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Using Intentional Strategies to Promote Self-Efficacy in a Choral Classroom: An Action Research Study

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USING INTENTIONAL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE SELF-EFFICACY IN A CHORAL CLASSROOM: AN ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

A Masters Thesis

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Master of Music

By

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ABSTRACT

As a choral music educator, I investigated the impact of strategies I designed to foster self-efficacy in one of my choral classes. Drawing on Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, I used enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and affective/physiological states to design specific classroom tasks that would serve as critical influences on an individual's self-efficacy. The action research study was conducted with a mixed-gender choir class of grades 10-12 students, using Michael Zelenak's Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale as a pre-and post-survey measure. Observational and qualitative data were also collected to enable a reflective examination of teaching practices and student-teacher interactions.

KEYWORDS: self-efficacy, enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, affective/physiological states

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I dedicate this thesis to my sons, Zane and Christian.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

In my perspective, the development of self-efficacy is fundamental to morale, growth, and sustained engagement within choral programs. Previous research conducted in performance-based class settings has reinforced the crucial connection between self-efficacy and a student's capacity to perform (Zelenak, 2020). Without sufficient musical understanding, performance skills, motivation, and optimistic self-beliefs, students may not meet the selection criteria for participation in auditioned choirs, all-district, all-state events, and competitive choirs.

From my observations, underperformance—usually marked by avoidable mistakes or missed opportunities for reaching the potential of a class—often correlates with diminished interest and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy for students. Subpar performances could lead to decreased morale, perhaps due to negative self-perceptions and low self-efficacy. It is crucial to note that these insights echo a growing body of research in music education. For instance, Zelenak (2020) found a connection between students' self-efficacy and their performance capabilities. However, Zelenak's research suggests that students with lower self-efficacy generally do not perform as well as those with higher self-efficacy. Therefore, it is important to understand that this statement refers not only to Zelenak's work but also aligns with a broader consensus in the field.

I have always been curious about the negative self-perceptions that often precipitate student frustration in my ensembles. Despite recognizing self-efficacy as an integral component of music achievement, it is routinely overlooked in many typical rehearsal activities used in school choral classrooms (McCall, 2021). In my classroom, I have focused my curriculum on enhancing performance tasks, such as vocal warm-ups for tone development and sight-singing to foster musicianship. My approach is informed by my desire to foster student performance and

positively promote their authentic self-beliefs. Like other music educators (e.g., Zelenak, 2020), I believe there needs to be more emphasis on directly influencing students' self-perceptions as a potent catalyst for achievement in music classes.

I propose to incorporate the cultivation of self-efficacy into the choral classroom more intentionally as a means to improve my teaching practice. This action research aims to (a) investigate the sources of self-efficacy, (b) elucidate how self-efficacy influences choral performance, (c) implement classroom strategies intended to nurture self-efficacy, and (d) evaluate these strategies' effectiveness using the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES) (Zelenak, 2011). I aspire to bring a fresh perspective that could enhance choral education and student achievement by shifting the focus toward self-efficacy, assuming the practices described in this paper are useful for other classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

In the United States, many state music education and activity associations maintain standardized music performance evaluations. These evaluations often rank students or provide ratings that gauge students' musical prowess. For instance, the Missouri State High School Activities Association aims to "evaluate each performance entered by a school system in comparison with the accepted standard of excellence" (MSHSAA, 2021). I believe that strong self-efficacy is crucial for students to deliver a high-rated performance. A high-rated performance in this context refers to the student’s ability to meet or surpass the set musical standards during these evaluations. However, from my observations, even well-prepared students often grapple with self-doubt, hindering their ability to perform at their best. When performances fall short of these standards, it can impact their morale and future participation in choral

activities. Herein lies the importance of self-efficacy: not only does it have the potential to boost students' confidence, thereby enhancing their performance ratings, but the experience of achieving higher ratings also reciprocally strengthens their self-efficacy, creating a cycle of improved performance and increased confidence.

Choral directors continually strive to enhance their students' performances and foster a sense of accomplishment. Central to this endeavor is self-efficacy, a factor that can significantly influence a student's musical performance and satisfaction when properly nurtured (Zelenak, 2011, 2020). Encouraging self-efficacy not only aids in achieving high-performance ratings but also cultivates an intrinsic love for music and a sustained commitment to choral singing (Zarza-Alzugaray et al., 2020). This potential has been acknowledged by choral professionals and music educators alike (McCall, 2021; McPherson & Hendrix, 2010; Zelnak, 2020).

However, practical strategies to foster classroom self-efficacy are often neglected despite this recognition (Zelenak, 2020). According to Brinson and Demorest (2013), a well-organized, practical approach to directing choirs and managing choral programs can help instructors incorporate self-efficacy into their music education philosophy. Indeed, the importance of self-efficacy in the learning process is well-documented (McPherson & Hendrix, 2010; Zelenak, 2020; Hewitt, 2015). It is not only an outcome of successful performance but also plays a foundational role as a prerequisite for achievement. Yet, its role has been under-theorized and generally incorporated into choral education only in broad terms. In this research, I aim to delve deeper into this underexplored area, investigating how intentionally developing self-efficacy within my choral classroom could enhance performance. This exploration will combine my observations with existing research on self-efficacy, aiming to bridge the gap between theory and practice, potentially leading to more explicit strategies for its incorporation into choral education.

Purpose of the Study

This paper explores the effect of employing strategies to boost self-efficacy in music performance. Various self-efficacy strategies were implemented in a high school choir classroom comprising 10-12th-grade students. The MPSES was used as a pre-and post-assessment tool to monitor changes in self-efficacy. The focus of this study was to measure the change in self-efficacy as it pertained to music performance, resulting from the application of different strategies designed to enhance self-efficacy.

Research Questions

1. What student/teacher behaviors, comments, and attitudes were observed using each strategy?
2. What was observed about the progression of self-efficacy through strategies and self-assessment?

Significance of the Problem

High-performance expectations for choral ensembles are prevalent in American schools and are typically evaluated based on assessments, ratings, and competitions. These evaluations largely serve as a measure of the ensemble's musical competence and performance prowess. Simultaneously, as highlighted in the forthcoming literature review, self-efficacy significantly impacts music performance (McPherson & McCormick, 2003; Zelenak, 2011). This implies that a choir's ability to meet these high-performance expectations and succeed in evaluations is closely tied to the student’s belief in their ability to perform successfully. However, there is a

noticeable absence of training within professional development in music education on methods to cultivate these self-perceptions.

In my classroom, enhancing student performance is fundamentally intertwined with pedagogy – the methods and practice of teaching, which includes fostering students' self-efficacy. Recognizing this connection, I developed a pedagogical approach that intentionally integrates the cultivation of self-efficacy. This approach is rooted in two key strategies: directly fostering students' beliefs in their abilities and providing them with the tools and environment necessary to build their self-efficacy independently. The rationale for this approach is not to detach self-efficacy from pedagogy but to examine its integral role in teaching methods and how this relationship can be leveraged to enhance student performance.

As an educator, I see my role as twofold. First, it is about building an environment conducive to self-efficacy through explicit encouragement, providing meaningful feedback, and setting achievable goals that stretch and challenge students. Second, it is about empowering students to take ownership of their learning and fostering their capacity to build their self-efficacy independently (Zelenak, 2020). The self-perception of self-efficacy cannot be disregarded, particularly given its demonstrated connection to achievement (Bandura, 1977; McPherson & McCormick, 2003; Zelenak, 2011). The role of self-efficacy extends beyond just the belief in one's ability to perform a task; it encompasses the students' belief in their potential to learn, improve, and excel in their choral pursuits and other endeavors. Therefore, a pedagogical approach that strategically emphasizes and enables the cultivation of self-efficacy is imperative to enhance performances and foster a more effective and self-motivated learning environment within the choral classroom.

Assumptions:

1. Students were assumed to approach the MPSES honestly and with self-awareness on both occasions.
2. It was assumed that students engaged with all the strategies with equal energy.
3. It was assumed that the teacher delivered all strategies effectively with similar fidelity.
4. It was assumed that increased self-efficacy would lead to improved performance.

Limitations:

1. Given the limited classroom size, the classwide data was susceptible to outliers.
2. The study was conducted over only four weeks, potentially constraining the positive potential of the strategies.
3. The primary data source is a self-evaluation tool that makes it difficult to disentangle self-efficacy from other self-belief variables.

Definitions

For this study, the following terms are clarified.

- Self-efficacy: belief in one's ability to attain a desired result from a specific task(Baudura, 1977)
- Music Performance Self-Efficacy Survey (MPSES): a tool designed to determine one's belief in their ability to execute musical tasks (Zelenak, 2011)
- Achievement: Documented performance in music as measured by criteria such as ratings, evaluations, and rankings. These may include scores on standardized music assessments, ratings from adjudicated performances or competitions, evaluations from music teachers or instructors, and rankings in music festivals or other competitive events.
- Self-Efficacy Development Strategy: A strategy used to promote the positive self-efficacy of a student.

Overview of the Study

In this paper, I first review the literature with a focus on (a) the sources of self-efficacy and their specific relevance to music education, providing the theoretical foundation for the research design. The study then moves to (b) examining strategies for enhancing self-efficacy, which are later applied in a practical context within the choral setting. The centerpiece of the

methodology is (c) the use of the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES), a tool specifically designed for measuring self-efficacy in music performance. This instrument is utilized with 10th to 12th-grade students from Nixa High School's choir program, with measurements taken both before and after applying self-efficacy development strategies. The study concludes by analyzing the data gathered and connecting the theory with my classroom.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Choral music education plays an integral role in the curriculum of many schools across the United States, shaping countless students' educational and creative experiences. However, the influence of students' self-efficacy, and their belief in their ability to succeed, should be considered an important factor in shaping these programs and curricula. The importance of self-efficacy in music education cannot be overstated, as it contributes to musical achievements and significantly impacts other academic areas (McCormick & McPherson, 2003). This chapter aims to: (a) probe the profound relationship between self-efficacy and student performance within the music education context; (b) outline relevant music education research; (c) pinpoint strategies to augment self-efficacy in the music classroom; and (d) explore the role of self-efficacy measurement tools such as the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale.

