SECONDARY MUSIC TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY IN TEACHING SONGWRITING

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music

Summer 2022

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to many individuals who helped create a strong support system while I completed this thesis:

Dr. Mark Adams, my advisor, for his continuous support during this project and over the past four years. His mentorship has helped me grow into my own strong identity as a teacher, researcher, and human; I am forever grateful to have studied with him.

Dr. Duane Cottrell and Dr. Miles Brown, members of my committee, for their time and commitment to furthering this project with their insight. Their valuable critique and additional lens helped further develop this study, and I am grateful for them.

June and Sam, my participants, for providing their time to chat with me and welcoming me into their classrooms. This study would not have been possible without their willingness to share their lived experiences.

Nicole, Tanner, and John Alt, for their friendship and kindness throughout graduate school. I am so thankful to all for being part of my support system.

To my family, found family, and friends who support and love me so very much. I would not be who I am today without you.

And finally, to Jacob—my partner in all things. Your support for me and my goals is unwavering, and I could not have imagined doing this without you by my side.

Thank you is truly an understatement.

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ABSTRACT

Songwriting has been used in the fields of music education and music therapy to encourage collaboration (Kennedy 2002; Jaffurs 2014; McGillen & McMillan, 2005), self-expression (Airy & Parr, 2010; Tobias 2012), and healing (Fairchild & McFerran, 2019; Lindberg 1995). As popular music and creativity in music become more widely included in music curricula in the United States, some teachers have also included songwriting in their classrooms (Draves, 2008; Jaffurs; 2014; Tobias, 2012). Though teachers may have positive attitudes towards songwriting, they may still exclude it from their curriculum (Brinkman, 1995; Roberts, 1995; Sloboda, 1985).

Authors have suggested different approaches and practices for teaching songwriting and the benefits it may have if used in the music classroom (Draves, 2008; Jaffurs; 2014; Tobias, 2012). If music teachers are open to include popular musics, what might prevent them from using songwriting in their classroom? One possible reason teachers may not include songwriting is their perceived self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. Bandura's (1994) theory of self-efficacy has been used to investigate students' decisions and teachers' pedagogical choices (Brudnick, 2009; Garvis, 2012; Landino & Owen, 1988; Menon & Sadler, 2016). While researchers have investigated the relationship between songwriting and self-efficacy (Lindberg, 1995; Randles, 2010; Richardson, 2011), the reason for teachers' curricular choices regarding songwriting has yet to be discovered. Self-efficacy has been shown to affect choices, behavior, and motivation, and could attribute to teachers' ability to include songwriting in their classrooms (Brudnick, 2009; Garvis, 2012; Landino & Owen, 1988; Menon & Sadler, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this multiple case study was to investigate secondary music teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. The research problems for this study were as follows:

1.To describe the music teachers' prior experiences with songwriting and the teaching of songwriting to others.

2.To describe music teachers' self-perceptions regarding their ability to teach songwriting.

Sub-questions included (a) What materials and resources do the teachers use to facilitate songwriting in their classroom? (b) Do those resources contribute to their self-efficacy regarding teaching the course? (c) What resources do they feel would be most helpful to develop stronger self-efficacy for teaching songwriting to others?

This multiple case study (Stake, 1995) utilized purposive sampling (Patten & Newhart, 2018) to examine two middle school music educators in the Northeastern region of the United States who teach creative musics in some way (e.g., a lesson/unit, a stand-alone course). Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews, teaching observations, and an examination of their relevant teaching documents. The findings of this study suggest that teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting may come from overall teaching experience and there are few applicable resources for teaching songwriting. Implications and suggestions for practice and further research for music educators are also discussed.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Music education researchers have noted a lack of engagement with music programs in school settings. Kratus (2007) outlined several concerning statistics that act as a call-to-action for music educators, suggesting that the lack of students' engagement with music programs is caused by two things: (1) change in the way that music is experienced by the students and (2) changes in educational practice. Kratus also suggested that there is an immense disconnect between educational practice and the prevailing culture of which these educational institutions belong. These suggestions are mirrored by Lamont et al. (2003), who investigated the documented decline of students' music engagement in school and found that more students engage with music outside of school than in-school. With this in mind, many music education researchers have suggested a shift in teachers' pedagogical practices to allow students to make connections between school music-making and how they engage with music during their daily lives (Adams, 2016; Kratus, 2007). Through the introduction of popular music genres and music creativity in the classroom, students may feel a connection between the music classroom and their own lives, which promotes lifelong engagement with music (Kratus, 2013; Kratus, 2016; Randles, 2019; Woody and Adams, 2019).

While teachers may show positive attitudes toward more expansive, popular music genres such as pop music, rock music, and hip hop, their teaching practices often remain rooted in Western-classical traditions (Allsup, 2003; Green, 2002).

Researchers in music education have previously attributed a lack of popular music study in undergraduate coursework to teachers' unwillingness to teach popular musics (Dunbar-Hall, 2002; Hebert & Campbell, 2000; Springer & Gooding, 2013; Woody, 2007). In interviews with polytechnical college students enrolled in an audio production program, Airy and Parr (2010) found that many students felt their musical experiences and tastes were not valued in school and therefore did not engage voluntarily in high school music. These students described in-school music making and their in-school experiences as "pointless," "boring," or "a waste of time." Many students made it clear that in-school music was not accessible to them, and the music explored in school did not relate to their preferred genres of music. In turn, the students felt alienated and further acknowledged that there was a dichotomy between school music and "their" music (Airy and Parr 2010). In addition to a lack of teaching popular music in the classroom, researchers have also found that there are few teachers who attempt compositional activities with their students (Brinkman, 1995; Roberts, 1995; Sloboda, 1985). A few of the reasons highlighted by researchers for the lack of compositional activity are as follows: (1) there is an elusiveness to composition that causes teachers to avoid trying it (Sloboda, 1985), (2) there is an issue of appropriate methods, strategies, and techniques for introducing composition into the classroom (Brinkman, 1995), and (3) there is an overwhelming amount of high school music programs that are dominated by performance outcomes (Roberts, 1995).

Teachers who have attempted songwriting and creative compositional activities in their classroom have been met with success and engagement from their students in several instances. Many researchers suggest that a genuine and purposeful use of songwriting and musical creativity in classrooms can draw connections between

students' music making inside and outside of school (Allsup, 2011; Bowman, 2004; Woody, 2011). This has proved effective in practice, as engaging with popular musics has been successful in connecting students' out-of-school music making with in-school music activities (Davis, 2013; Jones, 2015; West & Cremata, 2016). The use of songwriting and musical creativity also extends beyond levels of classroom engagement. These tools have shown to provide students with the ability to express themselves and their emotions (Hargreaves & Marshall, 2003) as well as explore their personal strengths and help develop their identity (Hess, 2018).

Authors have suggested different approaches and practices for teaching songwriting and the benefits it may have if used in the music classroom (Draves, 2008; Jaffurs; 2014; Tobias, 2012). However, there are few answers as to why teachers choose to either include or exclude songwriting from their curriculum. Why might teachers choose this tool for their curriculum? If music teachers feel positively toward including popular musics and increasing engagement, what might keep them from using songwriting in their classroom? For teachers who do engage in songwriting, what practices have shown to be successful? One potential cause for teachers' reluctance to engage in songwriting may be their perceived self-efficacy in songwriting. Therefore, the purpose of this multiple case study was to investigate secondary music teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. The research problems for this study were as follows:

1. To describe the music teachers' prior experiences with songwriting and the teaching of songwriting to others.
2. To describe music teachers' self-perceptions regarding their ability to teach songwriting.

Sub-questions included (a) What materials and resources do the teachers use to facilitate songwriting in their classroom? (b) Do those resources contribute to their self-efficacy regarding teaching the course? (c) What resources do they feel would be most helpful to develop stronger self-efficacy for teaching songwriting to others?

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following selection of literature reflects current studies that focus on songwriting and perceived self-efficacy. This review of existing literature provides background on different uses for songwriting, songwriting in different fields, self-efficacy theory, and how self-efficacy has been utilized thus far in relation to songwriting.

Songwriting

Songwriting has become a topic of interest in the field of music therapy, where researchers have found it can be beneficial for clients. Fairchild and McFerran (2019) conducted a study using songwriting as an arts-based-research method to better understand students' use of songwriting to cope with homelessness and family violence within the first author's music therapy workplace in Melbourne, Australia. The participants took part in workshops that consisted of three activities: (1) a warm-up activity using body percussion and singing, (2) a song-sharing activity in which each child shared a song that was meaningful to them, and the children engaged in active listening by drawing what came to mind during the song, and (3) a collaborative songwriting method in which the children wrote about what music meant to them. Analysis of the songs each group of children wrote as well as the children's feedback while songwriting showed two main themes for both groups: (1) music offers hope and (2) music provides an escape from the outside world. While this study had some challenges due to the ranging age levels of the children involved, high energy of the children, and group dynamics, it showed a significant value that children had for

music. Using a child-centered approach to songwriting could be helpful within a school setting as well.

