephen's Cathedral Choir. Ron also sang in Quattro Voci, a vocal quartet based at the cathedral and in the Opera Queensland Chorus. He completed a Master of Music Studies (Vocal Performance) in 2001 at Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University studying with Margaret Schindler. As part of that degree Ron undertook singing lessons with Janice Chapman and studied Accent Method Breathing with Dinah Harris in London. Ron completed his PhD at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University, focussing on breathing for singing. He currently sings at St John's Cathedral and continues to perform regularly both as a soloist and as a member of Opera Queensland's Chorus. Ron has continued to work as a speech therapist and audiologist with an interest in voice disorders and in working with the deaf. Ron is also in demand as a presenter with lectures and workshops on vocal anatomy and physiology, respiration and most commonly articulation and tongue function.

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Beth Rankin, has a background in nursing, creative arts education and public health. She has taught at all levels from early childhood settings to higher education. Beth has extensive experience of music pedagogy in Orff Schulwerk, Kodaly, Dalcroze and Music Learning Theory and in Laban Movement Analysis. Beth has been awarded grants to work with disadvantaged, disengaged and refugee middle years youth using digital photography programs, and inclusive musical theatre programs, as a way of providing opportunities for participation or re-engagement with learning. Beth's research interests are in the arts and health and the arts as social justice. Her masters research looked at the impact of music and movement on the health of new parents and their babies. She produced a CD of music, *A New Song to Sing*, which is a compilation of songs and dances designed to support family bonding and participation. Her doctoral thesis is an observational study of an arts and health art installation. Other research includes a study of university students with a diagnosed learning

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David Sell is Adjunct Associate Professor of Music at the University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand, where he was for some years Head of the School of Music and Dean of the Faculty of Music and Fine Arts. He is Director of the National Centre for Research in Music Education, a life-member of Music Education New Zealand Aotearoa, having served on its board for eighteen years, and of Music Education Canterbury, which he founded in 1972. Currently he is Deputy Chairman of ANZARME, Chairman of Arts Canterbury Inc, and Vice-President of the Christchurch Community Arts Council. David has presented papers at seven ISME conferences and seminars, as well as at many in New Zealand and Australia. For twelve years prior to joining the teaching staff of the University of Canterbury he taught in secondary schools in Wellington, and was for two years Advisor on School Music in the Canterbury region. He has written or edited thirty-six books, most in the field of music education, and is a music reviewer for the Christchurch Press.
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Associate Professor Jane Southcott studied music and education at the University of Adelaide, Australia. After teaching and lecturing for some time she completed a Master of Arts (Music education) at the Institute of Education, London University. Her thesis was an historical overview of the inclusion of creative practices in music education from Rousseau to Satis Coleman. Returning to Australia Jane lectured and continued her historical research with a particular interest in biographical and music pedagogical history in England, Australia and the USA. She completed a doctorate on the history of music in state schooling in South Australia to 1920. Jane is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, Monash University. She teaches at postgraduate level in music education and research methods. Jane supervises a large group of doctoral students whose research foci are varied and who primarily employ historical or phenomenological paradigms. Jane has completed a definitive biography of Sarah Anna Glover (1786-1867) who invented the Norwich Sol-fa. Jane has been a long-term member of the international executive of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Research in Music education, holding different positions and organizing national conferences. She is a member of the editorial boards of international and national refereed journals.
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Dr Stuart Wise was born in Hamilton, NZ. He studied music at the University of Otago and pursued a teaching career in secondary schools in Auckland, Nelson, the UK and Christchurch, before joining the Christchurch College of Education (now the College of Education at the University of Canterbury) in 1997. Stuart was appointed as Head of Centre for the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Art (NASDA) in 2000 before returning to teacher education in 2003 where he currently teaches both primary and secondary music education courses. At present he is programme coordinator for the GradDipTchLn (Secondary). He has recently completed his PhD examining the use of digital technology in music education in secondary schools.
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CHAPTER ONE

MUSIC AS RESEARCH, RESEARCH AS MUSIC

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Introduction

This book project is an initiative of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Research in Music Education (ANZARME). This association is the peak body for music research across the two countries. The book will assist all those who are undertaking research in music education and especially future researchers in music education, such as postgraduate research students. The intention is to primarily assist researchers to understand the many available research methods and provide clarity in choosing the most appropriate method for their particular research.

