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Rural music teacher self-efficacy: source influence and commitment

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

**RURAL MUSIC TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY:
SOURCE INFLUENCE AND COMMITMENT**

by

EDWARD GERARD MICHAUD

B.M.E., University of Maine, 1991

M.M., University of Maine, 1996

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Approved by

First Reader

Karin S. Hendricks, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Chair of Music Education

Second Reader

Tawnya D. Smith, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of Music, Music Education

Third Reader

Megan Lewis, D.M.A.
Music Education, Voice
Utah Valley University

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children, Camille and Simeon.

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EDWARD GERARD MICHAUD

Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2023

Major Professor: Karin S. Hendricks, Ph. D., Associate Professor and Chair of Music Education

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of self-efficacy sources in informing the self-beliefs, teaching practices, and commitment of rural music teachers. People's efficacy beliefs affect what actions they take based on how they envision the expected outcomes. These actions include how much effort they will give, their resilience in the face of obstacles and adversity, how they respond to stressors, and what results they realize. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy sources (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological and affective states) provide a framework to understand how rural music teachers experience with these self-efficacy sources may contribute to their teaching practice and their commitment to rural music teaching.

The study methodology was a multiple case study with cross-case analysis. There were six study participants who taught multiple grade levels and music subject areas in a rural public school in Maine. Each participant completed the Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (adapted from Zelenak, 2011 and Lewis, 2018); a focus group interview; individual interviews; and two written journal prompts. Results from this study show the importance to support rural music teachers' self-efficacy for teaching through

the four self-efficacy sources. The strengths of the participants' perceived self-efficacy enabled them to persevere through music teaching challenges, especially those with out-of-specialty music teaching, which contributed to their resilience and commitment to teaching in a rural area. Helping music teachers to understand self-efficacy development and the cognitive processing of the four self-efficacy sources may motivate them to persist and improve their teaching practice through perseverant action, improve student learning, and strengthen commitment levels for music teaching in rural areas.

Furthermore, fostering relationships and building connections of community with students, staff, parents, and members of the community may be important for developing rural music teachers' self-efficacy beliefs and for supporting affirming rural lifestyle experiences. Rural music teachers may discover an enduring concept of teaching success when they co-create meaningful experiences with students and community members that celebrates the individual strengths and values of a rural area.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Self-Efficacy: Bandura	1
Rural Challenges	2
Personal Context.....	4
Local Context	6
Teaching Out of Specialty Area	7
Purpose and Research Questions.....	9
Rationale.....	11
Enactive Mastery Experiences	11
Vicarious Experiences	12
Verbal and Social Persuasion	12
Physiological and Affective States	13
Theoretical Justification	14
Conclusion.....	21
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	23
Self-Efficacy Sources	23
Enactive Mastery Experience	23
Vicarious Experiences	27
Verbal and Social Persuasion	29
Physiological and Affective States.....	32
Perseverance	35
Commitment to Rural Teaching	36
Commitment to Engaged Teaching	38
Community	40
Summary.....	41
CHAPTER 3: METHODS	45
Selection of Participants	46

Setting.....	47
Data Collection.....	48
Data Analysis.....	54
Trustworthiness and Reliability.....	56
Researcher Self-Disclosure	59
CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANT STORIES:	61
ANNE: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER.....	61
ELSIE: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER	75
LAURA: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER	91
MOLLY: GRADES 9–12 MUSIC TEACHER.....	106
SARAH: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER	124
SYLVIA: GRADES 5–8 MUSIC TEACHER	139
CHAPTER 5: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	157
Self-Efficacy Sources	157
Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire: Source Scores and Category Rank.....	157
Enactive Mastery Experiences	158
Vicarious Experiences	172
Verbal and Social Persuasion	178
Physiological and Affective States	192
Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School	203
Commitment to Engaged Teaching	209
CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION	217
Self-Efficacy Sources	218
Commitment	247
Community	249
Implications	252
Recommendations for Future Research.....	259
Summary.....	260

Conclusion	268
APPENDIX A: Study Information and Survey	270
APPENDIX B: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	271
APPENDIX C: Focus Group Interview Format	274
APPENDIX D: Individual Interview	276
APPENDIX E: Journal Writing.....	278
APPENDIX F: Teaching Position at the Time of the Study	279
REFERENCES	280
CURRICULUM VITAE	301

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Anne	66
Figure 2: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Elsie.....	80
Figure 3: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Laura.....	94
Figure 4: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Molly	110
Figure 5: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Sarah.....	127
Figure 6: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Sylvia.....	144
Figure 7: Enactive Mastery Experience: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	158
Figure 8: Vicarious Experience: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	172
Figure 9: Verbal and Social Persuasion: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey	178
Figure 10: Physiological and Affective States: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey.....	192

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Teacher self-efficacy beliefs are a teacher's "judgment[s] of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated" (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001, p. 783). Furthermore, teachers who develop strong self-efficacy estimations demonstrate "beliefs in their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals" (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, p. 612). Personal efficacy beliefs affect what actions people choose to take based on how they envision the expected outcomes. These actions include how much effort they will give, their resilience in the face of obstacles and adversity, how they respond to stressors, and what results they realize. Self-efficacy beliefs extend beyond the conveyance of subject matter to encompass efficacy in classroom management, resource management, and working with sociocultural influences that can affect the work that teachers do (Bandura, 1997).

Self-Efficacy: Bandura

Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as: "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Self-efficacy beliefs enable people to recognize their capabilities in order to create desired effects through their actions. What people believe about their capabilities has a larger effect on their motivations and actions than what is objectively the case. How one perceives their self-efficacy is not by the number of skills one has, rather by what one believes one can do with their skills in a variety of conditions.

Four main sources contribute to self-efficacy beliefs: enactive mastery

experiences, vicarious experience, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016). Enactive mastery experiences are the most authentic and most influential: successful experiences with difficult endeavors through perseverance build self-efficacy. Vicarious experiences occur when a person observes successful modeled actions or performances by others with whom one views as having similar performance abilities, creating a basis for social comparison, or through masterly modeling, when one views others' effective and successful task performance. Verbal and social persuasion results when significant others express a positive belief that one has the ability to achieve a specific task or goal. Physiological and affective states occur when people judge their capabilities from physical and emotional domains of function, such as considerations of physical abilities, health functioning, and stress. It is through cognitive processing and reflective thinking that people weigh and integrate these four dimensions in determining their self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

Rural Challenges

Music teachers in rural areas share similar challenges as other rural teachers in general, which include lower salaries, geographic isolation, and career status (Kuntzelman, 2016). Specific to rural music teachers, however, are the broad skills necessary for teaching all aspects of a music program. Teaching assignments may include general music, band, choir, orchestra, and other outside of school activities, music or otherwise (Isbell, 2005). Working part-time and often in more than one school (Isbell, 2005), music teachers may be responsible for music programming outside their preservice focus and experience (Bates, 2011).

Rural music teachers described that they felt scattered in their teaching and that they lacked the preparation time to meet the varied demands of the position (Kuntzelman, 2016). People in these positions must manage time for adequate teaching preparation, adapt curriculum and music for smaller ensembles and classes, and be flexible to change focus quickly to teach a wider diversity of classes across a school day as compared to teachers at larger schools (Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016). Lower student enrollments may create the need to consider different choices in repertoire, re-write music parts, be innovative with scheduling, and to be creative with minimal resources (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005). Poor facilities or the lack of facilities may create additional teaching challenges (Jorgensen, 2008; Krueger, 2000; Spring, 2016).

In addition to regular teaching responsibilities, rural music teachers may have expectations from the school and community to lead activities and events outside of school because they may be the only one or one of just a few people with the skills and expertise (Bates, 2011; Conway, 2001; Hunt, 2009). They may take on responsibilities such as extra-curricular music, coaching, leading student club activities, or having another job (Bates, 2011; Hearn, 2009; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016; Spring, 2016). Some music teachers are not only responsible for teaching all K–12 music, but also for teaching other subjects (e.g., math and reading), being class advisors, and other activities such as directing the school play or coaching athletics (see Kuntzelman, 2016; Smith et al., under review).

With busy schedules and long distances between schools, teachers may feel a sense of isolation and lack collaborative opportunities with other music teachers (Isbell,

2005). Professional collaboration with other music teachers may be challenging due to long distances from colleges and universities, few personal performing opportunities, and minimal contact with other music teachers (Bates, 2011; Burkett, 2011; Kuntzleman, 2016). A lack of connection with music teacher peers may lead to feelings of isolation and inadequacy because there is little opportunity to reflect, read, and collaborate with other music teachers (Jorgensen, 2010; Krueger, 2000).

Feelings of isolation and inadequacy may contribute to a scarcity of interactions with the sources of self-efficacy. For example, music teachers may lack vicarious experiences that they might gain if they were able to observe other music teachers in action. Opportunities for verbal and social persuasion from distant music peers, mentors, or administrators may be limited by a lack of time due to busy and scattered schedules. Feelings of inadequacy may stem from limited enactive mastery experiences with teaching outside of music specialty areas, and could lead to anxiety or other affective and physiological states. Acknowledging potential teaching challenges in rural positions, music teachers' self-efficacy beliefs for teaching may be negatively affected.

Personal Context

In the rural Maine county where I taught at the time of this study, most of the schools were considered rural remote: more than 25 miles from an urbanized area, and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster (Provasnik et al., 2007). Many schools were K–8 (Kindergarten through grade 8) and had only one music teacher to instruct a range of classroom music, band, strings, and vocal music classes. In Maine, music teachers are certified to teach K–12 music; however, few teachers are equally qualified or confident to

teach all music subjects. For example, during my first several years of teaching, I felt confident teaching in the areas of band and jazz band, yet I was less confident about my skills and abilities teaching strings, chorus, and classroom music. Although I had taken the methods coursework for each discipline to qualify me to hold a K–12 music certification, strings, chorus, and classroom music were not my focus nor my specialization in my undergraduate degree.

To gain the needed skills, abilities, and confidence to teach music subjects outside of my specialization required focused effort. My method to gain understanding and to build confidence with my music teaching could be viewed through Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory. Observing other music teachers in action (i.e., vicarious experience), soliciting support from colleagues (i.e., verbal/social persuasion), cultivating a strong work ethic and self-confidence (i.e., physiological and affective states), engaging actively with student teaching, and what I refer to as "on the job training" (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) in my early teaching years were the most impactful. My interactions, experiences, and reflections on those experiences over the years revealed the challenges that I faced as well as how those challenges strengthened me, helped me to gain skills in my teaching, and built my self-efficacy as a teacher. As I reflected on my journey, I wondered how other music teachers in similar situations managed to navigate the challenges posed by the broad teaching assignments in rural schools.

Personal Justification

This study is an inquiry related to my personal experience with the rural music teacher phenomenon. I teach in a rural area, and I experience many of the same

conditions and issues detailed in the literature concerning rural music teachers and rural music programs. Teaching the breadth of grade ranges and music disciplines in which rural music teachers are required to become skilled can create challenges for those who may not have had adequate training and experiences. Some regional schools struggle with teacher commitment or to fill music teaching positions as a result. Given the number of challenges rural music teachers face, I sense that there is a state of “magic” for the rural music teacher who finds success. Through the lens of self-efficacy, I wish to discover what rural music teachers find challenging, what brings them a sense of accomplishment, how they believe in their teaching capabilities, and how they navigate the complex system of cultural, environmental, and situational factors to teach in a rural setting.

Local Context

There are two features that are pertinent to some rural school districts in Maine. First, rural economies can be place-bound, such as in a resort community. There can be valuable properties usually owned by seasonal residents that create a tax base for school funding. These high property values can make it difficult for permanent residents to afford to live in the community. Some teachers may struggle to find affordable housing nearby and may have a longer commute to work as the result—adding to work-related stress. A second point is that historically and particularly in the northeastern region of the United States, there has been an abundance of small schools in rural towns (Monk, 2007). In Maine, many small school districts continue to exist today, with each town operating as its own district (maine.gov, 2020a). The prevalence of small schools and small school districts makes it more likely that such a school will hire one music teacher to teach a

larger grade span in both specialty and out-of-specialty music areas. The county and local school system in which I worked represented both features. The school district was in a location that was a popular tourist destination that also included valuable real estate. Local news reports and informal communication with colleagues confirmed that there was a shortage of available affordable housing. Many staff lived outside of town, some commuting 10 to 25 miles to the school.

Second, historically there had been a tendency for small school units to exist in the northeast region of the United States. Our school system had retained small schools both physically and administratively to exercise a strong sense of local control. There were five K–8 schools in our school district—each with its own school committee—and all towns shared one school committee for the district high school. This organizational structure allowed each town and each individual K–8 school to exist as a school district (maine.gov, 2020a), and four of the five schools had one music teacher responsible for the entire K–8 music program.

Teaching Out of Specialty Area

In 2017, there were 39 states that certified music teachers K–12 for all music teaching disciplines, including general music, choir, band, strings, or any other music class (May et al., 2017). Teachers are certified for all areas regardless of their music specialization and training. As mentioned above, a music teacher in a rural school may be responsible for a wide range of music programming beyond their preservice focus and experience (Bates, 2011). Among all teachers in general, difficulty in filling positions in rural schools makes it more likely that any teacher may be required to teach outside of

their certification area (Monk, 2007).

Teachers who are assigned positions that do not fit their training or education may encounter the issue of *out of field teaching* (Ingersoll, 1998). Although many music teachers may receive K–12 music certification, those who teach music disciplines outside of their specialty area could be performing out of field teaching (Grieser & Hendricks, 2018). For example, if a teacher specialized in band and band instruments, then teaching chorus, general music, or strings could be considered a form of out of field teaching. To illustrate, Conway (2002) found that beginning music teachers had difficulties when teaching outside of their area of music specialty, something that Grieser & Hendricks (2018) suggested might affect the teacher's self-efficacy beliefs for teaching in that area.

Although a teacher may have a strong sense of instructional efficacy in one area, this belief may not transfer to another subject area (Bandura, 1997), which may have implications for music teachers who have teaching assignments and responsibilities outside of their music specialization. Researchers have shown that teachers working in their specialty area have a higher sense of teaching efficacy, and those assigned outside of their area of expertise have a lower sense of teacher efficacy (Ross, Cousins, Gadalla, & Hannay, 1999; Wagoner, 2011). For example, music teachers who instructed out-of-specialty string classes may lack fundamental content knowledge, utilize less challenging teaching strategies (Grieser, 2014), and experience lower levels of self-efficacy perceptions when teaching string classes (McCormick, 2008).

Summary

Music teachers in rural settings may be tasked with teaching multiple grade spans,

such as elementary, middle, and high school, and multiple music disciplines, such as general, choral, and instrumental music. Because rural teachers often teach at multiple school locations and they are often the only teacher in the school or district, they may take on a higher number of extra music and/or school responsibilities, as compared to their peers in larger school districts. Such demands are in addition to the more demanding schedule they maintain due to itinerant teaching and travel over greater distances between schools (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016; Spring, 2016). Given that rural music teachers maintain more varied teaching responsibilities, often have a higher number of extra-curricular music and school responsibilities, and travel long distances between schools, they may not have the time nor opportunity to collaborate with other music teachers in ways that might prevent feelings of isolation. Because a person's sense of efficacy in one area may not relate to another subject area, music teachers in rural settings may not have the same beliefs in their capabilities when teaching outside of their music specialty. These challenges that rural music teachers face may interfere with their ability to develop self-efficacy beliefs in the same ways or at the same frequency as their peers in non-rural districts; therefore, in the current study, I examined how music teachers perceive their music teaching self-efficacy and their commitment to rural music teaching.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to examine how rural music teachers perceive their self-efficacy and how self-efficacy in their jobs related to their commitment to rural music teaching. I used Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory to understand how teachers

perceived their levels of self-efficacy. Two research questions guided this study: 1) How are rural Maine music teachers' beliefs in their teaching abilities influenced by each of the four self-efficacy sources (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological/affective states), and 2) To what degree do the teachers report that their self-efficacy regarding out-of-specialty music teaching influences their commitment toward rural music teaching?

Method Overview

To develop a deeper understanding of self-efficacy source influences and commitment for rural music teachers, I used a collective case study approach. Conducting a case study allowed me to document the complexity of participants' perceptions and stories, and to utilize cross-case analysis to explore the diversity and similarities across multiple cases. I purposively selected teachers who would most likely provide rich data through their diversity of music teaching experiences; and who were the only music teacher in a school with the multiple age levels and multiple music subject areas. Four teachers taught K–8; one teacher taught grades 5–8, and one teacher taught grades 9–12. To collect data, I utilized a questionnaire, conducted both a focus group interview and individual interviews, and asked each participant to respond to journal prompts. Data were coded based on the a priori themes of the four self-efficacy sources: enactive experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. In addition, several additional sub-themes emerged from the data. Further information about the study design is provided in Chapter 3.

Rationale

Self-efficacy theory provides an avenue to better understand and inform music teaching practice. The four sources of self-efficacy—enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states—most often interact to influence and shape one’s perceived level of self-efficacy. The weight of influence from each of the four sources vary relative to the situation or performance task (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2014; Schunk & Usher, 2012; Usher & Pajares, 2006, 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). At the time of this study, there were no prior studies that had specifically examined the self-efficacy beliefs of rural music teachers through the four sources of self-efficacy. A study using self-efficacy theory to explore issues specific to rural music educators may help such teachers to better understand and develop self-efficacy beliefs in their teaching capabilities (desired outcomes) (Bandura, 1997) if such knowledge is used to inform professional development and mentorship. In the following sections, I review research about the four self-efficacy sources and consider how it might relate to rural music teaching, discuss theoretical and personal justifications for the study as they relate to out-of-specialty music teaching, and suggest how a study of rural music teachers might expand upon current theory and practice.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

Enactive mastery experiences are theorized to be the most powerful sources of self-efficacy because they are the most tangible source of information demonstrating success (Bandura, 1997; Schunk & Usher, 2012). Although music teachers’ beliefs in their self-efficacy increases with teaching experience (Biasutti & Concina, 2018;

Wagoner, 2011), rural music teachers may not have the teaching and learning experiences needed to effectively teach in rural areas (Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004). For example, a music teacher may have specialized in vocal music and may have taken some entry-level undergraduate methods classes for other music disciplines (band, strings, choral, general), yet in a rural setting they are expected to teach classes in an out-of-specialty area such as band or orchestra. The practice of out-of-specialty teaching is common in rural schools (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016); therefore, a study is needed to examine how rural music teachers may experience self-efficacy when teaching in out-of-specialty areas.

Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences are most effective when a person observes modeled actions by others with whom they perceive to have similar performance abilities (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016; Usher & Pajares, 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). Beneficial vicarious experiences for the rural music teacher, therefore, would involve modeled actions by peer music teachers. Due to geographic isolation, scarcity of music teachers, and scheduling considerations as teachers may be required to travel to multiple schools (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Isbell, 2005), rural music teachers may lack opportunities to observe other peer music teachers in action. This study is needed to gain a better understanding of various ways that rural music teachers might encounter vicarious experiences and how these may influence their self-efficacy beliefs.

Verbal and Social Persuasion

Verbal and social persuasion is most effective in developing self-efficacy

perceptions when coming from a credible source and when the communicated message is authentic, specific, and supports a person's capabilities (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016; 2018). Verbal and social persuasion may come from a variety of sources, such as administrators, mentors, teacher colleagues, parents of students, or community members; however, for the rural music teacher, interaction with peer music teachers may be limited due to distances between schools and because they are often the only music teacher in the district (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Kuntzeman, 2016). Furthermore, the types of support (i.e., verbal/social persuasion) from administrators may positively (deVries, 2013, 2017; Norton, 2013) or negatively (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Stipek, 2012) affect music teachers' self-efficacy perceptions. A study is needed to better understand how, and from what sources, rural music educators receive verbal and social persuasion and what may be the resulting impacts on their self-efficacy beliefs related to teaching.

Physiological and Affective States

Physiological and affective states influence people's self-efficacy perceptions when they assess their capabilities through emotional and physical domains. They judge their capabilities on their perceived physical abilities, stress and anxieties, and health conditions (Bandura, 1997). Environmental factors can influence how people interpret and discern meaning in their somatic functioning (physiological and affective states), thus affecting self-efficacy perceptions.

Viewing music teachers as local experts, people in rural communities and schools may place extra demands and expectations on teachers, which may contribute to stress and exhaustion (Hancock, 2008; Hunt, 2009; Kuntzeman, 2016). For example, music

teachers may be expected to have student performances for a multitude of school and community events (Hancock, 2008; Hunt, 2009; Kuntzelman, 2016). Further expectations may include performing at athletic events and festivals, instructing other subjects in addition to music, such as math or reading (Kuntzelman, 2016), and itinerant teaching and planning for multiple music programs (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017). These types of work expectations for the rural music teacher may impact their teaching self-efficacy perceptions related to their physiological and affective states. Furthermore, working in rural settings may lead to feelings of isolation and inadequacy (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Jorgensen, 2010; Krueger, 2000) where music teachers may have minimal contact with other music teachers (Bates, 2011; Burkett, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016).

Demanding schedules, itinerant teaching, and potential feelings of isolation and inadequacy, all due to the rural setting, may cause issues related to stress, anxiety, and fatigue (physiological and affective states); therefore, a study is needed to better understand how the unique challenges of rural music teaching positions may impact the self-efficacy beliefs of rural music teachers.

Theoretical Justification

Because self- efficacy beliefs can impact teacher effectiveness and student performance (Capara et. al., 2006; Day, 2008; Ross, 1992; Woolfolk Hoy & Davis, 2006), a focus of this study was to examine music teachers' personal self-efficacy. Self-efficacy theory provides a framework for understanding how people develop beliefs in their capabilities in order to effectuate desired outcomes. How people perceive their self-efficacy has a larger effect on their motivations and actions than actual ability (Bandura,

1997), which may have implications for rural music teacher self-efficacy beliefs and teaching effectiveness.

Teacher Self-Efficacy

Relationships exist between teachers' sense of self-efficacy and student learning and achievement. A teacher's personal teaching self-efficacy is more prominently associated with student achievement than with general teaching efficacy (Ross, 1992), while teachers' self-efficacy was found to correlate with student performance (Klassen & Tze, 2014). Teachers noted that positive self-efficacy beliefs made them feel as though they could favorably affect the learning and achievement of their students (Day, 2008). The effect of teachers' beliefs in their ability to adeptly handle professional challenges and execute a variety of teaching tasks and obligations (teaching behaviors) were shown to positively influence student academic outcomes (Capara et al., 2006; Muijs & Reynolds, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Furthermore, the level of a teacher's subject knowledge may impact teaching behaviors, which then affects student achievement (Muijs & Reynolds, 2015). For example, teaching outside one's area of specialty may have a negative effect on teacher self-efficacy, where teachers may use less challenging instruction methods, whereas teachers with greater beliefs in their self-efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves and their students when teaching in their area of expertise (Grieser & Hendricks, 2018; Ross et al., 1999). The issues of teacher self-efficacy levels, instructional behaviors, and subject knowledge all influence student learning and academic achievement; therefore, a study is needed to better understand how

the unique challenges of rural music teaching positions may impact the self-efficacy beliefs of rural music teachers.

Commitment

In studies that include K–12 teachers in general, teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy are an indicator of a commitment to the teaching profession (Coladarci, 1992; Day, 2008), and teachers with more years of teaching experience tend to demonstrate a stronger commitment to teaching (Chan et al., 2008). Among newer teachers, those who receive adequate teacher preparation (i.e., enactive experiences), mentor support (i.e., verbal/social persuasion), and support to promote teacher self-efficacy perceptions in teaching abilities (i.e., verbal/social persuasion) are more likely to persist in teaching (Rots et al., 2007). Teachers with lower perceptions of instructional efficacy have a weaker level of teaching commitment (Day, 2008; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

A commitment to engaged teaching could be considered an affective state related to a teacher's level of personal investment in their students and their school (Day, 2008; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy demonstrate a greater investment in their teaching practice. As Day (2008) explained:

Teachers who are committed have an enduring belief that they can make a difference to the learning lives and achievements of students (efficacy and agency) through who they are (their identity), what they know (knowledge, strategies, skills) and how they teach (their beliefs, attitudes, personal and

professional values embedded in and expressed through their behaviors in practice settings). (p. 254)

Teachers are more likely to show a strong commitment to engaged teaching when self-efficacy is bolstered by opportunities to observe other teachers (i.e., vicarious experiences) and when they are supported by their principal, their colleagues (Day, 2008; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999), and their family members (i.e., verbal/social persuasion) (Day, 2008). Committed teachers are more likely to cooperate and collaborate with others (i.e., verbal/social persuasion), and to seek ways to work towards both schoolwide and personal professional goals (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Behaviors of committed teachers could include demonstrations of passion for teaching, willingness to invest extra time outside of the regular school day, focusing on individual student academic and/or emotional needs, being proactive with ongoing professional development, transmitting knowledge and values to students, and engaging with the school community (Crosswell, 2006). Because teacher self-efficacy beliefs affect commitment to teaching and a commitment to engaged teaching, a study is needed to better understand how rural music teacher self-efficacy relates to committed teaching.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy and Commitment

Enactive mastery experiences are the most impactful for influencing high levels of self-efficacy beliefs in teaching music. For example, general music teachers in their first years of teaching reported that music teaching accomplishments contributed the most to self-efficacy beliefs in their music teaching, while verbal and social persuasion from administrators, teachers, and parents' vicarious experiences through professional

development also contributed (de Vries, 2013). For choral teachers, years of choral teaching experience (Clark, 2019) and for instrumental teachers, the success of previous instrumental teaching experience (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) (Regier, 2019) positively influence teachers' self-efficacy.