Within a school setting, songwriting has been used to explore collaboration efforts and cooperation among students. McGillen and McMillan (2005) examined the relationship between original music making, cooperative learning, and sociocultural relationships between 21 middle- and high school-age students within a music department at an Australian secondary school. The participants had a wide variety of experience levels with their instruments and collaborative songwriting. This group had a focus on creating original songs of varying styles and was open to anyone in the school regardless of their musical background or involvement in school music. For this study, the researchers utilized weekly rehearsal observations, student rehearsal journals, student interviews, third-person narratives from students before and after their participation, students' written reflections, and field notes to determine themes throughout the songwriting process and their relation to collaboration. The researchers found that many of the students felt that through the collaborative music-making experiences, students felt a strong sense of belonging, the ability to construct their own identity, and the ability to build relationships with other students. Though this study was a specific case, it shows the benefits of collaborative songwriting among a wide range of experience levels.

At the collegiate level, Airy and Parr (2010) found that the educational possibilities of using MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) were not yet explored and looked to better understand why teachers do not readily utilize MIDI in their music classroom. The researchers interviewed students at a technical college specializing in Audio Engineering and Music Production, Contemporary Music

Performance, and Live Sound and Special Event Production. The students at this school studied MIDI sequencing as part of their degree. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 participants that were part of the Audio Engineering and Music Production program after 10 weeks of using MIDI sequencing packages. In these interviews, students were asked about their musical background, experience with computers, and their compositional experiences with MIDI. Some of the students filled out a follow-up questionnaire sent 15 weeks after initial interviews to gain perspective on their use of MIDI after they received certification. Themes that arose during data analysis focused on access— access to music, to a musical voice, and to students' preferred music. Most students had not participated in formal music education prior to the course; most students described their in-school experiences as "pointless," "boring," or "a waste of time." Once students took this course, however, they felt their taste in music and personal musical identity was finally legitimized. It gave them the opportunity to compose and perform their own music and represent their own voice.

Songwriting in Music Education

Tobias (2012) utilized a case study to examine how secondary students engaged with music during a Songwriting and Technology Class (STC). Through the course, students completed activities that involved the creation, performance, recording, and production of original music with instruments and music technology. The researcher investigated how students engaged with music in the STC. The findings suggested that students explored music making through multiple roles or as "hyphenated musicians," where they thought and acted within multiple roles in the class (e.g., producer, songwriter, engineer) as they completed musical projects.

Moreover, students enacted in these identities simultaneously, which suggests an STC creates a unique musical experience for students. This study offered perspective into the current course offerings in K-12 schools that revolve around music creation and suggested that wider curricular offerings should be considered to address students' ways of participating in music through multiple roles.

Jaffurs (2014) investigated the environment in which students create music that is meaningful to them and how outside-of-school music-making can provide insight on music teachers' pedagogical practices. Through an ethnographic lens, Jaffurs set out to determine why and how musicality develops and is transferred between musicians in a case study of a rock band. The rock band was composed of five students whom Jaffurs observed during their rehearsals. The rock band was new to working together but composed two original songs and rehearsed about 20 times before the researcher's observation. The researcher also completed 15-minute to one-hour interviews with parents of those students in the rock band. Through data collection and analysis, the researcher found themes of informal music learning, democracy and constructivism, and enculturation and socialization. Findings of this study suggest that examining how children construct their learning method may prove helpful in developing an effective pedagogical practice.

Kennedy (2002) investigated the compositional processes of high school students to clarify which strategies might prove effective in implementing composition activities in high school music programs. Prior to the study, Kennedy identified three potential causes for the lack of high school compositional activities: (1) there is an elusiveness to composition that caused teachers to avoid trying it (Sloboda, 1985), (2) there is an issue of appropriate methods, strategies, and techniques for introducing

composition into the classroom (Brinkman, 1995), and (3) there is an overwhelming amount of high school music programs that are dominated by performance outcomes (Roberts, 1995). The researcher also intended this study to uncover some of the processes and steps to composition to find practical and useful approaches to composition in the classroom that teachers would feel comfortable implementing. This study focused on four high school students through the completion of two composition tasks. The first task was to set a short poem for voice and acoustic instrument(s), and the more open-ended second task asked students to utilize an electronic workstation to create a piece of their choosing without limitation. Students were primarily working on their own without formal guidance from an instructor, and much of the composition for both tasks was completed out of school time. The researcher found that compositional process was comprised of time (time use, thinking time, favorite working times for students), listening, exploration, and lack of formal notation. Through this, Kennedy (2002) constructed a model of composition that explained the compositional process. The study held implications for teachers who engage in creative compositional activities in the classroom, providing them with a baseline structure that may prove helpful in guiding students to compose.

Draves (2008) examined the relationship between music achievement, self-esteem, and aptitude in a college songwriting class. The researcher used the Advanced Measures of Musical Audiation (AMMA), Self-Esteem of Musical Ability, ratings of the students' original work to determine the relationship between achievement, self-esteem, and aptitude among students, and analyzed student journals for themes of personal desire/interest, support/recognition from others, and perceived musical ability. Results were statistically significant between all criterion measures in the

study, suggesting that teacher encouragement and opportunities for social music making may inspire students to continue music-making. While this study does not specifically use a self-efficacy lens, the concepts of mastery experiences and social persuasion are extremely applicable and found within the collected data of this study. These findings are important to note, as further exploration of teachers' self-efficacy experiences can prove beneficial for current educators and preservice teacher educators.

Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura's (1997) social learning theory, self-efficacy beliefs are split into two dimensions: (1) outcome expectancy, or a person's belief that their behavior will produce a desired outcome, and (2) personal efficacy, or a person's confidence in executing actions that lead to achieving a desired goal. Bandura (1994) established self-efficacy theory, defining self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p. 71). Besides forces that cause behavioral changes, self-efficacy has also been attributed to other personal factors such as motivation and thought patterns. The four main sources of perceived self-efficacy beliefs that Bandura established were: (1) mastery experiences, (2) vicarious experiences/modeling, (3) social persuasion, and (4) alteration of the interpretation of emotional and physical states.

Mastery experiences include past personal experiences, typically where one experiences success with an obstacle, that influence the individual's self-perceived competence for completing similar tasks. However, perceived self-efficacy is not a simple or quickly occurring process, but rather by sustained effort. Vicarious

experiences/modeling occurs when seeing someone else's performance of a task, and comparing competency based on their performance or the ability to replicate the task. Social persuasion consists of both encouragement and discouragement from outside sources. These encouragements/discouragements can hold weight dependent on who is providing feedback. Alteration of the interpretation of emotional and physical states includes an individual's physical reaction to a situation, which can in turn influence their self-perceived competence.

Bandura (1993) also specifically outlined the relationship between self-efficacy and education, determining there were three levels at which perceived self-efficacy intertwines with academic development. Students' self-efficacy is the first level, as their belief in their self-efficacy to achieve mastery experiences and regulate their learning directly affects their motivation, aspirations, and academic accomplishments. Teachers' belief in their self-efficacy to motivate their students and promote learning directly affects the learning environments they create and the level at which their students can academically achieve. The final level of self-efficacy in education is the faculty level; faculty beliefs of perceived self-efficacy in their instructional ability contribute to a school-wide achievement level.

Self-Efficacy of Preservice and Practicing Educators Outside of Music

Self-efficacy has been examined in education in many ways; several subject areas within education have utilized self-efficacy research to better the educational experiences of students and the pedagogical practices of teachers. Understanding the literature of self-efficacy in education can also provide a groundwork for discussing existing research surrounding self-efficacy in music education and, more specifically,

songwriting education. The following section provides a small sample of the generous number of studies about self-efficacy of teachers and preservice teachers.

Brudnick (2009) examined the relationship between perception of self-efficacy and professional burnout among general education teachers in Poland. Brudnick concluded that perceptions of self-efficacy protected teachers from a loss of professional satisfaction, increased emotional exhaustion, and a tendency to depersonalize their students (i.e., students feel disconnected from their individual identities). The researcher also found that teachers across different subjects perceived self-efficacy's role in preventing burnout differently.

Garvis (2012) utilized a questionnaire completed by 201 teachers with less than five years of experience in Queensland, Australia to examine teachers' self-efficacy beliefs toward teaching music. Teachers were surveyed and asked to rank their perceived level of self-efficacy for music, English, and mathematics. Within this specific study, the teachers who participated were music teachers with little background in English and mathematics, though typically music teachers in Australia are required to teach multiple subjects for lower grade levels. After surveying the teachers in the study, it was found that for those individuals with a background in mathematics and English, self-efficacy in teaching music increased. In contrast, beginning teachers who have a music background had their self-efficacy for music teaching decline as years of teaching experience increased, while their self-efficacy for mathematics and English increased during their first years of teaching.

Researchers have also examined self-efficacy when considering preservice education. Landino & Owen (1988) investigated the level of self-efficacy among faculty at a large research university. For this study, self-efficacy was defined as the

confidence in a participant's own ability to complete tasks at a university level in the following categories: (a) research, (b) service, and (c) teaching. The researchers used Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy and characteristics of the university work setting to create a researcher-designed measurement instrument, the Measure of Self-Efficacy in Academic Tasks (MSEAT). The researchers found that gender and the presence of nourishment and reward had an indirect effect on self-efficacy among faculty researchers at the university level. The results suggest that the number of individuals that identify with the same gender who are employed by a department, the number of mentoring opportunities, and peer support can be contributing factors to the development or lack of self-efficacy.