ANZARME

The Australian and New Zealand Association for Research in Music Education was established at the Annual General Meeting in 2007 of its precursor, the Australian Association for Research in Music Education (AARME). In turn, AARME was established at the Annual General Meeting, held in Newcastle in August 1995, from the former Association of Music Education Lecturers (AMEL). The Association of Music education Lecturers was established in 1977.

The objectives of ANZARME are to:
- promote communication between music education researchers and music educators;
- contribute to the further development of music education research and music education;

- encourage community support for music education research and music education;
- bring to public attention issues vital to music education research and music education;
- organise an annual conference;
- issue an annual publication of articles drawn principally from papers presented at the annual ANZARME conference.

ANZARME promotes and supports all styles of research in all avenues of music education. The association strives to maintain collegial networks between researchers in music education to contribute to research in this field in Australia and New Zealand.

An annual conference is held to provide a forum for music research whether this research is at proposal stage, work in progress, or completed. The association supports and encourages new researchers by providing student travel scholarships to attend the annual conference and financial awards for the best student presentation at the annual conference. Conferences have been held in Australia, New Zealand and Norfolk Island. A detailed thematic index of the papers published in past conference proceedings is available on the ANZAME website. Past proceedings are also available via Informit.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 2: Introduction to Historical Research in Music Education by Jane Southcott and David Sell
Historical research can offer a wide philosophical and practical perspective to any topic in music education. This form of inquiry underpins all research into music education as no subject is ever considered in isolation but is positioned in the context of previous studies. An ongoing dialogue is offered by historical research between historian and subject, as well as between the interpretations of generations of historians. Exploration on an historical basis is a highly disciplined form of inquiry that examines the widest definitions of memory and attempts to generate an understanding of the past that is as accurate as possible. Historical research is undertaken for manifold reasons including satisfying an interest, providing a record of the past, and offering understandings of past and present practice. It is a form of critical thinking in which the researcher interrogates data, its creation and survival and interprets past practices within their contemporary context. Good historical researchers

avoid potential dangers of bias and construct and disseminate balanced, informed accounts of past principles, people and practices. There are many genres and trends within historical inquiry but virtually all Australian and New Zealand research in this field to date has used a narrative approach that organises material in a chronologically sequential or thematic order to generate a coherent story or stories. Successful data collection requires great determination, unlimited persistence and often-unexpected inventiveness. Data sources are varied and can be illusive for example, oral history interviews that offer a picture of the past in the words of the protagonists. Although potentially biased, such testimony is valuable, increasingly so with passing generations. As in all qualitative research, there are rigorous criteria for evaluating the work of historians that rely on both trustworthiness and authenticity. The latter demands fairness, balance, openness and respectful negotiation. Recently there has been a resurgence in biographical research in education, particularly in Australia and New Zealand. There are also significant discussions of curricula, music methodologies, institutions, classroom practices, and the development of policy.

Chapter 3: Quantitative Research: A Viable Option for Music Researchers by Helen Klieve, Wendy Hargreaves and Ron Morris
This chapter presents a rationale for researchers to consider in making a choice of whether to use quantitative techniques in their research in the area of music. The use of such approaches opens many options that may not have been considered, such as examining previously unexplored research questions in established areas of investigation, of communicating with previously uninvolved audiences or of gaining insights into unchartered territories in music research. These approaches have the potential to widen the profile of music as a discipline, demonstrating its known and also often unknown contributions to society. The chapter models a quantitative research analysis through a review of literature that applies quantitative and mixed methods approaches in music research. As well as presenting simple data presentation strategies, this demonstrates the diversity of applications and also associated complexity of such research, with techniques considered under low, moderate and high levels of quantitative application. This review includes papers that have a music focus as well as those where music is an application of a research study – these including studies focusing on areas ranging from autism to oncology and economic education strategies. Recognizing the concerns of potential music researchers in moving into the use of quantitative analysis the chapter then unpacks the "Big Three T's," (terminology, techniques and

tools). These strategies can support a new user of quantitative techniques and observe how recent work by the authors has engaged with each. It concludes with a reflection on the motivations of researchers and encourages readers to genuinely consider quantitative methodology as a viable option in music research.