Music teachers report lower levels of self-efficacy in the first years of teaching, and higher levels of self-efficacy as they gain more teaching experience (Potter, 2021; Wagoner, 2011; West & Frey-Clark, 2019). For early-stage music teachers, lower self-efficacy levels were attributed to limited experiences during student teaching (Wagoner, 2011). As teachers gained experience, they had more opportunities to acquire skills from observation of and collaboration with other teachers (de Vries, 2013; Potter, 2021), which resulted in higher reported self-efficacy levels. These findings aligned with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy source influences of enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, and verbal and social persuasion for building self-efficacy perceptions.

Music teachers who communicated higher levels of teaching self-efficacy are more likely to remain committed to their profession and their job (de Vries, 2013; Hancock, 2008), whereas teachers with lower perceptions of instructional efficacy have a weaker level of teaching commitment (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020). Music teachers may typically spend extra time outside of the school day with activities such as rehearsals, performances, and festivals which may show a greater professional commitment; however, additional time working may cause greater stress (Hancock, 2008). Wagoner (2011) found that music teacher commitment levels remained steady with a slight increase across years of teaching experience, perhaps due to the concept of commitment

being constructed during pre-service studies and student teaching, and that commitment may be a more fixed rather than a malleable characteristic. In the same study, no significant differences were found for music teacher self-efficacy or teaching commitment by grade level (elementary, middle, high school), subject area (general, choral, instrumental), or location (urban, suburban, rural) (Wagoner, 2011). Furthermore, no studies were found that investigated self-efficacy and commitment for music teachers who taught multiple music disciplines (general, choral, instrumental) and grade spans (elementary, middle, high school). Because of the potential impacts to teaching practices and student learning, and because there is a lack of literature about music teacher self-efficacy and commitment in rural areas where teachers may be expected to teach multiple grade ranges and music subject areas, a study is needed to understand rural music teacher self-efficacy and commitment levels.

Environment

In social cognitive theory, triadic reciprocal causation depicted a bidirectional influence between three elements: personal factors (cognitive, affective, biological); behavior; and external environment (Bandura, 1986); therefore, the rural teaching context may represent an environmental factor that affects music teacher self-efficacy perceptions. How rural music teachers view environmentally situated opportunities or hinderances may dictate what actions they take, how much effort they will give, their resilience in the face of obstacles and adversity, how they respond to stressors, and what results they realize (see Bandura, 1997). People with low self-efficacy estimations may not put forth effort when faced with a difficult task, whereas people with higher self-

efficacy beliefs may be more likely to visualize their potential to persevere through a challenging task (Bandura, 2006a). In the case of the rural music teacher, the environmental and situational factors are important to examine to develop a better understanding of teacher self-efficacy and to find ways to better support rural music teacher self-efficacy and teaching practice.

Out of Specialty

Music teacher self-efficacy is influenced by a combination of personal self-efficacy and level of expertise (Biasutti & Concina, 2018). Because the level of expertise is a contributing factor to self-efficacy beliefs, there may be implications for music teachers who teach areas of music where they are not specialized. In a rural school setting, it is often the case for teachers to have wide-ranging teaching assignments across many grade spans (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Spring, 2016). Although music teachers may have specialty training in one music area (i.e., vocal), they may be certified to teach K–12 in all music areas (general music, vocal, band, and orchestra), likely instructing in areas outside of their specific music specialty.

People who are not prepared for teaching music in rural positions could experience a lowered sense of both self-efficacy and job commitment (Wagoner, 2011). Music teachers may likely need to teach outside their area of specialty, yet may not have received adequate pre-service training for working in rural settings due to university pre-service programming and certification related specializations. Once hired, there may not be adequate teacher induction workshops or professional development to help them acclimate to the local customs, culture, and expectations (Malta, 2004) which may also

contribute to lower self-efficacy and lower commitment (Ballantyne, 2007; Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017). Through this study, I seek to investigate how both specialty and out-of-specialty teaching in rural music positions may affect teachers' self-efficacy perceptions and commitment to teaching.

Conclusion

Research about the development of rural music teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may offer new insights into teacher effectiveness, student performance, and commitment to teaching. Because one's sense of efficacy in one area may not relate to another subject area (Bandura, 1997), music teachers in rural settings may not have the same beliefs in their capabilities when teaching outside of their specific music specialty. In rural positions, inadequate enactive mastery experiences with out-of-specialty teaching assignments combined with the effects from little opportunity for vicarious experiences and/or verbal and social persuasion from observation of and interaction with other music peers may contribute to lower self-efficacy beliefs. A lower self-efficacy belief may lead teachers to feelings of isolation and inadequacy which then could affect teachers' anxiety or other affective and physiological states. Furthermore, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may affect their perseverance in the face of obstacles and stress and may impact their commitment to teaching.

Rural music teachers' sense of self-efficacy may influence their teaching behaviors, may affect student achievement and performance, and may be influenced by their level of subject knowledge. In this study, I sought to investigate from what sources rural music teachers may develop their personal self-efficacy and to what degree they

perceive their self-efficacy across their teaching domains. I also aimed to gain a better understanding of their commitment to the teaching profession and their sense of engaged teaching through the lens of self-efficacy.

By examining the efficacy beliefs of rural music teachers through the four sources of self-efficacy, my intent was to help teachers better understand the factors that contribute to self-efficacy, the role self-efficacy plays in their teaching, and to encourage educators to discover new practices to develop their teaching practice and to foster student learning. Because self-efficacy is individually mediated and malleable (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2009), metacognition of self-efficacy sources may bring greater insights for teachers to develop and grow personal self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997) with implications to improve teaching practice and positively affect student learning, musical performance, and commitment to teaching. In this study, I aimed to expand on Bandura's self-efficacy work by investigating the intersections of personal factors, behavior, and environment to better understand how rural music teachers cognitively interpret self-efficacy sources and what music teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are in relation to teaching in a rural context.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A person's self-efficacy beliefs affect what actions they take based on how they perceive their ability to perform a certain task. People with high self-efficacy perceptions are more likely to give greater effort and persevere through adversity, challenges, and stress (Bandura, 1997). The role that self-efficacy may have for rural music teachers is important because of the possible environmentally situated and socio-cultural aspects of teaching in a rural area. In this literature review I discuss self-efficacy sources, explore literature related to teaching and music teaching self-efficacy, and review issues related to teaching in a rural area.

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

Enactive mastery experiences are the most powerful for influencing a person's self-efficacy belief. People who have successful experiences by persevering through difficult endeavors build self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Although music teachers' beliefs in their self-efficacy may increase with teaching experience (i.e., enactive mastery experience) (Biasutti & Concina, 2018; Wagoner, 2011), rural music teachers may lack previous teaching and learning experiences needed to effectively teach in rural areas (Kuntzleman, 2016; Maltas, 2004). Teaching outside of one's music specialty area is common in rural schools (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzleman, 2016); therefore, enactive mastery experiences may play a pivotal role for influencing the self-efficacy beliefs of rural music teachers.

Specialty and Out-of-Specialty Music Teaching

In most states (including Maine), music teachers may be certified to teach K–12 music for all music disciplines, regardless of their area of music specialization (May et al., 2017). A music teacher in a rural school may be responsible for teaching a wide range of music programming beyond their preservice focus and experience, which may require an expertise for teaching across grades level and subject areas (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004; Spring, 2016). For example, rural teaching assignments may include general music, band, choir, orchestra, and other outside of school activities, music or otherwise. People in rural music teaching positions must manage their time for adequate teaching preparation, adapt curriculum and music for smaller ensembles and classes, and be flexible to change focus quickly in order to teach the diversity of classes and age levels across a school day (Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016). The demanding schedule, heavy workload, and diverse responsibilities may lead novice music teachers to experience feeling as if they are a “one-man-band” (Ballantyne, 2007, p. 185) as they navigate the weight and complexities of job expectations and responsibilities. Rich (2004) described the high workload and possible itinerant teaching of music teachers as *intensification*—an issue heightened by marginalization and isolation which was found to make it more difficult for music teachers to invest the time needed to effectively teach students. The aforementioned examples illustrate how the lack of teacher training and experience (enactive mastery experiences) from teacher preparation, and the resulting emotional stress (physiological/affective states) could impact rural music teachers’ sense of self-efficacy.

Teachers who are given music teaching positions or assignments that do not fit their specific training or education may encounter the issue of *out of field teaching* (Ingersoll, 1998). Although a teacher may be certified for grades K–12 and all music areas, they may not have adequate training or experience to competently teach outside of their specialty area, which may be a form of out of field teaching (Grieser & Hendricks, 2018). For example, Conway (2002) found that early career music teachers struggled when teaching music classes that were outside their undergraduate specialty area, which could negatively affect the teacher’s self-efficacy perceptions for out-of-specialty music teaching.

Researchers have shown that teachers working in their specialty area have a higher sense of teaching efficacy, whereas those assigned outside of their area of expertise have a lower sense of teacher efficacy (Andrade, 2022; Regier, 2021; Ross et al., 1999; Wagoner, 2011). For example, researchers found music teachers who instructed out-of-specialty string classes lacked fundamental content knowledge and used less challenging teaching strategies (Grieser, 2014) and reported lower levels of confidence when teaching their string classes (McCormick, 2008). Similarly, music student teachers described feeling nervous and having low teaching confidence when placed in teaching assignments that were in out-of-specialty areas rather than in their specialty music areas (Regier, 2019). Furthermore, music teachers that had gained more teaching experience (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) reported higher self-efficacy levels than newer teachers (Andrade, 2022; Biasutti & Concina, 2018; Potter, 2021; Regier, 2021; Wagoner, 2011).

New music teachers may experience “praxis shock” (Ballantyne, 2007, p. 184) due to a dissonance between their pre-service preparation, teaching expectations, and the rural teaching experience. The author described two factors that contribute to the praxis shock for new music teachers: (a) a sense of isolation, both physical and professional; and (b) demanding workloads and extra responsibilities associated with the music program. The sense of praxis shock could be effectuated from the discrepancies between student teaching in a larger, well-resourced school and small, rural schools that may struggle for resources (Maltas, 2004), where some new teachers may not have been adequately prepared for the diversity of teaching assignments expected for teaching in a rural area (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016). For example, some of the experiences related to rural teaching that may not be addressed during undergraduate studies may include itinerant teaching; the need to re-write music parts to accommodate small-sized bands; and managing an overly busy, multi-level teaching schedule that may encompass elementary general music, band, chorus, and strings (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016).

Fostering Student Self-Efficacy. Music teachers can help students to build self-efficacy for musical development through empowering experiences from the sources of self-efficacy (enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion, physiological/affective states) and to build the cognitive processes that help students develop stronger self-beliefs and persistence (Hendricks, 2009, 2016; McCormick & McPherson, 2003; McPherson & McCormick, 2006). Enactive mastery experiences have the greatest influence in developing positive beliefs in music

performance (Hendricks, 2009, 2014; Hendricks & Smith, 2018; Hendricks et al., 2016). Music teachers can use the self-efficacy sources to foster self-efficacy perceptions through goal setting for activities and experiences (i.e., enactive mastery experiences), providing peer and adult modeling (i.e., vicarious experiences), offering feedback to promote learning growth (i.e., verbal/social persuasion), and creating a stress and anxiety-free atmosphere (i.e., physiological and affective states) to optimize learning (Hendricks, 2016). Fostering student self-efficacy could also be used to empower a collective efficacy for music ensembles by fostering motivation and persistence for students to work through musical challenges (Ray & Hendricks, 2019).

Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences are most effective when a person observes successful modeled actions by others with whom they perceive to have similar performance abilities, whereas modeled failures tend to lower the observer's self-efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Model similarity extends to characteristics such as age, ethnicity, and gender as influential attributes to predictive performance perceptions (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008). *Masterly modeling*, viewing others' effective and successful task performance, may be more beneficial for people with high self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). People may be more likely to boost their self-efficacy perceptions by observing the success of someone—who is similar in situation or performance as viewed through “social comparative inference” (p. 87)—who overcomes difficulties through persistent effort, called *coping modeling* (Bandura, 1997; Usher & Pajares, 2008). Modeling progressive mastery of a skill may be most effective for people

who have a low self-efficacy perception for a certain task (Bandura, 1997).

Vicarious experiences may have both positive and negative influences upon self-efficacy perceptions. Observing repeated failures of a task performance or viewing someone who has minimal competence performing a task may lower self-efficacy perceptions (Bandura, 1986, 1997; Hendricks, 2016). Researchers found that college vocal students reported positive vicarious source input from being grouped with students of similar ability levels; however, some students indicated negative influence on self-efficacy perception by comparing themselves to peers of similar gender or voice type (Lewis, 2018; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022). In a study of high school students' self-efficacy beliefs during an orchestra music festival, relative to gender, seating placement, and an environment of competition versus an environment of social support, all students experienced an increase in self-efficacy beliefs; however, the effect was delayed in females, and a competitive environment had a negative impact on female students. The author noted that when both male and female students are given the opportunity to demonstrate performance capability, there may be no difference in reported self-beliefs between males and females (Hendricks, 2014).

Isolation

Researchers have shown a number of factors associated with isolation in rural areas that may impact opportunities for teachers to observe modeling by peer music teachers. Geographic isolation in rural areas means greater distances between schools and fewer modeling opportunities among music teacher peers. Scheduling times to observe fellow music teachers may be challenging because of varied schedules and traveling

considerations due to itinerant teaching and teaching part-time at one or more schools. Rural teachers may be the only music teacher in a school or school district, and therefore lack local music colleagues. Rural music teachers may have a demanding schedule with a heavy workload, which may not allow sufficient time to schedule observations or travel the distances between schools (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Bautista et al., 2021; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016). Furthermore, the physical location of the music room within a school building may lead to a sense of physical isolation due to the distance from other classrooms and people in the school (Ballantyne, 2007; Krueger, 2000; Sindberg, 2011).

Verbal and Social Persuasion

Verbal feedback is most influential when received from a person who is perceived as credible and knowledgeable about the activity or task (see Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000). It would follow, then, that similarly situated rural music teachers may be able to offer meaningful influence from verbal and social persuasion source influence. Verbal and social persuasion has been found to be effective in developing self-efficacy perceptions when it is authentic, specific, and supports a person's capabilities (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016, 2018). Researchers have found that novice teachers welcome verbal persuasion as helpful, whereas experienced teachers did not perceive it to be as valuable (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006).

Principal Feedback

Administrators play a vital role in teachers' professional development through providing personal support, paying attention to teachers' needs, building trust, and

offering opportunities for teachers to grow professionally (Harr, 2007). A lack of support from administrators or supervisors has adverse effects on teachers' self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Stipek, 2012), whereas music teachers who receive positive administrative support feel empowered to overcome obstacles (Krueger, 2000) and indicate greater self-efficacy levels (deVries, 2013, 2017; Norton, 2013). To the contrary, teachers do not form self-efficacy estimations based on administrator influence where meaningful feedback and evaluations are minimal (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006).

Peer Teacher Feedback

Persuasive statements are most effective when a person has confidence in the credibility of the persuader because of their perceived skill level in the task or activity (Bandura, 1997). For example, connecting and sharing ideas with music peers in person or online may have a positive influence on teacher self-efficacy (de Vries, 2017). Verbal and social persuasion from peers that was positive (Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022), specific (Hardy, 2014; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Schmidt & DeShon, 2010), and constructive (Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al. 2022) boosted self-efficacy perceptions. Verbal and social persuasion from teaching colleagues is more influential for early career teachers' self-efficacy beliefs than for experienced teachers (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2006).

Isolation. Rural isolation may also impact opportunities for teachers to interact or collaborate for many of the reasons outlined above in the vicarious experiences section. Long travel distances between schools, itinerant teaching, and being the only teacher in a

school or school district hampers opportunities to interact with other music teachers (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Bautista et al., 2021; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016; Rich, 2004). The physical distance between the music room and other classrooms within the building, and teacher meetings lacking dialog about music teaching issues contributed to a sense of isolation for music teachers (Sindberg, 2011; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005).

To address music teacher isolation, online interactions may be an avenue to support verbal and social persuasion influences for rural music teachers. For example, online mentoring for music teachers has been found to bolster teacher self-efficacy (Branch, 2018; de Vries, 2017) and commitment to teaching (Branch, 2018); therefore, online mentoring support may benefit music teachers in rural areas (Bautista et al., 2021; Branch, 2018; Koerner, 2017; Monk, 2007; West & Frey-Clark, 2019). The support and influence from a mentor were shown to be helpful for building music teacher confidence, especially for novice teachers (Ballantyne, 2007; Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Branch, 2018; Conway, 2001). Furthermore, several researchers advocated for online communities to support music teacher collaboration and professional development in rural areas (Bates, 2011; Bautista et al., 2021; Burkett, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Monk, 2007).

Community Feedback

Teaching in a rural community may offer opportunities for positive connection and social interaction with others, where interaction with people in the community may be vital to supporting the music teacher and music program (Hunt, 2009). People in rural

communities often support school music programs and musical events, and give positive affirmations to the music teacher, principal, and other community members about the music program (Spring, 2014; VanDeusen, 2016). Spring (2016) suggested that building relationships with students, co-workers, parents, and community members may build “positive feelings of belonging” (p. 96), which may positively affect the music teacher’s quality of life in a rural setting (Bates, 2011; Spring, 2016; VanDeusen, 2016). Furthermore, teacher self-efficacy beliefs may be positively influenced when teachers perceive parents to be productive partners in student learning (Potter, 2021; Stipek, 2012), with verbal and social persuasion from parents and community members being influential for novice teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2006). Based on this literature, it may be possible that verbal and social persuasion from people in the community could influence music teachers’ sense of self-efficacy.

Physiological and Affective States

People may experience both positive and negative physiological and affective states related to how they assess their capabilities through their emotional and physical domains (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). They judge their capabilities on their perceived physical abilities, stress and anxieties, and health conditions. When faced with challenges, people with low self-efficacy perceptions may experience anxiety, fatigue, or stress. People can build positive self-efficacy perceptions in their abilities to be successful in future challenges by having positive enactive mastery experiences overcoming such challenges (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996), and thus mediating the negative influence on physiological and affective states.

Stress, Nervousness, Frustration

Stress related to classroom management issues and poor student behaviors may negatively affect self-efficacy perceptions (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Conversely, teachers with high self-efficacy levels may be positively affected by work and student-related stress (Harris, 2017). In such cases, teachers believe they can manage student behavior challenges based on their confidence built from previous teaching experience.

Music teachers face challenges in rural settings that may influence physiological and affective states. For example, teachers who planned and taught a diverse music program across many disciplines and grade levels reported that it was difficult to adequately prepare lessons, which lead to physical exhaustion and mental and emotional stress (Kuntzleman, 2016). Overly busy schedules in rural music teaching positions may not provide enough time to teach effectively, which may lead to stress and frustration (Bates, 2011; Ballantyne, 2007; Rich, 2004). School expectations for the music teacher may include student performances for school and community events, which also may contribute to stress and exhaustion (Hancock, 2008; Hunt, 2009; Kuntzleman, 2016). There may be extra time-consuming responsibilities outside of the school day, such as athletic events, music festivals, and extra-curricular music ensembles, which may add additional stress beyond the regular work expectations (Kuntzleman, 2016; Smith et al. under review).

Role conflict may create added stress for music teachers, which could include tensions between personal and professional roles (Kuntzleman, 2016; Scheib, 2003). Music teachers may face challenges balancing personal and/or family roles with outside

of school responsibilities, such as directing various performing ensembles. Furthermore, there could be tensions between the role as an educator and the role as a performing ensemble director. For example, in some rural communities there may be a focus on having music performed at athletic events rather than consideration given to music teaching and student learning (Scheib, 2003).

Furthering the concept of role conflict, some teachers in rural areas may divide their time and efforts by having to travel to several schools and plan for and run multiple music programs, from which they may experience exhaustion (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017). Other teachers may instruct different subjects in addition to music, such as math or reading, and may be especially taxed by the demands of teaching the wide range of ages and disciplines commonly found in rural schools (Kuntzelman, 2016). Music teachers who teach subjects in addition to music, and sometimes in different schools, expressed that they felt divided in their support between schools, which negatively impacted social connections and contributed to feelings of isolation (Conway & Christensen, 2006; Maltas, 2004). The resulting influence on social connections and the sense of isolation may negatively affect teachers' self-efficacy perceptions from verbal/social and physiological/affective sources.

Isolation. Music teachers in rural settings may have limited contact with other music teachers (Bates, 2011; Burkett, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016), which may lead to feelings of isolation and inadequacy (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Jorgensen, 2010; Krueger, 2000). In addition to feelings of isolation from physical distances, Maltas (2004) found that rural music teachers also expressed that they felt emotionally isolated

because of the dissonance they felt between their rural teaching experience and their pre-conceived ideals for a music program which were often reinforced by people in professional reference groups (i.e., music professors, music teachers outside of the local school district, festival judges and clinicians, professional organizations). Rural music teachers may experience “an internal struggle” (Maltas, 2004, p. 159), because they want to be viewed as a valuable professional, yet they often express anger and frustration as they try to reconcile the limitations they face in the rural setting.

Perseverance

According to Bandura (1997), acquiring knowledge and skills requires “perseverant effort in the face of difficulties and setbacks” (p. 72). Theoretically, positive self-efficacy perceptions strengthen resiliency and beliefs in one’s capability to be successful. In new situations, efficacious people can persevere, despite obstacles, through a sustained effort to proactively engage with positive and constructive courses of action. People who have low self-efficacy estimations may not put forth effort when faced with setbacks, may become negative about their ability to affect change, and may cease efforts when tasks become difficult. People with high self-efficacy beliefs may be more likely to have positive self-appraisals of their capabilities, and remain motivated to persevere through a challenging task. Among the four self-efficacy sources, positive enactive mastery experiences through difficult endeavors have the greatest influence for building one’s self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997).

Commitment to Rural Teaching

Music teachers who report higher levels of teaching efficacy are more likely to remain in the profession or stay in their job (Hancock, 2008, 2016). This finding is supported by research in general education where teachers' beliefs in their teaching efficacy were positively related to a commitment to teaching (Burke et al., 2013; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003). For example, teachers who have strong self-efficacy perceptions and are engaged in their teaching practice are more likely to remain in their profession (Chesnut & Burley, 2015). In another study, newly graduated teachers who demonstrated high self-efficacy levels were more likely to show a high commitment level to teaching (Rots et al., 2007). For music teachers, those who were in their first five years of teaching reported lower levels of self-efficacy and moderate levels of commitment to teaching; however, self-efficacy levels continually increased over time as they gained experience while commitment levels remained stable with slight increases over time (Wagoner, 2011). The increases in self-efficacy over time were likely the result of having opportunities to acquire teaching skills from observations (i.e., vicarious experience) and collaborations (i.e., verbal/social persuasion) with other teachers (deVries, 2013; Potter, 2021).

Administrators, mentors, pre-service preparation, and professional development may play a vital role in supporting teacher self-efficacy and commitment. Support from administrators is a key factor in contributing to music teacher self-efficacy. For example, principals may play an important role for new teachers by demonstrating personal support, paying attention to teachers' needs, building trust (i.e., verbal/social persuasion),

and providing opportunities to grow professionally (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) (Harr, 2007), while principals who empower teachers with autonomy and independence for pedagogical decision-making support teacher efficacy (Hancock, 2008). Gardner (2010) supports this finding for teachers in general, where teacher autonomy for instructional delivery and student evaluation positively affected teacher commitment. Additionally, researchers found that the leadership and support that principals provide is key to supporting teacher efficacy and commitment (Crosswell, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Krueger, 2000; Redman, 2015); whereas a lack of principal support may have a negative influence on teacher commitment (Crosswell, 2006; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Worthy, 2005).

New teachers may benefit from receiving verbal and social persuasion support from mentors. In several studies, experienced teachers who were mentors were found to be vital in terms of building confidence for new teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Krueger, 2000) and supporting teaching self-efficacy perceptions (Redman, 2015; Rots et al., 2007) and commitment (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Rots et al., 2007). Furthermore, teacher pre-service preparation and school-based professional development and induction programs (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) play a role in supporting teacher commitment (Redman, 2015). In music teacher studies, teachers noted that workshops relevant to music (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) were meaningful and kept them engaged in their careers, (Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Burkett, 2011), improved their teaching skills, and increased positive attitudes for teaching (Burkett, 2011).

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

A commitment to engaged teaching relates to a teacher's personal investment in their teaching practice (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Day, 2008), their students, and their school (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Day, 2008; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Crosswell (2006) described a commitment to engaged teaching as follows: "Commitment to the work of teaching requires teachers to consider constant change as consistent opportunity, to construct knowledge as organic and dynamic rather than static, and to consider themselves as on-going learners rather than master practitioners" (pp. 228-229). Teachers with high self-efficacy levels are more likely to show a strong commitment to engaged teaching as demonstrated by their belief that they can make a difference in student learning and by conveying their knowledge and skills through effective instructional practices (Day, 2008). Committed teachers are more likely to cooperate and collaborate with others (i.e., verbal/social persuasion), and to seek ways to work towards both schoolwide and personal professional goals (Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999).