Menon and Sadler (2016) examined the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and science content knowledge among preservice teachers. In addition, the researcher sought to determine the relationship between both self-efficacy beliefs and content knowledge over the course of a specialized science-content course. An established science self-efficacy test, a science concept test, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observations served as the data sources in this study. Results showed a statistically significant improvement in participants' science self-efficacy beliefs and concept knowledge, and the participants described the course as having a positive shift in their self-image when teaching science. The preservice teachers felt that their content knowledge had a direct correlation with their ability to help students and provide sufficient instruction. With having a course specifically focused on improving concept knowledge, the preservice teachers felt that their mastery experiences within the class improved their self-efficacy.

Self-Efficacy in Music Education

Researchers have also specifically examined self-efficacy as related to music education. Randles (2011) recognized the influence of individual music self-efficacy and conceptions of what it means to be a "good musician" on school musician participation and sought to discover the relations in students' self-perceptions of what it means to be a "good musician" with grade level, gender, and school music affiliations within students' in-school culture. Participants were 1,219 students from grades 4 through 12 at a suburban school district in the midwestern United States. The researcher utilized an online, researcher-designed questionnaire about areas of musicianship. The results of this study showed that a majority (56%) of students did not participate in school music, that students' self-perceptions of being a good musician decreased as students progressed through grade levels, and that girls were statistically more likely to self-describe as a good musician compared to boys. The most cited response for each grade level for the definition of a "good musician" was "performs/practices an instrument." While the results are not generalizable, they hold implications for preservice teachers, preservice teacher educators, and current music educators when considering how to structure their curriculum. In addition, the results of this study suggest that the curricular choices music teachers make can impact students.

Continuing the work of Randles (2011), Shouldice (2014) looked to further understand student accomplishment in music class in relation to their own beliefs about their musical abilities and potential across grade levels. The participants in this study were 347 students at two elementary schools in the midwestern US. The researcher conducted individual interviews with students in first through fourth grades to examine young children's definitions of what it means to be a "good musician" and

their self-perceptions as musicians. Mirroring the results of Randles (2011), the results of this study showed younger students were more likely to self-identify as "a good musician" than older students. Shouldice also found that students' definitions of a "good musician" and their self-perceptions were largely based on the performance of their peers.

To examine the nature of self-efficacy beliefs among music students in music programs at conservatories and universities, Ritchie & Williamon (2011) assessed students' self-efficacy for musical learning and performing. A sample of 250 students who attended either a conservatory or university for music study completed two separate questionnaires and provided ratings of their personal musical skills and attributes. Results suggest that conservatory students' self-efficacy for music learning was higher than university students, and there was no significant difference between conservatory and university students in performance self-efficacy. The researchers attributed this difference to curriculum differences in conservatories and universities, as the conservatories followed a more specialized music curriculum for each student while the universities followed a more generalized curriculum. Students at the university from this study were able to focus on several different areas of music (e.g., multiple instruments outside their primary, multiple ensembles) in contrast with the students from the conservatory, who are required to focus only on their primary instrument. The researchers concluded that the different values held at each school and the amount of time dedicated to certain areas affected the self-efficacy in both performance and education.

Hallam (2010) investigated conceptions of musical ability among 102 musicians (individuals with portfolio careers consisting of performing and teaching

music), 95 educators (individuals who did not teach music and were not actively engaged with it), 132 adult amateur musicians, 60 adults who were not actively involved in music making, 193 children actively engaged in music making in addition to their school curriculum, and 71 children who were not actively engaged in music making in addition to their school curriculum. Through the participants' responses, musical ability was strongly associated with having a sense of rhythm, followed by being able to interpret and understand music, express thoughts and feelings through sound, being able to communicate through sound, motivation to engage with music, personal commitment to music, and being able to successfully engage musically with others. Among the least important qualities determining musical ability were having technical skills, being able to compose or improvise, being able to read music, and being able to understand musical concepts and structures. Through factory analysis, the researcher determined there were six factors that differentiated between six sample groups, further concluding that musical ability was perceived in a complex way based on the environment in which individuals were located as well as their musical experiences or lack thereof.

Self-Efficacy in Songwriting

The concept of self-efficacy has also been explored when specifically examining songwriting. Music therapists often use songwriting to improve the self-efficacy goals of their clients. Lindberg (1995) examined the self-esteem and self-expression of an abused adolescent in a music therapy context. For this case study of one adolescent, songwriting was used as a tool to help abused adolescents increase the expression of their feelings and build self-esteem. The researcher found that as the client wrote songs, she uncovered feelings of deep sadness and anger, the latter of

which was particularly difficult for her to express without therapeutic assistance. The client's progress was seen through three areas of songwriting: (a) the client's outlook expressed in the songs, (b) the level of participation, and (c) the client's movement toward attaining goals set by the therapist and her at the onset of music therapy. Lindberg suggested that songwriting could act as an effective tool when working toward improving self-esteem of a survivor of sexual abuse.

Self-efficacy has also been researched in the field of songwriting education. Randles (2010) examined the relationship between high school instrumental students' compositional experiences and self-concept. Through digital audio workstations (DAWs), students were given the opportunity to compose during band class after completing the Self Esteem of Music Assessment (SEMA) and a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The students were asked to complete both the SEMA and questionnaire after composing for 12 weeks in class. The results of the study showed a strong relationship between compositional experiences and SEMA scores, suggesting that compositional experience can have a positive impact on student self-concept.

Richardson (2011) took an approach to songwriting and self-efficacy similar to that of the current study. The researcher investigated the impact of songwriting training sessions on songwriting knowledge, self-efficacy, and behavior of musical therapists. The results of a pre-test given before a five-hour training session and a post-test given after the training showed a statistically significant increase in all three areas (songwriting knowledge, self-efficacy, and behavior). The training helped music therapists feel differently about their perceived barriers to using songwriting in practice. Could a similar training on facilitating songwriting prove helpful for the self-efficacy of both preservice and current music educators?

Summary and Purpose of the Current Study

Songwriting has been used in various ways in the fields of music education and music therapy to encourage collaboration (Kennedy 2002; Jaffurs 2014; McGillen & McMillan, 2005), self-expression (Airy & Parr, 2010; Tobias 2012), and healing (Fairchild & McFerran, 2019; Lindberg 1995). As popular music and creativity in music become more widely included in music curriculum in the United States, some teachers have included songwriting in their classrooms (Jaffurs; 2014; Tobias, 2012). Though teachers may have positive attitudes towards teaching songwriting, there are a number of reasons why they may exclude it from their curriculum (Brinkman, 1995; Roberts, 1995; Sloboda, 1985). Bandura's (1994) theory of self-efficacy has been used to investigate student and teacher decisions in the classroom (Brudnick, 2009; Garvis, 2012; Menon & Sadler, 2016). Self-efficacy has been shown to affect choices, behavior, and motivation, and could attribute to teachers' willingness to include songwriting in their classrooms. (Brudnick, 2009; Garvis, 2012; Landino & Owen, 1988; Menon & Sadler, 2016).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate secondary music teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. The research problems for this study were as follows:

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self-efficacy regarding teaching the course? (c) What resources do they feel would be most helpful to develop stronger self-efficacy for teaching songwriting to others?

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This was a multiple case study (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) asserts that the purpose of a case study is to "catch the complexity of a single case" and "understand its activity within important circumstances" (p. xi). Typically, in education, cases are people or programs that are specific yet complex. For the current study, I examined two middle school music educators, who served as multiple cases. In gathering data about their experiences with songwriting and their pedagogical practices, I aimed better understand music educators' self-efficacy in relation to the teaching of songwriting.

Participant Selection

Stake (1995) asserts that in the selection of participants for case study research, researchers should select those who maximize what can be learned. To do so, I first utilized purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is when researchers "use their knowledge of the population to select individuals whom they believe will be good sources of information" (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 100). Purposive sampling allows researchers to choose participants who best meet the requirements and characteristics for the study based on the research questions (Patten & Newhart, 2018). The purposive sample of the current study was middle and high school music educators in the northeastern region of the United States who teach creative musics in some way (e.g., a lesson/unit, a stand-alone course).

Prior to participant selection, I created a human subjects consent and protocol form to submit to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB monitors and approves research projects that involve human subjects to ensure

ethical research standards are being upheld (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patten & Newhart, 2018). The approval process is "guided by policies requiring evidence of awareness of relevant ethical issues for the study and plans for addressing ethical issues related to three principles: respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice" (Creswell & Poth 2018, p. 54). In addition to providing participants a summary of the goals and methodology for the research, it is essential to include any potential benefits and risks to participants before obtaining their informed consent (Patten & Newhart, 2018). When choosing participants, the risks and benefits of participating in this study were made clear prior to obtaining consent. The proposed call that was sent to potential participants for this study was approved by the IRB.