There is a concerning paradox in music and arts education. While time spent on music performance practice is critical, a student's mental perception of their ability - their self-efficacy - is as crucial to their performance achievement (McPherson & McCormick, 2000). Alarmingly, students have consistently exhibited lower competency beliefs in music and art compared to all other subjects (McPherson & Hendricks, 2010). Furthermore, these negative beliefs increase as students ascend through grade levels (Randles, 2011).

This trend of declining self-efficacy is worrisome, given its importance in academic achievement across musical and non-musical disciplines (Yusuf, 2011; McCormick & McPherson, 2003). Self-efficacy is more than just "significant"; it has been identified as the primary predictor of achievement in academic and musical categories (McCormick & McPherson, 2003). This literature review will focus on understanding self-efficacy and its impact on music education, identifying the sources of self-efficacy and their relevance to music

education, and exploring recommended strategies for fostering self-efficacy in the music classroom.

Bandura on Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura introduced the concept of self-efficacy as part of his Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1977). He described self-efficacy as the dominant self-perception shaping action, effort, perseverance, resiliency, and achievement. He also characterized it as one's recognition of their ability to complete a specific task (Bandura, 1997). Bandura defined it as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p.3). Positive self-efficacy does more than allow individuals to engage with complex challenges. It also empowers individuals to tackle challenges using effective problem-solving strategies, encourages them to persevere in the face of difficulties, and equips them with the resilience to bounce back from setbacks. In music education, self-efficacy can lead to productive learning strategies, such as breaking complex tasks into manageable goals and constructs, along with more effective stress management strategies in challenging performance situations (Ritchie & Williamon, 2010).

Bandura identified the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement and the implication of this relationship for educators. For example, Bandura (1997) stated:

> Educational practices should be gauged not only by the skills and knowledge they impart for present use but also by what they do to children's beliefs about their capabilities, which affects how they approach the future. Students who develop a strong sense of self-efficacy are well-equipped to educate themselves when they have to rely on their initiative. (p. 234)

This initiative was in line with his views on self-regulation, which is the cumulative effect of setting standards and regulating one's performance in terms of those standards (Bandura, 1977).

Additionally, Bandura stated that self-efficacy becomes instructive when processed through reflective thought (1977). Bandura also believed that teachers have a critical role in furthering self-efficacy in their students through role modeling. By demonstrating and implicitly communicating their beliefs about self-efficacy, teachers can have an important effect on their students' self-efficacy.

Albert Bandura's research and suggestions on self-efficacy are pivotal to understanding learning processes. Bandura (1977) postulated that self-efficacy, a student's belief in their ability to complete a task, empowers them to take control of their learning. This belief forms the crux of their self-perception, shaping their confidence and willingness to tackle challenges. Furthermore, these self-perceptions are not fixed but can be nurtured and developed through four sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states (Bandura, 1977). By providing students with opportunities to succeed, observing others perform tasks successfully, receiving encouragement and feedback, and managing stress and anxiety, educators can play a transformative role in developing students' self-efficacy and improving educational outcomes. Therefore, the construct of self-efficacy, specifically how these self-perceptions form and how they influence learning behaviors, is the primary focus of this literature review.

Music Education Research on Self-Efficacy

Drawing upon Bandura's robust theoretical framework, music education researchers have explored self-efficacy's effects within musical learning contexts. McPherson and Hendricks (2010) found that students' self-efficacy levels were typically lower in music compared to other academic subjects. Recent work by Zelenak (2020) suggested the potential for a positive shift in

music learning outcomes through the daily integration of self-efficacy techniques. Zelenak's theory posits that enhancing self-efficacy would improve student achievement and positively influence the self-perceptions that guide music learning. Similarly, Ritchie and Williamson (2012) provided empirical support for the role of self-efficacy in musical achievement. Their research revealed that high levels of self-efficacy were associated with superior rankings for competitive ensembles and better placements within those ensembles. Further underscoring the pivotal role of self-efficacy, their work suggests prior achievement to be the strongest predictor of exceptional performance. This evidence collectively highlights the significance of self-efficacy within music education and provides a compelling foundation for the current study.

While teachers might successfully employ strategies to enhance self-efficacy without explicit knowledge of its sources, understanding these sources can offer a valuable conceptual framework for strategically targeting each one more effectively. Therefore, this subsequent portion of the literature review will delve into the four sources of self-efficacy outlined by Bandura (1997), potentially providing choral educators, including myself, with information that could enrich our pedagogical approach and professional learning experience.

Four Sources of Self-Efficacy

Albert Bandura (1997) outlines the following as the four sources of self-efficacy:

- enactive mastery experience—previous experiences of success or failure in the activity,
- vicarious experience—judgments of one's capabilities as compared to the accomplishments of others similar to oneself,
- verbal/social persuasion—opinions of one's abilities as expressed by others significant to the individual,
- physiological and affective states—the degree and quality of arousal from engagement in a task.

This next section will outline the literature on the four sources and elaborate on their implications on self-efficacy in general and music education.

Enactive Mastery. Bandura identifies mastery experiences as the most influential and most potent source of self-efficacy development (Bandura, 1997; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012). Enactive mastery refers to an individual's recollections and interpretations of their previous performance outcomes—successes and failures—on a particular task. This repository of past experiences significantly influences an individual's perception of their capabilities and, therefore, their self-efficacy (Zelenak, 2020).

However, the process of interpreting past performances is a double-edged sword. When a performance is successful, performers can view their achievement as perfect or mistake-free (Dempsey, 2015; Dempsey & Comeau, 2019). While bolstering self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), such a perception could inadvertently hamper further development. For instance, performers may interpret enthusiastic audience applause or high ratings as validation of strong performance (Ritchie & Williamon, 2012), thereby curbing their motivation to improve. Conversely, a lack of audience approval, even during a performance with errors, may also curb the motivation to improve. According to Bandura (1977), it is not the actual result of the performance that is important, but rather what the performer believes about the result. Their interpretation of the outcome can significantly influence their self-efficacy and motivation to improve (McCormick & McPherson, 2003; Bucura, 2019).

Navigating these perceptions to foster enactive mastery without stunting growth or dispensing false praise poses a significant challenge (Zelenak, 2020). One approach lies in assigning tasks that match the individual's capabilities (Zelenak, 2020). For instance, an adept instructor might select literature of a suitable difficulty level for their student. Assigning overly

complex literature risks leading the student towards a sense of failure, whereas selecting challenging yet manageable literature, coupled with appropriate instructional scaffolding, can guide the student toward success (Jones, 2020).

Furthermore, strategies that promote enactive mastery should ideally be goal-oriented, specific, short-range, and achievable (Jones, 2020). Such strategies balance challenge and attainability, ensuring the student stays motivated to progress without becoming overwhelmed (Ormrod, 2006; Zelenak, 2020). Ultimately, the goal of fostering enactive mastery is to incrementally build a robust sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977), thereby enhancing the individual's confidence in their ability to undertake future tasks successfully (Maddux, 2009).

Vicarious Experience. Bandura (1977) defines vicarious experiences as one's judgments of their abilities formed by comparing themselves to others one perceives as similar. This notion of similarity, however subtle, focuses on the efficacy of vicarious experiences, suggesting that shared attributes, experiences, or even group identities can inform an individual's perception of their capabilities (Bandura, 1977). The strength of vicarious experiences is their potential to facilitate learning without requiring the individual to confront the direct pressures or potential negative consequences associated with a task (Hendricks, 2009). It enables an individual to indirectly process the adversity and challenges associated with a task, thereby fortifying their self-efficacy for confronting the task directly.

However, Bandura (1997) warns of certain circumstances where vicarious experiences may inadvertently harm self-efficacy. For instance, Bandura (1997) explained that when a student observes a peer whose skills considerably surpass theirs, the observation could prompt feelings of inadequacy, thus undermining the observer's self-efficacy. Such an observation might incite thoughts like "Of course, he can do that. I could never achieve what he has," reflecting the

potential for vicarious experiences to influence self-efficacy negatively. Furthermore, vicarious experiences can be detrimentally skewed by media portrayals, such as a student comparing themselves to elite professional musicians in highly edited music videos (Bucura, 2019). In these instances, an unrealistic or inaccessible performance standard can foster a sense of inability or inferiority, further eroding self-efficacy.

Maddux (2009) suggested a strategy in the literature to harness the positive potential of vicarious experiences. This involves exposing students to video performances of similar groups. By observing comparable ensembles or performers achieving success, students can vicariously accrue necessary experiences and confidence. For example, showing a choir from a similar regional background or demographic achieving success can empower students with the belief that they, too, can attain similar levels of accomplishment.

Another effective strategy involves fostering collaborative learning environments where students of similar skill levels can work on tasks together and provide feedback to each other (Zelenak, 2020). For instance, a music instructor could select a passage of music that two singers are comfortable with and have them perform for each other, offering critiques and feedback. This strategy hinges on the assumption that by directing students' attention to the specifics of performance quality, they are not only focusing on what can be improved but also moving away from a global evaluation based solely on accuracy. Zelenak argues that this approach encourages vicarious learning and fosters reflection and active cognition, ultimately enhancing the overall learning experience.

Verbal/Social Persuasion. Verbal or social persuasion, as Bandura (1997) defined it, encompasses the expressed opinions about an individual's capabilities by significant others.

These opinions, especially when voiced by those important to the individual, such as teachers, mentors, or peers, have a meaningful impact on shaping self-efficacy beliefs.

One classic example lies in the classroom, where a teacher's words carry significant weight (Nucaro, 2017). Suppose a student is facing doubts about their ability to complete a particular task. In that case, the teacher could link the student's past successes to potential future ones through cognitive coaching. The teacher has a role in reaffirming the rationale for improvement by providing specific feedback on how continued effort has paid off. For example: "We have gotten better at this because we have continued to work on it, and it has paid off" vs. "We have gotten better at this because you are a talented group of young people." This kind of verbal persuasion can boost students' self-efficacy and reduce attributions based on talent or circumstances outside the learner's control, inspiring them to tackle and overcome the challenges ahead (Bandura, 1977).