Crosswell (2006) suggested that teacher self-efficacy contributes to engaged teaching commitment through six characteristics:

- “1. a passion
2. an investment of extra time
3. a focus on students
4. maintaining professional knowledge
5. engagement with the school community
6. transmitting values and beliefs” (p. 208).

Teachers show passion through emotional connections with their teaching area, students, or their teacher identity. Teachers who are committed are willing to invest extra time outside of the regular school hours to improve planning and instruction. Committed teachers who focus on students are concerned with student academic improvements and their emotional well-being, which was also supported by other researchers (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2007; Crosswell, 2006; Gardner, 2010; Harris, 2017; Regier, 2019; Woolfolk Hoy & Davis, 2006). Ongoing professional development is important for committed teachers to continue to grow their knowledge, ideas, and perspectives. Teachers demonstrate commitment by engaging with the school community through professional leadership roles and becoming involved with school activities. Commitment may also involve how teachers perceive the weighty responsibility as a transmitter of knowledge, beliefs, and values to students (Crosswell, 2006).

The collective characteristics described above regarding commitment to engaged teaching may be understood through the lens of self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1997), a person's belief in their capabilities to perform a certain task is realized through acquiring knowledge and skills through persistent and perseverant effort despite challenges and setbacks. An efficacious person believes in their capability to be successful and can proactively engage with positive and constructive courses of action. People with high self-efficacy beliefs will tend to seek challenging tasks and "display high staying power in those pursuits" (Bandura, 1997, p. 160). It would appear that a teacher's agency to be proactively and positively engaged to improve their teaching practice, to promote student learning and well-being, and to be engaged with their school

community would demonstrate a commitment to engaged teaching.

Community

Viewing rural communities and their music programs through a place-based lens welcomes local traditions and close ties between people in an organic way (Bates, 2013). Rural place-based music programs provide an avenue for students and schools to connect with local communities and celebrate local music and diversity. For example, school music performances are important in that they provide a rare opportunity for live music and one of the few times where residents can come together at the school to interact as a community (Brook, 2011).

How teachers interact with a rural community may positively or negatively influence their affective states. The differences between the expectations of a rural community and what music teacher expectations may be, based on their training and enculturation, could create conflict about the philosophy and role of a rural music program; therefore, it is important for teachers to be open-minded about adapting their teaching and music program to meet the needs of the community (Maltas, 2004). Music teachers have the opportunity to be mindful of both the geographical and social place of rural locales, which may help to validate, inspire, and support local musical identities (Corbett, 2016; Isbell, 2005). Furthermore, teaching music in a rural setting may be meaningful and fulfilling when one embraces the essence of the rural experience (Isbell, 2005; Kuntzleman, 2016). For example, researchers found that music teachers embraced rural living because of the relaxed and quiet environment and the sense of community (Bates, 2011; Kuntzleman, 2016; Spring, 2016), which could positively affect their

physiological and affective states.

Verbal and social persuasion may influence teachers in a rural community as they build relationships with students, school staff, and community members. Teaching in rural areas may provide opportunities to gain a more detailed knowledge of students, parents, and the community (Bates, 2011), where music teachers could develop a sense of belonging and build relationships that create strong connections within their community (Malta, 2004; Spring, 2016). Being cognizant of the local community's place-based strengths and values allows teachers to construct meaningful learning opportunities for students and work to meet local expectations (Carroll, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016). For example, in a study of rural teachers in Vermont, participants described that rural communities created a positive environment for teachers to gain more detailed knowledge of students and their families. These connections helped teachers to design more meaningful instruction for students (Carroll, 2011). Small class sizes in rural schools may support an environment where teachers can foster relationships and give more attention to students (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016). Furthermore, in small towns, teachers are able to make connections with students in the community setting outside of school (Carroll, 2011).

Summary

This literature review addressed the potential influences of the four self-efficacy sources as related to rural music teaching. Teaching in rural areas may present several challenges for music teachers. In many rural schools and school districts, music teachers may be expected to teach outside of their specialty area (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005;

Kuntzelman, 2016), where a lack of enactive mastery experiences and the resulting physiological and affective states may negatively influence rural music teacher self-efficacy beliefs. For example, teachers working in their specialty area have a higher sense of teaching efficacy, whereas those assigned outside of their area of expertise have a lower sense of teacher efficacy beliefs (Andrade, 2022; Regier, 2021; Ross et al., 1999; Wagoner, 2011). “Praxis shock” (Ballantyne, 2007, p. 184) from demanding workloads and isolation may affect new teachers as a result of the differences between their pre-service preparation, teaching expectations, and the rural teaching experience. Opportunities to observe (i.e., vicarious experiences) and to interact and dialog (i.e., verbal/social persuasion) with other music teachers may be limited because of isolation due to geographic distances, demanding schedules, and available time (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Bautista et al., 2021; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016). In the realm of physiological and affective states, rural music teachers may experience low self-efficacy perceptions due to stress, nervousness, or frustration. Stress may come from teaching a diverse and demanding schedule and extra responsibilities outside of the school day (Kuntzelman, 2016), or from a packed schedule with not enough time for effective teaching (Bates, 2011; Ballantyne, 2007; Rich, 2004). Teachers may experience exhaustion from role conflict due to itinerant teaching between several schools (Ballantyne, & Zhukov, 2017) or teaching additional subjects, such as math or reading (Kuntzelman, 2016). Teachers may also experience emotional isolation from limited contact with other music teachers (Bates, 2011; Burkett, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016).

Music teachers with higher self-efficacy levels for teaching are more likely to

remain committed to the teaching profession (Wagoner, 2011), which is reflected in studies on teachers in general education (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Rots et al., 2007). Positive support from administrators and mentors (i.e., verbal/social persuasion) play a role in supporting teacher efficacy and commitment (Crosswell, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2003; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003; Krueger, 2000; Redman, 2015); whereas a lack of principal support had a negative influence on teacher commitment (Crosswell, 2006; Madsen & Hancock, 2002; Worthy, 2005).

Teachers with high self-efficacy levels may demonstrate a commitment to engaged teaching through a personal investment in their teaching practice (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Day, 2008), their students, and their school (Chesnut & Burley, 2015; Day, 2008; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Crosswell (2006) described how teacher self-efficacy contributed to engaged teaching commitment through six characteristics: “a passion; an investment of extra time; a focus on students; maintaining professional knowledge; engagement with the school community; transmitting values and beliefs” (p. 208). Teachers who are committed to engaged teaching are personally invested in students’ academic and emotional well-being (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2007; Crosswell, 2006; Gardner, 2010; Harris, 2017; Regier, 2019). Aligning with Bandura (1997), teachers who demonstrate a commitment to engaged teaching have the agency to be proactive with their teaching practice through perseverant effort and with positive courses of action.

Rural place-based music programs provide an avenue for students and schools to connect with local communities and celebrate local music and diversity (Brook, 2011). It is important for rural music teachers to be mindful of community needs (Maltas, 2004),

where understanding the community values may help to support and inspire local music identities (Corbett, 2016; Isbell, 2005). Building relationships with students, school staff, and community members may provide opportunities to gain a more detailed knowledge of students and the community (Bates, 2011; Maltas, 2004; Spring, 2016), where music teachers can construct meaningful learning opportunities for students and work to meet local expectations (Carroll, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016). Furthermore, some music teachers have embraced rural living because of the relaxed and quiet environment and the sense of community (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Spring, 2016), from which some rural music teachers may personally benefit from the resulting physiological and affective states.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this collective case study was to seek understanding of perceived levels of self-efficacy among music educators who are currently teaching in a rural setting. Stake (1995) defined case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi), and explained that “the case is a specific, a complex, functioning thing” (p. 2).

Documenting the complexity of an individual’s perceptions requires a research approach through which a researcher can effectively engage a participant to address the depth and richness of their perceptions, experiences, and stories. A case study allows in-depth investigation of personal and grounded contexts and can yield clear and consistent depictions of participants’ stories (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 1995).

According to Stake (1995), in a collective case study, the researcher has the same goal as with a singular case study: the aim is to develop a deep understanding of the phenomenon. I had established a framework for the case to be studied—self-efficacy source influence and commitment of rural music teachers—making this an *instrumental case study*, where the researcher is interested in learning more about a broader phenomenon rather than a single case circumstance (Stake, 1995). The collected data were then analyzed in-depth across six cases. For this collective case study, selecting a group of rural music teachers with varied rural teaching experiences provided opportunities to comprehensively examine diverse cases to understand the broader phenomenon of self-efficacy source influences and commitment.

To gather detailed information about perceived levels of self-efficacy among rural music teachers, I administered a self-efficacy questionnaire, conducted a focus group, encouraged participant journaling, held individual interviews, and performed participant member checks to verify accuracy and to corroborate data. Two research questions guided this study:

1. How are rural Maine music teachers' beliefs in their teaching abilities influenced by each of the four self-efficacy sources (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological/affective states)?

2. To what degree do the teachers report that their self-efficacy regarding out-of-specialty music teaching influences their commitment toward rural music teaching?

Selection of Participants

To ascertain an understanding of teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, I sought six research participants who were the sole music teacher in a rural public school (see Chapter 4 for participant descriptions). I selected music teachers who currently taught multiple music subject areas, including specialty and out-of-specialty music, as well as teachers who had varying years of teaching experience in a rural setting. Through occasional interactions at local and state music festivals, I was acquainted with several teachers in the region who met these criteria. After connecting with my contacts to investigate possible candidates who may have rich and varied rural teaching experiences, I used purposive sampling to invite teachers to participate in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A vast majority of music teachers in the county who taught in K–8 schools were female, which precipitated a natural sample pool that was all female.

Setting

The setting for this study was centered around a rural coastal county in Maine. A majority of the schools in this county were considered rural remote (more than 25 miles from an urbanized area, and more than 10 miles from an urban cluster) by the 2010 U.S. census (US Census Bureau, 2010), with the remaining schools considered to be rural distant (between 5 and 25 miles from an urbanized area or between 2.5 and 10 miles from an urban cluster) (Provasnik et al., 2007). Of the 26 school units in the county that had schools for elementary and middle school students, 25 of the school units had a K–8 school (maine.gov, 2020b). The state of Maine certifies music teachers for grades K–12 in all music teaching areas, including classroom, instrumental, and vocal (maine.gov, 2019; May et al., 2017). The K–12 certification allows the small rural K–8 schools to hire one music teacher to teach all music disciplines. This type of K–8 teaching position was common throughout the county in which these schools were located.

The prevalence of K–8 schools in this rural county created a distinctive sample pool. In K–8 positions, teachers may have a student for nine years of schooling. K–8 educators who teach classroom, instrumental, and vocal music have informative perspectives about rural music education and their self-efficacy beliefs. Music teachers' perceptions about self-efficacy provided rich data through stories and imagery accrued over a spectrum of experiences and years with the same students within a rural school.

In compliance with Boston University IRB regulations and procedures, participants received disclosure of all project elements in verbal and written form. All study members gave permission to take part and signed a Boston University “consent to

participate” in research form along with agreed-upon research conditions. Study participation was voluntary, and those involved could withdraw at any time without discrimination. I sent an inquiry letter to each potential contributor with an explanation of the topic and a request for participation with the questionnaire, interviews, and journals. I shared study results with participants for clarification purposes, and all six responded and confirmed the information accuracy (see further description below). One participant withdrew early in the study after answering the questionnaire.

Data Collection

Due to the complexity of qualitative inquiry, it is necessary for the researcher to employ multiple ways of considering participants’ personal meanings (Eisner, 1998). Following a methodological data collection format used by Lewis (2018), I collected data in four phases, utilizing a questionnaire, focus group and individual interviews, and journals as a means to do an in-depth examination of rural music teachers’ self-efficacy perceptions. By using multiple methods to gather data, known as triangulation, I was able to validate findings and interpretations as more credible across each phase (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The phases included: (a) the Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire; (b) focus group interview; (c) journal entries; and (d) individual interviews.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

I asked study participants to respond to the Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire that I adapted from the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (Zelenak, 2011) and the Vocal Performance Self-Efficacy Survey (Lewis, 2018; see Appendix A). Zelenak developed this quantitative scale to assess the influence of the four primary self-

efficacy sources on music performance. Lewis' survey was a qualitative measure of vocal performance self-efficacy. The scales included questions based upon Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy relating to enactive experience, vicarious experience, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. I used this scale as a qualitative instrument for initial data gathering, for generating topics and questions for the focus group interview, and for supplemental journal entries.

I created an online questionnaire using Qualtrics software and I sent a link for the online questionnaire to the participants with a one-week timeline to complete. The questionnaire scale was designed for participants to select a number rating for answering each question, from one (strongly disagree) to one hundred (strongly agree). I adapted the questionnaire language from both sources (Lewis, 2018; Zelenak, 2011) to be specific to music teachers and to address the specific domain of music teaching (Bandura, 1997). For instance, I adapted question six, "I have overcome musical challenges through hard work and practice," to read, "I have overcome teaching challenges through hard work and practice." The questions were organized in groups reflecting the four sources of self-efficacy (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, physiological/affective states) and placed them in order of increasing complexity (Bandura, 2006b).

As part of the questionnaire, I asked participants to select one item/question from each group of the four self-efficacy sources and write about the reasons why they believe they selected a particular score for that item. These responses served as supplemental journal entries. Participants then selected two of their responses to share aloud during the

focus group interview session if they chose, serving as discussion prompts for the focus interview. This data-gathering approach was based on methods used by Hendricks (2009).

Focus Group Interview

As a method of collecting qualitative data, the researcher brings the topic of focus, and the data are generated by group interaction and discussion. Having a preliminary focus group can familiarize group participants with topics and issues at hand and can lead to a subsequent individual interview that has greater depth (Morgan, 1997). I conducted a 60-minute focus group interview of teachers who each instruct music in a rural school. The focus group interview was held using an online video conference platform.

Often individuals may be unaware of their own personal perceptions, and by interacting with others and sharing personal experiences in a focus group, people are better able to reflect about their experiences, define and articulate their perceptions, and refine their understandings (Morgan, 1997). In this study, participant teachers were each the sole music teacher in their schools; therefore, bringing people together for focus group interviews generated engaging discussion and useful data for both the researcher and participants. A less structured group with participants who shared interests, jobs, and backgrounds created lively discussion on prepared topics without much guidance from the moderator. This approach allowed for the possibility of new ideas in the participants' own words. Getting participants to talk about their personal experiences was important because they covered a wide range of relevant topics, were specific and in depth with their stories, and provided a personal context for their perspectives, which included

relevant social and cultural roles (Morgan, 1997).

I opened the focus group session with a welcome, followed by a brief overview of the topic and the sharing of ground rules (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The researcher can empower participants by giving them the responsibility to manage the discussion, work through any problems, and to ask questions of others to keep the discussion flowing; therefore, I emphasized that I was interested in hearing from everyone in order to gather as many different perspectives as possible, and that all experiences were equally important (Morgan, 1997).

I began the interview with an introduction question about where they taught, what grades and classes, and how long they had taught at each different position they had held. Beginning a focus group interview with easily answered facts about a person can encourage speaking and participation from the start (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The discussion unfolded as participants shared, on a voluntary basis, two of the four discussion prompts of their choice from the questionnaire journaling. The chosen themes from the questionnaire were from two of the four sources of self-efficacy (enactive experiences, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological/affective states). Having each participant share previously prepared discussion topics opened up the discourse, where personal views and experiences allowed differing perspectives to enter the discussion and helped to minimize early group consensus. Starting the discussion from the participants' perspectives rather than my interests allowed the participants to present various ways of thinking about the issues—some which were new to me. As part of the structure of the focus group interview, the final question I asked the

participants was what they thought were the most important elements of the discussion (Morgan, 1997).

Journals

I asked each participant to respond to journal prompts, based on self-efficacy source themes, which were generated from the focus group session. These prompts were intended to help me to expand upon and clarify information gathered from the focus group interview and to help me to prepare questions for the individual interviews. I sent two journal prompts by email over a two-week time period, and participants responded at their convenience. Sample journal prompts based on self-efficacy themes included ideas such as:

- Please detail your thoughts about out-of-specialty music teaching experiences. Reflect on both a notably positive and a difficult/challenging experience of your choosing. You may record your expressions as a journal entry or other creative expression.
- Please detail your thoughts about rural music teaching experiences. Reflect on both a notably positive and a difficult/challenging experience of your choosing. You may record your expressions as a journal entry or other creative expression.

On the questionnaire, participants had written brief journal entries in response to one question of their choice from each of the four self-efficacy source categories, which I added to the journal data.

Individual Interviews

Following the focus group interview and journal prompts, I emailed the individual

interview protocol to the participants one week prior to their 60-minute scheduled interview. The individual interviews were conducted through video conferencing where participants could be in a comfortable environment of their choosing such as their school music classrooms or at their home. I expected that the familiarity of the interview locations would encourage participants to speak freely with minimal inhibition (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morgan, 1997).

The interview questions were created in two parts. The first section included a priori themes relevant to the four sources of self-efficacy. The second section included questions based upon the literature concerning rural music teaching and commitment to rural music teaching. As a semi-structured interview, participants had the opportunity to naturally explore and expand the conversation. Following were examples of a priori interview questions:

- Enactive Mastery Experiences: What is your most memorable teaching experience? How have your previous teaching experiences influenced your belief in your teaching abilities?
- Vicarious Experiences: In what ways has observing other music teachers influenced your teaching skills?
- Verbal and Social Persuasion: How do teaching evaluations by your principal, both positive and critical, affect your teaching? In what ways have what peer music teachers said affected your teaching skills? What types of feedback have the greatest impact on your teaching? In what ways do peer teachers, friends, family, and community influence your teaching?

- Physiological and Affective States: To what extent do you believe that you are in control of your body and your emotions when you are teaching?

Following are examples of questions concerning rural music teaching and commitment to rural music teaching:

- For you, what is it like being a music teacher in a rural setting?
- How well were you prepared for your teaching role in a rural school?
- How effective do you feel in meeting the teaching demands of your music program and music teaching position?
- What type of supports do you have for you and your music program?
What types of supports would you find helpful to you and your music program?
- How committed are you to teaching in a rural area?

It is possible that in a focus group setting some individuals may not fully share their thoughts and they may have additional pertinent ideas to offer after the group session (Morgan, 1997). During the individual interviews, I asked each participant whether there was anything else they wished to add from the focus group experience. Most participants wanted to highlight or discuss a topic or theme from the focus group discussion.

Data Analysis

Transcription and Coding

Focus group and individual interviews were audio-recorded on a password protected computer. I used software to transcribe audio-recorded interviews, and I manually reviewed the transcriptions for editing and accuracy. All interview

transcriptions occurred within 48 hours of the session.

Coding is a process that relates collected data to enable deeper connections and analysis. A code was defined as: “a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Because qualitative studies are an evolving process, coding will also naturally evolve to reflect emergent patterns and meaning (Glesne, 2011; Saldaña, 2016).

I predetermined the initial coding in order to give focus and to build a coherent research strategy (Eisner, 1998; Saldaña, 2016). The a priori themes are the four self-efficacy sources: enactive experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states. I used *in vivo*, process, and values coding strategies for identifying and analyzing data relevant to sources of self-efficacy. I chose these three coding strategies as a way to view data through different lenses in order to develop a detailed and thorough understanding of peoples’ stories. Furthermore, utilizing three coding strategies created a form of coding triangulation for a deeper analysis. *In vivo* coding uses participants’ own words to create a conceptual code. I found *in vivo* codes to be prominent in data found in enactive mastery experiences and verbal and social persuasion sources. *Process* coding identifies actions people are taking, i.e., “building trust.” Process coding was evident in enactive mastery experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states, perhaps due to the more active participant processes with those sources. *Values* coding is viewed in three areas: (a) *values*, the meaningful importance of someone or something; (b) *attitude*, how we think

about people, things, or ideas; and (c) *beliefs*, based on values and attitude; it is how we perceive and interpret our social world. I utilized values coding throughout the data as participants shared their values and beliefs related to their teaching practice and their self-efficacy perceptions. I analyzed and coded data from questionnaires, interviews, and journals for emergent themes, thematic relationships, and core concepts. I looked for patterns and organized data into categories that aligned with the four sources of self-efficacy.

Constant case comparison involves the researcher organizing data points into categories and comparing them internally within a category and across different categories for thematic consistency (Glesne, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I triangulated data from the questionnaire, interviews, and journals, and I analyzed the data in an ongoing process. From my analysis, I was able to define coherent category properties to focus and characterize groupings and classifications (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In addition to the a priori themes of the four self-efficacy sources, I found several sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis: out-of-specialty music teaching; isolation; perseverance; and community. My analysis of the a priori and emergent themes led to general study findings and descriptive narratives.

Trustworthiness and Reliability

Member Checks and Review

The researcher establishes trust through clear study design and implementation (Krueger & Casey, 2015), and by using member checks and peer debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I anticipated that the nature of teacher reflections and focus group dynamics

may require extra time for the participants to think, reflect, and synthesize concepts about their experiences as a music teacher. Therefore, I checked with individual participants by email or in person to clarify and expand initial data gathering from focus group and individual interviews. I shared relevant study sections with each participant in order for them to render feedback and clarification to ensure that I accurately represented their perspectives. Five of the six participants confirmed that the information was accurate; one person made a minor clarification, and one person wanted to add a thought about the positive—and sometimes life-long—impacts music teachers make with students. Through data triangulation from the questionnaire, focus group interview, journal responses, individual interviews, and participant checks, I was able to verify accuracy through internal corroboration of data.

Formal readers conducted a peer review and an external audit. With expertise in self-efficacy theory and experience with rural music teaching, the review committee brought valuable insights to the review process. The peer review ensured that emergent findings were critiqued for cogent analysis and were consistent with collected data (Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2011; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). For issues of privacy, the people who have access to the recordings were the researcher and the peer review panel (Morgan, 1997). I kept detailed notes, interview recordings, and research documentation to provide systematic evidence for an audit review.

Risks

An ethical issue with focus groups for which the researcher must be mindful is that what individuals say is naturally shared with other group members. Some people

may not feel comfortable sharing their full breadth of stories or experiences, especially if their perspectives are at odds with the rest of the group or if there is embarrassment or shame in sharing difficult experiences (Morgan, 1997). A researcher who is sensitive to this possibility may be able to gather more information in the follow-up individual interview, although the same concern about sharing difficult experiences remains relevant. In another instance, there may be a shy participant who is more likely a reflective thinker and may need encouragement to share their views (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 1997). To minimize risks, I established ground rules that would address possible concerns with the focus group format. The guidelines included:

- Be mindful of others' perspectives
- Be mindful to let others finish speaking
- I would like to hear from everyone to share their perspectives
- I ask that comments made during the interview not be shared outside of this session. Be as open as you can with your discussion, yet also be mindful that I am not able to guarantee confidentiality with a group discussion.

Furthermore, I asked what other guidelines may be helpful to ensure everyone's comfort. There were no other guidelines proposed, as the participants were satisfied and comfortable with the process.

Another possible issue is privacy. I replaced all identifying information with pseudonyms and kept a separate document with the identification key. Ensuring participants that confidentiality was protected may have helped them to feel more open and honest in their responses (Smith, 1995).

Researcher Self-Disclosure

This study was conducted in a region in Maine which contained the school district in which I work. Participating music educators taught at schools dispersed across the county, with some teachers working in K–8 music programs similar to the one in which I taught. I acknowledge reflexivity (Gibbs, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and must be mindful of the potential impact for personal bias in interviews. Although I am situated in similar cultural and professional profiles as the participants, I strove to keep an open mind throughout the research process. I was acquainted with some study participants on a professional level through regional meetings, music festivals, and educational development workshops. My personal and professional relationships with participants enabled me to build an environment of trust and communication for appropriate interviewing, reporting, and data collection.

Summary

For this case study, I selected six participants who taught multiple music subject areas, including specialty and out-of-specialty music teaching assignments, in a rural public school in Maine. Participants answered the Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (adapted from Lewis, 2018; Zelenak, 2011), which generated discussion topics for a focus group interview. Next, I administered two journal prompts over a two-week period based on emergent topics from the questionnaires and focus group interview. I then conducted individual interviews to explore in greater detail teachers perceived self-efficacy levels and their commitment toward rural music teaching. I coded data and analyzed for patterns, categories, and themes related to the sources of self-efficacy, and I

performed member checks by asking for participants to review their own data for any clarification. In the next chapter, I explored participants' storied perceptions of self-efficacy as a rural music teacher.

**CHAPTER 4: PARTICIPANT STORIES:
SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS AND COMMITMENT**

The following chapter depicts individual participant’s stories and experiences related to the four self-efficacy sources. Each story opens with an introduction describing the teacher’s path to music teaching and the sense of community they experienced when teaching in a rural school. The next section details the teacher’s commitment to rural teaching and their commitment to engaged teaching. The third section begins with information derived from the questionnaire, followed by descriptions of how the four self-efficacy sources influenced each participant’s self-efficacy perceptions. I integrated data from the questionnaire, journals, and interviews to present teachers’ stories and experiences into a cohesive narrative.