Once I obtained IRB approval for this study, I contacted each National Association for Music Education's Federated State Organization within the Eastern division to find teachers who fit the case for this study. In the call for participants, I sent out an IRB approved, short questionnaire that asked background information (e.g., their experiences with songwriting in the classroom, their personal experiences with songwriting, and necessary contact information, the classes they currently teach). Those who completed this questionnaire were considered as potential participants. I then used maximum variation sampling (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002) to select three informants who would provide a broad sample. Maximum variation sampling "involves selecting a sample in which the widest range of variation on the dimensions of interest is represented" (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 100). For the current study, the goal was for the sample to include three total participants: one participant who is new to using songwriting in their classroom, one who has used songwriting for a long time in their classroom, and one who teaches creative music but does not use songwriting in

their classroom. This sampling method allowed for a range of cases to provide a variety of perspectives. I selected two middle school educators and one high school educator that met the constraints of the maximum variation sampling. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the high school teacher had to withdraw from participation in the study. Therefore, I was able to examine two middle school educators: one who had experience teaching songwriting the previous year and one who taught creative music making but did not teach songwriting in their classroom.

Data Collection

Stake (1995) described data collection in case studies as an ongoing process in which researchers must discern what information is valuable to a given study. This process can be guided primarily with the research questions, keeping a focus on the goals set forth when beginning a research project. For this study, interviews were the primary source of data collection, with additional data collection through observations and gathering course materials.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the primary source of data in this study. Interviews allow researchers to obtain the descriptions and interpretations of others for that which cannot be observed themselves (Stake, 1995). These interviews provided a lens into the unique experiences and stories the interviewees have in relation to the research questions for a study. I first designed a short list of open questions to guide the interview process. Open questions encourage answers that stretch beyond a simple yes or no response, allowing for a more accurate interpretation of the participant’s experiences (Stake, 1995). The questions focused on the teachers’ songwriting

experiences, both personal and in the classroom. At the start of the interview, preceding the open questions previously mentioned, I asked the same set of initial interview questions and began all interviews with the same script to maintain consistency and develop rapport with participants (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

Each participant participated in an initial interview and a follow-up interview, with each lasting approximately 30 minutes. The follow-up interview with participants provided the opportunity to discuss any observations and provide clarity for emergent findings. Follow-up interviews were informed not only by the first interview, but the observations and field notes. Participant interviews were audio recorded on two devices to ensure a backup audio recording is available in the event of technology failure. In addition to the audio recording, I listened, took succinct notes, and asked for clarification when needed to ensure I accurately interpreted the participant's responses (Stake, 1995). Time was allotted immediately following the interview to transcribe the audio recordings and provide accurate commentary. Immediately following each interview, I listened to the audio multiple times and transcribed using smooth-verbatim, preserving as much of the original intention as possible, to ensure proper interpretation of the participant's responses. The use of pseudonyms protected participants' identities throughout the data collection process.

Observations

According to Stake (1995), observations "work the researcher toward greater understanding of the case" (p. 60). Non-participant observations, which will be used in this study, are observations in which the researcher observes individuals without becoming involved in their activities (Patten & Newhart, 2018). I used observations in this study to see teachers' experiences with classroom songwriting and how they align

with the information provided in the interview. I observed each teacher and their instruction of creativity/songwriting and made quick jottings of the lesson. Immediately following the observation, I wrote rich and descriptive field notes that provided an accurate account of the situation and contexts that were used for further data analysis (Emerson et al., 2011; Stake, 1995). I did not record student responses and interactions with the teacher during observations. I only observed and made notes of the teachers' practices during the designated class time.

Document Review

In addition to interviews and observations, I collected course materials as a supplemental data source for this study. Yin (2018) states that in examining these course materials, documents, and resources, case study researchers are "able to develop a broader perspective concerning all of the classroom applications" over a longer length of time, "far beyond that which could be directly observed in the limited time of a classroom visit" (p. 125). Document review also often "substitutes for records of activity that the researcher could not observe directly" (Stake, 1995, p. 68). For this study, course materials provided context on how teachers use songwriting over a longer period of time.

Theoretical Framework

Bandura (1994) defined self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p. 71). By this definition, songwriting self-efficacy could be considered as one's own belief about their ability to write a song, while one's self-efficacy in teaching songwriting would be their own belief regarding their ability

to teach songwriting to others. Bandura's (1977) social learning theory provided the initial groundwork for his theory of self-efficacy as it gave more context to the behavioral decisions of people based on their self-perceptions. The four main components of Bandura's (1994) theory of self-efficacy were discussed throughout Bandura (1977), but were not yet an established, standalone theory of self-efficacy; rather, the four main components of self-efficacy were tied with self-perception and decision making.

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy beliefs are split into two dimensions: (1) outcome expectancy, or a persons' belief that their behavior will produce a desired outcome, and (2) personal efficacy, or a person's confidence in executing actions that lead to achieving a desired goal. Besides behaviors and the cognitive forces that cause behavioral changes, self-efficacy has also been attributed to other personal factors such as motivation and thought patterns. The four main sources of perceived self-efficacy beliefs that Bandura (1994) established were: (1) mastery experiences, (2) vicarious experiences/modeling, (3) social persuasion, and (4) alteration of the interpretation of emotional and physical states. Mastery experiences include past personal experiences, typically where one feels success over an obstacle, and that then influences the individual's self-perceived competence for similar tasks. One's perceived self-efficacy is not a simple or quickly occurring process, however, but is rather gained through sustained effort. Vicarious experiences/modeling occurs when seeing someone else's performance of a task, and comparing competency based on their performance or the ability to replicate the task. Social persuasion consists of both encouragement and discouragement from outside sources. These encouragements/discouragements can hold weight dependent on who is providing

feedback. Alteration of the interpretation of emotional and physical states includes an individual's physical reaction to a situation, which can, in turn, influence their self-perceived competence.

Bandura (1994) emphasized that self-efficacy can play a crucial role in influencing and regulating cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection processes. Cognitive processes include planning, analyzing, goal setting, and rehearsal of techniques are influenced by self-efficacy. Motivational processes are closely related to cognitive processes, as they are actions guided by predetermined thoughts. Affective processes, such as anxiety and depression, can also be highly affected by perceived self-efficacy. Lastly, selection processes—such as decision making and individual choices—are reliant on self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994). This framework sheds light on perceived self-efficacy’s relationship with individuals’ decision making. As this directly relates to the pedagogical choices made by teachers, these behavioral choices may be made based on an individual’s perceived self-efficacy in a skill or subject area.

The current study employs Bandura’s (1994) definition of self-efficacy in relation to educators’ behaviors, applying this concept to songwriting teachers’ process of planning and teaching the art of songwriting to others. The four main components of Bandura’s (1994) theory provided a lens for data collection and analysis, giving direction to the interview questions used as well as the coding of individual interviews. I utilized open coding (Charmaz, 2006; Saldaña, 2013) to analyze all interviews with teachers to find themes regarding behavioral choices made that relate to the four components of perceived self-efficacy. In addition to open coding the interviews and observing potential themes tied to Bandura’s (1994) theory

of self-efficacy, I observed teachers' creativity lessons, took rich and descriptive field notes, and collected relevant documents used by teachers. These additional sources of data collection were analyzed for themes related to self-efficacy to provide additional context for how teachers choose to engage with songwriting. Through this theoretical framework, I more closely identified the relationship between teachers' perceived self-efficacy and pedagogical decisions in the classroom regarding songwriting. The participants' perceived self-efficacy in relationship to the behavior of using songwriting in the classroom is the context through which data was collected and analyzed.

Researcher's Bias and Trustworthiness

As the researcher, I brought my own lens and bias to this study. I use songwriting to approach different musical skills with students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to approach different musical skills. Outside of the classroom, I write, record, and perform my own music both alone and collaboratively with others. Philosophically, I believe songwriting can serve and benefit people, and therefore approach this study with an existing bias regarding the use of songwriting in the music classroom. I actively kept my own biases in check through member checks and peer reviews. Member checks were accomplished by sharing transcripts, observations, and findings with participants to ensure accuracy with participants' lived experiences. The interviews were also coded by a peer reviewer; these themes and codes were then compared with my own analysis to confirm the accuracy of my findings.

Limitations

Qualitative case studies can be considered personalistic since the findings of the study are closely related to the subjects' own lens and values (Patten & Newhart, 2018; Stake, 1995). In addition, an instrumental case study is limited due to the small sample size, and thus the findings of this study may be generalizable but are not transferrable to all populations. There are some limits to nonparticipant observations within classrooms; participants may change their behavior based on the presence of a researcher or if they know they are being observed (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Though there are limitations, this study may still provide valuable insight into music educators' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting and, as a result, their pedagogical practices.

Chapter 4

DATA AND RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary music teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. Data collection involved an initial interview and follow-up interview, as well as observations of the teachers written up as rich, descriptive field notes. Each participant offered individual perspectives that provided insight into how teachers feel about approaching songwriting in their classrooms.