However, the effectiveness of verbal persuasion hinges on its authenticity (Bandura, 1997). Empty praise or unrealistic expectations may have an adverse effect, potentially undermining the student's confidence or attributing success to natural ability rather than work quality and persistence. Authenticity is necessary but insufficient for effective verbal persuasion; it must also be specific and based on observable evidence. Notably, Bandura (1977) observed that while teacher verbal persuasion can be impactful, peer encouragement can be even more effective. This observation highlights the strength of performance and persuasive models that students can directly relate to. A peer model, while complementing a teacher model's good musical guidance, can be more potent in promoting self-efficacy. This emphasizes the importance of fostering a supportive social environment in any learning context, further enriched

by promoting student collaboration and peer feedback. Such an environment allows students to learn from each other and gain confidence through positive peer reinforcement.

Physiological and Affective States. Physiological and affective states, identified by Bandura as the fourth source of self-efficacy, reflect the emotional and physical responses triggered within an individual when facing a task or challenge. These states, which could range from intense stress or anxiety to relaxation, are directly linked to an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). It is important to recognize that these states are not solely task-specific. In other words, they can be influenced by a range of factors, not just the immediate task at hand. Symptoms such as heart palpitations, trembling, sweating, or feelings of fear and exhilaration could manifest as generalized responses or other sources, such as external stressors like an upcoming test or personal conflict. However, in the context of task engagement and performance, these physiological responses can shape an individual's perception of their ability to execute the task successfully, regardless of their origin.

In the context of education, students who approach tasks with a relaxed and confident demeanor typically experience higher levels of success than those overwhelmed by tension and anxiety (Dempsey, 2015). This notion takes on particular relevance in music education, where the concept of music performance anxiety (MPA) comes into play. MPA, characterized by various cognitive and physical symptoms that can potentially hinder performance, is often associated with low self-efficacy (Zelenak, 2020).

It is worth noting that the prevalence of Music Performance Anxiety (MPA) is not uniform, as it is observed to be more common in women than men and shows an increasing trend with age, spanning from elementary through to high school (Dempsey, 2015; Dempsey & Comeau, 2019). Coupled with this, perfectionism - setting exceptionally high-performance

standards for oneself or others - can significantly exacerbate MPA. This tendency to overreact to minor mistakes can heighten performance anxiety and undermine self-efficacy (Dempsey & Comeau, 2019).

Addressing this, Zelenak (2020) proposes an alternative approach that counters perfectionism and its harmful effects. Instead of striving for perfection, performers should focus on delivering an expressive performance and fostering a genuine connection with their audience. Zelenak asserts:

> They should also avoid seeking perfection, especially when a parent or teacher demands it. Instead, they might focus on thoughts of performing expressively or sharing musical moments with the audience. Audiences will accept imperfection when it is delivered with passion.

This change in perspective, from striving for flawlessness to meaningful engagement with the music and the audience, is proposed to alleviate MPA and enhance performers' self-efficacy. This assertion finds resonance with Diaz (2018), who examined the use of meditation practices among collegiate-level musicians. According to Diaz's study, approximately 48% of participants had engaged in meditation in the past six months, and those who meditated at least weekly tended to report less MPA, holding mindfulness and perfectionist traits constant. Higher trait mindfulness predicted lower performance anxiety, while higher self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism predicted higher MPA scores. Hence, the shift from a perfectionist focus to a mindfulness or meditative approach, similar to Zelenak's proposition of focusing on expressive performance and audience connection, can potentially alleviate performance anxiety and bolster self-efficacy in music performers.

Self-Efficacy Development Strategies

This portion of the literature review discusses various strategies found in the music education research and pedagogical literature, targeted at developing the four sources of self-efficacy in the music classroom. These strategies have been purposefully designed or identified based on their alignment with Bandura's framework. The intent is not just to highlight their existence but to present a comprehensive guide that details how they can be implemented to foster self-efficacy.

I begin by referring to the researched strategies that target the development of enactive mastery in the music classroom. These are followed by strategies aimed at fostering vicarious experiences in learners. Subsequently, I explore how verbal and social persuasion can be nurtured within the learning environment. Lastly, consideration is given to the techniques employed to cultivate learners' favorable physiological and affective states.

Following the discussion on these strategies, I evaluate a specific assessment tool: the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale, developed by Zelenak. This tool offers a way to gauge and track student self-efficacy and is unique in its specificity to music performance. The review concludes with a summary of the importance of self-efficacy in music education, the current gap in the literature, and the aim of this study to provide tangible strategies for enhancing self-efficacy in music education through direct application in a choral classroom.

Developing Enactive Mastery. Enactive mastery, defined as perceptions of previous successes or failures in a given task (Bandura, 1997), requires thoughtful educational design and strategies promoting successful experiences. Developing enactive mastery is not simply about providing opportunities for success; it involves nurturing an understanding of why success occurs and how it can be replicated. In this respect, the literature on enactive mastery provides

various resources with strategic ideas. Bandura's (1997) extensive work on self-efficacy is a cornerstone in the field, outlining the fundamental processes behind developing enactive mastery. It explores why certain actions lead to success and how these can be systematically replicated. Similarly, Schunk and Zimmerman (2007) have proposed several goal-setting strategies that promote success and enhance learners' understanding of the roots of their achievement. Lastly, Jones (2020) provides a comprehensive array of low-pressure performance strategies designed to foster enactive mastery by emphasizing success and building confidence in learners. All these sources provide valuable insights and ideas for educators looking to enhance their students' enactive mastery experiences.

One effective strategy for fostering enactive mastery is the creation of low-pressure performance opportunities combined with self-reflection (Jones, 2020). This approach could involve a teacher, or student, selecting a piece of literature or a segment the students have shown they can perform well. By arranging for this piece to be performed before a smaller, less intimidating audience, students can showcase their abilities without thinking about the intense pressure that a larger audience might induce. The strategy includes structured reflection and feedback sessions post-performance, where teachers guide students to analyze their performance and identify strengths and areas for improvement. The reduced stakes and the reflective component help students focus on the performance itself, reinforcing their sense of accomplishment and further enhancing their self-efficacy.

A complementary strategy involves working with students to develop realistic learning goals (Bandura, 1997). Establishing achievable objectives serves a dual purpose: it provides a clear path for students to follow and offers a tangible measure of success when the goals are met. Moreover, Schunk & Zimmerman (2007) emphasize the role of reflective processing through

guided reflection, where teachers facilitate sessions that allow students to review their progress toward set objectives. They suggest prompting students to identify effective strategies and areas needing improvement, thereby focusing attention on the factors at issue rather than success or failure as a global conception. This intentional reflection process, guided by the teacher, enables students to appreciate their progress and reinforces their enactive mastery experiences (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007; Jones, 2020).

Developing Vicarious Experiences. Vicarious experiences, learning from observing others, play a significant role in the educational process. As Bandura (1977) noted, these experiences can be powerful tools in shaping an individual's perception of their abilities, including their self-efficacy. In a music classroom, vicarious experiences may come from various sources, from watching professional musicians perform to observing peers' success. However, current choral education literature emphasizes the importance of planning and facilitation by educators to leverage these experiences fully (Maddux, 2009; Zelenak, 2020).

Educators need to create opportunities for students to observe relatable and achievable performances. For instance, Maddux (2009) suggests using video performances featuring performers of similar ages, skill levels, or cultural backgrounds. Maddux's strategy implies a structured process in which the teacher guides the learners through the performance analysis, helping them connect their observed successes with their potential achievements. This strategy is made relatable through shared characteristics and bolsters self-efficacy by presenting an achievable model of excellence.

Further, Zelenak (2020) proposes the formation of groups based on similar skill levels. Instead of a free-for-all group work, Zelenak's strategy includes teacher-guided peer feedback sessions, where students learn to provide constructive criticism and praise for each other's

performances. The strategy also implies that teachers help students understand how to translate feedback and observations into improvements in their performance. This cooperative and interactive process fosters vicarious learning while encouraging active reflection and critical thinking.

Developing Verbal/Social Persuasion. Nurturing Verbal/Social persuasion is a potent tool for boosting a learner's self-efficacy, according to Bandura's (1997) work on self-efficacy theory. Through careful application, the influential voices in a student's life can positively affect their perceptions of their abilities. Educators play a crucial role in developing verbal/social persuasion by providing frequent and detailed actionable feedback, which allows students to perceive the feedback as genuine, beneficial, and pragmatic (Bandura, 1977). Precise feedback not only offers guidance for improvement but also presents an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate student achievements, further enhancing their belief in their capabilities (Bandura, 1997).

In addition to feedback, educators can utilize recognition strategies to reinforce student accomplishments. Awards and certificates are tangible symbols of success and effort, providing students with a sense of achievement and motivation (Zelenak, 2020). However, the use of these recognition strategies needs careful consideration. If students perceive awards as privileges for the naturally talented, it could undermine their intended purpose. Although recognition and use of awards are pervasive in our education system, they often emphasize results rather than progress or effort. Therefore, to effectively nurture verbal/social persuasion, these awards must be framed in a manner that values and celebrates the effort, progress, and process of learning rather than focusing solely on the outcome or perceived talent.

It is important to note that verbal persuasion does not solely originate from authority figures. Encouraging students to provide constructive feedback to their peers can significantly contribute to the development of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977). Research has highlighted the memorable impact of student feedback, which may surpass feedback from teachers or parents, emphasizing the influence of peer influence in shaping self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977).

In conclusion, nurturing verbal/social persuasion is vital to promoting self-efficacy in the music classroom. Educators can create an environment that boosts students' belief in their abilities by providing frequent and detailed feedback, acknowledging student accomplishments through awards and certificates to recognize effort and progress, and encouraging peer feedback. These strategies foster a sense of validation, motivation, and collaboration, ultimately enhancing self-efficacy and facilitating students' musical growth and achievement.

Developing Physiological and Affective States

Cultivating favorable physiological and affective states is paramount for fostering self-efficacy, as Bandura (1997) asserts. Students with positive and relaxed emotional states tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy, leading to enhanced academic performance. This process necessitates counteracting pressures and stressors, such as Music Performance Anxiety (MPA), which can foster negative physiological states (Zelenak, 2020).