Chapter 4: Narrative Inquiry by Peter de Vries
The chapter provides an overview of narrative inquiry, an increasingly popular approach to qualitative music education research. Stemming from the premise that people make sense of experience through telling stories, narrative inquiry allows the researcher to present holistic pictures of people's lived experiences through story. De Vries stresses that the relationship between the researcher and the research participant in co-constructing stories as research is particularly important. Following on from an overview of narrative inquiry, he then outlines the popularity of this mode of inquiry in music education research. An example is offered from his own research using narrative inquiry, beginning with a personal story about how he came to narrative inquiry following a prior research experience where he felt his analysed data was missing the kind of depth that narrative inquiry could provide. *Melinda's story*, a narrative of a "de facto" school music teacher is then examined, which focuses on Melinda's self-efficacy in teaching music. The narrative in this story provides a portrait of one teacher's experience teaching a school choir, and the obstacles she encountered that she ultimately overcame. The interview data with Melinda has been re-storied using the five elements of plot structure as identified by Ollerenshaw & Creswell (2002), namely the elements of character, setting, problems faced, actions taken to address these problems, and resolution. De Vries follows Melinda's narrative with a discussion of how these five elements of plot were used to re-story the interview data. The narrative gives voice to an individual, situated story that may have resonance to other music educators and school administrators.

Chapter 5: Action Research by Kay Hartwig
Action Research is explored and discussed in this chapter. Although there are many models of action research, the two models presented in detail are based on Zuber-Skerritt's work. These models are: (a) the action research spiral (Zuber-Skerritt, 1995); and (b) the critical, reflective, accountable, self-evaluation, participatory (CRASP) model (Zuber-Skerritt, 1992). These define action research and the ways in which it can be implemented through rigorous research. The CRASP model is discussed and related to

music education. Examples are given of where the action research methodology has been used in music education. Action research is a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. *Planning* includes problem analysis and strategic planning. *Acting* means implementing the strategic plan. *Observing* includes monitoring and evaluating the action and its impact on the participants and the stakeholders. *Reflecting* on the evaluation means drawing practical and theoretical conclusions and planning the next cycle. The example used by Hartwig (2009) for a music education project is given as a detailed example of action research and the major project cycles implemented in the study. The action research model has been used in many areas of business, industry and education however it is well suited to the classroom. It enables teachers to work directly in their classrooms with other teachers and the students – in the natural setting. Collaboration defines action research and the kind of involvement required of all parties in the research is collaborative involvement.

Chapter 6: Ethnography and Music Education by Georgina Barton
This chapter on ethnography explores two distinct ethnographic approaches to researching music education. The first is from an ethnomusicological perspective and investigates a participant-observation approach to researching music teaching and learning contexts. It shows distinctly, how the ways in which teachers teach music is very much influenced by the cultural context in which it is taught. The author discusses her own comparative study of South Indian and Queensland instrumental music teachers (Barton, 2004) and how in this study she found that while there were a number of differences between these two cultural contexts there were also a number of similarities. It was evident that culture influenced the teacher, the chosen methods and modes of teaching, as well as the context in which the music is taught. The second approach explored is from an ethnomethodological framework and draws on Conversation Analysis (CA). Barton provides two examples of research that utilises this approach. Firstly, Freebody, Chan, and Barton (2013) showed how ethnomethodologists highlight how people interact in order to make sense of the teaching and learning at hand. Secondly, the study by Roulston (2000) of itinerant music teachers is examined to show how a teacher's particular biases can impact on the ways in which they teach. Each approach can reveal important information on how music education practices can be transformed.

Chapter 7: Case Study Research in Music Education: An Examination of Meaning by Errol Moore

Case study research is surprisingly common in overt or disguised forms. While it is not held in high regard by some researchers because of issues around generalisation and its integrity as an identifiable method, case study research fulfils an important role by default. It has particular application possibilities in music education because of the many situations that exist, and this would allow multiple forms of data gathering (qualitative/quantitative), and can be identified by researchers to be a centre of interest, a unique situation, or a collection of cases. The chapter explores the flexibility of the method, potential advantages of its typically rich data gathering, to answer how and why questions, and its cross-paradigm potential. In proposing greater acceptance of case study research as a methodology, the chapter highlights the importance of researcher attributes alongside more predictable credibility/validity measures, integrity of data trails and analysis toward theorisation, and explores the potential of generalisation through theoretical inference and implications, and reporting that allows readers to induce and apply theory to other cases. A tenet questioned in the chapter is the practice of little or no intervention in a case by the researcher, and a proposal is made about music in particular, that there be more honest awareness of change invoked in cases by the occurrence of almost any research process. How might the researcher and research contribute back to a case, even through forms of intervention, yet remain distinct from the realm of experiment?