June's Classroom

I arrived at Apple Grove Middle School at 1:30 pm. After checking in with the secretary, she drew me a winding path on a colorful paper map to get to June's classroom. On my way down the path, I noticed that Apple Grove had a very notable feature—a courtyard that the school was built around. The large rectangle central to the school let in an enormous amount of natural light, warming the halls as I rounded the corner and found June's classroom. I had tried to knock on the door, then pulled the handle before realizing no one was inside… I must have arrived a bit too early. I waited until the class change occurred; a sudden rush of middle school students flooded the hallways. From down the way, June appeared with a big smile and shouted, "HI! COME ON IN!" I noticed that June was much shorter than me; she wore a floral sundress with a white knit sweater overtop. Her dark blonde hair was parted down the middle, and she removed a hair tie as she walked, letting her hair fall to her shoulders. She explained that she had held her previous class outdoors, and we had just a few minutes before her sixth-grade general music class would start. She was moving lots of things around her classroom as she talked—grabbing Boomwhackers from a closet, setting up her laptop projector, and shuffling

worksheets around. I found her classroom provided a very welcoming atmosphere with different lighting options and ample open space. Yet, there were very few chairs—with the only ones in sight lined on the top-tier riser and against the back wall. As students started to walk in, she spoke to me on the side— "I don't have a lot of chairs in here because, ya know, it's a choir classroom. They don't seem to mind the floor, though!" June was very animated and energetic—I wondered if she always was this way or if it was a side-effect of being outdoors for an hour.

Students filled into the chairs across the highest tier, while others sat on stools or the floor. It was a small class—only about eight students. June walked over to me as students yelled and laughed—she whispered, "This group is a bit… rambunctious." She smiled, "They're small, only about eight students usually, but especially at this point in the school year, they are full of energy!" Before I could respond, she was already across the classroom, welcoming students and giving them their directions for the day—they were nearing the end of their unit on busking, and students were creating their own performances with found sound, body percussion, and Boomwhackers with their classmates. (Field notes, 5/17/22)

June is a middle school teacher in Maryland who teaches choir and general music for sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. While she does not cover songwriting in her curriculum in choir or general music, she expressed a strong desire to give students creative opportunities in her classroom. I observed June's sixth-grade general music class as they neared the end of their school year.

June was teaching students about busking, a creative art form that allows individuals to create musical performances to be shared in public. These performances can use a wide range of instruments as well as objects that are not commonly

considered 'instruments,' such as pots, pans, and buckets. Busking encompasses a wide range of performance types, though June focused her class on mainly percussive, rhythmic-driven performances to help with accessibility for her general music students who may not have experience with band, orchestra, or choir. She uses busking as a way to engage students in the creative music making process and help students toward the creation of a final end product, which is similar to songwriting. June's teaching strategies are fairly informal, providing students with a large amount of individual time to work alone or in groups on their busking performances. Students begin the unit by learning the definition of busking, then are asked to use Boomwhackers, found sound, or body percussion to create different rhythms with their group to make a minute-long performance. They use a busking worksheet to notate four rhythmic patterns of their choosing, then perform them in a predetermined pattern from memory. Throughout the unit, June shares videos of students who took the class in previous years and created their busking project as well as videos of street performers in different cities as inspiration. At the end of the unit, students have a full day where they share their busking performances with the class. This emulates busking since students are creating a musical performance to be shared with others using both musical instruments (Boomwhackers) and other sounds (found sound and body percussion).

June's busking lesson was based on a unit on Quaver Music—a classroom tool provided by her district. Quaver Music is a fully digital music curriculum with predesigned units created to cover specific musical skills based on pedagogical practices of Kodaly, Orff, and Music Learning Theory. There are interactive scores, videos on musical elements, instruments, historical eras, musical styles, and more that

teachers can easily choose from depending on the needs of their classes. June expressed positive feelings about Quaver, stating, “We follow a curriculum called Quaver, which is god’s gift” (interview transcript). June also mentioned that Quaver allowed opportunities for her to expand her horizons when she first started her teaching job:

> …no one’s ever taught me what actual busking was until I took this job, and Quaver had it as one thing. I didn’t know that—I thought it was just called street performing. I didn’t know that busking was an actual term. So, I learned something joining this school as well. (Interview transcript)

I asked about her reasoning for including busking in her curriculum. She smiled and said,

> I like this unit the most… I keep it in the curriculum because you get to see the other sides of students, and you get to see how their brains kind of flourish. And they get to work with their groups together, and you see how well they work in groups. You get to see their imaginary minds and their creative minds really go and work… I feel that they have a sense of accomplishment at the end as well, because they get to spend so much time working with their friends and working in these groups, and they actually create something at the end… and it’s fun! (Interview transcript)

Personal Songwriting Experience

I started by asking June about her personal experiences with songwriting, to which she quickly replied: “I’ve never fully finished a song.” After a moment of pause, she exclaimed, “Oh, you know what? I wrote one song in my life, and it’s a

bop. It's called 'I Want to Go to The Beach.' I can sing it for you right now if you want!" (Interview transcript)

June quickly jumped over to the piano, wearing a big smile as she got ready to play her song. I sensed that she felt good about it, even before she began to sing. As she started the opening verse, she had to spend a small amount of time remembering the lyrics before she lit up—the groove and flow of the song came right back to her. It was reminiscent of "Summer Lovin'" from Grease, which felt appropriate for the beach and summer-themed lyrics. I was surprised to find out that she wrote the song over five years ago in her sophomore year of college, which she shared with me after her very informal and impromptu performance had finished. (Fieldnotes, 5/17/22)

After finishing her song, June walked back to where we were sitting for our interview and elaborated on the song, unprompted, "… I sing that song to this day still … because it was a composition project in school, in college, and [my professor] said that was the only song composition that has ever been stuck in his head. So, I feel pretty proud of that" (interview transcript). Though she felt successful in her songwriting experience, June did not identify as someone who writes songs or composes. She explained that she does not write songs alone and has attempted to write choral pieces but never finished one.

June expressed that she was not sure how to define songwriting, even after completing a song of her own:

> I guess, songwriting is sitting down and composing your own piece of music, I don't think that—I think there's a difference between composition and songwriting. Like… a composition is a symphony, a quartet, a piano concerto, an etude. That's a longer piece of music, I guess you could say, but

> songwriting is a popular song that you hear on the radio … a "song" is something that people find catchy and will sing along to. (Interview transcript)

Teaching Creative Music Making

Though June does not directly include songwriting in her curriculum, her time teaching creative music has made her more open to trying different creative music-making options with students. June described her initial feelings about starting her busking unit by simply saying she "liked it," but then paused to think, and then elaborated further:

> I think it also gave me a sense to be creative while I was teaching them. So, you go about things kind of like, "What am I doing? How do I go about teaching this?" But now I think that I'm at the point where I can lead them in the right direction. I feel like I was a newbie when I was also teaching them busking performances, but now I feel that I can lead them with the right path, like the right direction, so that each group can have some sort of success out of the busking performance. I guess at first, I was kind of just tiptoeing around it, kind of figuring out what the unit was like. But now I feel like I have a firm grasp on it, and I'm just like, "Let's do this!" ya know? (Interview transcript)

June provided a detailed answer on what led to this change in perspective and gaining confidence in teaching busking:

> So, my first year when I was doing this, I was very, "You have to write out your ta's and your ti-ti's, and you have to do this, and you have to do that… you need to do this in order to be successful." I felt like that was a part of my background in music because I don't really have a background in just sitting down and singing my feelings on the piano. (Interview transcript)

This was a common theme with June, as she often described how her classical training from college interacted with her real-life teaching experience, and how she began to balance her own mastery experiences with what she discovered while actively teaching creative music making.

I noted this in my observations as well, when she described a co-worker who could pick up a guitar and easily improvise:

> *June gestured at the door, where her two co-workers in the music department were standing outside, waiting to talk about their day with her. "I know this is specific, but my one co-worker can sit down and just—," she said, followed by her mimicking guitar sounds and strumming on an imaginary string instrument. "My other co-worker and I are just like, 'Yeah! Classically trained over here! Cannot do that!' Ya know?" She laughed, but I could sense the frustration in her voice.* (Fieldnotes, 5/17/22)

June explained how she adapted her requirements for the busking unit over time:

> Now I'm very, very lenient … I give them the busking paper [handout]… I'll tell them, that's a hard rhythm. We don't have to put it on the paper, just write something down that will help you remember the rhythm for tomorrow… It's not common notation. My first time teaching it I was very strict and now, my third year teaching it, I'm like, "Come up with something cool! This is what busking is—street performing! You don't have to have it notated down, but I need to see where your brain was thinking on the paper." (Interview transcript)

June further expressed that her confidence in her teaching ability grew over time as well. She stated, "I'm three years in now, and I feel like I have a grasp on things. I

know what works for students. And yeah, so I just feel more confident in teaching and things I can teach" (interview transcript). Even without training or personal experience with creative music making, June expressed that her confidence grew in her ability to adapt and plan her lessons over time.

Considering Songwriting

June has never attempted to teach songwriting to students. To consider teaching songwriting in the future, June expressed instrument requirements, particularly a need for a piano or a ukulele and how the students would need to learn them. "I would say piano for eighth grade, ukulele for seventh … You need to physically break it down [and provide students] with some sort of road map" (interview transcript). She went on to discuss possible scaffolding measure, such as teaching chords, chord progressions, and rhyming.