Educators bear a significant role in addressing MPA by encouraging dialogue around the issue and challenging detrimental perceptions. Zelenak (2020) suggests that facilitating discussions about anxieties and fears can help debunk misconceptions and mitigate harmful beliefs. This engagement contributes to the betterment of physiological and affective states. Furthermore, Zelenak (2020) recommends a shift in focus from perfectionism to expressing

passion and creativity as a strategy for fostering positive states. Accepting that passionate performances can captivate audiences despite minor imperfections may help reduce performance-related anxiety and stress, resulting in improved physiological and affective states. Encouraging this mindset allows students to prioritize personal expression, thus creating a positive emotional environment bolsters self-efficacy. A supportive rehearsal environment is also crucial for establishing positive physiological and affective states, as Durrant (2003) outlined in "Choral Conducting: Philosophy and Practice." The conductor's role extends beyond guiding the choir to fostering an environment through clear communication, positive reinforcement, and effective feedback, all enhancing singers' emotional well-being and self-efficacy.

In conclusion, developing positive physiological and affective states is pivotal for nurturing self-efficacy. By managing factors such as MPA and emphasizing passion and creativity over perfection, educators can create an environment conducive to emotional well-being and self-efficacy. As such, they enhance physiological and affective states, essential for academic growth and success in the music classroom (Zelenak, 2020).

Self-Efficacy Music Performance Scale

The Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES), developed by Michael Zelenak in 2010, is a comprehensive tool designed to measure self-efficacy within the context of music performance (Zelenak, 2011). Built upon the theoretical foundation laid out by Bandura (1997), this instrument operationalizes the concepts central to self-efficacy research, offering an actionable means for educators to gauge and track student self-efficacy. With 24 questions directly aligned with the four sources of self-efficacy, students are asked to rate their agreement

with each statement on a scale from 1 to 100. The aggregate score derived from these ratings provides an overall measure of students' self-efficacy in music performance (Zelenak, 2011).

One of the instrument's key strengths is its specificity to the domain of music performance, with questions tailored to address content knowledge relevant to this field. This alignment with the context and content of music performance ensures that the scale remains highly pertinent and meaningful to the individuals whose self-efficacy it aims to measure. The scale's reliability and validity have been demonstrated through its alignment with other achievement measures in non-music subject areas (Zelenak, 2011). This consistency underscores the scale's robustness and applicability across various educational contexts, including its potential use for improving student outcomes and for research purposes.

While the MPSES has demonstrated its effectiveness in accurately measuring self-efficacy in music performance, further research could explore specific aspects of the scale that still need to be scrutinized. For example, investigating the scale's sensitivity to changes in self-efficacy over time or its ability to predict student outcomes in music performance could provide valuable insights into how the scale can be used to improve student outcomes. These areas present opportunities for future investigation, enhancing our understanding of the scale's full potential and its implications for music education (Zelenak, 2011; Wehr-Flowers, 2007; Ritchie & Williamon, 2010).

Summary

The literature on self-efficacy underscores its significance in promoting academic achievement across all areas, including music education (Zelenak, 2011). Self-efficacy in music encompasses four key sources: enactive mastery, vicarious learning, verbal/social persuasion,

and physiological/affective states (Bandura, 1997; Zelenak, 2011). While existing studies offer valuable insights, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding applying strategies that nurture these sources of self-efficacy, specifically in music education (Wehr-Flowers, 2007; Hendricks, 2009). More particularly, there is a need for a more diverse array of studies exploring these strategies in different classroom settings, employing detailed assessments of student responses, and expanding the theoretical understanding of how self-efficacy interacts with music education.

In response to the need for a targeted assessment tool, the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES) was developed, providing a valuable instrument for measuring student self-efficacy, specifically in music performance (Zelenak, 2011). The MPSES allows educators to obtain tangible scores that reflect students' perceived self-efficacy levels, enabling them to make informed decisions about instructional strategies and track changes in self-efficacy over time (Zelenak, 2011). Reports on the scale's development and validation process document its reliability and validity (Zelenak, 2011).

Educators are urged to explore and implement strategies nurturing self-efficacy in their music classrooms. The availability of the MPSES scores can support this endeavor by providing insights into students' self-efficacy levels and helping educators tailor their instructional approaches accordingly. By evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies through reflection and follow-up, educators can make informed decisions about their classroom practices and contribute to enhancing student self-efficacy in music education (Zelenak, 2011; Bandura, 1997). Many intersections with commonly used choral teaching techniques are worth mentioning. For example, providing frequent and detailed feedback, setting achievable goals, and encouraging

collaboration and peer feedback among students are all strategies that can support the development of self-efficacy in singers.

It is important to note that the decision to utilize the MPSES in this study perceived benefits in measuring student self-efficacy about performance and the potential for evaluating the effectiveness of instructional strategies (Zelenak, 2011). While Zelenak emphasized the value of the MPSES as an assessment tool, the interpretation of its application in the present study as a means to inform instructional decision-making and evaluate strategy effectiveness was made by myself based on an analysis of the scale's attributes and its alignment with the study's objectives.

By incorporating the MPSES and exploring strategies to nurture self-efficacy, educators can empower students to develop confidence in their musical abilities and enhance their overall performance outcomes. However, further research is needed to analyze the specific aspects of self-efficacy enhancement in music education and assess these strategies' impact on student outcomes. This area has been under-explored in the literature on choral classrooms. Further research could provide valuable insights into music educators' instructional practices (Zelenak, 2011; Wehr-Flowers, 2007; Hendricks, 2009; Ritchie & Williamon, 2010).

Research has shown that musicians with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to demonstrate higher levels of knowledge and skill in music performance than those with lower levels (Clark, 2012; Hendricks, 2009; Hewitt, 2015; McCormick & McPherson, 2003; McPherson & McCormick, 2000). Music education researchers could study how these techniques impact student outcomes across school districts or lab settings. For example, they could investigate how implementing techniques that foster enactive mastery experiences or vicarious learning impacts students' academic achievement or performance outcomes. Choral teachers should study how to implement techniques that foster these sources of self-efficacy in their classrooms. For example,

they could explore how providing frequent and detailed feedback or setting achievable goals can support students' development of enactive mastery experiences or how encouraging collaboration among students can support vicarious learning.

This project fits into this broader research agenda by exploring how incorporating the MPSES into instructional practices can support educators' efforts to nurture self-efficacy in their music classrooms and my desire to study my teaching and my student’s learning.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Existing literature, particularly the work of Bandura (1997) on the sources of self-efficacy and Zelenak's (2020) development of the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale provide a foundation for understanding self-efficacy within music education and methods for evaluating a student's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; Zelenak, 2020). However, further exploration is necessary to ascertain the effectiveness of teaching techniques and strategies intended to promote positive self-efficacy in choral classrooms. In this project, I studied the development of self-efficacy in performance within my classroom using the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (Appendix A). With rigorous performance schedules and high-performance expectations, enhancing their self-concept could improve performance and motivate students for future engagements in choral music. To learn more about self-efficacy and how it developed in my students, I utilized the MPSES as a pre and post-evaluation (Zelenak, 2011) while implementing specific self-efficacy-developing strategies that drew upon the four key sources of self-efficacy. Additionally, I utilized an observational journal to paint a bigger picture beyond the student's self-assessment.

Site of the Study

Nixa High School, located in an affluent suburb outside a moderate-sized city, has a reputation for having one of the strongest academic records among school districts in the state. According to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2022), Nixa High School was one of seven Missouri schools that earned National Blue Ribbon accolades in

2022. The National Blue Ribbon Schools program recognizes individual schools' outstanding academic achievement.

The Nixa Choir program consists of over 500 students from Nixa Junior High and Nixa High School and has been known to have a robust choral program for many years. The high school program consists of 6 choirs, including Nixapella, a contemporary ensemble created to have a more active choir within the community and to participate in contemporary a cappella competitions. The overall program features award-winning, regionally recognized ensembles that perform for various events, including regional music conferences. The program had a choir accepted to perform at the state music educators conference in the present year and has had numerous invitations in the past. Nixapella serves as a bridge to contemporary music and increases competitive opportunities for the choral program by performing in the International Championship of High School A Cappella. The group's performances have included several concerts, a national anthem performance, and several run-throughs of their ICHSA set.

The study participants are from this intact class I teach at Nixa High School. The class was a new contemporary a cappella class that is relatively novice to performing contemporary a cappella. As stated, the class must be taken in conjunction with another choral class. All participants were in grades 10-12 during this teaching project. The students had to be enrolled in an additional choir within the program to be in this class, providing them with multiple performing opportunities.

Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale

Michael Zelenak's Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (Zelenak, 2020) is a self-questionnaire that measures performance self-efficacy based on the four sources of self-efficacy.

The questionnaire was developed using the guidelines Bandura (1997) stated in his recommendations for measuring self-efficacy by outlining generality, strength, and level. In addition, several experts examined the content in music education (Zelenak, 2011). As a result, they found that the four sources of self-efficacy were represented in a way that accurately reflected secondary music education.

The validity of this scale was examined through correlations to teacher ratings and other self-efficacy scales (Zelenak, 2011). Also, the scores of students that were measured by this tool were shown a moderate correlation to the teacher ratings of student self-efficacy. Finally, the scores produced from the MPSES were consistent with scores produced from other subject self-efficacy scales.

The scale has quite an extensive format, which is comprehensive in theory. The questions require a response from 1-100 on how much the participant agrees with a given statement. Their responses were used to assess self-efficacy in a pre-post format.

Strategies to Develop the Four Sources of Self-Efficacy

I drew upon self-efficacy theory and research to design strategies to use with my class to enhance their self-efficacy. With enactive mastery, the class had weekly learning goals that pertained to performance—for instance, performing the dynamics from pages 7-10. The key was to ensure the goal level matched their current ability. This was done by breaking apart the literature into smaller portions. Attainability was considered critical in promoting self-efficacy during this project. Also, in the enactive mastery component, I created small performance opportunities once a week. These performances included inviting guest audience members in our school to our classroom. We strategically watched a clip of a similar choir weekly to develop

vicarious learning. Additionally, I developed a reflection activity where partners of similar abilities were paired up. Students were to provide positive feedback on each other's performance. I designed the feedback component of this activity to foster social persuasion. In addition, each week, the choir was given a Google form in which they named an award and designated it toward a specific person for a specific reason. This activity was intended to develop social persuasion in the classroom further. Finally, in developing students' physiological and affective states, students engaged weekly in small group discussions meant to address fears associated with performances.