Chapter 8: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis by Dawn Joseph

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) has developed internationally into a growing qualitative approach to research in the areas of psychology, health sciences, social sciences, education and also specifically in music education. This chapter focuses on IPA as an experiential approach to research which explores the lived experience of the individual's perception and how individuals make sense of it in their given context. As with other forms of phenomenological research, IPA takes account of the researcher's own context and perceptions through a process of interpretation, while analysing the phenomena under study. IPA offers a framework to undertake research based on the traditions of phenomenology, which uncover meanings and hermeneutics which interpret the meaning; it is idiographic in nature when undertaking data analysis. This chapter provides a narrative on IPA as an appropriate methodology that can be used when undertaking research in education and in particular music education. As a tertiary researcher of music education I have employed

IPA in my research. This chapter attempts to address broad questions in relation to: What is IPA? Where does it come from? How is it used? How does one analyse interview data and construct themes? A brief discussion of the strengths and limitations of the method is posed, giving examples where IPA has been successfully employed in music research. By balancing the tensions between phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiographic approaches, IPA situates music and music education research within the realm of qualitative experiential research. Joseph argues that if more music educators apply IPA to their research, we can look forward to the emergence of new insights from research in music and music education that is rigorous and offers both convergent and divergent analysis, beyond description, using interpretation to explain insights.

Chapter 9: Arts-based Methods in Music Education by Beth Rankin
Arts-based research is almost impossible to define. It occurs like an improvised piece of music requiring an idea, willing musician(s) (self or research participants), and an agreed key and style, but beyond that there can be many surprises and unexpected delights as the research unfolds. Music education research, like all the genres and styles of music, is diverse. There are many ways of knowing and doing research that is reliable and valid and makes a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge. Arts-based research is another way of approaching research. It is suited to those who may not have a particular research question in mind, but would rather like to explore their teaching or music practice to see what emerges, either for themselves as teachers and/or learners, or for the children they teach. This chapter on arts-based methods for music education research is written especially for those teachers who are looking for another way of knowing and understanding what is happening in music education and practice. It is not intended to replace or summarise what has already been written about arts-based research, but rather explain how arts-based research can be used as a stand-alone methodology or as a complementary method to other research methods. This chapter provides some guidance to the strengths of arts-based research through more personal and subjective methods, while addressing the concerns of research for work that has integrity and rigour.

Chapter 10: Mixed Methods: The Third Research Community by Stuart Wise
Mixed methods has been defined (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003) as a type of research design in which quantitative and qualitative approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis

procedures, and/or inferences. Another definition (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007) stated that mixed methods research is where the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the findings and draws inferences using both quantitative and qualitative approaches or methods within a single study or program of inquiry. The mixed methods research tradition is less well known than the quantitative and qualitative traditions because it has only emerged as a separate orientation in the last 20 years. Researchers employing mixed methods present an alternative to the quantitative and qualitative traditions by advocating the use of whatever methodological tools are required to answer the research questions under study. Many writers discussing research approaches believe that mixed methods research is here to stay and that it should be widely recognised in education and related disciplines in the social and behavioural sciences as the third research paradigm. This chapter explores mixed approaches to research questions, briefly discusses strengths and weaknesses of all research approaches and recommends researchers adopt *contingency theory* for research approach selection, which accepts that quantitative, qualitative and mixed research are all superior under different circumstances and it is up to the researcher to examine the specific contingencies and make decisions about which research approach, or combination of research approaches should be used in a specific study.

Chapter 11: The Journey Continues ... Challenges for Music Education Research by Kay Hartwig
This presents a conclusion to the book. The journey continues for all researchers in music education as we strive for a valued and recognised place for our music in education.

Conclusion

The following chapters provide in-depth discussion of a range of research methodologies, including underpinnings, philosophical stance, and strengths. The aim is to assist with informing future research in music education. This book is a valuable aid to music researchers who are striving to understand research methods, or trying to determine the most appropriate method for their particular research.

References

ANZARME Website: http://www.anzarme.org/
Informit Website: http://www.informit.com.au/

CHAPTER TWO

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORICAL RESEARCH
IN MUSIC EDUCATION

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Historical Research: Definitions and Purposes

Historical research underpins all other research into music education as even the most contemporary facts have already occurred by the time we study them; that a "description of 'the present' is actually a description of the past – last year or last week, it is all the same, a backward glance" (Barzun & Graff, 1985, p. 5). It is worth noting that almost any account of music education or related aspects of it will contain, in the content of the book itself or in a preface or introduction, some historical background to put it into perspective for current readers. This may be in the form of quotations from 'authorities,' related experiences of others, or reminiscences on the part of the author. References are historical in that they support or elucidate, by drawing on past writings, a point that the researcher is currently making. Each reference is therefore subject to scrutiny of its relevance and academic integrity.