ANNE: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER

Anne’s Path to Music Teaching

“Anne” had taught music for 20 years, simultaneously part-time in two different rural K–8 schools. She taught grades K–4 general music, grades 5–8 band, and grades 5–8 chorus. Both schools were small—each school had around 65 students total in grades K–8. Anne grew up with inspiring music teachers who guided her to musical experiences including school bands, All State Band, Symphony Youth Orchestra, community bands, and pit bands. She also competed on clarinet in many solo and orchestra competitions. Her music teachers, performing experiences, and love of music influenced her decision to become a music teacher.

Teaching in a Rural School

Community

"We all know each other." ~Anne

Anne embraced the sense of community and the family feel in her small rural school, an environment where she was able to build positive relationships with students. She described how her feeling of community related to her sense of identity and ability:

I believe where I am matches my personality and abilities in that I feel more comfortable in a small group setting and I like really getting to know my students and feeling like we're just a big family all learning together.

Anne explained that she knew who the students' brothers and sisters were, and about the students' family situations, which enabled her to create a more personal connection with students and be mindful of students' needs. She stated: "That's a really good thing to know everybody's family situations or what's going on at their homes, you can be sensitive about that." Anne enjoyed seeing students' progress from pre-K to eighth grade. She expressed that because of the small class sizes, she believed that students received more attention and were more likely to experience greater learning.

Anne shared that sometimes she thought about teaching in a larger school or at the high school level; however, she did not want the extra responsibility and became anxious when thinking about that prospect. She valued not having extra music rehearsals and events outside of the school day, which allowed her to have time with her family. Anne quipped, "I just like doing what I do."

Commitment

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School

Anne was very committed to teaching in a rural school. She noted several factors as to why she liked the small rural schools, such as small classes, a schedule that was not overly filled, and time to reflect and prepare for her teaching. Anne shared that she felt comfortable in her position and with her schools, stating that she had built positive relationships with all the students and teachers, and had “good relationships with the principals and the community...It’s kind of like family style at school,” which were qualities that she valued. Her positive teaching experiences (enactive mastery experiences) from being in two small schools, and the genuine relationships she created with students, staff, and community members (verbal/social persuasion) contributed to her commitment to teaching in a rural area.

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

Anne’s commitment to engaged teaching was mixed. Anne expressed strong connections with grade K–4 students in elementary general music classes, and stated that she loved actively engaging with them through singing, dancing, and spirited fun, activities that created her most memorable and meaningful moments. On the other hand, Anne stated, “I could do without band and chorus...because the size of the school, it’s hard to have a good quality.” Teaching singing was outside of her specialty area, and perhaps contributed to her dispassionate view of chorus—a subject she may not have had enough opportunity to learn through enactive mastery experiences. Inadequate vocal teaching mastery experiences may have influenced a lower self-efficacy for teaching

chorus and a weaker commitment to engaged teaching. Band was in her specialty area, yet she was frustrated with the small numbers of available students, which made it a challenge to have enough players to have balanced instrumentation. Despite the small numbers of students, Anne was positive about her initiative to combine the middle school band students from her two small schools for performances, thereby demonstrating a stronger sense of engaged teaching.

The 2020–2021 pandemic year provided an inflection point for Anne. She expressed frustration with the lack of opportunities to teach when certain music classes were not able to be held:

I didn't really realize how much I enjoy teaching until they started taking all this stuff away like...band. I'm just depressed all day. I'm like, what am I going to do? I can't *not* sing. It's like I can't even do my job.

Anne's frustration with the lack of teaching opportunities negatively affected not only her perceived utility as a music teacher, but it also hindered opportunities to be an effective teacher. Without the opportunity to teach music, she was challenged by her positive constructs of effective and committed teaching.

Taking a broader perspective, Anne described the importance of music in her life and the commitment she had to teaching:

Overall, I really enjoy teaching music. I always remind myself how music got me through life when I was younger and how important it was to me. I enjoy being able to help others find a love for music or just being able to give them a half hour of fun while learning at the same time. There are some aspects of teaching that I

don't really enjoy such as complaints from parents, staying after for meetings, the time it takes to prepare, etc. Overall, it's a very positive experience for me.

Although Anne acknowledged that some of the teaching challenges that she experienced were just part of her job, she expressed moderately high teaching self-efficacy perceptions and a strong commitment to her teaching, especially related to teaching elementary students.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire Data

Anne had an average score total of 66 (out of a possible 100) on the questionnaire. The scores for the four self-efficacy sources were: Enactive Mastery Experiences–80; Vicarious Experiences–26; Verbal and Social Persuasion–68; and Physiological and Affective States–84 (see Figure 1). Anne's overall score suggested low to moderate positive influence from source categories. Anne's score (26) in the vicarious experience category was very low. Her lowest score (10) was on the question if she had watched similarly situated teachers teach a piece of music, and then deciding whether she could, or could not, teach that same piece of music. Collectively, the low scores (26) for vicarious experiences suggested that she had not had opportunities for these types of observations. Despite indicating high scores concerning principal feedback and evaluations (90), Anne recorded a low score (10) on the questionnaire item about receiving feedback that her professional development effort improved her teaching skills. For enactive mastery experiences, she recorded moderate to high scores for all items (80–90) except for one area where she scored moderately (50) at having positive experiences teaching large ensembles. Anne's highest positive source influences were physiological

and affective states, scored at a moderate-high level (84).

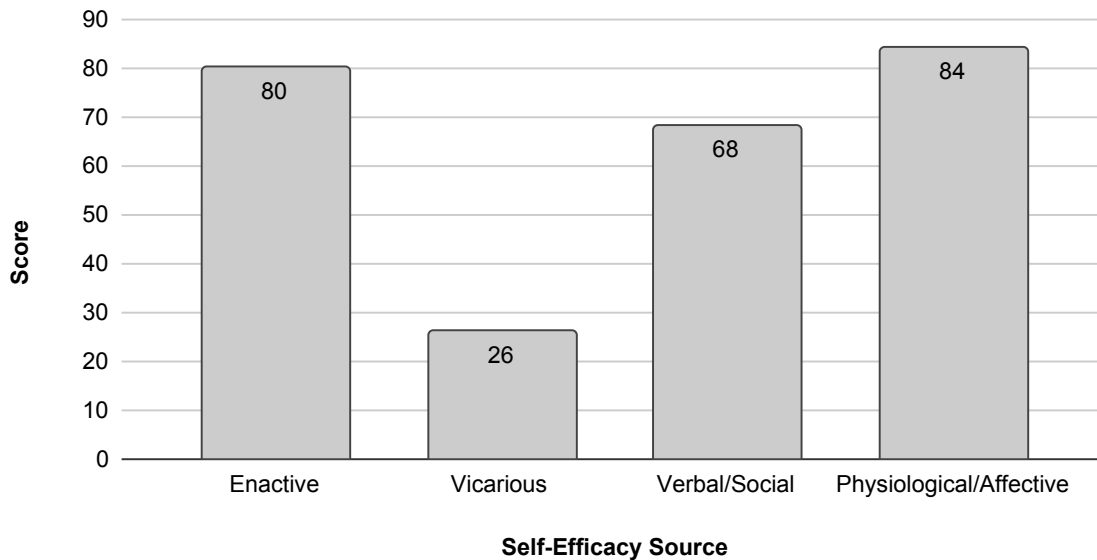


Figure 1: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Anne

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

Out-of-Specialty Teaching: Chorus

“I was never taught how to teach singing.” ~Anne

To begin, Anne stated that she loved teaching elementary general music classes, which were an area with which she had experience in playing the piano and knowing many children’s songs and games. She explained:

I just I feel like I'm still young at heart and I love singing and dancing and being silly with the little kids...they always have smiles on their faces. They don't care if you mess up. They're always willing to try new things.

Anne demonstrated a passion for teaching elementary students, and she spoke with high confidence about her teaching grades pre-K through four; however, she related a

different story for teaching middle school chorus, which was a challenge for her.

Anne disclosed that she did not have many singing experiences growing up or in her undergraduate program. As an instrumental major, she did not have time to fit choral classes into her already heavy schedule except for the minimum program requirements. Anne indicated that she did not feel very effective teaching middle school chorus. She stated:

I can do singing fine with the elementary kids in classroom music but teaching chorus was always a challenge for me. I can play piano which helps a lot, but I really don't know much about choral repertoire, singing techniques, the correct singing ranges for middle school students, and probably a lot more.

Anne recognized that her lack of knowledge about teaching chorus affected her students: "I'm sure the students would have displayed a higher level and quality of singing if I was trained in knowing how to teach it appropriately." Anne's lack of mastery experiences with vocal teaching and vocal training negatively affected her out-of-specialty choral teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Teaching Preparation

Despite not having many experiences to prepare her to teach chorus, Anne stated that she was well prepared for her teaching position overall. She wished that there had been undergraduate courses to learn about how to handle classroom behavior issues and "real-life teaching things." Anne student taught in a larger school, and she noted that teaching in the small rural school was easier than her student teaching experience. One of the reasons was that during student teaching, she had to work with a large band of near

one hundred students, whereas in her teaching position, her “band groups might max 15 students in a good year.” Anne expressed that her background (i.e., enactive mastery experiences) adequately prepared her to effectively meet the teaching expectations for her school and for the music program.

Vicarious Experience

Anne had very little contact with other music teachers throughout the school year. She stated: “I am the only music teacher in both of my buildings, so I feel very isolated.” She communicated that she only saw a few music teachers from her district twice a year at district workshop days, yet they were usually never given time to work with each other or share ideas. Instead, they learned about math programs, bullying, mindfulness, or were encouraged to work on their own. Furthermore, Anne found it difficult to leave school to observe another music teacher. She explained:

It's so hard to take a day off and leave sub plans. There are no subs and then if you do take a day off, there's just no music for today, and I don't want classroom teachers having to take that on. So, I don't.

Anne’s contact with music teachers from outside the school district was “non-existent except for going to the yearly honors festival once a year. Usually, that would be my only contact with music teachers.” Anne recorded very low influence (26) from vicarious experiences on the questionnaire. This score aligned with her reported feelings of isolation and a lack of opportunities to observe other music teachers during the school year.

Another challenge for Anne was when she attended a festival and observed

another group perform more difficult music than what she was able to do with her own groups. She explained: "I'd kind of feel a little badly, but I'd always have to tell myself, you know you have 20 kids in your fifth through eighth grade. There's only so much you can do." Anne worked to address the issue of small bands by combining the bands from the two schools in which she taught for concerts. In doing so, the bands had full instrumentation and played with a fuller sound, which created both a valuable musical and social experience for the students. Anne's challenge illustrated that observations of other bands (vicarious experience) led to a negative response (affective state), yet she demonstrated strong self-efficacy by persevering through obstacles by problem solving the issue of her small bands by combining schools for performances.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

Anne indicated a moderate positive influence from verbal/social persuasion on the questionnaire (68) and in the interviews. She stated that the primary reasons were the lack of interaction with other music teachers and the lack of constructive feedback from her principals. Anne received positive feedback from her students and community members, although she expressed that she wished she could have opportunities to have connections with other music teachers.

Principal Feedback

Anne found that feedback from her principals to be inconsistent and not constructive. She stated:

I don't even know what school I'm observed at. Both principals come and see me once in a while, but I don't know which one is actually writing things down. But

when they do come in, they're like, 'Oh, looks like you were having fun.' That's about it.

Anne stated that her principals did not understand the music classroom and the evaluation process was “non-existent.” She has only received positive principal feedback, yet it lacked any constructive elements. For example, Anne stated that the extent of feedback was limited to: “Well, keep doing what you're doing.”

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Feedback from peer music teachers was limited for Anne. “I have no peer teachers,” she stated, as she was the only music teacher between two small schools. She had never been observed by another music teacher and she felt as though she did not have much opportunity to draw from other music teachers. She explained: “I've basically been on my own to figure things out for myself since I started teaching. I've taken a few courses here and there but haven't really been given the opportunity to work with other music teachers.” Because of limited interactions, Anne sought out music resources on social media platforms which she found to be valuable to use in her teaching. Anne’s efforts and persistence to improve her teaching through online resources positively influenced her teaching self-efficacy perceptions through her interactions (verbal/social persuasion) with peer music teachers. Anne relayed that she had one rare opportunity to meet with music teachers at a district workshop day to share her ideas and resources. She stated: “They’d think I'd have neat ideas to try when they would get back to their school of things I was doing in my classroom. So that made me feel a little more confident.”

Community Feedback

Anne's greatest sources of feedback were from community members at concerts and from her students. She noted that concerts were an important event, one of the few occasions that people in the town gathered. She described how concerts were "the only place I ever get any feedback for anything that I do. Mostly positive comments. That makes me feel good." Positive feedback from people attending concerts boosted Anne's teaching self-efficacy perceptions. As for her students, Anne related:

They're the ones that tell me what they like what they don't like. I take what they say, and I really try to accommodate to what I think would be the best for them. I guess to be honest, I want them to have fun.

Anne used feedback from her students (verbal/social persuasion) to design more effective lessons for student learning.

Physiological/Affective States

"I guess I actually enjoy teaching. It took 20 years to figure it out!" ~Anne

Anne's highest recorded positive source influence on the questionnaire was in the physiological and affective states category, which she scored at a moderate-high level (84); however, her described physiological and affective states in interviews represented both ends of a spectrum. On one hand, she expressed love, enjoyment, and fun when teaching younger students in the elementary grades. On the other hand, Anne recounted feeling "nervous" and "flustered" when teaching middle school chorus.

Nervousness

Although Anne expressed that she felt joy when working with students in the

younger grades, she had a different reaction when teaching middle school. “I’m more nervous with the middle school kids just because I still feel young, I don’t feel like a superior to them.” She shared that she felt worried and sometimes had “flustered talking” when she conversed with students about a topic in which she was not an expert. Teaching chorus was especially trying: “My stomach churns whenever I get ready to teach chorus because I don’t know what I’m doing. I just don’t.” She also expressed feeling anxious when she thought about teaching in a larger size school or at the high school level. Although her low teaching self-efficacy perceptions were likely rooted in limited enactive mastery experiences, Anne stated that her nervousness (physiological/affective states) was prominent when teaching middle school students.

Frustration

Anne expressed that she felt frustrated because of the difficulty to have quality middle school band and chorus ensembles due to the small number of students in the schools. She stated:

The performance group situation gets a little frustrating. When there are only 25 to 30 students in the whole middle school, it’s tough making a balanced, good sounding band. I usually strive for 50% participation and most years I come pretty shy of that goal.

Anne indicated that she typically had around 12 or 13 students in band at each of her schools, making balanced instrumentation in the ensemble challenging. She shared that she had a few students who would not practice and would not know their music, which negatively affected the sound of the band. Furthermore, in cases where only one or two

students played a certain instrument, the students sometimes had more difficulty to progress without adequate peer modeling. Anne's frustration because of the small numbers of students available for traditional band and choral ensembles caused an ongoing negative affective state.

Summary

Anne appreciated the sense of community in her school where there was an environment that allowed her to build positive relationships with students. She expressed that the small rural school felt comfortable and matched her personality and her abilities. For these reasons, she stated that she was very committed to teaching in a rural school. Anne's commitment to engaged teaching was mixed, as she indicated strong teaching self-efficacy perceptions when teaching elementary students, yet she expressed low teaching self-efficacy perceptions with middle school choral teaching.

Anne's questionnaire scores ranged from 26 to 84 (out of a possible 100), averaging a score of 66, which suggested a low to moderate positive influence from source categories. She indicated a lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences with vocal training and vocal teaching, resulting in low teaching self-efficacy perceptions when teaching middle school chorus. Anne recorded a low score of 26 on the questionnaire for positive influence from vicarious experiences. This score aligned with her reported feelings of isolation and a lack of opportunities to observe other music teachers during the school year. Anne's lack of contact with other music teachers was also reflected by a modest score (68) in verbal and social persuasion. Although she stated that she did not receive any meaningful feedback from her principals, Anne did welcome

the positive response she received from parents and the feedback she received from her students. Her highest scores on the questionnaire were from physiological and affective states (84). Anne expressed strong positive influence from teaching elementary students; however, she described that she was nervous when teaching middle school chorus, doing “flustered talking,” and having a churning stomach. Anne expressed that she felt frustrated with inadequate numbers of students in band and chorus ensembles, which seemed to be a place of tension relative to her reported preference for teaching in a small school.

ELSIE: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER

“I feel one of the best ways to learn and grow as an educator is to watch and listen to great teachers, regardless of content taught.” ~Elsie

Elsie’s Path to Music Teaching

“Elsie” was in her fifth year of teaching at a K–8 school, her first rural school experience. She had previously taught on Long Island, New York for 11 years in a suburban blue-collar area where she directed high school symphonic band, marching band, and pit band, all of which were much larger band programs than the program she taught at the time of the study. She taught part-time (80%) K–4 general music, grades 4–8 band, grades 5–8 chorus, grades 2–8 strings, jazz band, show choir, and also served part-time (20%) as the school’s gifted and talented teacher. Elsie’s inspiration to become a music teacher was sparked by two music teachers who built personal and genuine connections with her. She explained: “Through music, they taught me the value of perseverance, teamwork, and reliability. The passion they showed for both music and teaching was what I craved and is what inspired me to follow my own journey into music education.”

Teaching in a Rural School

Community

Elsie valued the deep sense of community and the ability to connect with all students in her school. “Kids don’t get lost in these schools because we know them so well, and we know their parents, and we know their friends, and we know what they’re doing. They can’t hide from us.” Because of the intimate school setting, she shared that

the teachers in her school cared for every student and worked to meet every student's needs. Elsie stated that she enjoyed being able to see students grow over many years as she taught them from kindergarten to eighth grade. She explained the joy of the connections she made in the small school: "Because of this rural setting you really get to know these kids very, very well and they get to know you. That's a pretty amazing thing about what we do here." Elsie expressed that the small school size and the endearing sense of community made her feel welcome in this rural school.

Commitment

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School

Elsie stated that she was fully supported by her principal and by the community in which she worked:

I am incredibly fortunate to work in a school where I am valued and appreciated and where music is viewed as a mandatory part of the learning process. I feel very fortunate to work in only one school, as many rural music teachers work in a number of schools throughout the week in an effort to piece together full-time employment.

She expressed feeling satisfied when she went to the annual town budget meeting and saw town members overwhelmingly support the school budget. This support was a welcome contrast to her previous position on Long Island, New York, for when the annual budget time came, she was never sure if her job would be cut due to spending cuts, which she divulged was quite worrisome.

Pursuing a job in a rural area made sense for Elsie. Where she lived previously,

the area was so busy and congested that she and her husband would “escape to hike on the weekends [because] our lifestyle did not line up with our work life.” She now lived in a place where she could take advantage of many outdoors activities. She explained:

Driving seven minutes to school is pretty remarkable and stopping somewhere after school for a quick hike is pretty remarkable. . . . We're still surprised that we live here. . . . I'm fully committed. And as long as I feel like our community will support us as teachers, then this is the place that I can be for a very long time.

Elsie expressed that the support she received, the sense of community, and the rural lifestyle contributed to her commitment to teaching in this rural school.

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

Elsie was committed to being an engaged teacher, and she was also aware of the challenges that came with her teaching position. She viewed these challenges as obstacles that she could overcome, which may have contributed to her sense of commitment. For example, Elsie referred to the struggle of having to teach multiple music disciplines—most of which were out-of-specialty—in a K–8 school although she was only specialized in one music area. She expressed that she felt frustrated because her busy schedule did not give adequate teaching time to any one area. She stated: “I do feel as if I will never gain the skills needed to be an extraordinary general music teacher or an extraordinary vocal teacher simply because of the lack of time spent with each age/discipline group.”

Despite these difficulties, Elsie continually strove to develop her teaching skills. She desired to always be the best at what she was doing and stated that she wanted “to be as confident as possible” in all her teaching areas. Elsie expressed that if she had more

time to focus on an out-of-specialty area such elementary general music, “I could do great things.”

Positive feedback from local peer music teachers and community members (verbal/social persuasion) built her teaching self-efficacy to try new teaching ideas. She stated: “If it works, that's awesome, and we'll go with it and if it doesn't work, we'll just try something new.” Elsie shared that it was important for her to observe other teachers and to reflect upon feedback and ideas from other people in order to improve her teaching craft. Elsie’s perseverance to build strong self-efficacy perceptions with her teaching skills supported her commitment to being an engaged teacher.

Elsie described the pressures put on students in her school to participate in multiple school activities, and she stated that she worked to keep balance in her students’ schedules by being flexible with the music schedule when possible. In her small school, Elsie was challenged by “always tapping into the same kids for different things.” Her jazz band students were her strongest musicians and were also strong both vocally and academically. Elsie described her challenge:

You always have to remember to be an advocate for your kid and remember that they're 12, and that sometimes they're being pulled in many different directions because there's just so few kids in that school. And to give them an out every once in a while, and say yep, you need to miss this because you're exhausted, and I need to be thinking about you and your well-being more than jazz band right now.

As shown in the quote above, Elsie demonstrated empathy and compassion with students as they navigated the participation pressures from being in a small school. Although she

was aware that in doing so, she sometimes sacrificed her own music teaching opportunities with students because her perception of effective teaching was to address the needs of the whole child.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire Data

Elsie had an average score total of 94 (out of a possible 100) on the questionnaire. The scores for the four self-efficacy sources were: Enactive Mastery Experiences–100; Vicarious Experiences–84; Verbal and Social Persuasion–100; and Physiological and Affective States–92 (see Figure 2). Elsie’s scores suggested a high positive influence from each source category. Elsie had one outlier score on an item from vicarious experiences, selecting a score of 19 out of 100 on the question if she had watched similarly situated teachers teach a piece of music, and then deciding whether she could, or could not, teach that same piece of music. Her low score suggested that she had not had opportunities for this type of observation. In the physiological and affective states category, Elsie selected a slightly lower score (90) for the question, “I enjoy teaching music.” She stated, “This year I am enjoying teaching general ed and it has made me question if I enjoy teaching music specifically or is it simply that I enjoy teaching.” Elsie recorded a very high source influence for the enactive mastery experiences (100) and the verbal and social persuasion categories (100).

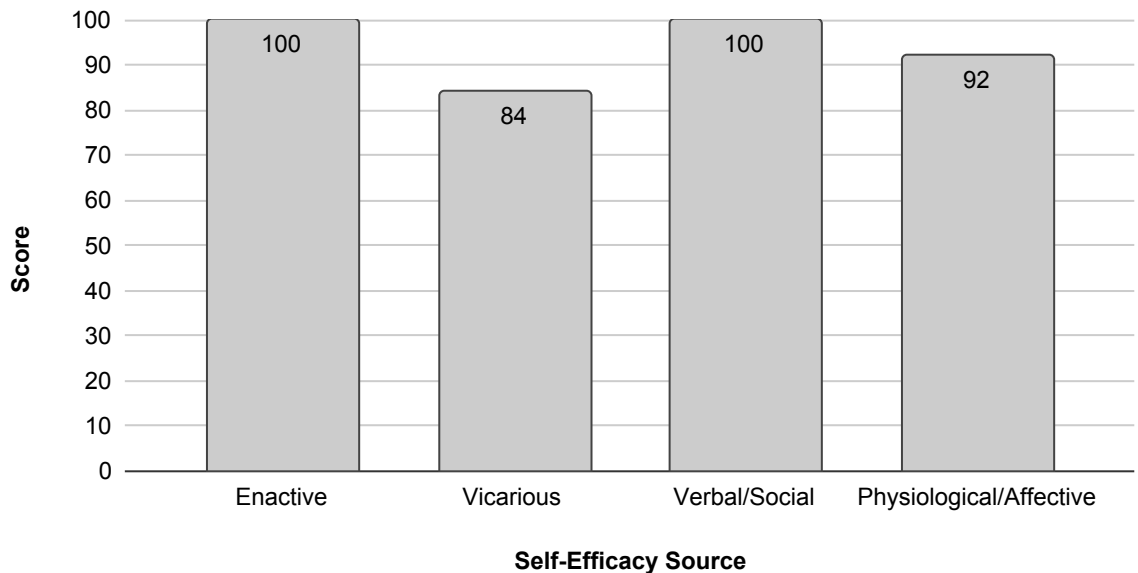


Figure 2: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Elsie

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

Out-of-Specialty Teaching

Despite selecting a score of 100 on the questionnaire for enactive mastery experiences, Elsie remained concerned about her effectiveness when teaching out-of-specialty music classes. She expressed that she did not feel prepared to teach in a rural school. Elsie’s undergraduate work prepared her to be a band director, and she had no classes in undergraduate or graduate school that addressed the range of teaching that she was expected to do. She explained:

I do wish that probably college prep was a little bit more generalized because kids [undergraduate music majors] are going to be going and teaching in various places in various parts of the country in various communities. So, I wish that there was a little bit more preparation in that regard from the college setting.

Coming from a school where she directed band and marching band ensembles with over 100 students, Elsie had no experience teaching in a rural school or with teaching grades K–8. She shared that her music job “is an 80% position, but I'm expected to teach a K–8 setting: woodwind, strings, vocal. I mean, it's just there's so many parts to it.” Elsie was concerned about how effective she could be because of the diversity of teaching responsibilities:

How can I ever necessarily feel like a “mastery” teacher if I don't necessarily have the time to get there with all those different pieces? I could see if I was an 80% teacher, maybe just focusing on general music or just focusing on middle school band. That, I could wrap my head around. I thought that I would be able to wrap my head around that better now that I've had a few years in, but I can't seem to sort of push forward with that idea. I do think that I would be a lot more confident long-term if the job was a little bit more focused on one area.