Mindful of maintaining a balanced pedagogical approach, I chose not to implement every strategy daily. Considering the constraints of time and classroom dynamics, I opted for various techniques spread across different days to increase student engagement (Omrod, 2006). Table 1 provides an overview of the techniques used on each day.

Table 1 *Self-Efficacy Strategies Used on Each Day*

Strategies	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Attainable Goals			X	X		X			X	
Low-Pressure Performances			X			X			X	
Reflecting on Choirs	X				X				X	
Partners	X				X			X		
Peer Positive Feedback	X		X		X	X		X	X	
Naming and Placing Awards	X				X					X
Performance Fears Discussion		X					X			

Note: This chart represents the selected strategies used each day.

Daily Procedures

Before Day One. The students were given the MPSES. The questions were given through a Google form. This data were later compared to the same assessment given at the end of the ten days to see if any scores of their self-efficacy perception scores had changed.

Day One. As part of a strategy to encourage vicarious learning, we watched a brief, three to four-minute video of a contemporary a cappella choir that was similar in demographic, size, and voicing. After viewing the video, students were prompted to engage in a brief discussion in

which they identified three things the choir in the video did exceptionally well. The discussion was facilitated by teacher prompts that encouraged students to think about how the observed group could elevate their performance.

After the discussion, students worked on a 10-bar passage from a piece of music in the class repertoire. This passage was student-selected and considered challenging based on its demands for creating an emotionally impactful performance. Each partner then sang individually for the other person. Afterward, each individual provided their singing partner with three comments about aspects they performed exceptionally well, followed by an additional comment on "taking things to the next level." This strategy aimed to develop self-efficacy through social/verbal persuasion.

At the end of the class, we discussed several awards for various aspects of performances, another strategy used to encourage self-efficacy through "Social/Verbal Persuasion." I first facilitated a 5-minute conversation about what performance areas most needed improvement and what the titles could be for three different awards that encapsulated our discussions. Students were to determine the recipients by observing the various performance behaviors throughout classroom rehearsals over the next few days. I then put this information into a Google form where students voted on days five and ten.

Day Two. Class began with discussing the anxieties we needed to work through as an ensemble to achieve our performance goals. This strategy was intended to build self-efficacy through "Physiological States." The class discussion revolved around the following questions:

- How do we want our music to come across?
- What are the most significant challenges to our ensemble giving an impactful performance?
- What strengths do we already have that will help us overcome these hurdles?
- What character traits will need to be developed to overcome these challenges?

I intended to spend approximately 20 minutes on this conversation, but I lengthened the activity based on the level of student engagement. After the discussion, we rehearsed our pieces, referencing our responses to the questions.

Day Three. The focus was on building self-efficacy through "Enactive Mastery." A brief, five-minute conversation about our performance goals for an upcoming small performance led to constructing three attainable goals. Guided by the previous day's conversation, we performed one of our pieces in front of five students. This performance occurred in our classroom to emphasize that it was a low-pressure situation. After the performance, the audience provided input on the positive aspects they perceived during the performance. We then reviewed the ensemble's performance goals and asked the audience if they felt our goals were achieved.

Day Four. The class engaged in a unified reflection and discussion activity related to the small performance from Day Three. This activity, spanning about 10 minutes, started with the class reflecting on their performance and transitioned into a collaborative reevaluation and refinement of our attainable performance goals. This strategy aimed to build self-efficacy through "Enactive Mastery." I used this comprehensive discussion to raise awareness of the previous day's student performance, enabling them to recognize their areas of achievement and inconsistencies with our ensemble goals. Following this, we worked on these revised goals within a standard teacher-led rehearsal structure while practicing our music.

Day Five. The class replicated the activities of Day one, albeit with a more refined sense of purpose. We watched a 3-4 minute video of a different choir of a similar level and age. In a discussion, we reflected on their performance with three positive comments and one constructive comment focused on an area of improvement. After watching the video, the students were directed to break into pairs and to provide feedback to their partners. Then, I had the students

vote on the appropriate award recipients via a Google form. Each person voted for one student for each award for the three different awards. The person with the most votes was determined to be the recipient and received a certificate.

Day Six. Class began by setting performance goals for an upcoming small performance. Different students attended this performance and provided positive feedback to the ensemble.

Day Seven. Similar to Day two, this day consisted of a teacher-led discussion on how closely we met our performance goals from the previous day. A 20-minute conversation about the following three items followed:

- Which performance goal did we most closely achieve, and why?
- Were there any performance goals we did not achieve, and why?
- Was there anything emotional that got in the way of our performance?
- How can we prepare ourselves mentally for our performance on day 9?

Day Eight. Students practiced performing with a partner, guided by our conversation from the previous day. Partners were grouped based on voice parts and gave feedback to each other based on their singing and how closely they came to achieving the performance criteria.

Day Nine. The class concluded with small performances for the study. With the insights gathered from the previous days, students were assumed to have more explicit performance goals in mind.

Day Ten. On the culminating day of our self-efficacy journey, we presented the named awards to our students again. We discussed the reasons why students were nominated.

After Day Ten. The MPSES survey was distributed to students via Google Forms. We compared these scores to the initial MPSES survey results to see if their perception of their self-efficacy had changed from before the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The proposal was submitted to the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board for approval. Approval was granted on April 18, 2023, and the study was assigned number IRB-FY2023-417 (Appendix B). Informed consent was required and collected from all of the students, with necessary approvals (Appendix C). Before the strategies were implemented in the study, members of Nixapella were given the MPSES via a Google survey. The data were collected during a regular class meeting, and a specific score was calculated for each student regarding their self-efficacy. Then while rehearsing their set of songs, seven strategies for developing the sources of self-efficacy were implemented throughout the following ten classes. The MPSES was again given as a post-assessment survey at the end of the ten classes. The initial survey results were then compared to the latter survey to observe any changes in their self-efficacy perception.

In addition to the survey, I made journal entries daily to document the implementation of strategies, students' reactions, and other notable details from the class sessions. My observations were recorded via a written journal in a Google Document. The journal was used to describe the usability of various strategies based on my observations. In addition, noteworthy observations were made during class and reflected after classes. I wrote the observations based on the student's body language, verbal interaction, and general feelings on how the strategy seemed to be perceived. Also, I took notes on the conversations at the end of class on students' experience of a particular strategy.

RESULTS

Introduction

This study delved into a rich and thorough examination of self-efficacy in a sample of 15 participants from 10th, 11th, and 12th grades. It was comprehensive in its analysis, using a two-pronged approach to data collection. Firstly, all students completed the pre- and post-assessment using the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES). This allowed for an objective, quantifiable measure of their self-efficacy changes throughout the study. Secondly, I kept a daily journal of observations throughout the process to provide a more nuanced and holistic view. This journal was instrumental in capturing the day-to-day activities, student reactions, and my reflections on the emergence and absence of self-efficacious behaviors among students. The richness of the study lies not only in the data collected but also in my meticulous and detailed analysis.

The results of the MPSES pre- and post-assessment are summarized in Table 2. This table includes data on the source of self-efficacy, maximum scores, pre-scores, post-scores, and gain scores, presenting a combined mean of the scores. This quantitative analysis, coupled with the qualitative insights from the journal entries, allows for a deep understanding of self-efficacy development among the students. The subsequent section provides a more detailed analysis of the journal entries, enabling me to delve deeper into the underlying interactions and reflections that influenced the observed outcomes.

Class Session Descriptions. Care was taken to avoid extraneous factors influencing the survey. Before the start of this intervention, the MPSES survey was administered. To promote consistent understanding and minimize potential influences on responses, the following steps were taken:

1. Clear instructions: I asked the participants questions to ensure they understood the directions by providing a thorough explanation of the survey's purpose, instructions, and response format. Participants were encouraged to seek clarification if needed.
2. Independent completion: Students were asked to complete the survey individually, without discussing or collaborating with peers. This approach aimed to prevent undue influence or bias in responses.
3. Reading instructions: I read the instructions aloud for the survey administration, which included asking if the students understood the instructions.
4. Time allotment: Participants were told to take as long as needed to complete the questions. This direction was said to allow students the time to provide thoughtful responses without rushing.

On Day One, the class initiated a focused discussion on performance to enhance students' understanding and appreciation of key performance elements. I prompted students to observe the OneVoice contemporary a cappella choir performance techniques to kickstart the conversation. After the performance, we gathered as a class to give positive feedback about the ensemble. The students shared the aspects that stood out positively with each other, including confident soloists, expressive vocal percussion, good blend and dynamics, and overall tone. Later, one student, referring to a conversation from a different choir class she had earlier in the day, emphasized techniques that could create a "3D" performance. At the same time, they suggested adding expressions to their performances. The students then engaged in a discussion activity that the teacher timed for three minutes. Students were partnered up and given peer feedback. Comments were made about positive aspects of their peer's performance that they observed. Comments were also made about being expressive and musically competent. For instance, statements like "I could tell you really were trying to believe in what you were singing," "that was very in tune," or "that had really good tone." At the end of the class, we discussed awards intended to reinforce positive vicarious experiences. This discussion on awards emerged from our 5-minute conversation about their performance goals. Awards were titled by students and given out by myself to the class on day five after completing their Google survey. The awards named and

described were the “Girly-Pop Slay” award, given to someone who encourages others to be expressive by engaging with others in singing. Next is the “Polar Expressive” Award, given to a very engaged student in the expressive process of singing. Finally, there is the “Eeyah-eeyah” award. This award was given to a student who does vocal effects with their voice, like singing like a vocoder, being diligent with dynamics, or blending well with the ensemble. These awards were also met with great enthusiasm, and the students seemed very engaged with this concept.

On Day Two, the class discussed their perceptions of their music, challenges they face, strengths, and characteristics necessary for success in a high-level choral ensemble. The group discussions revealed student anxieties related to music performance. This discussion was prompted by designated questions as outlined in the methodology. I observed that the students were not surprised by the anxieties expressed by the group members, reflecting their shared experiences. This response was surprising to me. I felt that the pace was generally slow and was predicated on sitting and listening. However, the students were most responsive.