Considering her positive description of Quaver Music, I asked about her thoughts on using that for songwriting:

> I mean, Quaver is good for a first-year teacher … because now I know what I like from it. But … I [now] feel very confident in my teaching to be, like, "I'm just gonna make a Google Slide and it's going to make sense." (Interview transcript)

I found June's response interesting; she seemed so supportive of Quaver Music for her classes yet seemed confident enough to not rely on it as a resource for a new topic. It seemed that she felt it would be useful for younger teachers to start with something like Quaver for topics they are unfamiliar with, but she felt her teaching experiences gave her the confidence to work without the guiding resource.

I later attempted to clarify what June would need as an educator to feel successful in teaching songwriting, rather than the resources her students would need:

> I think that examples are definitely a given in education, no matter what subject. I also think having a well-structured PowerPoint and maybe a structured list of deadlines, like a progress chart of some sort… Those would probably be the main three. (Interview transcript)

I asked June where she might get the information about songwriting to inform these methods:

> In college, they didn't touch on songwriting at all, so it's kind of—having the knowledge that you use to teach them, so using your prior knowledge to just kind of piece it together… I would even sometimes go on YouTube and look up teaching demos for songwriting… Teachers Pay Teachers … I'd say the majority for me, and this goes for any of my lessons, I just use my prior knowledge because I know that I cannot teach effectively and efficiently if I am not using what I know best. (Interview transcript)

June also expressed that she felt that using something relevant to both her and her students has proven effective in her classroom:

> If I'm teaching them about form, I'm going to use a pop song that I know every single word to, so I'm always using stuff that I know and also a lot of stuff that goes with what they know. Using examples that fit their generation is also helpful. (Interview transcript)

June also expressed that Facebook Groups have been helpful in the past and might possibly provide helpful information on how to use songwriting in her classes.

When asked what she feels is holding her back in teaching songwriting, she struggled:

> Honestly, this is a question that I've never even thought to myself … I think it could be a little bit of like a personal thing. I have never fully finished a song except *I Want to Go to the Beach…* Maybe it's an insecurity because I also think that I want every single song to be perfect. And I know that it can't be perfect … I think that's why I went for the funnier side than the serious side [with *I Want to Go to the Beach*]. But at the same time, my song was the song that was a bop. So, I don't know… Maybe it's a little bit of an insecurity thing, just because I don't identify and I'm not a songwriter myself, and it's not something that I'm actively doing every single day. But I don't see why I wouldn't try it. (Interview transcript)

June also felt that certain classes might lend better to songwriting in different ways, so teachers might need to approach it differently based on their classroom:

> I think it's also hard in general music classes, because not every single person there would be willing to song write in some sort of way … Not every single student is going to feel comfortable doing that. I think that that would be something that I'd have to learn a little bit more … I think that it would be something that I would have to do more research on and maybe go to a [conference session] or something… I don't know why I don't do it. I think I'm definitely capable of doing it, but I don't think that I, myself, have the resources right now to be able to teach it effectively. (Interview transcript)

Of her current curricular load, June believed her chorus classes would be the easiest to teach songwriting to, since the students were already open to singing.

Summary

To teach her middle school general music classes, June based her lessons on units from Quaver, a teaching tool provided by her district. She makes a point to continue teaching a busking unit, as it allows students to make their own compositions using body percussion, found sound, and Boomwhackers. June has one memorable songwriting experience, which occurred in her sophomore year of college as a requirement for a class. She has not attempted to write songs since. She expressed her inability to express herself through songwriting and attributed this partially to her background as a classically trained musician. This background initially affected her teaching methods when she approached the busking unit with her students, resulting in strict expectations rooted in standard notation. However, June believed her self-confidence as a teacher grew with time, which helped her be more lenient with these guidelines. She instead focused on providing students guidance and feedback on their busking creations. June expressed interest in including songwriting in her curriculum but had difficulty detailing how she would scaffold students toward writing a song.

Sam's Classroom

I arrived at the school around 12:15 pm and was glad I did. The school looked a bit out of the ordinary, consisting of several smaller, white buildings surrounded by a large field and tall trees. I immediately found myself in doubt. Which building am I supposed to go in? I checked my emails with Sam but found no direction. I wandered down a long, asphalt path toward a few picnic tables. The sound of laughter echoed throughout the area; young children were playing on the playground several feet away. I was relieved to finally find a sign with a large blue arrow pointing to a building and read "SIGN IN INSIDE." I entered and a secretary greeted me by asking

my name. After providing my name and a brief explanation, she looked surprised and said, "Oh, you're early!" She explained that they were having an evacuation drill in the next two minutes and that I should just wait to follow her out when she made that announcement.

After grabbing what looked like a walkie-talkie from a charger on her desk, the secretary's calm voice echoed through the halls, "Please evacuate the building. We must evacuate the building. Please proceed to your evacuation location." She returned the walkie to the charger, and I followed her outside. I felt grateful for beautiful weather as a nice breeze accompanied our walk back down the path. Once we arrived at the main parking lot, I heard a voice from behind me say, "Emma? Hello, I'm Sam. You can follow me." Sam appeared, and I immediately noticed he was much taller than me. I looked up to see his face, and his round glasses stood out to me. He was wearing very simple clothes—a muted green shirt and khaki pants. A pair of well-worn tennis shoes completed his look. I walked with him back to his students—all of whom were so silent that I could easily hear birds in the surrounding trees. Once the secretary announced the drill was complete, we all walked back inside. We eventually came to a small office filled with music equipment, including an upright piano. "This is me," he said. "I teach in the library for other classes. I don't really have my own room." (Field notes, 5/23/22)

Sam's journey to becoming a music teacher had a unique start. He attended a small liberal arts college where he majored in music and math, but after graduating he worked with a music non-profit in New York that places teachers in public and parochial schools there. He gained much of his music teaching experience through his time in a public school in New York City. After relocating to New Jersey for personal

reasons, Sam began teaching music part-time at his current school. He eventually added math classes to the mix and became a full-time teacher, with music classes now spanning from pre-kindergarten to eighth-grade level. Outside of his daily teaching schedule, he directs the school's annual spring musical.

Sam's curriculum is heavily based on the musical background gained from his non-profit placement, where he participated in a mentorship program with experiences in Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze, and Feierabend. Sam used bits and pieces from this program, selecting parts he believed most effective in his classroom. His instruction of younger students is influenced by John Feierabend's *First Steps in Music* and *Conversational Solfege*:

> Basically, the philosophy, which I use for my lower grades right now… is lots and lots of singing… It's a lot of movement, dance, and singing. With the middle grade, it's a little more Orff-y… I'm trying to do more instrumental work [with them]. (Interview transcript)

When we discussed his middle school curriculum, Sam wavered a bit and expressed feeling that his middle school instruction was not as sound as his younger grades:

> Middle school is the tricky part, because I hadn't taught middle school before coming to this school. And so, coming in, I didn't know exactly what I was doing. I still don't really know what I'm doing… There have been some successes this year, in part because we've been trying to be more intentional about partnerships between subject areas. So this year, social studies and music are trying to be more connected… I had them do a project where they were sort

> of acting as historians and trying to analyze different songs from a historical perspective. (Interview transcript)

These partnerships between subject areas throughout the school had led to other creative music-making projects. Students now had opportunities to discuss motif and theme in their literature classes, and designed a theme song for a character, created playlists for a character, and extended familiar songs from stories and movies. Many of these projects utilized a digital audio workstation (DAW), called Soundtrap. Sam believed some of these projects were challenging, but students enjoyed working with a DAW.

Personal Songwriting Experience

During his sophomore year of college, Sam enrolled in a songwriting course over the winter term. Though he completed a song and had attempted songwriting in his own time, he did not self-identify as a songwriter or composer:

> I took a songwriting course, during sophomore year … learning about, for four weeks, how to write a song or [thinking] about what it means to "write a song." And so, I wrote one out of that process that I felt pretty good about. And since then, I think I've written maybe one or two more on my spare time. (Interview transcript)

Sam believed songwriting was easiest to define by containing parts, saying "There's a couple of different components [for songs]. You have the melody part, you have the chord part, and you have the lyric part" (interview transcript). This definition aligned with his songwriting experience in college, where he learned the different components of a song and what it took to write them. When transferring this definition to teaching, Sam confessed that he struggled most with younger students. "I [still] need to figure it

out," he said, "how to best scaffold those three things in conjunction with each other" (interview transcript).

Teaching Songwriting

"I'm moving this in because some students might use it to perform their songs," Sam said as I helped him move the upright piano from his office into the library. Before he shut his office door, he frantically looked around before excitedly grabbing one last thing—a bright yellow rubber chicken—then shut off the lights.