Historical research is a continuing dialogue, an endless exploration between generations of historians, between different interpretations of the significance of historical events, and between established opinions and challenges arising from new discoveries about the past (Carr, 2001). Cox (2002) defined history as "a science that discovers; it is an art that creates; historical narratives are constructions governed by the same rules and constraints as literature" (p. 73). History is created by the encounter of an historian and data (Petersen, 1992). Petersen suggested that research

involves locating new information and forming from them an account that can illuminate the past. His meticulous attention to detail is commendable but this view engenders an image of researcher as external to the historical process. He urged the novice researcher to glean information from, for example, the lavishness of a publication, such as a magazine produced by a school.

The idea that continuity and interaction, in the theme of history ebbing and flowing between the past and present, may give an impression of history being an unruly, wayward research subject. Recognition of the errant potential of historical research negates its waywardness and instead contributes to its richness and complexity. Tosh and Lang (2006) identified historical research as a disciplined inquiry that seeks to sustain the widest possible definitions of memory and make recall as accurate as possible to ensure "that our knowledge of the past is not confined to what is immediately relevant. The goal is a resource with open-ended application, instead of a set of mirror images of the present" (p. 2). Seminal and much reprinted historian E. H. Carr (2001) considered historical research to be a continuous process of interaction between historians and their data. Historians seek to interpret the surviving evidence of the past and create a narrative account that encompasses context. There will never be a definitive historical work on any subject as it is impossible to know the totality of even the recent past, and the further back we go the more difficult it becomes to locate relevant material. Another respected writer on history Marwick (1970) argued that each age must interpret its own past. There is no ultimate history and there is no time machine.

Historical inquiry can offer a wider philosophical and practical perspective for any topic. It is important however, to understand the complex meanings of even the word *history*. History is about the past but it is not the past itself. History is far more than individual or collective memory. Historical research explores the knowable past and good historical writing can conjure past events and their contexts. It is not possible to recreate the past and it should be recognised that there is not one finite version of what happened and why, but many. Rodwell (1992) described the historian as "a person completing a complicated jigsaw puzzle with many of the parts missing. On the basis of what is often incomplete evidence, the historian must fill in the gaps by inferring what has happened and why it has happened" (p. 61). More recently Donnelly and Norton (2011) warned against the metaphor of a jigsaw puzzle as this implies that there is a single correct image of the past that is being re-constructed.

The purposes of historical research are manifold and historians offer different arguments for different purposes. Early historiographers Heller and Wilson (1992) identified four meanings for history *per se*: the past, the written account of the past, living memory of the past, and the discipline of history (historiography). Historical research may satisfy interest, provide a record of the past, offer understandings of present practice, and narrate deeds worthy of emulation (Heller & Wilson, 1992). This last is now contested but it is generally agreed that historical research can inform present practice. Cox (2002) explained how the reclamation of historical perspectives could inform our understandings of school curricula and the position of subjects within them. History can provide models for practical application. How many teachers have discovered Kodály, Curwen, Rousseau, Suzuki, Dalcroze and even Plato and recognized that there may be something that can be emulated in their practices? Accounts of great music educators tend to be more idealistic than their practices. It has been said, for example that Rousseau, a great musician, philosopher and educationist, was not a good practical teacher (Rainbow, 1967) although this has been refuted (Simpson, 1976). This indicates that one value of historical inquiry is in providing the means to recognize both virtues and deficiencies in the past; in people, systems and methods. Descriptions of the successes of the Suzuki approach to music education seldomly point out inadequacies of this approach when different teachers put it into practice in a different context. It is the work of historians to chronicle, interpret and provide balance to unquestioning applications of past practices. It is only partly right to suggest that we do not learn from the past. Instead, we sift from the ideas and practices of others those that are most appropriate to our own work. In order to do this, we must know what these ideas and practices are. It is to study this and convey it in a present-day context that is one of the tasks of the historian of music education.

Historical research serves varied purposes. As suggested, it can inform present practice and alert current practitioners of pitfalls and barriers encountered in previous applications of ideas and approaches. History can be regarded as a safeguard that allows us to avoid what is cited as the condemnation to repeat "the most damaging excesses and wrong turnings" of the past (Donnelly & Norton, 2011, p. 4). History can offer perspectives on present practices but as each context is different the ability of historical inquiry to protect us from repeating past mistakes is perhaps overly optimistic. Historical research is a form of critical thinking in which the researcher questions data, its creation and survival, and interprets past practices within their contemporary context. Historical research can also

support current political and ideological interests (Donnelly & Norton, 2011) that carries with it the potential for bias and selective reporting. Good historical researchers avoid these potential dangers and construct and disseminate balanced, informed accounts of past principles and practices.