On Day Three, the group identified performance goals and participated in a “low-key” performance. The class period began with reviewing three goals about enactive mastery. Nixapella’s agreed-upon goals were identified in a 10-minute conversation: (a) focus on keeping a steady tempo, (b) diversify movement, and (c) intentionally vary dynamics. A small audience of peers in another class gave students individual feedback on their performance. Nixapella were instructed to perform with dynamic contrast as an explicit goal during the performance. The audience remarked on their skill level and how expressive they perceived the group to be. The students who made up the audience were taken from another non-varsity choir that met at the same hour and were taught by another teacher. Notably, the Nixapella members were very excited and appeared giddy over the positive feedback they received. After the feedback,

students shared that the smaller performance reduced stress and prioritized the audience's perceptions rather than the items they usually worry about. There was a noticeable improvement in tempo and diversity of movement; The students and I noted a lack of progress in dynamic contrast, although the progress in general expression was notable.

Day Four activities extended the dialogue on feedback and the reevaluation of our shared enactive mastery goals. We were collectively revisiting our objectives: to maintain a steady tempo and to amplify contrast and expression through movement and dynamics. In the discourse that unfolded, I had to tread the line between facilitator and observer, trying to ascertain the depth of students' engagement with these goals. The students expressed their agreement on persisting with these goals. However, it was imperative to examine the fundamental motivations that prompted this consensus carefully. Was it a genuine reflection of their musical aspirations? Or was it influenced by their desire to please me as their teacher?

I also encouraged them to consider what they felt needed improvement or what they enjoyed about their performances. The students' feedback on the mini-performance gave me some insight into this quandary. While they acknowledged the platform’s usefulness, they indicated that the feedback was predominantly technical rather than performance-oriented. This acknowledgment could suggest that their familiarity and comfort with the technique, reflecting our program's foundation, may have influenced their approval of the agreed-upon goals.

Day Five was spent with the Nixapella group observing the performance of the 2023 ICHSA winner, intending to understand the performance's emotional impact. One student expressed how what she witnessed felt achievable for the class, creating a sense of relatability and sparking optimism in the class's ability to reach similar performance levels.

The group shared an enthusiastic consensus in response to this student's commentary. However, I must acknowledge the limitation of asserting that all students underwent vicarious learning based on this shared enthusiasm. Indeed, this enthusiastic agreement may suggest that others may have experienced similar feelings or learned vicariously, but this is unknown. My categorization was a cautious speculation that, while reflecting the informal type of information teachers often rely on in day-to-day instruction, could still benefit from additional supportive evidence in the future.

In the following activity, students engaged with a 10-bar passage, offering feedback in pairs, much like observing the ICHSA winner's performance. The feedback exercise improved its effectiveness from Day one, which could be attributed to the students' increased familiarity with the process. Reflecting on this, I consider the importance of my established learning environment, which encouraged openness, peer feedback, and teacher restraint. I believe my choice to suspend immediate intervention or commentary significantly facilitated this learning process. By creating space for student discourse and reflection, it seems the students felt more empowered to analyze performances and provide feedback, enhancing the learning experience and facilitating potential vicarious learning.

While the goal is to identify opportunities to gather more concrete evidence of vicarious learning among all students, I acknowledge the challenges inherent in this task. This is particularly true given the often implicit nature of vicarious learning, as well as the practicalities of simultaneously facilitating learning and observing its processes. As an educator, I aim to continue exploring ways to strike a balance between these dual roles, recognizing that the process will likely remain an ongoing journey of discovery and adaptation.

On Day Six, the group began by reviewing their performance objectives before delivering their performance. This performance was witnessed by a select group of varsity choir students who were chosen for their advanced abilities and expertise in choir performance. They provided feedback to the group post-performance. The feedback received was positive, but it is crucial to dissect this positivity. It encompassed the affirmation of well-executed aspects of the performance and constructive advice framed encouragingly. The feedback highlighted what was done well, along with suggestions for improvements, aiming to motivate the Nixapella group rather than undermine their confidence.

One particular incident stood out just before the performance - a student from the Nixapella group expressed her nervousness so intense that it was causing her nausea. Despite this, the group went on to deliver their performance, and surprisingly, they chose to perform an additional song immediately afterward, unprompted by me. This unexpected move indicated a heightened level of confidence within the group. This act and positive feedback hinted at a sense of accomplishment and the perception of success. The decision to perform an extra song, unprompted, suggested they felt confident and comfortable enough to expose their talents further, which I interpret as a positive sign of progress and a reduction in performance anxiety.

Following the performance, the panel provided more feedback. This feedback consisted of positive reinforcement, constructive suggestions, and insightful comments on their performance. The feedback was provided in conversation, which engaged the students. They appeared thrilled with this feedback process, perhaps because it came from peers who were relatable in age, ability, and experience. Reflecting on the process and its success, several elements played key roles. First, the use of peer feedback rather than top-down feedback from the instructor. Second, the positive framing of feedback balanced affirmations of strengths with

suggestions for improvement. Third, the environment of support and understanding fostered throughout these activities likely contributed to the student's willingness to expose their abilities further.

In replicating this with other classes to foster self-efficacy and reduce performance anxiety, it would be crucial to maintain these elements. These include the cultivation of a supportive atmosphere, the use of positive and constructive peer feedback, and the encouragement of student autonomy in performance choices. However, providing more detailed instructions or guidelines to the feedback panel might have resulted in even more specific and potentially useful feedback. It is a potential area of refinement for future iterations of this teaching approach that I wish to explore.

On Day Seven, the class engaged in a teacher-facilitated discussion to assess their progress toward their performance goals. The discussion was centered on fostering a sense of enactive mastery. During this reflection, students highlighted the consistent tempo, diversification of movement, and maintaining dynamics as key components of their growth. For example, one student pointed out the benefit of focusing on the steady tempo, connecting more deeply with the music. Another student explained how experimenting with different movements added a dynamic layer to their performance. A third student expressed how conscious attention to dynamics increased her control over her voice. These detailed reflections from the students indicated a deepening understanding of the integral elements of their performance and how enhancing these aspects contributed to their personal growth. However, these insights also highlighted their challenges while mastering these aspects, painting a realistic picture of their development process.

During the conversation, students identified and expressed the influence of maintaining a steady tempo, diversifying movements, and managing dynamics on their performance, demonstrating their enactive mastery. This conversation points to their learning and skills improvement through active involvement and experience. An intriguing finding was the students' varying comfort levels in performing for smaller groups. This finding suggests the existence of individual differences in self-efficacy and readiness to perform in diverse settings, highlighting the necessity for a personalized approach to nurturing self-efficacy. Reflecting on the experience, the successful outcomes can be linked to the focus on particular performance elements, reflective dialogues, and a supportive environment fostering open discussions on challenges. Future enhancements to the process could include more structured guidelines for reflection and personalized feedback sessions, acknowledging the differing perceptions of self-efficacy among students within the same choir group.

Day Eight saw a shift in the rehearsal order, with partner work moving towards the end, creating additional time to address other performance aspects. As partner work began, we focused on the enactive mastery goals. This activity led to positive exchanges on each other's successes. Observing this activity made it apparent that students had gained a deeper comprehension of specific performance expectations, particularly in tempo, movement diversity, and dynamic control, which they previously found challenging. Furthermore, students voiced that the clarity provided by these goals prevented distraction from less important elements and fostered a sense of accomplishment upon task completion.

Day Nine includes participation by alum observers, introducing a fresh dynamic to the session. These attendees, being graduates and former classmates, represented a unique audience. The intention was to escalate the performance pressure in a manageable way due to the small

size of the audience of five, yet simulate a more authentic performance scenario given the added pressure. The alum observers offered detailed feedback on the performance, and a heightened level of energy and preference for this audience type was observed among the students. The feedback they received was overwhelmingly positive, marked by praise for their tempo control, movement diversity, and dynamics. The students' reactions were noticeably positive, reflecting their active listening and eagerness to apply the feedback. Drawing a connection between the previous outsider feedback group and this session's feedback, it is notable how each instance of constructive criticism and praise further empowered the students.

On the final day, Day Ten, the treatment phase ended with an awards voting process based on the categories we had previously set up. The day's discussion centered on performance anxieties, and using specific performance goals was acknowledged as a useful tool for strengthening self-efficacy. The students were open to changes in routine and found introducing new activities engaging. Post this discussion; the MPSES survey was administered again. Reflecting on the awards, they stirred up a positive response among students. While the impact on their intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy cannot be quantified without further data, the general enthusiasm and participation in the process suggested a positive influence. The awards were consistent with Zelenak(2020) suggesting that they should be given to affirm effort. These awards could be adapted for other contexts to spur motivation and support self-efficacy, with careful consideration of each group's specific dynamics and needs.

MPSES Survey Results

The MPSES pre-and post-results are indicated in Table 2. The survey was nuanced, assigning differing weights to the scores of each source of self-efficacy, mirroring their

importance in shaping self-efficacy beliefs and outcomes (Bandura, 1997). Eight questions pertain to enactive mastery (800 point maximum), six to verbal/social persuasion (600 points), and five to both vicarious learning and physiological/affective states (500 points each). Exploring the journal entries and MPSES scores highlights the interaction between the sources of self-efficacy and students' experiences in shaping their self-efficacy beliefs and performance outcomes.

Looking at the intersection of enactive mastery and increased vicarious self-efficacy, students' pursuit of their enactive mastery goals paralleled their perceptions of successful performance. The positive feedback received during small performances and the session with the advanced varsity choir students amplified this. Notably, the feedback was not merely accepted passively; students showed immediate enthusiasm and engagement. This active reception likely affected the observed gains in enactive and vicarious self-efficacy scores.

The connection between vicarious learning and physiological/affective states is equally important. Viewing the 2023 ICHSA winner's performance and participating in the partner activity provided a vicarious experience of success and a tangible sense of the possibility of achieving a similar performance level. Coupled with increased awareness of their physiological and affective states, this likely contributed to the significant increase in scores in these areas. The elevated belief in their ability to manage their emotions and perform at their peak in various contexts could reflect a link between these two self-efficacy sources. However, it is worth acknowledging the limitations of my analysis here; while I observed these reactions in one student, the actual perceptions of the rest of the class are unknown. I believe the quantitative results allow me to infer a broader impact, which remains speculative.