Elsie’s limited undergraduate college preparation for out-of-specialty music teaching (enactive mastery experiences) created challenges for her diverse teaching assignments.

Despite the range of music disciplines and student age ranges, Elsie relayed positive feelings about her music teaching, stating, “I feel quite effective. I definitely feel stronger in some areas than other areas.” She viewed herself as a band director and stated she had strong teaching self-efficacy beliefs in her directing skills: “I feel like I have a fairly decent mastery level at [band]. But I could be an exceptional band director if I just focused on band.” Elsie’s strong self-efficacy beliefs in teaching band was supported by her enactive mastery experiences with band.

As she began teaching at the rural school, Elsie sought out strategies and resources for teaching general music at the elementary level. She was most interested in learning more about students' developmental capacities and corresponding appropriate repertoire, noting a lack of experience in these areas. Elsie expressed that if given the ability and time to focus, she "could do great things with general music." Her efforts to develop her knowledge and skills in areas where she had fewer enactive mastery experiences demonstrated a higher level of self-efficacious behavior as demonstrated by her perseverance through difficult endeavors.

Elsie noticed that teaching time with students was an issue for both student learning and her own degree of teaching skill:

I will not be able to be the best middle school vocal teacher because I am limited to one 40-minute block per week with my chorus. ...My students will not have the most valuable choral experience because of the lack of time in rehearsal and quite frankly the knowledge of their instructor.

If she were to miss a chorus rehearsal because of a meeting, students had to wait two weeks to sing again because of the once-a-week class schedule. Missed time in the classroom also affected Elsie's teaching. She stated: "I'm not building my skill set. It's affecting my "mastery" level because I don't then have that practice." Elsie's limited time to work with students negatively affected her development and self-efficacy perceptions in her teaching skills.

Vicarious Experiences

Observations

Elsie knew from the outset that she needed to gain skills to teach elementary general music. Her primary method for learning was through observing local music teachers. She also found she could enhance her knowledge about working with the younger grades by watching other teachers as well. She explained: “I think just watching and learning how a class is structured and gathering ideas of what you feel could work for your specific group of kids I think is really vital.” By watching other teachers, Elsie learned effective ways to work with younger children. She also appreciated the opportunity to observe her principal and to see her interact compassionately with students: “She [the principal] has a way of speaking very kindly with a lot of empathy towards to kids, and really being on their level and showing them a level of understanding...if they're having a tough time.” Elsie’s observations (vicarious experiences) of her principal, classroom teachers, and music teachers provided her meaningful opportunities for building teaching self-efficacy perceptions with teaching elementary students.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

“I think I'm probably my hardest critic. I find myself fairly self-reflective and kind of over analyzing what people say. So, I think I'm probably harder on myself than feedback that I would ever really get from anybody else. So, I'm my hardest critic.” ~Elsie

Principal Feedback

Elsie felt very supported by her principal during conversations and through

evaluations, and she appreciated her principal's flexibility to observe a range of different teaching settings. Elsie welcomed the magnitude of praise in evaluations yet felt the feedback could be more constructive. She explained: "I think often I'm left with a desire of more critique. That sounds silly, but I think really in order to grow, you have to kind of hear some criticism." Elsie's strong sense of self-efficacy beliefs was demonstrated by her wish for meaningful constructive feedback to help her improve her teaching.

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Elsie found it odd to be the only music teacher in her K–8 school. She missed having the opportunity to dialog with other music teachers as she had done in her previous job. She stated:

I find it very strange to be sitting in the music room by myself and not having somebody to just talk about the specific kids or just to throw ideas out, like, "What do you think about this unit? What else could we do here? How else can we enhance this program?"

Elsie said she missed the daily connection and the collective thinking she engaged in with music colleagues from her previous position that helped to enhance her teaching: "I think most people in general work a lot better when they have that ability to converse with other people, and I think that it's a really strong point in your teaching."

Although she was the only music teacher in her school, Elsie relayed that she was fortunate that she had opportunities to talk with the music teachers from the other small rural schools in her district, especially since the schools had similar music programs: "I'm lucky to have colleagues that are happy to walk me through working with kids in a choral

setting and with general music setting and with a string setting.” Through connecting with music teacher colleagues, she realized that they too had to navigate teaching the numerous music disciplines and grade spans. Elsie stated, “It’s just really validating to hear that other people struggle in the same way.”

Elsie welcomed opportunities for district music teachers to come and observe her and to give feedback. Finding that she valued her music peers’ feedback the most, Elsie stated that it was important to be open to their comments and suggestions in order to gain strategies to become a more effective teacher. She recalled one critical comment from a music colleague early in her career that has always stuck with her: “Just yell at them [students];” however, she flatly stated, “It’s not who I was.” Despite this one negative incident, Elsie reported that verbal and social interactions with music teacher peers positively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions and skills.

Community Feedback

Elsie received strong community support for the music program. She described one instance where she did an interdisciplinary concert with the French and art teachers. Elsie considered the concert program to be risky. She stated that the concert “was pretty out of the box. I was definitely taking a chance.” Despite a few bumps during the concert, the parents shared with her how much they loved the presentation that highlighted the students’ different modes of learning. Elsie expressed validation by the strong community response:

The community is supporting what I’m doing, then that ensures that I can continue what I’m doing, but then also push forward and go with my own agenda. I don’t

necessarily feel like I need to be locked into a certain type of role or a certain type of teaching. I can do what I feel like is best for the kids and what's best for myself as an educator. So, I think that's probably what I value the most and what boosts me the most.

Crediting the parent and community feedback, Elsie was empowered to continue to make creative decisions and to try new ideas with her teaching.

Physiological & Affective States

Frustration

As Elsie spoke about her teaching role, she often expressed feeling frustrated. Her main frustration was that she had to be a “jack of all trades,” in order to teach all aspects of a K–8 music program. Elsie appreciated the community atmosphere of the small school of 125 students; however, she had to serve higher numbers of children than teachers in a larger school setting because of the number of grades and different types of classes. Although rooted in enactive mastery experiences with out-of-specialty teaching, Elsie’s frustration was compounded by a busy schedule and personal expectations. She explained:

It's just impossible to feel like you can excel at everything. I feel like our schedules are so jam-packed. We're not full-time music teachers, and so and it's probably more honestly the expectations that we are putting on ourselves more than anybody else is putting on us. I always want to pretend like I'm the best at what I'm doing, and I want to feel as confident as possible. But I think it's very, very tricky when you're teaching that many kids.

Elsie realized that the varied responsibilities in her position would not likely allow her to excel with every aspect her teaching assignment:

I think there's a lot of frustrations in so many different areas. It just can really turn into quite the wormhole when you really start thinking about it. It would be really great to be feeling like you're at a mastery level, feeling like I was at a mastery level in all those regards, and it's just not something that I feel like I would ever get to in the future.

Elsie's frustration (physiological and affective states) was affected by her lack of opportunity to be focused on one teaching area and realizing that she was not able to be as fully effective with her teaching as she wanted.

Multiple Positions. To be a full-time teacher, Elsie became certified as a gifted and talented (GT) teacher. Working two part-time jobs in the same school presented challenges, including packed schedules and multiple responsibilities. She explained the challenge of teaching two positions:

I think the tricky part of those two different positions are that oftentimes, I'm asked to wear two hats, and sometimes those hats create schedule conflicts because it almost looks like it's supposed to be two separate teachers...I find it difficult to maintain an 80/20 split between positions, often offering more of my time into each role than I am being compensated for.

Teaching two different subject areas meant that she was required to do professional development for both and would be away from the classroom more often than other teachers. She explained:

One job affected the other job, and that was tricky for me because I felt like I needed to be an advocate for my students with both positions and I didn't feel like my music kid should be affected because of my GT role that I was playing.

Elsie was concerned that having two separate teaching job responsibilities challenged her teaching effectiveness: "If I'm teaching K–8 everything, and the position's an only 80% position because there's only one of me, that affects how I can build a really effective music schedule." Elsie noted frustration when her role conflict affected her music students: "Schedules are just really challenging. But I think it becomes really tricky when the kids are affected. And there's no answer to that." She indicated a sense of frustration (affective state) because being a part-time teacher in two different subject areas negatively affected her teaching effectiveness, which in turn, may have inhibited her ability to have enactive mastery experiences. Despite this frustration, she remained persistent: "I'm happy to do it and I'm happy to grow as a teacher and as a musician in my out of specialty areas." Elsie's persistence through the complex challenges of her teaching roles displayed evidence of her self-directed skills, flexibility, and teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Overconfidence

Elsie stated that she was confident in her teaching abilities when she came to the new rural teaching position from the larger music program in New York. She described that she felt quite accomplished having taught bands of 130 students for 11 years, and she thought, "If I could teach a band of 130, I can teach a band of 25.' I mean, how simple could that be? That was my thinking and I quickly realized that it's pretty tricky." Elsie

understood that it took time to adjust and to grow confidence with any new position; however, in hindsight she realized she was too sure of herself: “What's the difference if I have 130 kids in front of me or 25? Easy. But it was really different.” Elsie’s enactive mastery experiences with large ensembles in a large school supported her strong self-efficacy beliefs for teaching band; however, she lacked the experience teaching small ensembles in a rural school. Over time, she was able to persevere through the challenge and built her teaching self-efficacy belief in successfully teaching smaller ensembles.

Summary

Elsie expressed gratitude for the connections she made with students and the sense of community she experienced in the small school setting. She reported that she felt supported by her principal and the community which, along with the rural lifestyle, contributed to her commitment to teaching in a rural school. Elsie disclosed that teaching a K–8 music program while also being the gifted and talented coordinator was a challenge, yet her perseverance and efforts to improve her teaching demonstrated her commitment to being an engaged teacher.

Elsie’s questionnaire scores ranged from 84 to 100 (out of a possible 100), averaging a score of 94, which suggested a high positive influence from source categories. She reported that she was not adequately prepared (enactive mastery experiences) for all the teaching responsibilities in a rural K–8 music program. Despite Elsie’s challenges with teaching out-of-specialty music classes, she recorded a high score of 100 on the questionnaire for positive source influence from enactive mastery experiences. She used observation of other teachers and her principal (vicarious

experience) proactively to gain knowledge and skills to build self-efficacy perceptions to work with younger students. Elsie also recorded high positive influence from verbal and social persuasion with a score of 100 on the questionnaire. She noted that positive and constructive feedback from her principal, peer music teachers, and the community empowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Elsie expressed frustration (physiological/affective states) with the complexity of her schedule—being both the K–8 music teacher and the gifted and talented coordinator—and with the teaching challenges she faced in out-of-specialty music classes.

LAURA: K-8 MUSIC TEACHER

“I’m passionate about making music with kids and taking kids to the next level of experiencing music.” ~Laura

Laura’s Path to Music Teaching

“Laura” became involved with music in elementary and middle school where she played the violin in orchestra, saxophone in concert band and jazz ensemble, and sang in the chorus. In high school, she was involved in the concert band and jazz ensemble, took private lessons on saxophone, and played in the All-State Band. Laura’s positive experiences in music led her to study music education in college. She was a student teacher in the small, rural school system she attended as a student, and at the time of the study, worked in the same school system teaching grades K-8: K-4 general music, 2-8 strings and middle school orchestra, 4-8 band, 5-8 chorus, and jazz ensemble.

Teaching in a Rural School

Community

Laura stated that because of continuous public performances, music teaching was a very public job, more so than many other types of teaching positions. Because of the importance of the school in a rural community and the public visibility of her music program, she voiced, “I think a positive of teaching music in a rural school is that the community is very excited and proud of the music program.” Laura described her connections with her students and community members:

I like having them [students] as five-year-old’s and establishing a relationship with them. So even the kids that aren't music kids are my kids. And so, I like that

aspect of teaching in a small enough school that I know everyone's everybody. I know their grandparents; I know most of their aunts and uncles. I probably went to school with their parents at this point or someone in their family. And I like having them for nine years.

Laura's interaction with the community was generational, where relationship-building with students was interwoven with her established relationships with people in the community.

Commitment

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School

Laura stated that she was committed to teaching in a rural school. She expressed that she was very comfortable to live and work in this area, having had no other experiences because she grew up in the area and was a student teacher in the same school where she taught. She declared: "I don't know it any other way." Laura stated that she could not foresee herself moving from where she lived; however, "I might move to a different school, but it would just be a different rural school because there are no other options [in the region]."

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

Laura expressed a commitment to engaged teaching as her quote at the head of this section demonstrated: "I'm passionate about making music with kids and taking kids to the next level of experiencing music." For example, she wrote about teaching complex music:

Even though this requires more work, it is by far the most satisfying and professionally fulfilling to take the kids from a lower level of musicianship/performance and guide them to performing high quality music that stretched them and provided the opportunity for them to connect with more complex music.

Laura noted that she would have the same motivational approach and teaching style regardless of where she lived or taught. She set high expectations for her teaching and for student learning. Laura reported that she was deeply engaged with challenging her students with music learning. She stated: “I strive to push the kids to the limits and to excite them with a challenging performance-based program.”

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire Data

Laura had an average score total of 76 (out of a possible 100) on the questionnaire. The scores for the four self-efficacy sources were: Enactive Mastery Experiences–89; Vicarious Experiences–76; Verbal and Social Persuasion–80; and Physiological and Affective States–51 (see Figure 3). Laura’s scores suggested a moderate to moderately high positive influence from source categories.

Laura recorded the highest ratings in enactive mastery experiences (89), particularly with positive experiences teaching complex music. She selected high scores for positive influence from vicarious experiences except on one item: “watching other music teachers with similar music and teaching ability as me teach a piece of music, and then decided whether I could, or could not, teach that same piece of music.” Laura rated this item a zero, indicating no positive influence. She had a similar scoring pattern in

verbal and social persuasion, where she indicated high scores for positive influences from most items yet selected a zero positive influence for being told that professional development effort had improved her teaching skills. For physiological and affective states, Laura selected zero positive influence on two items: controlling nervousness while teaching and not worrying about making small mistakes while teaching, indicating these two issues were not present for her.

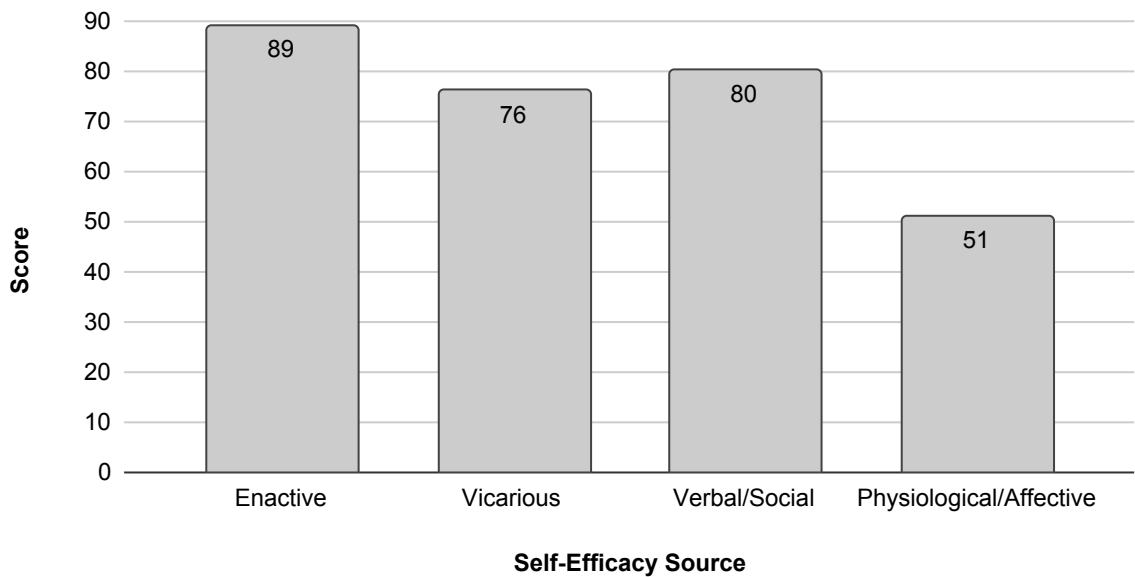


Figure 3: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Laura

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

Out-of-Specialty Teaching

Laura recorded her highest self-efficacy source score in the enactive mastery experiences category. She stated that she felt well prepared to teach in a rural school and believed that she was very effective with her teaching, particularly with instrumental music. Although teaching chorus was a weak area for her due to limited vocal training,

Laura suggested that her musical strengths helped her to teach out-of-specialty areas. She shared this experience from a choral festival:

I had no clue what I was really doing. I had NO vocal experience. I knew nothing about diction or vowel sounds! I used my love of music and my instrumental music experiences to teach them [students] their parts and fine tune their performance to the best of my ability. If I had taken my band to this festival, they would have done fantastic, and I would have been 100% confident and the kids far more prepared.

Laura's statement demonstrated a contrast in her self-efficacy source influence: she described a strong teaching self-efficacy belief for teaching band from past positive enactive mastery experiences, and she expressed low teaching self-efficacy perceptions for teaching chorus due to limited enactive mastery experiences for teaching chorus.

Laura was not deterred by her lack of adequate experiences with chorus. She stated: "I think that the areas that I was weakest in, I've found opportunities to learn to be better." One of these opportunities was to use local colleagues and community members as resources. "I'm good at surrounding myself with people that I need and that will complement me and make me a better teacher." Furthermore, Laura communicated that her specialized music experiences positively influenced her beliefs in her capabilities in out-of-specialty teaching. She stated, "I don't see my out-of-specialty teaching being a negative thing, because I focus on the parts that I'm good at and that complements the stuff that I'm not good at. I always tell myself that."

Vicarious Experiences

Observations

Laura relayed that she was positively motivated by observing other music teachers. When she saw what she considered to be poor teaching was equally motivational as observing what she considered to be great teaching. She stated, “I think when I see great teaching, it inspires me and motivates me to aim for that and when I see what I consider not great teaching, it motivates me to never let myself do that.” Laura stated that she benefitted from the post-observation discussions with a mentee about the teaching process when taking that mentee to observe other music teachers: “I think that sort of deconstruction of a lesson is helpful to me.” Laura expressed that she felt validated with her personal teaching approach when observing other music teachers. As an undergraduate student, Laura observed one teacher in particular who she viewed as similar to her with holding students to high musical standards and to be accountable for their work. She shared, “I don't work with a lot of people who are like me in teaching style, it's nice to be validated and see that works.”

Laura shared her experience when attending the Midwest Band Clinic, an event that was meant to be empowering, yet she disclosed that the experience lowered her self-efficacy perceptions in her teaching abilities:

I wanted to hear high quality performances from small schools. I wanted to go sit and talk with music teachers who got high quality results with tiny little programs. And I found this workshop, and I was so thrilled, it was like exceeding the standard in the small schools or something like that, and I go in, and I'm just so

psyched to be there. It was the small schools like 1,200 kids in the 7–8. Okay forget it, I'm done. And I didn't go to any more workshops the rest of time I was there.

She indicated that there was nothing at the Midwest Band Clinic that compared to her school's music program, as her school had around 140 students in grades K–8. "This is not real. These people's reality is not my reality." Although Laura communicated that she felt inspired while at the clinic, she did not plan to return to the event in the future because there was nothing offered that was similar or applicable to her teaching situation. In contrast, Laura expressed that she found observations (vicarious experiences) of similarly situated music teachers and programs were the most meaningful in supporting her teaching practice.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

"Praise, praise, and more praise!" ~Laura

Laura recorded a strong positive influence on most items on the questionnaire in the verbal and social persuasion category with scores ranging from 90–100; however, she rated zero positive influence concerning professional development feedback. She stated that peer music teacher feedback was the most helpful to her teaching, while principal feedback had little influence.

Praise

Laura expressed great validation from people's praise, finding that praise motivated her to be a better teacher. "I get praise and that works well for me, and it motivates me, and therefore has a positive cause and effect with the kids." She claimed

that “it's like a self-fulfilling prophecy. The more you're praised, the better you want to do.” Although Laura valued praise, she stated that she did not receive feedback or praise often. “I give a lot of people feedback on their teaching because I'm a mentor, but no one ever comes into my room to give me feedback on my teaching.”

Principal Feedback

Constructive feedback from the principal was non-existent for Laura. She stated that she had not been observed by her principal for eight years, and that she had never had an administrator or colleague speak with her or acknowledge her professional development goals.

This current principal is an entire cycle behind, and she just doesn't observe me, and she doesn't give me any feedback other than this, ‘Oh, Laura, you're so great,’ but there's nothing substantial behind the statements. I think, as long as parents are happy, she's happy.

Furthermore, Laura revealed that her recent professional development plan was driven by the needs of the school rather than her needs as a music teacher. First, she was pushed to include a goal in her plan that did not interest her professionally. She explained: “Maybe somewhere along the line someone up above said this is a box that needs to be checked, and I was chosen as the one to check it.” Second, administration wanted Laura to add sign language classes to her professional development plan so that she could fill in when the sign language teacher was not at school. Laura expressed frustration because both professional development items were unrelated to her music teaching position and did not meet her needs as a music teacher. Laura stated that the lack of feedback from her

principal, and then pushed to include goals in her professional development plan outside of the scope of her music teaching (verbal/social persuasion) had a negative influence on her teaching self-efficacy estimations and professional growth.

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Laura stated that she valued feedback (verbal/social persuasion) from music teachers more than from any other source because she respected the insights from people with similar experience and positions as her. “Peer music teachers, their positive feedback definitely is the driving motivator.” She expressed that she enjoyed receiving feedback not only from local and regional colleagues, but also from those from around the state and New England.

Countering the positive feedback from local and regional peers was what Laura perceived to be a lack of stature recognition from music teachers in other parts of the state for being a music teacher in a small school. She explained:

I feel like I have lots of music connections, but I feel like the K–8 music community is the second tier, third tier. . . . One thing that irritates me is that many teachers in larger schools don’t give us [teachers] or our programs the credit they deserve. I think the “jazz culture” is a perfect example of this.

Laura explained that many of the area rural schools did struggle with their music programs, and when she brought students to the regional honors festival, there were no students with whom her students could musically connect. She explained:

Our students don’t have the same opportunities to perform in honors festivals that are overly challenging and enriching because many rural programs are not quality

programs and the level of musicianship there is low. I try not to let these lower standards lessen what I aim to get out of my students.

As the quote above suggests, despite some other people's perceptions (verbal/social persuasion) of small rural school musicianship levels, Laura continued to strive to be as effective with her teaching as possible.

Community Feedback

Laura shared that feedback from parents and town residents, supported by her deep and generational connections with her community, strengthened her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Her high self-efficacy beliefs allowed her to expand and manage program supports such as music boosters, classroom volunteers, guest artists, and to cultivate a healthy budget. Furthermore, Laura acknowledged that it was "good for my mental health to have more adults in the room," such as music artists and volunteers, because she felt physically isolated due to her music room's physical distance from the rest of the classrooms in the school building. Laura described that her teaching self-efficacy perceptions were boosted when she connected (verbal/social persuasion) with other adults who were supporting her in the music classroom.

Laura stated that she had occasionally received negative feedback from parents—not about the music, but rather from the way she was dressed. She stated: "Do I look that bad on stage? It's not about my teaching." She recalled a comment from a parent, whom she had taught several of her children and who had attended concerts for ten years, who said, "Finally, finally you got your outfit right." Laura stated that this comment was probably meant to be a compliment; however, it negatively affected her. She explained:

Those kinds of comments derail me because it's people not even validating what I'm doing for their kid. They're just judging me on my clothes and that part is weird to me...But definitely people's comments that are so not music related can lower my desire to teach, which I guess ultimately lowers my teaching capabilities.

After working hard to teach music and to share her student's work in a public performance, Laura did not expect to receive personal comments about how she dressed on stage. She expressed that negative feedback about how she presented herself negatively affected how she viewed her self-efficacy beliefs for teaching. Laura received a mixture of both positive and negative feedback from her principal, music teacher peers, and community sources. She was positively influenced by affirming feedback while having strong enough teaching self-efficacy perceptions to work through challenging feedback to meet her high teaching self-efficacy beliefs in her teaching abilities.

Physiological & Affective States

Laura selected a score of zero positive influence on two questionnaire items: controlling nervousness while teaching, and not worrying about making small mistakes while teaching. She explained the positive opportunities presented when making mistakes: "I actually think it is important to make mistakes in front of kids...they need to see that everyone makes mistakes and that is how we grow." She stated that making mistakes is part of the learning process and that making mistakes or not knowing the answer to a student's question created opportunities to learn for both the student and the teacher. As for not being nervous, Laura voiced feeling secure in her teaching ability,

stating, “I feel confident every day.”

