

Building Preservice Elementary Classroom Teachers' Self-Efficacy to Use Music

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Research has shown the number and types of musical experiences classroom teachers provide ultimately rests on their confidence utilizing music in the classroom (Auh, 2004; Barry, 1992; Giles & Frego, 2004; Jeanneret, 1997). Experiences that provide musical training for classroom teachers build their confidence incorporating music (Auh, 2004; Berke & Colwell, 2004; Jeanneret, 1997; Siebenaler, 2006), yet little research (Auh, 2004; Vannatta-Hall, 2010) has focused on which course aspects influence their confidence teaching or utilizing music. Self-efficacy plays a substantial role in confidence and refers to “people’s beliefs in their capability to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 2006, p. 307). Self-efficacy functions as a predictor for future achievement (Bandura, 1977, 1997). The purpose of this study was to determine which aspects of a “Music for Classroom Teachers” course had the greatest influence on preservice elementary classroom teachers’ self-efficacy to use music in their future classrooms. Specifically,

1. To what extent do course experiences affect self-efficacy to use music in classrooms?
2. Which aspects of the course significantly affect self-efficacy to use music in classrooms?

In 1977, Bandura proposed a theoretical framework for how experiences influence self-efficacy, known as sources of self-efficacy. Sources of self-efficacy were categorized into Mastery Experiences (e.g., participant modeling), Vicarious Experiences (e.g., symbolic modeling), Social Persuasion (e.g., coaching), and Emotional State (e.g., symbolic exposure). In experiments, mastery experiences in which participants modeled the desired behaviors exerted the most influence on perceived self-efficacy and execution of tasks. In the present study, course aspects were categorized in a similar fashion in order to allow examination through the lens of sources of self-efficacy.

In this quasi-experimental, one-group pretest-posttest design, sixty-seven students in the four sections of the “Music for Classroom Teachers” course were invited to participate in the study. Based on Bandura’s (1977, 1997, 2006) self-efficacy theory, two online questionnaires were developed utilizing a 101-point sliding scale to examine participants’ self-efficacy and determine the course aspects that affected self-efficacy judgements. The first questionnaire examined self-efficacy and was completed by participants after the first class meeting. The second questionnaire, given at the end of the semester, examined self-efficacy and course aspects. Thirty four (50.7%) students (female 33, Average age 20.55 (19-34), SD 2.356) consented to participate and completed both surveys. Results showed the course experiences in the “Music for Classroom Teachers” positively influenced participants’ self-efficacy to use music. Further, mastery experiences exerted the most influence on participants’ self-efficacy to use music. Findings indicate instructors for similar courses should engage preservice elementary classroom teachers in hands-on musical experiences.

Applications to Teaching

- The level of people's beliefs in their capability at a certain task (self-efficacy) affect their choice of activities and their level of effort for activities.
- The perceived self-efficacy can be changed by four main sources of influence: mastery experience, observation, verbal feedback on their performance, and person emotional state.
- The most effective way of improving self-efficacy is through mastery experiences. Successful attempts raise a person's mastery expectation. Repeated failures lower them.
- To develop preservice classroom teachers' self-efficacy to use music,
 - Provide students with opportunities of being successful in using music
 - Provide active musical experiences in a variety of ways.

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