I found a cozy corner in the library to sit and looked around to see walls lined with books and a ceiling featuring large skylights. The library was central to the school, surrounded by a circle-shaped hallway with two doors on opposite sides so students could enter from either end of the small school building. As students filed in, their energy livened the room. They didn't pay me much mind, and Sam was preoccupied with getting a speaker set up next to a big green chair he had positioned in front of the students. The group continued to chit-chat up until a point where Sam squeezed the rubber chicken. A loud "SQUAWK!" silenced the crowd, and a pause lingered in the air. "Okay. Let's get started," he said. (Field notes, 5/23/22)

I observed Sam's eighth-grade class on their presentation day for the final songwriting project. Students had several options for their final project, including writing a full original song. Sam included other options as well for students who felt they were not ready to complete a full song but would feel more comfortable writing a parody or extending an existing song. Sam sent me an email with the written instructions he provided to students through their school's communication platform:

> Here are some options for your final music project: 1. Compose a song with original music and lyrics. 2. Write a parody to an existing song. 3. Compose an

> extended instrumental composition. You can use Noteflight or Soundtrap or perform it live. 4. Extend a song from the binder by writing one or more new verses. If you have a different idea for a final project, let me know. (Course documents)

Sam explained that with this songwriting-inspired unit, he wanted to get students to use their singing voices, which is inspired by what he does with his younger grades:

> I just think it's something that—It's useful for kids to be able to do that ties back into John Feierabend again… [The younger students] are able to sing back and use their singing voice while coming up with words. I want to get that feeling into eighth grade for songwriting. (Interview transcript)

Sam felt songwriting was an excellent way for older students to learn valuable musical skills, but he struggles and has not felt very successful in teaching it to his students. He stated, "How do I scaffold it, so they feel successful?... I can't hand a pencil to someone and say, 'Okay, now write something,' if you've never written something before" (interview transcript).

He elaborated on this in a later conversation when he expressed having difficulty knowing what and how to scaffold for each group he teaches:

> It's like, how do I get them to that point? I would have to do a lot more scaffolding with this group this year … they're able to run away with conversation more… Last year's group was quieter ... So how do I make it so they can be successful while also not stalling? (Interview transcript)

Some of his attempts to scaffold students resulted in other projects throughout the year. Sam detailed some of these projects, including one where the eighth-grade class

"wrote a rap about the way that our world today should be reconstructed" (interview transcript). Sam expressed discontent with the project's outcome, saying, "I didn't give them enough time, and there wasn't enough time [to cover everything]" (interview transcript).

Sam heavily assessed his ability to teach by examining his students' productivity and project success. He reflected on a small class the previous spring:

> I had some interest from the eighth graders when I surveyed them … some of them wanted to do songwriting in the spring. I said, "Sure we'll just do it," and I basically threw it at them. About half the class succeeded. A couple kids did okay, and then some of them really struggled … I have more [students] this year … it's hard to be a songwriting mentor for 15 kids, especially if I know that I haven't particularly prepared them well. (Interview transcript)

Sam also described students' self-efficacy while working on the rap project. He said, "… there were some kids who were—they didn't feel capable … they didn't feel like they had the skills or otherwise" (interview transcript).

Sam still hoped his students would gain knowledge to attempt songwriting on their own, but confessed, "That's the thing I haven't figured out" (interview transcript).

Providing Feedback

Each student shared their creations, one by one. Many seemed hesitant to share … Sam did a good job helping hesitant students and gave them positive affirmations after each project. I also noticed that he mainly took notes about each project on his clipboard. Much of Sam's verbal comments were short and positive, such as 'good job' or 'nice work,' but I wondered if he provided ways for students to

grow or improve… Class ended, and the students dispersed. We returned to Sam's office to move the piano before he showed me the way out. Before I could go, a student named Kate came to the office and asked if she could share an original song. She played ukulele and sang original lyrics through a shaky and timid voice … When Kate finished, Sam simply nodded and said, "Great job, thank you for sharing." (Field notes, 5/23/22)

In a follow-up interview with Sam, I asked about the notes he took during class and how he provided feedback to the students:

> We write narrative reports… and so I want to be able to reference what they did in the report. So, this is just for me. If there was more time, I would maybe try to give them feedback, though I'm not sure how qualified I am to give some of that feedback… I don't have any comments other than 'good job.' Like, 100%. I don't know [what to say] … Like, "You did a nice job. You wrote something that was original to you. Do more of it." I don't know what I would necessarily say to Kate after coming in here and singing for us. "I loved your song. You made a song with original melody. Next time, I don't know. Try adding some harmony with it or ask for advice? I can help you with chords or something. (Interview transcript)

Sam expressed this difficulty with providing feedback for other students as well, saying, "Johnny struggled, and I don't know what I would have said to Johnny to help them get there. I didn't say anything to Jamie or Harry to help them [either]" (Interview transcript).

Whenever Sam felt unsure of himself when providing feedback or advice, he relied mostly on his prior musical training. He felt there was a balance between giving

advice and telling students what to do. He said, “I’m not trying to give them an idea that they—I don’t want to be like, ‘This is what you’re writing a parody about’ … that’s not relevant to them … they’re not going to have fun with it” (Interview transcript). When students were working on their projects during class time, Sam tried “to make sure that people are staying on track and being productive” (interview transcript), while also fielding questions whenever necessary. He did not feel this writing time was best for providing students with feedback.

Summary

Sam’s background in music and math informed his teaching approach, where he prioritized cross-curricular projects to help students understand larger contexts of what they were doing musically. He had some experience in songwriting himself, including a songwriting course he took during his undergraduate degree, though he did not self-identify as a songwriter or composer. Sam believed songwriting has a good balance of musical skill and practical application, and thus he created a songwriting unit for his eighth graders. While he tried to teach students how to write songs, he believed most of his attempts were not successful for several reasons—particularly due to his scaffolding students into songwriting. He also expressed difficulty due to the lack of time meeting with students, not having clear learning goals, and not feeling qualified to provide students feedback. Sam was interested in learning better ways to include songwriting in his curriculum and hoped that future research might help him understand how to best do so.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to investigate secondary music teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. The research problems for this study were as follows:

1. To describe the music teachers' prior experiences with songwriting and the teaching of songwriting to others.
2. To describe music teachers' self-perceptions regarding their ability to teach songwriting.

Sub-questions included (a) What materials and resources do the teachers use to facilitate songwriting in their classroom? (b) Do those resources contribute to their self-efficacy regarding teaching the course? (c) What resources do they feel would be most helpful to develop stronger self-efficacy for teaching songwriting to others?

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study provide insight for music educators who currently teach songwriting or are looking to include songwriting in their curricula—particularly those who wish to understand their pedagogical practices better. In this section, I will discuss both participants' teaching self-efficacy and self-perceptions regarding their ability to teach songwriting. I will then touch on both teachers' thoughts on resources for teaching songwriting and how these connect with their self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. Throughout this section, I will connect findings from the current study with relevant literature.

Self-Efficacy as Practicing Educators

Findings from this study support Bandura's (1994) self-efficacy theory, which described mastery experiences as one of the sources of perceived self-efficacy. The background of both teachers led to different levels of overall self-efficacy in teaching music to middle school students. June felt that her self-efficacy was low when she first started teaching middle school general music. Her background in music was primarily focused on classical music and choir, and only some of the skills she obtained in her undergraduate degree applied to her general music curriculum. June tried to use her prior experiences and skills she felt confident with to teach her classes. She found that with continued experience as a teacher and her continued success with units she planned that her self-efficacy in teaching middle school general music improved. After three years of teaching general music, June's self-efficacy was higher, and she felt less insecurity due to mastery experiences while teaching.

Sam felt that his background in classical music and teaching younger students made it difficult to feel confident in his ability to teach his middle school students. Many of his affirming teaching experiences were with younger-aged students at the elementary level. Sam had several professional development opportunities that provided information on teaching early childhood and elementary students. He has been actively teaching middle school for two years and described a general low self-efficacy in teaching that age group. He continued to try new music lessons and ideas with students but felt that those experiences did not yield the expected result. Sam's lack of mastery experiences in his past two years of teaching resulted in low overall self-efficacy in teaching middle school students.

Self-Efficacy in Teaching Songwriting

The musical backgrounds of both teachers influenced their self-efficacy in teaching songwriting to their students. June primarily grew up singing in choirs and continued to do so in a college music program, where she continued her training centered on Western Classical traditions. June initially found busking to be an excellent resource for teaching rhythm and notation, since reading rhythms and common notation were skills she felt she had high self-efficacy for teaching based on her music education experience. However, over time June saw that busking encouraged additional skills in her students, including collaboration and self-expression, which is why she continued to teach the unit. Sam expressed that much of his music background and music education were rooted in values from Western Classical tradition. When Sam taught songwriting to his students, he felt it was an excellent vessel for teaching basic music skills, such as improvising melody, understanding chords, and creating harmonic progressions. Sam had higher self-efficacy in these skills from his prior musical experiences. Much of this value differs from those discussed in previous research, including how songwriting can benefit other areas of learning such as collaboration (Kennedy 2002; Jaffurs, 2014; McGillen & McMillan, 2005), self-expression (Airy & Parr, 2010; Tobias, 2012), and healing (Fairchild & McFerran, 2019; Lindberg, 1995).