Interestingly, the scores for verbal/social persuasion declined in the post-survey. Despite receiving positive feedback from peers and closely related peers panel, the focus of the feedback on singing technique rather than the act of performing could be why verbal/social persuasion had a less significant effect in this context. This result underscores the emotional complexity inherent in the components of self-efficacy. The nervousness and concern over peer perception may have affected the reception and impact of verbal/social persuasion, something that I will consider in planning future classes.

Through this process, my understanding of the different sources of self-efficacy has deepened. It is clear that these sources do not operate in isolation but intersect and interact with the student's experiences, shaping their beliefs about their performance abilities. Learning how to leverage these sources best and facilitate these interactions has become a crucial part of my approach to teaching.

Table 2 *Average MPSES Gain scores for each source of self-efficacy*

Source of Self-Efficacy	Max Score	Pre-Scores	Post-Scores	Gain Score
Enactive Mastery	800	606.7	611.6	4.9
Vicarious Learning	500	379	393.5	14.5
Verbal/Social Persuasion	600	474.1	448.5	-25.6
Physiological and Affective States	500	336.3	373.1	36.8
Total Self-Efficacy Score	2400	1796.1	1826.7	30.6

Note: The max score is not included in the student's score but just as an information reference point.

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

I conducted this project to understand my student's self-efficacy levels in a performance-based educational setting. Self-efficacy, a concept Bandura (1977) brought to prominence, defines an individual's belief in their ability to carry out behaviors necessary for specific performance outcomes. For this action research study, I conceptualized self-efficacy as the student's confidence in their skills to execute choral music pieces and their capability to reach their performance goals. This concept showed how I believe that my students should handle the complexities of music performance, from the musical elements of performance, and their interpretation of the pieces' emotional content. I saw self-efficacy as a reflection of their vocal skills and their belief in their ability to conquer challenges, improve with practice, and deliver a successful performance before an audience. This study's design involved probing, describing, and identifying the resultant influence of various pedagogical strategies on self-efficacy among my students.

The research was structured to examine the implementation of various strategies and their accumulated effect on student self-efficacy over a ten-day intervention period. The intervention adopted a multi-faceted approach, deploying strategies that included observing performances, engaging students in guided discussions, providing and receiving feedback, setting performance goals, and conducting performances within smaller ensemble groups. While I collected evidence of the strategies' impressions through journal entries, the primary focus was observing their cumulative influence on self-efficacy rather than determining the substantial impact of individual strategies.

The study participants were 15 students from the 10th, 11th, and 12th grades from Nixa High School who were taught these pedagogical strategies over the defined intervention period. To measure the effect of the intervention on student self-efficacy, I used the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES), a validated tool for assessing self-efficacy in the context of music performance in another teaching context (Zelenak, 2011). The scale was administered pre-and post-intervention. While it is challenging to isolate the precise impact of each strategy in educational research due to the numerous variables, this pre- and post-assessment approach was designed to provide an understanding of the cumulative effect of all implemented strategies on the overall perceived self-efficacy of the students.

This study was conducted in my classroom. The data are limited to what I observed through students' behaviors, verbalizations, and self-reported survey scores. While it is crucial to recognize the intrinsic limitations of directly observing and measuring self-efficacy, this study can offer valuable insights into how self-efficacy transpires in music performance in my students. The survey results indicated an overall improvement in the self-efficacy of the participants, which suggests that the implemented strategies had a positive effect. During the implementation, I also made several anecdotal observations about some behaviors of individuals I considered to be self-efficacious. I used these anecdotal observations and the MPSES in conducting this project with my students. I recognized that self-efficacy was not directly measurable, even with a survey tool. Among the various sources evaluated by the MPSES, the most substantial gain was recorded in the physiological and affective states domain. This source corresponds to how students manage and respond to physical and emotional responses related to performance, such as stress and anxiety. In the next section, I discuss the implications of the results for teaching in my class using the components of self-efficacy described by Bandura as

organizing parameters. Then, I provide suggestions for future educators contemplating implementing strategies to enhance student self-efficacy and conducting research in their classrooms.

Discussion

The core objective of this research study was to examine how specific teaching methodologies and strategies could influence the self-efficacy of music students in my classroom. The Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES) scores analysis provided intriguing data that sheds light on this complex topic. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of the survey in capturing the robust nature of self-efficacy, particularly within the context of performing musicians. Self-efficacy is influenced by numerous factors that are highly personal and subjective.

Although the overall increase in self-efficacy levels observed in this study was modest, the findings suggest that the implemented strategies potentially fostered self-efficacy in my classroom. The observed improvements, particularly in the physiological and affective states category, indicate the potential of interventions focused on students' emotional and physical experiences during performances. By cultivating a supportive and non-judgmental environment in my classroom, where students could navigate performance anxieties and express themselves creatively, I contributed to enhancing my students' self-efficacy in music. While specific to my classroom, this finding may prompt further research into its potential applicability in other settings, providing direct connections to the existing research literature are established. Teachers can enhance students' self-efficacy in music by creating a supportive and non-judgmental

environment where students can navigate performance anxieties and express themselves creatively.

However, it is important to recognize the complexity of the self-efficacy development process and the variable effects that different strategies might have. In my ongoing journey as an educator, I am committed to refining and adapting my teaching methods, always mindful of how intricately self-efficacy intertwines with performance in music education. For instance, high self-efficacy may not always translate to high performance due to performance anxiety, learning styles, or personal attitudes toward music. On the other hand, improving performance through targeted practice could enhance self-efficacy by boosting confidence. By understanding and applying these multifaceted interrelationships, we can develop more effective teaching strategies.

Building upon these insights, the following discussion points delve deeper into the specific aspects that influenced student self-efficacy in this study, including the role of physiological and affective states, verbal/social persuasion, enactive mastery, and vicarious learning. By examining these findings, I gained a more nuanced understanding of how different factors contribute to the development of self-efficacy in the music classroom.

Physiological/Affective States Discussions Increased Self-Efficacy. The physiological and affective states category demonstrated promising improvements with the highest gain score in the study. As the intervention progressed, students increasingly managed performance-related responses and emotions, such as stress and anxiety, a change evident as early signs of nervousness, including physical discomfort and tension, shifted with repeated performances and constructive feedback. This shift aligns with Bandura's (1997) theoretical framework of self-efficacy, where he outlines how these emotional and physical responses, ranging from relaxation to intense anxiety, significantly sway one's belief in their capability to succeed. By creating a

supportive, low-stress environment through goal-oriented activities and small group performances, I observed students shifting their focus from performance anxieties to their performance outcomes, mirroring Zelenak's (2020) approach to emphasizing expressive performance and audience connection over perfection. Such changes reflect Bandura's theories and indicate potential strategies for mitigating music performance anxiety and boosting self-efficacy.

The role of physiological and affective states in musical performance cannot be overstated. Music performance often induces a high level of stress and anxiety in students, potentially undermining their performance (Dempsey, 2015; Dempsey & Comeau, 2019; Zelenak, 2020). Providing students with opportunities to perform in less intimidating settings (such as small groups) and helping them set and achieve realistic performance goals, the intervention strategies may have helped students build resilience to these negative physiological and affective responses. This resilience could have fostered a sense of confidence in their abilities, leading to increased self-efficacy. In addition to the quantitative results, this increased self-efficacy was further evidenced through discussions with students. They expressed that these conversations, where they realized their peers were also navigating similar challenges, led to positive feelings of self-belief, reinforcing that they were not alone in their struggles.

Verbal/Social Persuasion Negative Gain. One of the most surprising observations in the post-intervention data was a negative gain in the verbal/social persuasion category, indicative of a decrease in self-efficacy. Despite my efforts to create a supportive environment throughout the project, this unexpected result illuminates the intricacy and sensitivity of nurturing self-efficacy within music education. The delicacy lies in fostering a belief in one's musical abilities while providing constructive criticism to enhance their skills. This balance is particularly relevant to

choral educators who strive to mold students into technically proficient musicians and individuals confident in their musical abilities (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1997) emphasized that cultivating positive self-efficacy demands a careful balance of feedback and reinforcement. A noteworthy incident in our study, where a student perceived feedback on their solo performance as overly critical, demonstrated how this balance could be disrupted, leading to decreased self-efficacy. This incident emphasizes the importance of authenticity, timing, tone, and context of feedback, as proposed by Bandura (1977). Moreover, social comparisons observed during the study reinforced Bandura's notion that peer encouragement might exert more influence than teacher feedback (Bandura, 1977). These observations bring up vital questions for further study: how can choral educators balance their desire to inspire and guide students toward precise, expressive performance while helping students to become empowered, self-reliant, confident musicians and individuals?

McPherson and Hendricks (2010) found lower self-efficacy levels in music students compared to those studying other academic subjects. This finding implies that my feedback may have a greater impact on my students' self-efficacy in music than in their other classes. However, this observation is not intended as a comparison with other teaching contexts but rather as a reflection of the unique dynamics in music education. In light of these findings, I plan to refine how I provide feedback, striving to be more attentive to its potential impacts, taking into account the timing, tone, and context. I aim to foster growth rather than demotivation while being cognizant of the potential for students to perceive feedback as pandering.

In conclusion, this study underscores the intricate process of fostering self-efficacy within music education's unique environment. These findings emphasize the need for a more nuanced application of Bandura's model in practice. In the future, I aspire to be more mindful in my

feedback delivery, fostering a positive, growth-oriented environment. Further research could prove beneficial to identify additional factors inherent to music education that can shape self-efficacy and develop a more comprehensive understanding of this essential aspect of student development.

Enactive Mastery and Vicarious Learning Limited Gains. Moderate improvements among my students in enactive mastery and vicarious learning, as key elements of choral music education, became clear through this study. Understanding the effects and implications of these gains, while promising, were limited due to various uncontrollable factors, including the study's short duration and the complex dynamics of enactive mastery. Specifically, enactive mastery, where students gain confidence through successful performances, showed signs of growth. However, how we define and see success in music education could subtly affect these small advancements. Understanding these potential influences and thinking about potential strategies is something that could help to improve instruction.