Whether a research study is historical or includes an historical perspective virtually all research includes an element of historical research. For example a recent study by Watson (2013) concerning professional teaching standards included a substantial amount of historical background to contextualise her subject; a subject that is in constant flux. Cox (2002) pointed out that historical context may be little more than a casual reference in an introduction but that it is almost always there. Having acknowledged the pervasive nature of historical research in most research, the remainder of this discussion will focus on research that is solely historical. In Australia and New Zealand there have to date only been two published articles that discuss the nature and processes of historical inquiry in music education in Australia: the first was by Robin Stevens (1981) and the second was by Jane Southcott (1997a). The aim of this discussion is to extend these earlier discussions. It should also be noted that this discussion does not purport to be comprehensive but refers to a large amount of published articles and chapters and unpublished research projects and theses in Australia and New Zealand.

There are many trends in and genres of historical inquiry (Stone, 1987; Donnelly & Norton, 2011) but virtually all Australian and New Zealand research in the field has employed a narrative approach that organises material in a chronologically sequential or thematic order to generate a coherent story "albeit with subplots" (Stone, 1987, p. 79). This should not imply that there is a single, determinate past as historical research should be "open, heterogeneous, aware of its own contingencies and self-reflexive about the conventions that govern its construction" (Donnelly & Norton, 2011, p. 6). Healey (2002) described the process of historical research evocatively:

> The reader must be warned that we will make several detours and deviations along the way, for we have tangled stories to weave, intriguing digressions to pursue, idiosyncratic personages to call upon and obscure volumes to sift. But this is what history is, the dirt roads and singing by-ways often having more to interest us than the straight, black highway. (p. 8)

Initially, local historical overviews presented surviving data but offered little contextualisation or interpretation, for example, the celebratory South Australian histories of the Public Schools Music Society (Eckermann & Eckermann, 1991) and a stretched attempt to chronicle 150 years of state music education (Fox, 1988). Since then narrative historians have sought to explain and interpret the traces of the past that survive, although historians must be aware that there may be bias in surviving data. Tosh (2010) points out that primary sources themselves may be "inaccurate, muddled, based on hearsay or intended to mislead" (p. 92). More recently, historians have been influenced by feminisms that seek to recognise unheard voices. For example, although women have always been present in music education in the nineteenth century they were often relegated to the private sector and did not receive adequate recognition in the public record (Howe, 1998).

The intentional act of selecting a topic for research is the first step in shaping understanding. Curiosity is indeed a valid purpose in itself and may initially lead the researcher to a topic, in a manner not unlike the way dreaming leads to inspiration, innovation and motivation. While the researcher seeks answers to questions such as "how did … ?," "why did … ?" and "what if … ?," it is important to select material not solely on the basis of being quizzical or curious (Stone, 1987). As Gould (1990) suggested, historical research is "vacuous unless rooted in some interesting particular" (p. 17). The researcher should make no assumptions and question everything (Heller & Wilson, 1992). Once a research question and possibly subsidiary questions are decided, then data must be collected.

Collecting Data

In historical research successful data collection requires determination, persistence and inventiveness. Assiduous searching and meticulous attention to detail may at times be rewarded by the discovery of new materials; at other times promising endeavours may lead nowhere. Although historians use secondary sources of data to contextualise their work it is primary data that is essential. Primary data is the raw material of historians and it is through engaging with such data that historians construct meaning. Peterson (1992) stated that history is "created out of the encounter of a historian with a document" (p. 61) or primary source which may include a diary, a governmental report, a song, a map, a letter, a photograph, an artefact, an oral history interview – anything that has "been preserved from the past, or that is created to document a past

phenomenon by someone who witnessed or participated in it" (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 1999, p. 396). To be deemed reliable and scholarly a historical work must be firmly based on primary sources (Marwick, 1970).