Findings from the current study further support Menon and Sadler (2016), who found that a course focused on improving concept knowledge and providing teaching practice helped preservice teachers improve their self-efficacy in teaching a subject due to mastery experiences. June's experience with songwriting in her undergraduate coursework was not robust. She was asked to write a pop song for a music theory class but did not learn about songwriting or how to teach songwriting to others. Therefore,

June's undergraduate coursework did not lead to higher self-efficacy in teaching songwriting, and she did not consider songwriting as a unit to teach in her general music class. Sam's experience with a songwriting class at his university did not lead to higher self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. This class primarily focused on how to write a song but did not focus on furthering his self-efficacy in teaching songwriting to others through mastery experiences. Sam felt that while he knew how to write a song, he struggled with giving students feedback on their creations. While both teachers experienced songwriting in their undergraduate degrees, they did not receive thorough content knowledge in songwriting or have mastery experiences with teaching songwriting to others. Though they could write songs themselves, June and Sam did not express comfort in teaching songwriting to others.

The teachers' prior experiences teaching creative music making and songwriting also influenced their self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. These findings support Hallam (2010), who determined musical ability was perceived based on the environment in which individuals were located as well as their musical experiences or lack thereof. June's high self-efficacy in teaching middle school students transferred to a high self-efficacy in potentially teaching songwriting. She felt confident in her abilities as a teacher to plan content based on what her students respond well to. After three years of teaching creative music making through a busking unit, June felt confident she could teach songwriting in her classroom if provided strong research and appropriate resources. Sam's low self-efficacy in teaching middle school students likely contributed to his lower self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. Sam did not have many prior positive experiences with students writing songs, and thus Sam did not

have consistent mastery experiences and felt that his teaching was the cause for their varied success.

Another factor that affected teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting was students' varying needs. June's perceived self-efficacy in teaching songwriting varied from group to group; her perceived self-efficacy for teaching songwriting to her choir was higher than that of teaching songwriting to her general music class. June expressed how she would approach songwriting differently for students in each grade level. Her self-efficacy may be impacted by how much she would need to adapt and modify resources and lessons for different groups due to the amount of scaffolding needed. Similarly, Sam described how groups of students created varying classroom dynamics, making it difficult to feel confident when approaching songwriting with groups. Ultimately, Sam felt that the same teaching methods that worked for students in a previous group were not as successful this year, which caused his self-efficacy in teaching songwriting to decrease. Though not directly regarding music education, these findings support Richardson (2011), who found training sessions on songwriting increased the knowledge and self-efficacy of musical therapists. Training sessions on how to adapt lessons for different groups of students based on their needs may benefit both June's and Sam's self-efficacy in teaching songwriting.

Resources and Self-Efficacy

June and Sam described how their available resources impacted their self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. As Brudnick (2009) found, there is a relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and professional satisfaction and burnout. Finding ways to improve teachers' self-efficacy in songwriting may benefit younger teachers and practicing educators alike. June believed that classroom resources like Quaver

Music helped increase her self-efficacy in teaching creative music through busking and that a similar resource for songwriting would be helpful—but likely only for young teachers. June felt that her self-efficacy in teaching was high enough to attempt songwriting in the classroom, as she could create her own resources similar to Quaver. June described having scaffolding resources, such as PowerPoints, deadlines, and charts, as well as instruments requirements, such as piano or ukulele, to help her better teach songwriting to students. When discussing what might be included in a songwriting lesson PowerPoint, June mentioned having to do more research on songwriting to be able to decide what she needed to include for students. Having designated songwriting resources that help guide students and lay out steps for student success would likely improve June's self-efficacy in teaching songwriting.

Sam's use of classroom resources helped improve his overall self-efficacy in teaching songwriting. Students used Sound Trap to write their music and explore their songwriting process with limited guidance from Sam. These experiences helped him see that having designated songwriting resources providing clear scaffolding for students could help improve his self-efficacy in teaching songwriting.

Implications for Music Education

The conclusions from this research offer several implications for the music education profession. Preservice music education programs should consider their curricular offerings and the subject matter covered to include musics and teaching strategies outside a Western-classical tradition. Specifically, preservice music teachers could gain experience by participating in songwriting courses—particularly those exploring songwriting for its social and emotional benefits. By having courses that cover how to write songs as well as how to teach the skill of songwriting to others,

preservice music teachers may leave teacher preparation programs with higher self-efficacy in teaching this art to others.

Randles (2011) and Shouldice (2014) recognized the influence of individual music self-efficacy with students' musical identity. In addition, Randles (2011) and Shouldice (2014) had implications for how self-efficacy can be impacted by curricular offerings. Popular music cultures can provide unique ways to connect music and identity, which may be intimidating for some practicing and preservice music educators. As shown with June and Sam, practicing teachers' self-efficacy in musical skills may influence the curricular choices offered at their school. With June, she had not considered songwriting with students as an option based on her music-making background. Sam found songwriting to be a helpful way to teach musical concepts with which he was comfortable but had difficulty feeling that he had effectively bridged those concepts with songwriting. When music teacher preparation programs offer courses in musical cultures outside the Western Classical tradition, they must also prepare preservice teachers with skills and experiences needed to feel comfortable and confident teaching these musics to others. Music teacher education programs should reflect on their course offerings and the structure of those courses to ensure they include these rich experiences to help preservice music teachers have higher self-efficacy moving forward. Furthermore, practicing music educators must reflect on their musical background and self-efficacy in teaching music to better understand what might be included or excluded from their curriculum, and to understand what practices of musical cultures are used and which are left behind.

Finally, while providing practicing music educators with resources for teaching songwriting may be helpful, the adaptability of resources must also be considered.

Students across age levels and varying school demographics have needs that cannot be met with a singular resource. Similarly, the structure of a songwriting course will likely vary from classroom to classroom, given that each class will be comprised of different students and therefore have a different dynamic. As the conditions, skill levels, and classroom dynamics will vary for different groups of students, the resources for songwriting must be malleable. Practicing educators must examine their classroom resources to determine how they can make them work for their specific classroom and their teaching styles. By adapting resources, practicing teachers may find more student success and a higher self-efficacy in teaching songwriting in the process. Teacher preparation programs could teach and reinforce this skill of adapting resources through practical examples in school settings or peer-led teaching exercises.

Overall, teachers must understand that the benefits of songwriting reach beyond their current self-efficacy. Concepts such as chord structure, rhythm, and rhyme are fundamental and can be taught through songwriting. However, songwriting should also be used to teach students how to collaborate, express themselves, and help them explore their identities. By finding ways to strengthen teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting, more teachers may feel empowered to teach songwriting and see the range of benefits to songwriting in their classroom.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future research is needed to understand the relationship between self-efficacy and teachers' ability to teach songwriting in their classrooms. Replicating this study with the same or different theoretical frameworks, such as identity, could provide more substantial insight into teachers' pedagogical practices and curricular choices. Future research is also needed to determine the resources teachers need to feel

confident in teaching songwriting to students. Researchers should also examine relationships between self-efficacy in teaching and teachers' curricular decisions. For example, researchers might investigate teachers' musical backgrounds about their curricular choices, as this was an emergent finding within this study.

Closing

June and Sam provided valuable insight into music teachers' self-perceptions and perspectives regarding teaching songwriting. Understanding teachers' self-efficacy in teaching songwriting is essential to also understand how teachers interact with popular music cultures in their classrooms. Teachers who feel more confident in their ability to teach and adapt resources regarding songwriting have an opportunity to connect students' school music culture with their music culture outside of school.

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Appendix A

HUMAN SUBJECTS TRAINING CERTIFICATE

Completion Date 07-Jun-2019
Expiration Date 06-Jun-2022
Record ID 31347276

This is to certify that:

Emma Engel

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Course In The Protection Human Subjects
(Curriculum Group)
Human Subjects Protections - Social-Behavioral-Educational Focus - All UD Researchers/Faculty/Staff
(Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

University of Delaware

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wcc750c5b-505a-4211-9bd5-d07940e8d62d-31347276

Appendix B

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

Institutional Review Board
210H Hullihen Hall
Newark, DE 19716
Phone: 302-831-2137
Fax: 302-831-2828

DATE:	March 23, 2022
TO:	Emma Engel, B.M.
FROM:	University of Delaware IRB
STUDY TITLE:	[1880828-1] Secondary Music Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Teaching Songwriting
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	DETERMINATION OF EXEMPT STATUS
EFFECTIVE DATE:	March 23, 2022
REVIEW CATEGORY:	Exemption category # *(1,2)*

Thank you for your New Project submission to the University of Delaware Institutional Review Board (UD IRB). According to the pertinent regulations, the UD IRB has determined this project is EXEMPT from most federal policy requirements for the protection of human subjects. The privacy of subjects and the confidentiality of participants must be safeguarded as prescribed in the reviewed protocol form.

This exempt determination is valid for the research study as described by the documents in this submission. Proposed revisions to previously approved procedures and documents that may affect this exempt determination must be reviewed and approved by this office prior to initiation. The UD amendment form must be used to request the review of changes that may substantially change the study design or data collected.

Unanticipated problems and serious adverse events involving risk to participants must be reported to this office in a timely fashion according with the UD requirements for reportable events.

A copy of this correspondence will be kept on file by our office. If you have any questions, please contact the UD IRB Office at (302) 831-2137 or via email at hsrb-research@udel.edu. Please include the study title and reference number in all correspondence with this office.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

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