Although rooted in the enactive mastery experiences category, Laura expressed that teaching strings was a stressful endeavor (physiological/affective states) at the beginning of her career. She explained: “I used to dread tuning strings... all the frozen pegs, slipping pegs, unraveling/frayed strings, popped bridges, bows tightened to the point of arching.” At her first concert, Laura acknowledged that she could not tune strings very fast, which led to her “feeling like I was going to die before the concert trying to get all those freaking violins and cellos tuned.” After the concert, she happily announced that when she “tuned a sea of string instruments, I felt like a rock star!” Although Laura reported an overall high teaching self-efficacy belief, she experienced negative physiological and affective state responses when working with strings. After she had a successful enactive mastery experience tuning strings at her concert, she expressed joy with her tuning success which boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Laura recalled a field trip from many years ago where she brought her chorus to sing the national anthem at a semi-professional league hockey game. A multitude of crises occurred during the event, such as sick students, a vandalized bus, and rude and inappropriate behavior from strangers directed at her and the students. These events left her feeling traumatized. She recounted:

I had like teacher PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] and I was still crying about it on Monday morning, and this was a Friday night event...I could cry about that for a good six months. It could trigger like really bad PTSD.

As she recounted her story to her principal, she stated, “I started bawling and

hyperventilating. I said to him, ‘this has destroyed me. I can't get this out of my mind.’” This singular event led her to consider quitting her job. Despite this low moment, Laura stated that she had two supports that helped her persevere to continue with her teaching: (a) steadfast support from her principal (verbal/social persuasion), and (b) her ongoing belief in herself to persist through challenges (self-efficacy). Laura’s response to this stressful experience demonstrated her resilience in the face of adversity and her belief in her capability to succeed with teaching.

Emotional Responses

Laura recollected that she felt emotional during musical performances with her students. She shared: “It happens every once in a while, where either it mostly is in concert band or jazz band where we'll just come together, and the climax will be so big, and I'll just burst into tears.” Laura expressed that she was not shy or hesitant to cry in front of students when she felt moved by the music. Some of these emotional moments would happen when her own children were in the music program:

There’s something about making music with your own kids...when [my son] was in jazz band, we rewrote some parts, and he was just singing over the top of it with his trombone. I was just crying my way through it. And because I'm not ashamed to cry, the kids were feeling it at a higher level and then it just feels so good.

In another example, a middle school music student from the neighboring town was diagnosed with cancer. Because many of her students knew this student, Laura programmed a piece of music with her band that had previously been written

(commissioned) in dedication to a student who had passed from cancer. “I programmed it because I needed it...and the kids knew the story, a lot of them knew [him].” When the final performance came, she described her deep connection and shared experience with the students through the music. She voiced: “The kids were connected. I was connected. It wasn't just playing a song really well; it was like playing a song and feeling it all together. And that was a high.” Laura embraced meaningful musical moments with students while freely showing her emotional reactions when she was moved by the music. Her teaching self-efficacy allowed her to adeptly use her emotional displays (physiological/affective states) to help her students learn to create their own emotional connections with music.

Summary

Growing up in the school district in which she taught, Laura detailed that she had deep connections with her rural community as she described that she knew not only parents of her students but also their extended family members. She valued the relationships she could build with all her students because of the small school size. Laura expressed comfort from living and working in a rural area and that she would likely continue to teach in a rural area. She was committed to engaged teaching—she expressed feeling passionate about music-making with students and challenging them musically.

Laura’s questionnaire scores ranged from 51 to 89 (out of a possible 100), averaging a score of 76, which suggested a moderate to moderately high positive influence from source categories. Her highest selected score (89) was in enactive mastery experiences, stating that she was well prepared for teaching in a rural school. Laura

lacked training with teaching vocals and chorus, yet she expressed that her strengths in other music areas supported her out-of-specialty teaching. She reported that observing teachers (vicarious experiences) who were in similar teaching positions and who taught with a similar style to be the most meaningful and inspiring, whereas when Laura observed groups at the Midwest Band Clinic, it was not helpful because the types of groups were unrelatable to her rural teaching situation. Laura valued the feedback (verbal/social persuasion) from similarly situated peer music teachers and from genuine praise from teachers and people in the community. Regarding physiological and affective states, at the start of her teaching career she recalled that teaching strings, an out-of-specialty area, to be powerfully stressful, and events at a school chorus field trip left her feeling traumatized. On the other hand, Laura expressed feeling emotional and crying in front of students when feeling moved by the power and connectedness of the musical moments they created together.

MOLLY: GRADES 9–12 MUSIC TEACHER

“I think that those are good times when you have kids that get to make music that never thought they'd be able to. That's the joyful part. Bing!” ~Molly

Molly's Path to Music Teaching

“Molly” had taught at five different K–8 schools, two public high schools, and one year as an adjunct piano and woodwinds instructor at a rural branch of the state university system. She was in her fourth year at a semi-private high school academy where she taught concert band, chorus, beginning band, and beginning guitar during the school day, and acapella choir and jazz ensemble after school. Each of these schools were in rural areas with small student populations. Most of her music performing had been as an accompanist for choirs, shows, and church services, all at a variety of levels both in schools and in the community. Molly described her inspiration for becoming a music teacher:

When I was eight years old, I can remember going to music class with Mrs. Fortin and knowing that I wanted to be her. I wanted to learn to play the piano and sing and dance. When it was time to leave the music room I always wanted to stay, and when I told my mother this, she said that maybe I might want to be a music teacher someday...As this thought about being a teacher took root, it REALLY took root, and I began collecting mimeograph copies of all of the classroom music things with Mrs. Fortin's blessing. And then I just bopped through the rest of elementary school and high school just looking around knowing that I was doing on the job training.

Teaching in a Rural School

Community

Molly expressed enjoyment living in a rural community, where she appreciated the calm and quiet of the area. “There’s not a lot of stress. Nobody’s ever in a hurry to go anywhere. The kids have that relaxed atmosphere about them.” Molly noticed that in each rural school in which she taught that students, parents, teachers, and community members sincerely appreciated having a music teacher and a music program. Her first teaching job was in a small K–12 school with fewer than 150 students where there had been no music teacher for six years. Molly described the recognition from the community:

The blessing was that whatever I did there was soaked up and appreciated an incredible amount. I was teaching in a very tight-knit community with not many outsiders, and the majority of the staff and students took me in, which was fantastic.

While experiencing broad school and community support for music in each rural school in which she had taught, Molly reported that rural communities faced challenges with sustaining music programs due to teacher availability and proper certification. She described some of the obstacles:

It is hard to recruit music teachers somewhere where there is no nightlife, outsiders are shunned sometimes, and there are definitely no high-quality performing groups for them to belong to. The schools here in [this] county pay the lowest salary in the state - nearly half of what some other schools in southern Maine do.

These rural issues resulted in many music teacher positions left unfilled or staffed with people who did not have certification for music teaching. For Molly, it was challenging to teach in a school where there had been no music, and where she had to build a music program with scant resources. She also expressed that she felt gratitude from students, parents, and community members for bringing music into their lives.

Commitment

Commitment to Teaching in A Rural School

Molly stated that she was committed to teaching in a rural school. She grew up in a rural area and envisioned teaching in a rural area: “I always had a strong love of both early elementary general music and ensembles [band/chorus], and I was excited to get into a small rural school and get cranking on all of the music making!” Molly was not interested in teaching in a more populated area. She explained:

I think at this point knowing how much energy it takes with a huge program, the thought of going to a place where I had 900 students or something, I don't think I'd want to do that. I do like living in a rural area. And I like teaching in a rural area.

After Molly found a more stable rural teaching job with less stress, she planned to stay in that position as long as she was able. She stated: “It feels like home.”

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

Molly was committed to engaged teaching despite the challenges she previously described and had experienced while teaching in a rural school. Her vision of teaching did not align with the realities of teaching in a rural school. She stated that it was “not

what I considered when I thought I was going to be a teacher, just that kid getting the new shiny instrument.” Many families could not afford to rent or buy their child an instrument. She explained how this impacted the students in band: “I’ve been at the point where I’ve had 15 kids that need a school instrument but only seven school instruments. And that’s often very hard.” Itinerant teaching at multiple schools with nearly impossible schedules added to a sense of frenzy. She related: “I never knew what was happening.” As Molly adjusted to the challenges, she realized how important she was in the lives of her students as a music teacher and giving them the best that she could offer, stating: “It’s just what they get in the music room, that’s their music experience. It’s nowhere else.” Molly continued to set high expectations for her teaching and for student learning. She explained: “I feel effective for where I am and what I do. It’s producing good results and sometimes even great results.” Molly expressed her commitment to and the importance of her engaged teaching: “Kids in rural, poverty-stricken schools need music just as much as those in more affluent areas, maybe even need it more. And they certainly deserve to have a teacher that is well-educated and passionate for teaching.”

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire Data

Molly had an average score total of 97 (out of a possible 100) on the questionnaire. The scores for the four self-efficacy sources were: Enactive Mastery Experiences–100; Vicarious Experiences–90; Verbal and Social Persuasion–100; and Physiological and Affective States–97 (see Figure 4). Molly’s scores suggested a very high positive influence from source categories.

One of the highest ratings that Molly selected was in enactive mastery

experiences (100), particularly with positive experiences teaching simple music. She described her enjoyment when teaching younger students:

When I began to dream of what I might do as a music teacher I always seemed to picture myself leading large groups - bands or choruses. I found that some of my most rewarding moments, however, were not made with older, experienced high school groups, but very young beginners playing simple music tastefully and with great technique. It gave me hope for the future with my older students!

Molly also selected a rating of 100 in the verbal and social persuasion category. She noted a positive influence on her teaching self-efficacy perceptions from when her high school aged son told her that she was a good music teacher who cared about her students.

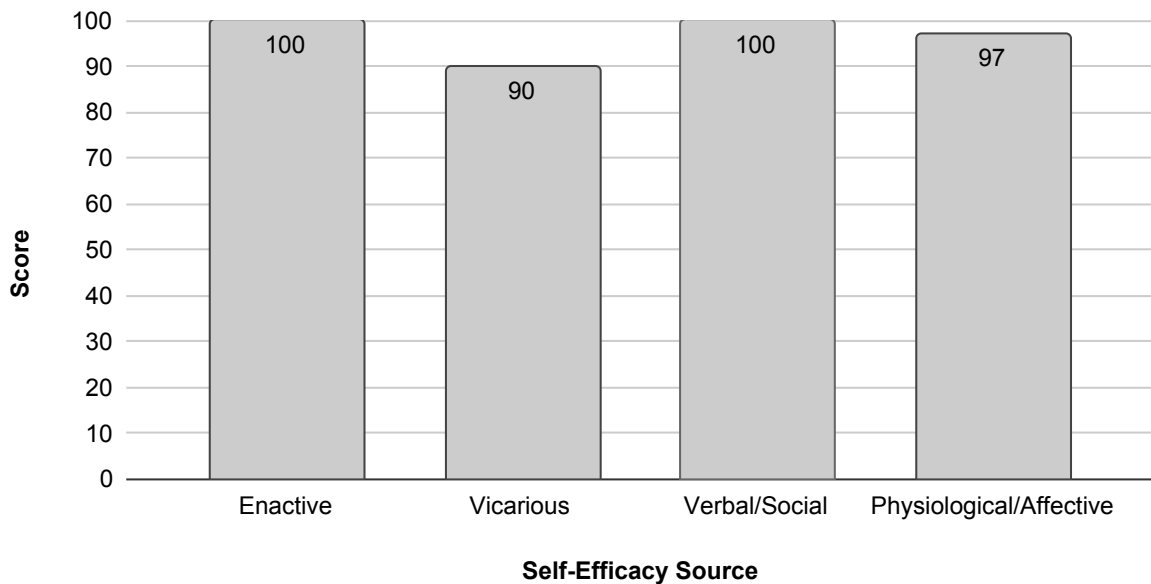


Figure 4: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Molly

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

Molly stated that she felt prepared to be a music teacher, a readiness that was built from her experiences being a young music student through her time student teaching:

I knew I was going to be music teacher ever since third grade. So, I've been paying attention and I've been keeping a copy of everything I ever did in any music class. I still have like the mimeographs with the purple on them!

As an instrumental major in college, she focused on flute and piano, took all of the instrumental methods courses, and became well-versed on all the woodwind instruments. She stated that knowing the woodwind instruments helped her to feel comfortable and confident in her instrumental teaching abilities.

Out-of-Specialty

Molly recounted that she knew she would eventually have a music job where she would have to teach multiple areas of music—band, chorus, and general music—yet was never able to fit a choral methods class into her schedule with an instrumental heavy course load. Despite not having choral coursework, Molly accompanied several choirs during college. She explained how her accompanying experience supported her teaching:

I think that my keyboard skills have helped all the way along as no job that I have ever held in [rural] Maine has an accompanist as part of the gig. I used my experience of all of the choral groups that I performed in and accompanied.

Molly's opportunities to observe choir directors (vicarious experience) while accompanying choirs positively affected her chorus teaching self-efficacy perceptions,

which was an out-of-specialty area for her.

One challenge Molly found was teaching a violin student because she had no experience teaching strings. The student joined the middle school band where all the music was in concert Bb or Eb and the student did not have experience playing in flat keys. The student would come to flute lessons to be with other concert pitch instruments. Molly stated that she knew just enough to help with some fingerings: “I had my little blue book that has all the fingerings and all of the stuff in it...that was out of my element.”

Another challenge Molly found was teaching acapella choir at the high school level. She explained: “I’m really out of my element here teaching an acapella choir which is different than regular choir. I really struggled with teaching the kids what to listen for in order to get their own pitches.” Molly expressed that teaching acapella forced her to become a better listener to the students, and that it was “awkward for me to just stand and make music without an instrument attached.” She reported that she had improved her self-efficacy perceptions to teach the acapella choir through the experiences of teaching the choir and through the work she did to prepare for teaching acapella. She explained:

Normally I can just I’ll get familiar with scores, or I’ll get familiar with the choral piece and be able to do it. But the acapella I had to like sit and learn it without a piano, all the time, I had to make myself do that. So that made me feel less confident.

Molly described her acapella teaching: “I know what they need in order to make them better which is just confidence and repetition...I think that’s the key for any group to be able to...feel comfortable.” This statement about how to adeptly teach her students

with confidence and repetition seemed to reflect her own teaching journey when teaching an out-of-specialty area. Molly indicated that she had a lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences for teaching choral groups and strings; however, her teaching self-efficacy beliefs in her specialty areas allowed her to competently teach in out-of-specialty areas as well.

Professional Development

Molly described that gaining professional development learning experiences was difficult due to minimal opportunities and access. Because she lived in such a rural area, she stated that:

There's no professional development. You've got to go find it. I've gone to tons of things. Any time a general music clinic was offered, like the *one* day I would go. I wish that there were more online resources my first couple years of teaching.

Molly described that her access to professional development was essentially limited to state and national conventions. Attending these events was challenging because of time, distance, and missing school, yet she put forth the effort when possible to support her teaching practice.

Vicarious Experiences

Molly's most influential vicarious experiences were from observing music teachers during her undergraduate courses and during student teaching. She described playing a proactive role in selecting where her student teaching placements would be based upon the teachers she had observed during previous undergraduate coursework:

I was able to pick and choose separate elementary, middle school, and high school locations and chose those based on situations where I knew that I would be placed in the classroom of really inspirational teachers that knew their craft well.

Molly stated that it was important to her to choose where she did her student teaching to get the experience she needed, and that asserting her preferences was challenging. She explained:

I worked it out. I had to make my own schedule and figure it out myself because no one would help me because I wouldn't go where they wanted me to go, but I'm glad that I did. I think I made good choices about where I wanted to go.

Molly demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy while seeking to maximize her student teaching placement opportunities, which in turn gave her meaningful observational (vicarious) experiences.

Once teaching, Molly recounted that she did not have many opportunities to observe other music teachers. On the questionnaire, she selected an outlier score of 50 out of 100 on the item: "I have improved my music teaching by watching other teachers (of any level) teach well," which indicated a low to moderate positive influence for observing and learning from other teachers. She explained difficulties when trying to plan time to observe:

We don't do a lot of sharing or visiting, especially [in our] county. If you miss the day, those kids don't get music that whole week. So, nobody around you wants to take a day off to go visit another because then classroom teachers don't get a break.

With music teachers that she did observe, Molly shared that she learned to talk less when in front of an ensemble and that “those kids in my room are the most important right that very second.”

Molly had served as a mentor for two beginning teachers which required her to do regular observations. She averred, “It always stuns me when I meet a teacher or go to observe and they've never played the flute before, but they're teaching flute, which is kind of strange to me.” Molly expressed that knowing how to play all the woodwind instruments was helpful for her teaching, and she was perhaps surprised to see another teacher not have the woodwind instrument experience. Although she found it odd that a music teacher was teaching flute who had never played flute, Molly had previously related that she had taught violin when that was an instrument with which she had little experience. Molly reported that observations of other music teachers that related to out-of-specialty teaching in rural schools positively contributed to her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

Principal Feedback

Molly stated that she received minimal feedback from principals. She explained: “In the 21 years that I've taught, I have been observed three times for probably a total of 30 minutes maximum each time.” The written feedback was usually from the required template checklist used by principals which Molly found typically unhelpful. Verbal feedback included statements such as “It was wonderful to be in there and to just see what you're doing,” and, “It looked like so much fun.” One principal admitted they did

not know what they should be looking for in the formal observation. Molly indicated that perhaps principals could have offered input about classroom management; however, she expressed confidence in her ability to run her classroom and therefore had not ever received feedback on classroom management issues.

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Molly found support from two other music teachers in her region. She connected with them through email and social media because they lived a long distance away, and the physical size of the county made travel distances difficult. Molly shared that her music teacher friends understood the music issues she faced and were supportive to her needs. She shared: “It’s good to have those two kinds of ‘music buddies.’”

Molly also made connections with teachers who lived out of state when she worked on her master’s degree. She expressed that she was dumbfounded by some of the attitudes of other music teachers. Molly stated: “Their schools provide everything and they’re still not happy. It’s amazing. I feel like we’re very lucky that we have the connections that we have with the kids that we do have.” Molly shared that these teachers were helpful to her in understanding new perspectives, such as socio-economic contrasts between rural and urban/suburban areas, and the differences in the type of relationships music teachers can build with students and communities between rural and urban/suburban settings.

Molly expressed strong feelings when recounting how teachers and professors tried to discourage her from taking a job in rural Maine. She stated: “They had the gall enough to express their displeasure that my career would be wasted on [rural] Maine.”

They cited that Molly's music and teaching skills would serve more students if she worked closer to the university. Upset by this negative feedback, she exclaimed: "It infuriated me!" Rather than discouraging her, Molly was empowered: "So, here I am 23 years later NOT wasting my time teaching in rural [Maine]!"

Teacher Feedback

Teachers at her school supported Molly and the music program. She stated that teachers were happy to have a music program at the school and saw the positive effects with the students who participated. Molly received offers from teachers to help with concerts, to make her a meal, or to do whatever was needed to help.

Molly recalled receiving positive encouragement from a fellow teacher about her lack of confidence to teach an acapella group:

I have a friend that I'm like, 'I can't do this acapella thing and there's only like eight kids, so maybe I shouldn't do it.' And [they replied], 'You can do it. You can play the piano; you can find the notes.'

Molly reported that ongoing encouragement from this colleague helped her to build her self-efficacy perceptions as she worked to refine her teaching. She stated: "I definitely have improved with the acapella choir."

Student Feedback

Molly shared that the most valuable feedback she received was from her students. She stated that she loved giving her students surveys that included open-ended questions: "That feedback is really important to me." Molly indicated that feedback from students was "always better because they'll be more honest than adults most of the time." She

expressed that she preferred having the direct feedback from students for building relationships and giving student voice to the teaching and learning process.

Community Feedback

Molly indicated that she received strong support and positive feedback from families in the community. People shared comments such as “You always do such a good job,” and they would stay to help clean up after concerts. Molly found that in all the rural communities in which she had worked, people supported their schools and music programs because music fostered pride and a sense of belonging. Molly expressed that she valued teaching in rural schools because students in rural schools should have quality music opportunities like students in other areas. She indicated that the positive comments and actions from community members helped to create an environment that she found appealing. “I certainly feel sometimes that the many challenges seem to outweigh the positives, but the positives do leave you with a much bigger high. The ups are usually much more memorable than the downs.”

Molly reported strong positive feedback from many different sources across several different communities. Her positive verbal and social persuasion came from principals, peer music teachers, other teachers in her schools, her students, and from people in the community. The positive influences Molly relayed aligned with her verbal and social persuasion score of 100 on the music teacher self-efficacy questionnaire.

Physiological & Affective States

“I don't even have time to reflect on it because I was like running with my hair on fire.”

~Molly

In one of the school systems in which she taught, Molly expressed that she was negatively affected by the stress from her teaching position. She stated that she and other music teachers that she knew were stretched thin in rural schools. For example, her teaching responsibilities included grade 3 general music, grade 4 beginning band and lessons, grades 5–6 band and lessons, grades 7–8 band and lessons, and high school band and chorus. She recalled spending hours every evening preparing for lessons because she had no preparation times during the school day. Molly described her struggle:

I kept doing more and more, and more, and more and more. I had a zillion groups and I had like a zillion kids and it was a very big program for the capacity of my sanity to be able to do it all. So, I feel like I was probably not boosting myself because I kept having so much to do that I kind of ran myself into the ground. ...Because I had grown the program so much, it really began to take a toll on me mentally and physically.

One of her points of stress was the challenging schedule. She explained:

I had seventh and eighth grade band, and then high school added to that, and the seventh and eighth graders left halfway through [rehearsal]. And then I'd have third grade right after that. And then it would be seventh grade trumpets and it was so weird. And on those days where you didn't know what day it was because you thought it was Monday, but it's really Wednesday, and a whole group of kids

would walk in I wasn't expecting. I'm like, why are you flutes here? And they're like, it's our lesson. Every day was just so crazy and different.

Molly described the physical manifestation of her stress: “I was having a lot of physical reactions just to the stress in general. It was even to the point that my vision was spotty in front of me,” in addition to experiencing stomach problems. Contributing to her stress was the weight and responsibility of running a full and diverse music program, yet not having enough time to effectively teach. She explained: “I felt like that lowered how I felt about my teaching capabilities because I didn't have the time to give every kid what they needed because I was it. I was the only person.” Molly reported that the weight of an overbooked schedule caused her stress, resulting in negative physical and emotional responses that negatively affected her self-efficacy belief for teaching.

When Molly took a different teaching position at a high school, she expressed a sense of relief. She explained:

Switching jobs has magically taken care of all the things that made me think I was dying. I actually feel a lot better and I'm a lot less stressed. I think my body just got used to the chronic stress. And I would always get sick like on a vacation third day, and I would get sick because I think I finally stopped moving.

Once established in her new position, Molly was able to reflect upon her previous years of work, never having noticed that she had been in “survival mode” because “I was just keeping my head above water with no time to stop and think.” At the time of the study, she reported less stress (physiological/affective state) and fewer student numbers, which allowed her to focus on essential tasks rather than reverting to her “old personality,”

which she described as: “I have super-duper type A, like band director alphabetize everything disorder.” Molly acknowledged that the change of intensity had helped her to be a better teacher, stating, “I think I enjoy teaching now that I actually have time to figure out what I'm doing.” Molly’s schedule allowed her time to reflect upon her teaching and to properly prepare and plan, which she stated positively affected her teaching self-efficacy estimations.

Molly reminisced about positive recollections with her previous experiences teaching recorders to grade three students. She explained:

I have so many amazingly well things that have happened like having like cute little third graders that magically can play the recorders, and I actually loved teaching recorders because we could do some really great things and do really good ear training with them.

Molly also talked about the joy of teaching high school students who were beginners on their guitars and band instruments. She described:

I think the guitar class...actually has become a lot of fun! I did the modern band training kind of thing a couple years ago, and guitar class is a lot of fun because there are kids that have never had music. I have a lab band class that's like new kids to band, and so they learn to play flute and clarinet and trumpet, and they're like these almost grown-up size people that are just like fourth graders. They have the same problems with saxophones and trumpets. I think that those are good times when you have kids that get to make music that never thought they'd be able to. That's the joyful part. Bing!

Summary

Molly shared that she enjoyed the calm and relaxed features of a rural community. She welcomed the support she received from students, parents, teachers, and community members who all appreciated having a music teacher at their school, especially because finding and retaining a certified music teacher can be a challenge in rural areas. Molly reported that she was committed to teaching in a rural school, citing that she liked the less stressful rural lifestyle and the fewer numbers of students. She was committed to engaged teaching, reporting that she felt effective with her teaching in the rural environment. Molly expressed that she believed that students in rural areas need music in their lives and deserve well-educated and passionate teachers.

Molly's questionnaire scores ranged from 90 to 100 (out of a possible 100), averaging a score of 97, which suggested a very high positive influence from source categories. She stated that she was well prepared for teaching in a rural school and relied on her piano skills and knowledge of woodwind instruments (enactive mastery experiences) to support her out-of-specialty teaching areas such as strings and chorus. Molly shared that her best and most meaningful opportunities to observe other music teachers (vicarious experience) were during her undergraduate program, and that the ability to observe other music teachers during her teaching career was limited. She described that she gained helpful feedback (verbal/social persuasion) from peer music teachers, other regular classroom teachers, students, and from people in the community, but not from principals. In some of her teaching positions, Molly expressed that she was negatively affected by stress to the point where the stress was taking a toll on her physical

and mental health and well-being (physiological/affective states). She indicated that she found relief from influences that negatively affected her physiological and affective states in previous teaching positions when she took a new position, which gave her time to reflect, plan instruction, and be more confident as a teacher with strong self-efficacy estimations.