Historians need to be alert to the possibility of bias in all forms of historical source material. Even the survival of evidence needs to be questioned. Historians need to ask why certain materials have been preserved when others appear to be lost. This is true for both published and unpublished texts. For example, have school inspectors published reports that highlight only the positive? Have well-meaning relatives culled letters and papers to present their ancestor in a better light? For historians the most important primary sources are often those that were not intended for posterity (Tosh & Lang, 2006). For example, detailed lesson plans written by Patricia L. Holmes, a demonstration music educator in South Australia in the 1950s offer a remarkable snapshot of the primary school music classes but were never intended for posterity (Southcott, 2004a). Documents may be written that reflect an author's particular philosophical, social, political or economic point of view. It is the work of historians to recognise intentional or unintentional bias or misrepresentation and to be aware of issues such as validity, reliability and authenticity of primary sources. It is also within the purview of historians to seek out the commonplace and the unheard voice. Too often, everyday practices are not recorded or preserved because the assumption is that they are generally understood. For those historians that later come to the data this can be an ongoing source of frustration and may lead to misinterpretation.

Historians often find primary data of both published and unpublished form in multiple and unlikely places. Published documents encompass a wide range of materials including governmental reports, policies and curricula, syllabi, text books, school histories compiled to celebrate centenaries, programs, and song books. Each has been produced for some particular purpose and reflects the time and place of creation. For example, song books created for school children reflect what those in authority wanted children to learn, while school centenaries and school magazines are unfailingly positive and celebratory. Unpublished documents include personal papers, correspondence, carefully compiled family scrapbooks, school exercise books, and diaries. Published and unpublished music works are primary data for music education historians. For example, in South Australia during the 1930s musically able primary school teachers were given a bound collection of songs to use in their future teaching. Known colloquially as the "blue book" or the "black book" (depending on

the colour of the cover) this collection reflected cultural and social values of that time. Published sources such as newspapers and journals are also a vital resource for researchers. Trawling through them can be tiresome but they often provide information, background, and illustrations for research (Cox, 1996; Petersen, 1992).

Photographs, video recordings and images of all types are important sources of data for historians. As in all primary data sources, photographs can offer rich detail but may also contain bias. Gasparini and Vick (2006) advocated strongly for the use of photographic data in historical research, noting that there is little discussion on how images should be analysed. Despite this, photographs can offer evidence of past events and practices not elsewhere described. For example, photographs of school ensembles are often published in journals, magazines, newspapers and school histories. These images often provide far more information than that available in the written text and indicate how the commonplace can easily be overlooked. For example, many Australian and New Zealand schools had small drum and fife bands throughout the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries. For many years these ensembles accompanied school assemblies and physical drill, and sometimes filled the roll of a municipal band. There was however barely a mention of the drum and fife bands in school curricula, with photographs instead offering the richest data about their practices. Although an imported tradition, drum and fife bands were adapted to suit Australian practices; for example, the original wooden B*b* fifes being replaced by metallic instruments that could survive the harsher climate (Southcott, 2005a).

Relics are another significant source of primary historical data. Relics are anything that is not a document. Relics may reveal much and may validate other data. Relics include plaques, medallions, foundation stones, and gravestones, as well as musical instruments, batons, wall-charts, musical games, teaching devices, toys and materials. For example, the instruments and musical equipment employed in school music has changed over the years. The introduction of the portable phonograph allowed children to listen to music that was beyond the ability of their teacher to play. The later presence of a radio in the classroom made it possible for children to listen to school music broadcasts. Now, school music programs use the internet and iPods. In the first half of the 20th century young children formed percussion bands with drums, triangles and cymbals (Southcott, 1992, 1993). From the 1960s tuned percussion instruments began to appear with the introduction of *Orff Schulwerk* (Southcott & Cosaitis,

2012; Webster, 1993). As with all primary data, the object does not speak for itself (Petersen, 1992) but relies on the historian for contextualisation and interpretation.

Oral History

Interviews provide an additional source of primary data for historians researching comparatively recent topics, events and practices. Oral history offers a picture of the past in people's own words (Robertson, 1985) and has become "increasingly important for educational historians" (Rodwell, 1992, p. 96). For example, McCarthy (2003) cited the benefits of recording teachers' accounts of classroom practices, as these may not have been described in curriculum documents. Oral history testimony is not intended as a replacement for documents but offers another way of acquiring information that encourages the dialogue between researcher and data. The use of interviews offers participants the opportunity to chronicle past events, communicate a perspective and sometimes simply explain past practices (Perks & Thomson, 1998). Historians now commonly use oral testimony and initial scepticism about its perceived benefits has largely dissipated. However, it remains essential to evaluate oral testimony in terms of intentional or unintentional bias, to remember that human memory can be unreliable (Spaull, 1998) and that researchers should be careful about accepting interviewees' stories, opinions and interpretations of the past unquestioningly (Robertson, 1985). Given these concerns, oral history interviews do offer historians new insights and perspectives otherwise unobtainable. Interviewing participants also gives voice to those who would otherwise remain unrepresented in historical accounts. For example, the voices of private studio music teachers and those of children and students who are the recipients of music education are rarely heard.