Vicarious learning, where students learn by watching others, also showed noticeable but restrained improvement. The extent of these gains might have been limited by how students interpret and compare observed performances to their abilities. Like enactive mastery, we need to acknowledge these vital yet complex aspects. Fully understanding them might not be entirely possible due to their inherent complexities and theoretical nature. However, recognizing their potential impact and striving to gain insight into the students' real experiences rather than our perceptions can provide valuable perspectives for enhancing teaching efficacy

Even with their moderate improvements, enactive mastery and vicarious learning in self-efficacy within music education cannot be overlooked. With careful use, these key aspects can help students navigate the high-pressure environment of a music classroom. To further

strengthen enactive mastery, teachers can create an environment that celebrates all kinds of achievement, moving beyond the strict pursuit of 'perfection.' At the same time, for vicarious learning, music teachers can thoughtfully create chances for students to see their peers overcoming challenges, ensuring a careful balance to prevent any negative impacts on self-efficacy. These findings underline the complex process of building self-efficacy in music education, with its many connected parts. To make a big impact on students' confidence and performance, it is crucial to nurture a learning environment that values helpful feedback, recognizes different levels of achievement, and encourages problem-solving and independence (Bandura, 1997). However, choral educators must be aware that our approach has its limitations and complexities, requiring our ongoing commitment to attention to detailed learning and using reflective practice to make improvements to teaching.

Limitations of the Study

This classroom-based action research study provided a focused exploration of self-efficacy among my students. While such an examination is not unique and can be conducted in any classroom, the outcomes would likely differ across settings, underscoring the need for ongoing research to understand self-efficacy's nuances in varied classroom environments.

The time constraint was a significant limitation. With the study's duration, the results may not fully represent the possible shifts in self-efficacy over a longer time frame. For future projects on self-efficacy, a lengthier period, perhaps an academic year, could enable a more profound understanding of self-efficacy shifts and a better evaluation of intervention strategies' long-term impacts.

Relying on self-reported measures was another constraint, introducing potential bias. A disconnect was noticed between self-reported efficacy and actual performance. This could mean that while the self-reporting tool captured students' perceived abilities, it may not consistently align with their performance levels. Therefore, future research could aim to enhance the measurement tools, perhaps by including more objective measures alongside self-reporting for a more complete view of students' self-efficacy.

The study's focus was confined to a specific age group and educational setting within one class, limiting the generalizability of the results. They may not fully represent the diverse experiences influenced by variables like different age groups, cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, or other educational contexts. Yet, this does not devalue the study but advises careful result interpretation. Given the study design's flexibility, it could prove valuable in other choral classes. Although unique contexts would lead to differing outcomes, the insights gained could help tailor effective strategies to meet different student groups' specific needs.

Future research in music education could address these limitations by examining various intervention durations, strategies and conducting performance assessments alongside self-efficacy measures. Also, by maintaining the intimate context of action research, future investigations could be expanded to include multiple classes or cover a longer period, capturing a more diverse range of student experiences.

Given the observed discrepancy between self-reported self-efficacy and actual performance, future usage of the self-efficacy survey instrument should be done thoughtfully. Despite offering valuable insights, it may not fully represent students' self-efficacy, especially within the action research context. These scores could be better used to facilitate self-reflection, encourage discussions, and track changes over time rather than as definitive measures. This

emphasis on process rather than product aligns with action research's spirit and highlights the importance of teachers becoming researchers in their classrooms. This approach promotes a context-specific understanding of student self-efficacy and the potential for tailored teaching strategies. Such strategies can serve diverse student needs, contributing to the broader conversation on self-efficacy in music education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study offers a glimpse into the complexities and nuances involved in various sources of self-efficacy within a specific choral classroom setting. I found that strategic intervention strategies can subtly enhance my students' self-efficacy, as seen from the increase in the physiological and affective states category and a decrease in the verbal/social persuasion category. However, it is important to remember that these shifts result from the specific interventions chosen for this study, which, while grounded in prior research, are not universally applicable.

The increase in the physiological and affective states category, which refers to students' physical and emotional reactions to musical performances, is noteworthy. This increase underlines the significance of interventions focusing on students' emotional and physical experiences during performances. Within the context of a choral classroom, this could translate into creating a supportive, non-judgmental environment where opportunities are provided for students to experiment with music, manage performance anxiety, and express themselves creatively.

The decrease in the verbal/social persuasion category, which pertains to the impact of verbal feedback and social interactions on self-efficacy, indicates the importance of how

feedback is given and social interactions are fostered in music classrooms. It prompts reevaluating my approach to ensure it enhances students' belief in their musical abilities rather than hindering them. This insight may be valuable for other educators in rethinking their feedback mechanisms and social dynamics in class.

These changes underscore the potential of context-specific approaches for nurturing self-efficacy in music students. While centered on my classroom, this study also reflects a broader implication for music education, demonstrating the potential impact of targeted, research-informed interventions on student self-efficacy. To stay attuned to the diverse factors that shape self-efficacy, educators can turn to resources like Bandura's seminal works on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1997), McPherson and Hendricks' study on music education (2010) and consider creating communities of practice to share experiences and strategies.

The findings highlight the importance of pedagogical self-reflection and innovation in enhancing self-efficacy in choral classrooms. Music educators can integrate strategies such as targeted feedback, controlled peer interactions, and exposure to successful experiences in their teaching methods. Continual self-reflection on the impacts of these strategies can aid in the iterative improvement of classroom practices, contributing to the development of effective, context-specific teaching methods.

Ultimately, the goal in choral education extends beyond immediate performance enhancement; it is about cultivating a deep-rooted passion for music in our students. This goal is achieved by continually evolving our understanding of self-efficacy in choral education and tailoring our teaching methods to meet the unique needs of our students. By drawing upon self-efficacy strategies and fostering a supportive learning environment, teachers can enhance their immediate choral performance and nurture their long-term engagement and love for music.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey

The research involved a survey distributed through Google Forms and sent to 15 students. The survey consisted of 24 questions aimed at measuring self-efficacy in music performance. Below, we provide a detailed transcription of the survey for reference

MUSIC PERFORMANCE SELF-EFFICACY SURVEY

Instructions: Respond to the following statements based on your current level of musical ability, experience, and musical experience. There are no right or wrong answers. Indicate to what degree you either agree or disagree with the statement by inputting any whole number between 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 100 (Strongly Agree) into the box. Carefully consider the number you choose.

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Rate the following statements:

1. I have had positive experiences performing music in the past.

Response: _____

2. I have improved my performance skill watching professional musicians perform.

Response: _____

3. My friends think I am a good performer at singing.

Response: _____

4. I have had success performing in large ensembles (more than 11 performers).

Response: _____

5. I have improved my performance skills by watching someone I know perform well (parent, brother, sister, church member, etc.).

Response: _____

6. I have positive experiences performing music solo.

Response: _____

7. Members of my family believe I perform well.

Response: _____

8. I have had positive experiences performing simple music.

Response: _____

9. People have told me that my practice efforts have improved my performance skills.

Response: _____

10. I have had positive experiences performing complicated music.

Response: _____

11. I have used other students as models to improve my performing skills.

Response: _____

12. I have overcome musical challenges through hard work and practice.

Response: _____

13. I have received positive feedback on music performance evaluations.

Response: _____

14. I have used a practice routine to help me prepare for my performances.

Response: _____

15. I am learning, or have learned, to control my nervousness during a performance.

Response: _____

16. I have had positive experiences performing music in a small ensemble (2–10 performers).

Response: _____

17. Performing with my voice makes me feel good.

Response: _____

18. I have watched other students with similar music ability as me perform a piece of music, and then decided whether I could, or could not, perform the same piece of music.

Response: _____

19. I do not worry about making small mistakes during a performance.

Response: _____

20. I have compared my performance skills with those of other students who are similar in musical ability to me.

Response: _____

21. My music teacher has complimented me on my musical performance.

Response: _____

22. I have met or exceeded other people's expectations of being a good musician for someone my age.

Response: _____

23. I enjoy participating in musical performances.

Response: _____

24. I have positive memories of most, or all, of my past music performances.

Response: _____

Appendix B: Human Subjects IRB Approval

RE: Notice of IRB Approval
Submission Type: Initial
Study #: IRB-FY2023-417
Study Title: Using Strategies to Promote Self-Efficacy in Choral Classrooms
Decision: Approved

Approval Date: April 18, 2023

This submission has been approved by the Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). You are required to obtain IRB approval for any changes to any aspect of this study before they can be implemented. Should any adverse event or unanticipated problem involving risks to subjects or others occur it must be reported immediately to the IRB.

This study was reviewed in accordance with federal regulations governing human subjects research, including those found at 45 CFR 46 (Common Rule), 45 CFR 164 (HIPAA), 21 CFR 50 & 56 (FDA), and 40 CFR 26 (EPA), where applicable.

Researchers Associated with this Project:
PI: Daniel Hellman
Co-PI:
Primary Contact: Daniel Gutierrez
Other Investigators: Daniel Gutierrez

Appendix C: Informed Consent Form

Using Strategies to Promote Self-Efficacy in a Choral Classroom

By: Daniel Gutierrez, Graduate Student of Missouri State University

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to study the effect of using self-efficacy strategies to increase self-efficacy in music performance. This study will focus on measuring the change in self-efficacy, as it pertains to music performance, as a result of using various strategies to increase self-efficacy.

How: I am asking your student to complete a brief survey, twice, about their views on their self-efficacy in music performance(measuring their belief in their ability to perform musically) before and after a ten-class time frame of using techniques designed to promote self-efficacy.

Benefits: This survey aims to provide practical ways for future educators to promote classroom self-efficacy.

Voluntary Participation: You understand that your consent for your student to participate in this research is entirely voluntary and that your refusal to participate will involve no prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

Risks Associated: There are minimal risks associated with this study. You may contact Dr. Daniel Hellman for questions regarding this study at danielhellman@missouristate.edu. Withdrawal: If you consent for your student to participate in this study, you are free to stop your participation at any time without prejudice, penalty, or loss of benefits to which you would otherwise be entitled.

Privacy: The researcher seeks to maintain the confidentiality of all data and records associated with your participation in this research. This study does not use personally identifiable data.
Printed Name of Child_____
Signature of Parent/Guardian_____
Date _____
Investigator's Signature_____
Date_____