SARAH: K–8 MUSIC TEACHER

Sarah’s Path to Music Teaching

“Sarah” became involved with music in elementary and middle school where she played the cello in the orchestra, trumpet in the concert band and jazz ensemble, and sang in chorus and show choir. Her musical interests turned to singing in high school where she was primarily involved in chorus and show choir. Her love for singing inspired her to major in voice in college, while also keeping up with her trumpet in a jazz combo. Sarah’s teaching included an internship while in high school at a small K–8 school, student teaching in the same school with a focus on kindergarten, first grade, and middle school chorus, student teaching at a high school where she worked with the grades 9–12 chorus, assisting in directing a high school show choir, and directing a second high school show choir. At the time of this study, Sarah taught part-time in a small, rural K–8 school, teaching: K–3 general music, 4–8 band, 5–8 chorus, guitar class, jazz ensemble, and show choir.

Teaching in a Rural School

Community

Sarah expressed delight to be teaching in a small rural school, where she found great pleasure in the sense of community. “I love teaching. I love teaching in the smaller community because you do know the parents, you know the people around you.” Sarah stated that there was strong community support for the music program and learned to utilize this resource more frequently especially since she considered herself to be “a bit of a control freak,” where she wanted to do everything herself. Smaller class sizes allowed

her to get to know students better both in and out of the classroom. She explained: “I just love the personal connections. I love being able to talk with a kid during their lesson and see how they're doing and really kind of just check on them and have normal conversation.” During the school day there was time and space for more individualized instruction and for her to be involved in other school activities and events outside of music. In the fall and spring, the school offered local hiking trips, an activity Sarah loved to share with her students. During the hikes, she had meaningful conversations with students and saw them in a different light. Sarah embraced the small school size and the community-like school culture, stating, “These are my kids...I can give more to them.”

Commitment

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School

Sarah reported a strong sense of commitment to teaching in a rural school. She described her thoughts: “I definitely don't plan to go to a different area. I definitely don't. I do not want to teach in any kind of suburban type school. Like, that's for sure not in the in the books for me.” Because Sarah grew up in the area where she worked, she understood the small communities, schools, music programs, and the inherent challenges, stating: “I do, despite its challenges, I do really like being in a small-town school.” Sarah shared that she felt at home teaching there. “I know for sure I'm not going to leave the rural school.”

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

Sarah had a continued drive for excellence in her teaching, stating, “I take things to 110%. I work really hard for everything.” Aware of her various specialty and out-of-

specialty music teaching skill levels, she strove to be as effective as possible teaching her students. Sarah noted her personal ongoing work to strengthen her knowledge and skills in her out-of-specialty areas (enactive mastery experiences). She was positively influenced by observations of other local teachers (vicarious experiences) and found working collaboratively with other teachers (verbal/social persuasion) built her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire Data

Sarah had an average score total of 95.5 (out of a possible 100) on the questionnaire. The average scores for each of the four self-efficacy sources were: Enactive Mastery Experiences–98; Vicarious Experiences–95; Verbal and Social Persuasion–94; and Physiological and Affective States–93 (see Figure 5). Sarah’s overall scores suggested a very high positive influence from each source category; however, within the questionnaire, she recorded slightly lower scores on three individual question items. One item was related to vicarious experiences, where Sarah’s score of 88 reflected fewer opportunities for observing other music teachers that were similar to her in some way. The lowest recorded score (90) in the verbal/social persuasion category concerned principal feedback and professional development work, which she attributed to a lack of feedback from the principal about her teaching and professional development. In the physiological and affective states category, Sarah selected a slightly lower score (90) in having positive memories about past teaching experiences. Sarah highly rated her enactive mastery experiences (98); however, she was able to detail limited training in

instrumental teaching areas during her undergraduate program and how the lack of experience lowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

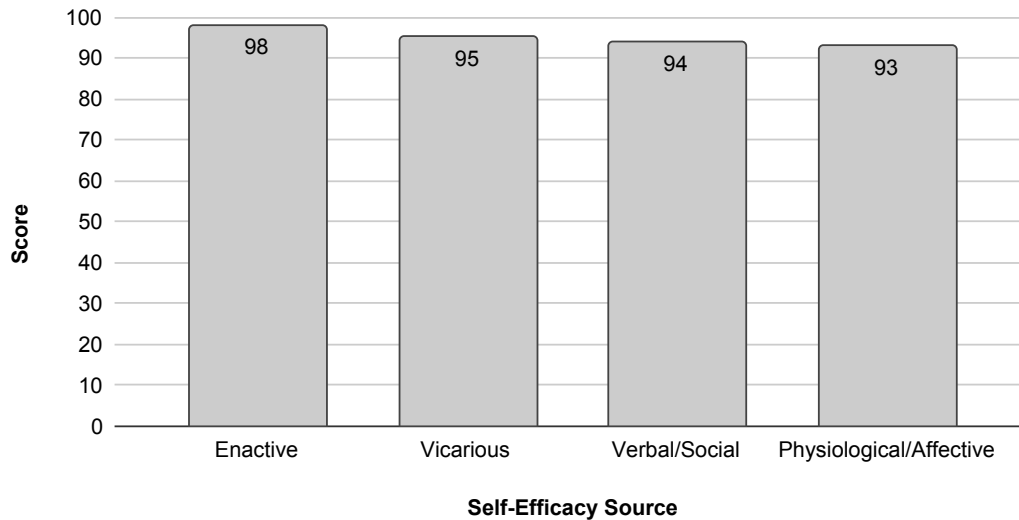


Figure 5: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Sarah

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

Teaching Preparation

Sarah grew up attending a rural school and performed her student teaching in a rural school, which gave her the situated experience and cultural knowledge for rural teaching. She stated that she was able to teach effectively in her K–8 music program, crediting her previous rural school experiences. As a vocal major, she had strong self-efficacy beliefs in her teaching abilities to work with singers. She explained:

I feel confident with being able to teach a chorus how to shape their vowels well while singing, how to give themselves better breath support, how to just have a bigger presence while they're singing. It just comes much easier, and I feel much more confident with it.

Sarah also welcomed opportunities to share her expertise with other school choirs, from sectionals to full rehearsals, expressing self-assurance with her music teaching skills and happily willing to help students build their singing technique.

Despite reporting that she felt strongly prepared for vocal instruction, Sarah did not have the same experience with instrumental preparation. Although her music concentration in school was vocal, only one out of four music teaching areas in her current job was in her specialty. Sarah wished that she would have had more opportunities for taking instrumental pedagogy classes such as brass class and percussion class to better train her for her current position. For out-of-specialty teaching areas, she relayed that she was not fully prepared, and that her lack of adequate training negatively affected her belief in her teaching abilities. She stated: “It definitely left some holes that I had to research and work on in my teaching.” Sarah had to rely on her previous experiences as a student in bands and jazz ensembles as an entry point to directing these ensembles as a teacher.

Out-of-Specialty Teaching

Sarah had concerns about her job expectations and the range of grades and disciplines required, saying that she needed to be “basically a jack of all trades for music.” She explained: “We are expected to be teaching more than one grade, and teaching band and orchestra and chorus and general music.” Because most of her teaching assignments were outside her vocal specialty, Sarah noted that her specialty teaching also felt compromised:

I do feel very sad and disappointed when I can't reach the level I know I could when teaching my chorus and show choir. All of the energy it would take to get my choir to that level is used to make up for the skills I lack in the other areas my job requires. It certainly is a challenge and something I battle with consistently at this point in my career.

Sarah continued, "I feel like my skills as being a really good vocal teacher are slipping because I can't focus on that as much. I have to focus much more on the things that I'm not good at." The time that Sarah spent working to improve her out-of-specialty teaching skills detracted from her focus on her vocal specialty teaching. Sarah reported that the lack of experience (enactive mastery experiences) in out-of-specialty areas negatively influenced both her specialty and out-of-specialty teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Sarah considered her lack of adequate preparatory experience (enactive mastery experiences) in classroom and instrumental teaching areas to hold her back with out-of-specialty teaching, which rendered her less effective; however, she affirmed that she had enough knowledge and skills to give students positive and enjoyable learning experiences. She explained:

I think it's just keeping up the positivity and showing them that I enjoy it even if it's not my forte. ...I had to do a lot of work to get to where I am now, and I still need to do a lot of work to be able to teach effectively in different areas.

Sarah persevered with optimistic self-efficacious perceptions about her teaching abilities. She explained: "I feel like I have enough to at least give a kid an experience and to give them a positive experience." Her sense of teaching optimism corresponded with the high

self-efficacy source influences score (95.5 out of 100) on the questionnaire.

Jazz Ensemble. Sarah recounted that she felt challenged when trying to form a jazz band at her school in her first year of teaching. She selected music with which she was familiar rather than arrangements that might be better suited entry points for young students. She described her efforts:

We were able to play the pieces okay, but I definitely struggled to explain how to play rhythms with certain styles, and I was terrible at teaching improvisation. And because of my lack of experience with all instrument groups, my drummer and bass player really struggled with picking up their parts.

Sarah continued that she did not have any experience with electric bass or drum set because that was not part of her undergraduate studies:

I had no clue how to teach my bass player how to play. I didn't have the confidence to give her the confidence to exude what she needed to hold the band together. I felt very much—and still feel very much—out of my league when it comes to that. I ended up relying on my bit of cello and guitar skills to help teach our bass player her music. I also had to take a lot of extra time reading through the music to figure out how to help my drummer play a more-simple beat throughout the songs that still held the band together.

As the quotes above suggest, Sarah used her previous experiences (enactive mastery experiences) with cello, guitar, and as a student in jazz ensembles as positive source influences to support her with teaching the jazz ensemble. After performing a challenging song at a concert with her jazz group, she reacted to her success: “I think I sometimes

remember the victories of those more than I do the things that are in my strength just because I guess I don't always expect it.” Despite her uncertainty when teaching jazz, Sarah reported that the strong performance made her feel more efficacious about her teaching abilities.

As Sarah continued to gain experience, she expressed that she became more comfortable with selecting music that was a better fit for her students, and that she felt a greater assurance in her abilities with teaching jazz. Sarah demonstrated a high level of self-efficacy beliefs through engagement and perseverance with a difficult task despite not having had supporting enactive experiences. Her strong sense of self-efficacy beliefs correlated with her high questionnaire response scores for enactive mastery experiences (98) and the high scores overall on the collective source influences (average score of 95.5 out of a possible 100).

Vicarious Experiences

Observations

Although Sarah had a modest number of opportunities to observe other music teachers during student teaching and in the first years of teaching, she stated of her current teaching situation, “I feel I’m flying much more solo and don't really know what other people are doing.” During student teaching, she observed teachers in larger schools and found it difficult to compare those larger ensembles with her small ensembles and to apply the same types of observed teaching styles and techniques. Sarah reported that observing music teachers at local schools that had a similar size and music program as her school to be the most helpful, although finding the time to travel and observe was

challenging. She stated:

I feel like it's the opportunity to actually get out and have the observations that are just really pertinent or really applicable to my teaching, it has been really, really hard. It's not easy to find somebody on the same level in the same sort of situation.

Sarah noted, for example, that from a broad perspective, school sizes and music programs varied tremendously across the region and the state, and program differences made it difficult to find music teachers who were similarly situated. Sarah explained that from a more detailed viewpoint, regional K–8 music teachers each had their specialty strengths: “I may be on the same level as one teacher with band, but not at the same level with chorus or orchestra, for example.” Because most regional teachers were instrumental specialists, she had difficulty finding vocal specialty teachers in a similar teaching position to observe.

Modeled Effects

Sarah communicated that she could benefit from observing peer teachers in area schools that were similarly situated with a K–8 grade span, student population, and music program responsibilities. She shared: “One of the things that would build up my teaching more specifically... would be to be able to observe [the other district teachers] more often.” From one observation of a district teacher, Sarah was impressed by the teacher’s ability to command a classroom, which gave her “a lot of confidence in how to manage a classroom as well.” Sarah continued, “The confidence kind of bled into me a little bit to kind of be like, ‘oh, yeah, okay. I can, I can be in command of a class like this.’” Sarah

also learned other tips that she gathered from the observation process, such as having a full lesson plan to ensure there was no downtime while teaching a general music class, and to “keep things a little lighter, bouncier, fun, not always so serious.” Sarah used modeling from other music teachers in her district (vicarious experiences) to improve her teaching, which positively influenced her self-efficacy perceptions with proactive and engaged teaching.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

Verbal and social interactions were a valuable self-efficacy source for Sarah. Feedback from peer music teachers and the community had the greatest influence on her beliefs about her teaching abilities. She explained: “It does definitely drive me to make something better because I always am striving to be that 110%. Affirmation I think is the biggest thing for me, just knowing that what I'm doing is good.” Sarah stated that she worked better when collaborating with other teachers, where she thrived from dialog and creative thinking. She also valued peer collaboration to reinforce her teaching self-efficacy perceptions:

I work much better when I can bounce ideas off of people. ...Bouncing ideas off of people kind of gives me a little bit more self-assurance of like, all right, that's a good idea or all right, maybe that's not such a great idea.

Principal Feedback

In Sarah’s school district, teachers were required to write a five-year professional development plan used for recertification and evaluations, as well as an annual one-year plan for personal and school goals. Sarah expressed that she did not perceive the plans as

meaningful to her teaching because they did not relate to what she needed for her teaching practice. She stated:

I find that with these five-year plans, when it comes to planning, I feel like as music teachers our performances should be things that are looked at more and I feel like what would be better, better professionally for us, and better maybe for our administration to see would be for us to do reflections on our performances instead.

Furthermore, there was never any follow through discussion with the principal about either of the professional development plans. Sarah quipped, “I just don't feel how relevant they are actually to our jobs.”

Principal evaluations were infrequent and done only for elementary general music classes and never for any ensembles or lessons. Despite the limited scope of evaluative feedback, Sarah reported that the principal’s comments boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions because they were positive, constructive, and positively reinforced her teaching practice for when she gave continual feedback to students. She explained:

I'm constantly assessing what the kids are doing and I feel strongly that music is kind of like that because you perform and generally it is a constant assessment of seeing what skills they pick up. So, [the principal] always had really positive comments on that.

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Sarah reported that feedback from her peer music teachers was always helpful and accepted. She admitted to not always being confident, and she welcomed the positive and

supportive comments from other music teachers. Sarah stated that “music teachers nudge my confidence up,” and that they push her to do her best. She expressed that she wanted people to be honest with their comments and feedback because she tended to thrive when she received better quality feedback.

Community Feedback

Sarah stated that she received generous support from the community from the time she began teaching at her school. She continually received positive reactions to her concerts, not only from people telling her directly, but also indirectly from overhearing parent conversations:

That really boosted [me] especially coming into a new community, wanting to make a good impression, and I've had very similar comments on every concert that I have given saying that people just really enjoyed it and that it was a much better experience than they had had in the past.

Sarah stated that she worked hard with students to be able to produce a strong concert performance, and the positive feedback from community members boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Despite her efforts to create meaningful student performances, Sarah recounted that it was difficult when there were negative comments from those few people who did not value music in school, which she felt lowered her self-efficacy perceptions. She explained: “It ultimately is just this disrespectfulness toward music itself...because I've taken so much time to make myself a good music teacher.” Sarah shared that she took negative comments hard because she diligently worked for everything she did; she never wanted to upset anyone and always wanted to

do quality work. When experiencing this type of pessimistic feedback, she took time to self-reflect: “Those moments that have brought my self-esteem down or have hit me a bit harder personally, I do think back and just try to figure out ways that I can look at that differently in the future.” Sarah described reframing negative feedback as a way to continue developing her teaching skills, while letting go of the adverse aspects. “I’m trying to let it go as well because it’s not always something that should be affecting my teaching.” Positive feedback from people in the community boosted her teaching self-efficacy beliefs, whereas negative feedback lowered her teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Physiological and Affective States

Nervousness

Working with jazz band affected her physically. Sarah recalled feeling nervous when teaching jazz band:

Jazz band stuff I’m always nervous, always so, so nervous. Jittering my knees. I have a thing with my knees when I get nervous that I’m I kind of bounce my knees. I’ll do it when I’m standing, I’ll do it when I’m sitting. I kind of bounce my knees, and that has happened numerous times. But that’s my nervous gesture.

Sarah was aware that her nervous knee bouncing would be visible to her students: “I try really hard to mask any kind of nervousness...just because I don’t want to spread it. I don’t want it to spread to my kids.” Although wanting to hide the physical presentation of her nerves, Sarah was honest with her students: “I do tell them when I’m nervous.”

Sarah’s nervous gestures (physiological/affective states) were a response to teaching an area of music in which she had less experience (enactive mastery experience).

Reacting to Music

Sarah described the power of music—the way that creating music impacted her both emotionally and physically. She recounted how she responded to musical experiences while teaching:

I feel like almost every music teaching experience gives [me] some sort of emotional or physical reaction because I think that's part of what music is. It's supposed to give you these, it's supposed to help you feel emotions and to have physical reactions, and I always know when I've had a really good performance or had a really good teaching moment because I get goosebumps.

In the same manner that Sarah disclosed to her students that she was feeling nervous, she also shared when the music resonated emotionally: “I make sure I always tell my kids, ‘I got goosebumps there.’” She stated that when those magical music moments occurred, “It's just this overwhelming feeling of joy...I always feel kind of like I'm glowing just because it's just, it's amazing.” Sarah’s moments of goosebumps and feelings of joy strengthened her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Summary

Sarah embraced the sense of community in her small rural school. She shared that she loved knowing so many of the parents and members of the community, and she especially loved the meaningful connections she was able to make with students. Sarah reported that she felt she was at home because she grew up in the rural area where she taught, and that she planned to remain teaching in a rural area. She strove to strengthen her knowledge and skills in her out-of-specialty areas (enactive mastery experiences),

wanting to improve her teaching effectiveness, which demonstrated a commitment to engaged teaching.

Sarah's questionnaire scores ranged from 93 to 98 (out of a possible 100), averaging a score of 95.5, which suggested a very high positive influence from source categories. She stated that she was prepared for vocal teaching, yet lacked opportunities for adequate instrumental training (enactive mastery experiences) to meet the needs of her teaching position. She worked to meet the challenge of teaching jazz ensemble through positive self-efficacy perceptions and by using her previous experiences (enactive mastery experiences) with cello and guitar. Sarah had limited opportunities for observing other music teachers (vicarious experience); however, she stated that music teachers who were teaching in a rural K–8 setting were the most helpful for her to observe. She shared that verbal and social persuasions were a valuable self-efficacy source for her teaching abilities, with peer music teacher and community member feedback being the most meaningful. Sarah expressed feeling nervous (physiological/affective states) when teaching out-of-specialty jazz band to the point where she had visibly jittery and bouncing knees. She recounted moments of overwhelming joy with great performances and powerful teaching moments, making connections with her students by always sharing with them her nervous and joyful feelings.

SYLVIA: GRADES 5–8 MUSIC TEACHER

Sylvia’s Path to Music Teaching

Sylvia had taught in many different rural settings. These included school systems of pre-K–12 and K–12, and several K–8 schools, teaching all aspects of the music program. In some positions, she also taught math and gifted and talented. Her position at the time of the study included: grade 5 beginner band, grade 6 band, grades 7–8 band, grades 6–8 chorus, grades 5–8 general music, as well as the gifted and talented teacher. Sylvia was inspired to become a music teacher by her supportive band director in middle and high school. The teacher pushed her musically and facilitated broad musical experiences such as community groups, pit band, and music theory independent study. Sylvia found a sense of community in band, and she wanted to provide that same opportunity for others:

I wanted to share that passion and help give a place for kids who may not always have a place at school. Music was a part of education where students of all social groups seemed to come together as one - and the barriers disappeared. It was our safe place to be ourselves and be a family within the chaos that can be adolescence.

Teaching in a Rural School

Community

Sylvia expressed that she enjoyed teaching in a rural area because of the connections with the students and members of the community. “I love being part of the community...I love that part of the ruralness. Getting to know people and how everything

fits in...knowing the families and how they connect.” She appreciated the support of people who “care about what you’re doing...even if its moral support.” Sylvia stated that when you teach music in a small K–8 school, you know all the students:

When you're in a rural area and it's a smaller population, it's harder for kids to find someone that they mesh with sometimes. I always loved that I tried to make the music stuff kind of a family and have our own culture that we're the band kids, we're the chorus kids. This is a safe place and we're all together in this and trying to make that sense of community. Maybe some kids don't have one otherwise. So, I really like that and the closeness of getting to know the kids is great, having them multiple years.

The relationship and community she formed with students extended beyond schooling years. She stated:

...how much I get from maintaining connections with my former students once they're adult, and being able to see how they progress in life. I love seeing how they keep music in their lives and stay friendly with their fellow "music kids". Once in a while an old group chat will resurface, and kids will say hello. It's wonderful to have that reminder of the difference we make, and the connections.

Through the connectedness of the rural community and by having students over a span of nine years within a small school, Sylvia was able to create a strong sense of community with students through her music classes.

Commitment

Commitment to Teaching in A Rural School

Sylvia stated that she was committed to teaching in a rural school. The sense of community was important to her: “I love the small schools. I love the getting to know people and being part of the community. I think it's kind of my jam, having to work at it a little and not be the cookie cutter.” She expressed that she would not want to live or work in a more populated area. She explained: “I feel like you miss out on so much that we get of making those connections and making an impact, and having it make an impact on you.”

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

“A lot of people don’t see what we’re doing as magical.” ~Sylvia

Sylvia was committed to being an engaged teacher. She valued the work she did teaching music and cared about the students that she served in rural communities. She stated:

I love that we're giving kids something that maybe they might not be able to get in another way. Some of the kids in rural areas may not ever be exposed to some of the stuff we get to teach them.

Sylvia shared that in a rural area with a small population, sometimes it was difficult for kids to find a community of peers. She strove to build a music community for her students where all would feel welcomed. She explained:

I tried to make the music stuff kind of a family and have our own culture, like we're the band kids, we're the chorus kids. Especially the ensembles—this is a safe

place and we're all together in this and trying to make that sense of community. Sylvia indicated that there was a mutually reciprocal positive influence between the students and her teaching; not only did she feel she was making a positive impact on the students, but her teaching was being impacted in positive ways by the students. She stated: “There's so much of that with the kids, that thing they give you back is just super cool.”

At times when she reported feeling challenged with her teaching, Sylvia proactively sought out support or researched information to help improve her craft. She used the internet to find teaching resources, lesson plan ideas, and music teacher groups on social media. She created opportunities to visit other teachers in rural settings to observe how they taught in their out-of-specialty areas. She contacted colleagues with whom she had studied at university who may have had general music experience while student teaching. Over time Sylvia built her “toolbox” of teaching skills, ideas, and resources to improve her teaching; she persevered through the challenging aspects and focused on the joyful aspects of her teaching experiences.

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire Data

Sylvia had an average score total of 76 (out of a possible 100) on the questionnaire. The scores for the four self-efficacy sources were: Enactive Mastery Experiences—75; Vicarious Experiences—89; Verbal and Social Persuasion—63; and Physiological and Affective States—81 (see Figure 6). Sylvia’s scores suggested a moderate to high positive influence from source categories.

The highest rating Sylvia selected was in vicarious experiences (89), noting that she had used other music teachers as models to improve her teaching skills:

I have gotten a lot from watching other music teachers in action, especially when I can relate to them. It's hard to watch "exemplar" videos of good teachers who are in giant, well-supported music programs with lots of resources, for example. Having been in programs that were struggling, it was helpful to see teachers in other small, rural programs with similar communities - and see HOW they were being successful and how it could adapt to my own situation.

Sylvia's response aligned with self-efficacy theory where the effects of vicarious experiences was greatest when observing others who are similar in a meaningful relatable way, in this case music teachers in similar small school music programs in rural communities.

In the physiological and affective states category, Sylvia scored question items between 90–100 except for one outlier score of 25 on the item "I have positive memories of most, or all, of my past teaching experiences." The score (25) indicated a low positive influence from her memories of teaching. She explained:

This is tricky - because I DO have positive memories of every one of my teaching experiences. However, in a few of them, the negative memories overpower and cloud the positives. Focusing on the positives is what helped me continue as a teacher.

Although she indicated a low influence with her score, she used positive experiences to persevere and continue in the profession.