Trustworthiness of Data

Once collected, data needs to be evaluated for authenticity and bias. Pertinent to historical inquiry, Lincoln and Guba (1986) argued that in qualitative research, rigorous criteria for researchers depend on both trustworthiness and authenticity. The former relies on appropriate research techniques involving thick description. The latter demands fairness, balance, openness and respectful negotiation. In historical terms this can be understood in the dialogue between historian and data. This also speaks to the questioning that is inherent in the task of a historian who must not only read between the lines but note significant minutiae and absences.

Vick (1998) noted that as historians we understand "the residues of the past … and appreciate their fragmentary and partial (in both senses) character" (p. 1). He also pointed out the challenges of linguistic change. Over time the meanings of a word may alter and common usage may no longer have the same inferences. There is also the possibility of error – a mistyped word can change and even reverse intended meaning (Wiersma, 1995).

The historian must acknowledge his or her own presence in this process of location, collection and selection of data for inclusion in construction of an historical narrative. As researchers we have motivations for pursuing particular research questions and these can influence how we undertake historical research. There is delight in pursuing data, in locating previously unknown information and making connections that create a fuller understanding of the topic being researched. Historical research can be serendipitous and reflect creative and tireless searching but it is important to remain cognisant of the risk of personal bias in our pursuits (Cox, 1996). To arrive at an acceptable interpretation, it is essential that historians weigh evidence judiciously with an understanding of the context that surrounds the research. The passage of time can allow events to be observed from different vantage points not available to contemporary writers yet time can also obscure what happened, either by intention or by accidents of survival of documents and artefacts. Ultimately interpretation of data can become a question of taking a well-informed guess.

Presentation of Historical Research

The selection and organisation of data is the most basic evidence of the presence of the researcher. As data are collected, themes emerge, some unexpected and some surprising. The construction of themes is also dependent on the researcher's understanding. Wiersma (1995) pointed out that interpretation of data invariably reflects the values and interests of the researcher. The researcher also requires an affinity with the past (Theobald, 1998). Burstyn (1990) also agreed that the presentation and interpretation of the past is "seen through the prism of the historian's own view of the world" (p. 1). Such interpretation carries with it considerable responsibility and the danger that particular interests and biases may distort historical research. Petersen (1992) warned against attributing motives to historical protagonists when no explicit motive is documented and notes that "if you had known the whole story, you would have been alerted to this or that

fact and noted it … but you didn't, since that was what you were bent on discovering" (pp. 46–47).

Once historians have written the first studies, subsequent historians may reinterpret what has been written. This process is known as revisionism. Each generation finds new ways to understand past events, informed by new data or framed in new cultural understandings and contexts. Historical evidence remains open to review as "our personal and cultural conditioning induce an unconscious re-envisioning of history" (Pemberton, 1984, p. 214). As historians, we are also part of history and therefore to some extent we are all revisionists.

Biographical Historical Research

There has been a resurgence in biographical research in education (Roberts, 2002), that is, the "retelling of a story already lived" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1997, p. 84). Biographical research offers a window through which we may view educational practices and societal context (Cox, 2002). Such research is particularly evident in Australian music education historical inquiry. Studying people's lives is part of the work of historians who are "trying to make whole people, whole situations, whole other ways of being out of the dusty fragments left … we have a fleeting sense of what it would have been like to have lived a different life, in a different place, at a different time" (Clendinnin, 2006, p. 56). Lives should be viewed in historical context (Tosh & Lang, 2002) and should help the reader understand the life (Mertens, 1998). Through researching and retelling a life we reveal much about "individual and collective, structural and agentic and real and fictional worlds" (Goodley & Lawthom, 2004, preface). Biographies can illuminate beyond the individual to explore and explain wider events and understandings. However it remains essential that, "we see ideas, practices and processes from the perspective of the individuals who developed them and the time and place in which they were developed" (Forrest, 2002, p. 138).

In trying to capture and understand past lives, historians access a wide range of materials and in doing so often find materials in unusual places, particularly in biographical research. The search for data may stretch the boundary of generally considered sources to include church magazines, family stories, memorabilia, ephemera, and anything else that may unearth information about the subject. Such data can be in archives, personal collections, presentation displays, and cupboards or even on eBay.