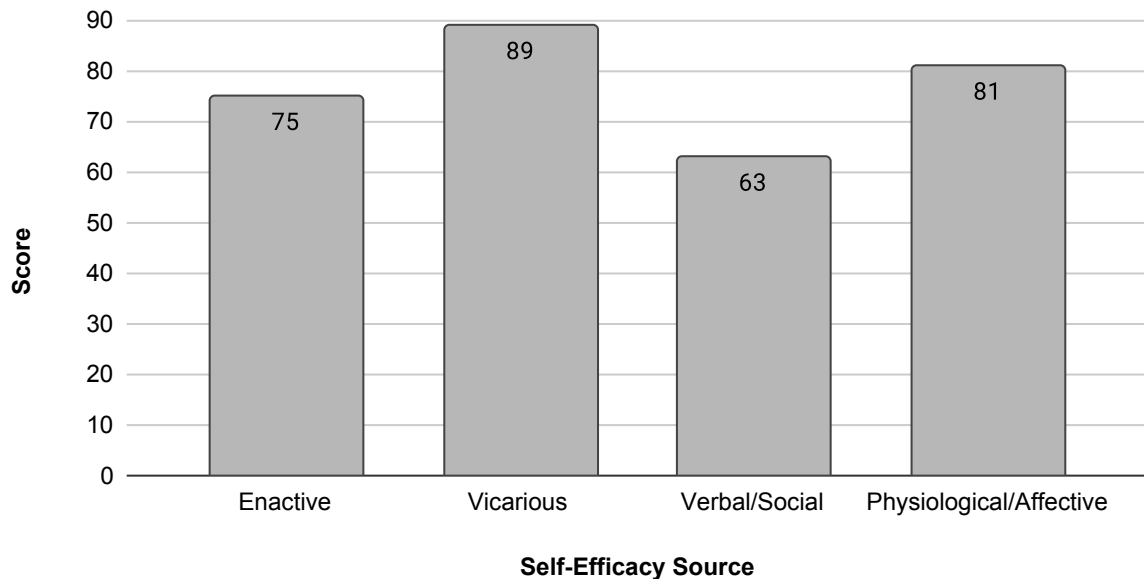


Figure 6: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey Score: Sylvia

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

“I thought I had all the tools for all the situations and discovered I did not. I even went through the whole toolbox and even used the melted elastic in the bottom.” ~Sylvia

Sylvia recorded a moderate positive influence from enactive mastery experiences on the questionnaire. She selected higher scores (80–90) for positive experiences teaching small and large groups, and for teaching simple and complex music. Sylvia selected a moderate score (50) for overcoming challenges through hard work and practice. She gave context to why she chose this score: “I feel like I haven't necessarily overcome some of my challenges teaching, and when I have, it isn't always through hard work and practice. Sometimes the challenges were external.” Some of the struggles Sylvia described were from changing jobs every few years and needing to adapt to unique music teaching situations in each school system, such as travel between schools and varied teaching

assignments beyond music that included teaching gifted and talented and math.

Out-of-Specialty

“It's so funny to see that we're so generalized in the specialty we do.” ~Sylvia

Sylvia stated that she was not fully prepared in her undergraduate studies for teaching in a rural school. She indicated not having enough experience with vocal teaching, elementary classroom music, or with working with younger children. Because she had little experience at the elementary level, combined with not having connections with young children while growing up, she shared that she did not know what the capabilities of elementary aged students were. As for vocal teaching, Sylvia described her limited undergraduate training:

I had done one semester of a vocal ensemble in college, and other than that, I did chorus from fifth and sixth grade. I didn't have that back pocket of warm-ups or singing games that you do as a warm-up, or the rep stuff that you just know...I didn't have any of that so that was really tricky. And just not having that, the culture of chorus, even, not getting it. I was like, oh, this isn't like band. This is different. How does this work? So, that was really scary for me.

Sylvia reported that the lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences in her undergraduate training negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions when teaching out-of-specialty elementary general music and middle school chorus.

Sylvia perceived differences between her college preparation and what she experienced when teaching in rural communities, stating that it was a challenge starting out in a rural music program:

The dichotomy of what we saw in college and while student teaching and then what reality in the rural program is, that was huge, like getting smacked upside the head of like, ‘oh, yeah, it's not really like that. That's just on TV.’”

Sylvia’s student teaching was done in a well-established and high resourced music program which was atypical for rural schools. “You’re an instrumental concentration or you’re a vocal concentration, then you get a job and by the way, you’re doing K–12 everything.” One of several challenges she encountered was a lack of community resources, such as the availability of private lessons or community music opportunities. She explained:

I think lack of resources is a hard one and I don't necessarily even mean money wise. I think it's challenging because a lot of times the kids don't have a lot of background. A lot of the schools I've taught in have very minimal to zero general music at the elementary level. And then when you go to start band and chorus, you're starting from nothing.

Another example was having a small band of 11 students with incomplete and unbalanced instrumentation. This band size made it difficult to use typical band arrangements, which led her to continually re-write and modify the music parts. A third issue was being an itinerant teacher working in different school buildings. She shared that these types of rural school issues were not discussed in her music education coursework despite the prevalence of rural areas in the state, stating: “The preparation wasn't there for what you really walk into.” Despite her reported lack of preparation for rural music teaching, Sylvia worked through the challenges over time and expressed strong teaching

self-efficacy beliefs in her teaching specialty areas while acknowledging the extra work needed to persist in out-of-specialty areas.

Vicarious Experiences

Observation

Sylvia stated she got the most meaningful insights when observing other teachers with whom she could relate—teachers in small programs who were doing well. Watching exemplar teaching in larger, established programs with financial and curricular resources was not relatable for her. As she spoke about observing other music teachers, Sylvia noted:

That's one of those things I don't get to do enough. We don't get to do that as much as we should because we're usually the only one. All the other places I've worked, I've always been *the* [only] music teacher in the entire district. So, there wasn't somebody else to watch easily...and getting a day off...it's always impossible to get the time and to get them to understand that it's important for us to see somebody else.

Sylvia expressed that she felt isolated from other music teachers while teaching in rural communities, which she reported lowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

On one occasion when she was able to observe a peer music teacher, it affected Sylvia in a positive way. She explained: “I got more out of that day and a half I think than I got out of both of my general music classes in college because it was a real school with the real struggle.” In another rare observation opportunity, she exclaimed: “I got so much out of that. I feel like I learned something today!” Sylvia shared that one of the most

important aspects she learned from observing other music teachers was to be herself and let her personality shine. She explained: “You could have that give and take relationship with the kids...be fun but still have them be on task and have them be learning...Nobody else does this that I see around the building.” As Sylvia related, the few opportunities that she had to observe similarly situated rural music teachers positively influenced her teaching self-efficacy perceptions, which was reflected on the questionnaire as a strong influence (score of 89) from vicarious experiences.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

“It was always like an island, and nobody got what you were doing, nobody understood anything you were going through.” ~Sylvia

Principal Feedback

Sylvia recounted that much of the feedback from observations by her principals was not helpful: “Most of the time the feedback I did get when I was getting observed wasn't what I needed.” Some examples of feedback were: ‘You were sight-reading a piece. It seems like the notes weren’t in tune,’ and, ‘Why do you let them make noise when they are sitting down?’, referring to the warm-up time at the beginning of band rehearsal. Because she had taught in several different school systems over a relatively short period of time, Sylvia was continuously observed as a new teacher in each district. Many of the observations were using ever-evolving pilot evaluation systems, with which she described feeling like a “guinea pig.” In one of her positions, she taught music in several different school buildings. A principal from one of those schools observed her for a formal teacher evaluation; however, Sylvia questioned the level of helpful constructive

feedback she could receive from a principal when she was only in the building a few hours per week. She explained, sarcastically: “It was the school I actually taught at for 4 hours a week, and I'm like, well, that totally makes sense to judge me on my job by that.” She stated that she had several negative experiences with her administration despite feeling that she was doing well with her teaching. Sylvia expressed that she was frustrated by a lack of meaningful verbal and written support by her principals, which negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Despite reporting that many of her experiences with principal feedback were negative or not what she needed, she stated that sometimes the feedback incited her to work more diligently with what she considered to be her most essential and meaningful teaching practices.

Sylvia described a different teaching experience in her current position where she received positive feedback and support from her administration. She explained: “The positive I think is so encouraging. They see me. They see what I'm doing. That's so huge because especially with past experiences I didn't necessarily have that.” Her principal gave positive and constructive feedback that positively influenced Sylvia's teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Sylvia found support from music peers through online music teacher communities. She made friends with music teachers from around the country who taught in similar rural teaching situations. Online access to music peers was important to support her connection with other teachers. She described her online group experiences:

You can actually talk to the developer of this music program, and she answers in a couple minutes and that's pretty awesome. A lot of it is a little overwhelming. I have to pare down from like 15 groups to force myself to get down to five of my favorites.

Sylvia expressed that the constructive influence from online music teacher communities positively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

As for local music teachers, Sylvia shared that she did not ever have another music teacher observe her. She expressed that it was difficult not having other local music teachers available with whom to connect:

The lack of fellow music teachers I think has been hard. When I was in [rural school district], there were three of us, but we're so spread out and so busy that we never got a chance to collaborate. You still felt very isolated and itinerant having to move place to place and not always having a space to use and having to make do.

The lack of opportunities to interact with other music teachers created a sense of isolation: “It was always like an island, and nobody got what you were doing, nobody understood anything you were going through.” Because of her sense of isolation, Sylvia connected with other teachers and staff within her building who either were itinerant or who had a similar schedule where they taught all the students in the school, such as therapists and physical education teachers. She explained:

I used to always end up being friends with speech and OT [occupational therapist] people because they always got the itinerant part; and then nobody knows what

you're doing and takes over your space part. And then I started relating [to the] PE teacher, at least they see everybody, and everybody [classroom teachers] just wants to just drop off their kids and run away. So, they sometimes get it.

Sylvia's sense of isolation combined with itinerant teaching limited her opportunities to connect with other music teachers, which negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Sylvia shared that while at a conference, a longtime music educator from another part of the state gave her supportive feedback, saying that teachers in her region worked harder than any other music teacher in the state and that they should be proud of what they do. She stated, "He really stood up for us. I thought that was one of the biggest moments." Overall, Sylvia received positive verbal and social persuasion from online teacher communities and attending conferences rather than from more proximal music teachers.

Community Feedback

Sylvia noted that as she entered a new position, she occasionally encountered negative feedback from people in the school and community, mostly comments based on differences in how she was running the music program. She explained how that negative feedback affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions: "That kind of kicks you in the teeth a little bit. So, that's been tricky. That makes you feel badly." Positive feedback came from teachers, parents, and community members. Unsolicited emails from parents and community members who wrote about the music program in positive ways were affirming for Sylvia. In school, she made connections with other specials teachers such as

speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical education teachers with whom she could relate because of similarities with scheduling challenges. Some teachers would ask to sit in on guitar and ukulele classes, and others would comment on how good the ensembles sounded at concerts. Sylvia expressed that positive feedback from community members and other teachers boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained: “Those people noticing something specific, that's nice. It makes me feel like I'm doing the right thing and I'm doing well.” The mixed feedback from her principal, peer music teachers, community members, and school staff aligned with Sylvia’s questionnaire score (63) for a moderate positive influence from verbal and social persuasion.

Physiological & Affective States

Sylvia reported that building a music program where there had not previously been a music program was a challenge when entering a new position at a rural school. As her music programs grew and developed, she noticed that students were having successful learning experiences because of her teaching. She stated: “That made me feel really good about that what I was doing was the right thing.” She expressed excitement in times when a teaching moment went well:

I have that moment, a touchdown moment almost. I get a little over excited sometimes when something is interesting to me and I'm geeking out on something I'm teaching. I get like almost caffeinated sounding, talking fast and getting excited, and a little flush...I got to slow down, they're not going to understand what I'm saying.

These types of excitable moments (physiological/affective states) positively affected Sylvia's teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

In one of her rural teaching positions, Sylvia recounted that student behavior was a serious issue for her. She recalled, "I don't know how to fix this. I've run out of tools in my toolbox. Please help me!" The poor student behavior was school-wide, and despite reaching out for help from administration and other teachers, she received tepid support and little sense of caring. Sylvia expressed questioning her value and worth as a teacher: "What am I here for? Am I just a prep period?" She recalled that her struggles with student behavior lasted for two years before she took a different teaching position. Sylvia explained her strife: "It definitely made me feel unconfident because the stuff [behavior] was so bad, I couldn't even teach...I was trying everything, and nothing was working and that was really frustrating." Although her struggles may have been related to and exacerbated by a lack of support from her principal and other teachers (verbal/social persuasion), the poor student behavior resulted in Sylvia feeling frustrated and lacking self-efficacy beliefs in her teaching ability for the two-year duration of her teaching in that school.

Sylvia shared that as a new teacher she had a strong teaching self-efficacy perception in teaching band, yet she was unprepared and had a low teaching self-efficacy perception for teaching chorus or elementary general music. The lack of adequate preparation and low teaching self-efficacy perceptions were generated from the enactive mastery experiences category; however, the resulting physiological and affective states she experienced were prominent and negatively impacted her teaching self-efficacy

perceptions and effectiveness. She explained: “I felt like I was worthless...it was really frustrating and scary.” She stated that she did not have the training for teaching general music at the time which made her feel uncomfortable. She explained:

As a beginner teacher, not having the basic teacher stuff down yet that you're still learning, and not having that specialty, and not having the preparation for it, it was *terrifying*. I felt like an idiot most of the time. I would get sick to my stomach thinking about it.

Teaching chorus was also a challenge for Sylvia. She explained: “The vocal thing is the hardest for me just because I feel that angst, a little bit of nervousness...give me an instrument, I'll play in front of everybody, but please don't make me sing.” She divulged that she did not like hearing her own singing voice, that it would make her “cringe” and “want to crawl under a rock” while making her skin crawl. She shared a time when she was helping a student prepare for the All-State Chorus audition: “I sound like a wildebeest, like this is awful. So, I've been embarrassed or avoided doing a part.” Again, the low teaching self-efficacy perceptions were related to the lack of adequate training (enactive mastery experiences); therefore, the resulting experiences (physiological/affective states) were prominent and negatively impacted her perception of ability in her capability to effectively teach.

Sylvia reported both positive and negative influences from physiological and affective states upon her teaching practice. Although most of her scores from the questionnaire indicated high positive source influence, during interviews Sylvia emphasized the influence of the negative experiences. Teaching in out-of-specialty music

areas had the greatest negative affect on her physiological and affective states and therefore on her teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Summary

Sylvia shared that she loved the connections that she built with students, parents, and community members. She created a community of musicians in her school where music was a safe place to be with a supportive and empowering culture. For Sylvia, the strong sense of community was the important factor for her to remain committed to teaching in a rural area. She demonstrated commitment to engaged teaching by continually seeking ways to improve her teaching craft through observing similarly situated teachers, using the internet for teaching resources, and joining and engaging with online music teacher groups.

Sylvia's questionnaire scores ranged from 63 to 89 (out of a possible 100), averaging a score of 76, which suggested a moderate positive influence from source categories. She expressed that she did not feel fully prepared (enactive mastery experiences) to teach in a rural school. She noted that she lacked experience with teaching elementary general music and vocals, and that her student teaching was in a well-resourced school which did not represent the realities of rural schools. Sylvia worked through these challenges and built positive self-efficacy perceptions in her teaching abilities in out-of-specialty areas. She reported that it was most meaningful to observe music teachers (vicarious experiences) who taught in similar small schools in rural communities with similar music teaching responsibilities, which aligned with self-efficacy theory. Verbal and social persuasion was most meaningful with peer music

teachers from online communities or at conferences, whereas interactions with local music teachers were limited. Sylvia expressed an enthusiastic excitement when teaching moments went well, which boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions (physiological/affective states). On the other hand, she reported that she felt terrified, scared, and worthless at times when teaching out-of-specialty music classes or when she lacked support from her principal or teacher colleagues. These physiological and affective states negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions in those contexts.

CHAPTER 5: CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Introduction

People's beliefs in their capabilities have a significant influence upon their motivations and actions. What someone believes they can do with their skills and how they envision the expected outcomes influences their level of effort, resilience, response to stressors, and what results they realize (Bandura, 1997). Teachers in this study reported experiences that influenced their beliefs in their teaching capabilities, which were then analyzed and interpreted through Bandura's (1997) four self-efficacy sources. Although each teacher shared unique and personal experiences, several important themes emerged across the data.

In this chapter, I discuss the data related to research question one: "How are rural Maine music teachers' beliefs in their specialty and out-of-specialty teaching abilities influenced by each of the four self-efficacy sources (enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, and physiological/affective states)?" I then explore the data related to research question two: "To what degree do the teachers report that their self-efficacy regarding out-of-specialty music teaching influences their commitment toward rural music teaching?"

Self-Efficacy Sources

Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Questionnaire: Source Scores and Category Rank

Consistent with self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997), four of the six participants stated that their greatest positive source influence from the enactive mastery experiences category. Anne recorded enactive mastery experiences as her second highest source

influence (80), while Sylvia recorded it as her third (75), with both scores indicating moderate-high influence. The vicarious, verbal/social, and physiological/affective categories each ranged from one through four for source influence, showing a greater source influence diversity. Elsie and Molly selected verbal and social persuasion as a very high source influence with a score of 100, matching their score for enactive mastery experiences. Sylvia recorded her highest source influence score in the vicarious experiences category, which reflected her interview responses about the learning and positive teaching self-efficacy perceptions she gained from observing other similarly situated music teachers. Anne’s recorded greatest source influence came from the physiological and affective states category (84), which may have been positively affected by her joy in teaching elementary music and with her ability to work through her nervousness when teaching middle school chorus.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

Self-Efficacy Source	Anne	Elsie	Laura	Molly	Sarah	Sylvia
Enactive Mastery	80 (2)	100 (1)	89 (1)	100 (1)	98 (1)	75 (3)
Vicarious	26 (4)	84 (4)	76 (3)	90 (3)	95 (2)	89 (1)
Verbal/Social	68 (3)	100 (1)	80 (2)	100 (1)	94 (3)	63 (4)
Physiological/Affective	84 (1)	92 (3)	51 (4)	97 (2)	93 (4)	81 (2)

Figure 7: Enactive Mastery Experience: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

Four of the six music teachers recorded their highest positive source influence scores in the enactive mastery experiences portion of the questionnaire (see Figure 7). The strongest effects and influence on teachers’ self-efficacy estimations came from this

category overall; however, all teachers reported a lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences related to their out-of-specialty teaching assignments. Three teachers who selected the highest scores in the enactive mastery experiences category had higher overall self-efficacy scores across all four source categories, which generally indicated higher levels of teaching self-efficacy than those who recorded lower scores for enactive mastery experiences.

Specialty Music Teaching

All the participants reported that they felt efficacious when teaching in their area of expertise. For example, because she was a vocal major in college, Sarah expressed strong self-efficacy beliefs when teaching chorus:

I feel confident with being able to teach a chorus how to shape their vowels well while singing, how to give themselves better breath support, how to just have a bigger presence while they're singing. It just comes much easier, and I feel much more confident with it.

Elsie reported similar strong self-efficacy beliefs when teaching and directing band. She stated: "I feel like I have a decent mastery level at [band]...I feel quite effective. I definitely feel stronger in some areas than other areas." Her specialty area in college was clarinet with a focus on directing bands, which provided her ample enactive mastery experiences.

Although trained on clarinet, Anne's greatest confidence in her teaching abilities came when teaching elementary students. Using her piano skills and having experience with that age group (i.e., previous enactive mastery experiences), she stated that she felt

effective when teaching younger students. Anne shared that her background and training prepared her to adequately meet the expectations for her school and music program, especially with teaching elementary-aged students.

Laura stated that she believed that she was very effective with teaching in her area of expertise, particularly with instrumental music. For example, after she had taken her chorus to a festival, she envisioned how the experience might have gone better if she had taken her band to a similar festival. She explained: “If I had taken my band to this festival, they would have done fantastic, and I would have been 100% confident and the kids far more prepared.” Anticipating she would be teaching in a rural school, Molly shared that her piano skills and knowledge of the woodwind instruments helped her to feel confident and comfortable with her instrumental teaching abilities. Sylvia expressed strong self-efficacy beliefs in her specialty teaching areas and noted the extra work that needed to be done when teaching out-of-specialty music.

Out-of-Specialty Music Teaching

Every participant reported that their teaching assignments included out-of-specialty teaching where they were responsible for instructing music classes for which they had minimal training. One teacher was trained as a vocal teacher in college, whereas the five other teachers majored on a band instrument. All six participants were certified to teach music subject areas K–12 in the state of Maine. Most of the responses, discussion, and feedback focused on the minimal training teachers received in their undergraduate program toward certain music subjects. All teachers indicated that the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences had the greatest impact on their teaching self-efficacy

perceptions. Three teachers who were instrumental majors in college stated that they had low self-efficacy perceptions when teaching classroom general music and chorus.

Sylvia divulged that she felt less efficacious when teaching chorus or elementary classroom music. She described how her lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences teaching chorus lowered her self-efficacy perceptions in her out-of-specialty teaching:

I had done one semester of a vocal ensemble in college, and other than that, I did chorus from fifth and sixth grade. I didn't have that back pocket of warm-ups or singing games that you do as a warm-up, or the rep stuff that you just know...I didn't have any of that so that was really tricky. And just not having that, the culture of chorus, even, not getting it. I was like, oh, this isn't like band. This is different. How does this work?

As a band instrumental major, Molly shared her struggle when teaching voice with a high school acapella choir: "I'm really out of my element here teaching an acapella choir, which is different than regular choir. I really struggled with teaching the kids what to listen for in order to get their own pitches." Laura also described her perceptions of low teaching capability from a lack of vocal teaching experience. She recalled working with her chorus: "I had no clue what I was really doing. I had *no* vocal experience. I knew nothing about diction or vowel sounds!"

For Anne, teaching chorus was challenging due to a lack of singing experiences growing up or when studying music in college. She stated flatly, "I was never taught how to teach singing." She shared that her ability to play the piano was helpful with teaching chorus; however, she still lacked the knowledge for teaching vocals. She stated: "I really

don't know much about choral repertoire, singing techniques, the correct singing ranges for middle school students, and probably a lot more." Having never had enactive mastery experiences with teaching singing, Anne reported a low level of self-efficacy estimation for teaching chorus.

Three teachers communicated the need to work on their skills for teaching elementary classroom music, citing limited undergraduate coursework in this area, or not having much experience working with elementary-aged students. Sarah acknowledged she lacked experience with elementary general music. Elsie was trained as a high school band director, while Sylvia shared that she had no experience with younger children either personally or professionally. All three teachers admitted having lower self-efficacy perceptions in their teaching abilities when working with elementary grade levels.

Specialty Skills Affected. Two of the teachers reported that because of the number of different music areas they were required to teach, they felt their primary music teaching strengths were compromised. A full schedule divided their time across band, chorus, orchestra, and general music, leaving only a small portion of the schedule for specialty area classes. Sarah stated that she felt like "a jack of all trades," having to teach band, chorus, orchestra, general music, jazz band, and show choir, reaching all students in a K-8 school. She explained how her specialty teaching felt compromised: "I feel like my skills as being a really good vocal teacher are slipping because I can't focus on that as much. I have to focus much more on the things that I'm not good at." She explained the challenge further: "All of the energy it would take to get my choir to that level is used to make up for the skills I lack in the other areas my job requires. It certainly is a challenge

and something I battle with consistently at this point in my career.” Because the majority of her time was spent teaching out-of-specialty music, she expressed that she felt less effective in her specialty area music teaching.

Elsie shared similar concerns about her teaching effectiveness. Using the same phrase as Sarah, “jack of all trades,” she described how most of her teaching responsibilities were in out-of-specialty areas. The busy teaching schedule left only a small portion of time to teach in her specialty area, which she stated left her feeling less effective with her music teaching in that area. She explained:

I'm expected to teach a K-8 setting- woodwind, strings, vocal. I mean, it's just there's so many parts to it. ...How can I ever necessarily feel like a “mastery” teacher if I don't necessarily have the time to get there with all those different pieces...I do think that I would be a lot more confident long-term if the job was a little bit more focused on one area.

Because of a full schedule that divided teaching time across music areas, both teachers reported that they felt less effective teaching not only in their out-of-specialty music areas, but also in their specialty areas, which lowered their music teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Student Teaching

Three teachers reported that there were differences between undergraduate student teaching experiences and what they experienced when teaching in a small, rural school. Upon analysis, I discovered that many of their comments related to enactive mastery experiences and the dissonance they experienced between their training and real-

world practice. Sylvia and Anne did their student teaching in a well-established and high resourced music program, which was usually atypical for rural schools. Sylvia recounted the surprise she faced with her first music teaching job. She stated: “You’re an instrumental concentration or you’re a vocal concentration, then you get a job and by the way, you’re doing K-12 everything.” Sylvia explained the differences between her college preparation and what she experienced when teaching in rural communities, stating that it was a challenge to start out in a rural music program:

The dichotomy of what we saw in college and while student teaching and then what reality in the rural program is, that was huge, like getting smacked upside the head of like, ‘oh, yeah, it's not really like that. That's just on TV.’”

The models that Sylvia had seen during student teaching in a larger school (vicarious experience) and how professors and peers had discussed music programs during her training (verbal/social persuasion) did not fit with her experience teaching in a rural school. One of the challenges was a lack of a previously existing music program, which left students with no musical experiences. She explained:

I think lack of resources is a hard one and I don't necessarily even mean money wise. I think it's challenging because a lot of times the kids don't have a lot of background. A lot of the schools I've taught in have very minimal to zero general music at the elementary level. And then when you go to start band and chorus, you're starting from nothing.

Sylvia noted other challenges such as itinerant teaching and the need to rescore music parts for small bands. She indicated that these rural school issues were not discussed in

her music education coursework despite the prevalence of rural areas in Maine, stating: “The preparation wasn't there for what you really walk into.” The lack of sufficient undergraduate preparation for teaching in a rural area (enactive mastery experiences) negatively affected Sylvia’s self-efficacy perceptions; however, as previously discussed, she was able to persevere and be resilient through the challenges and build positive self-efficacy belief in her teaching abilities.

Although Anne did her student teaching in a larger school, she perceived the experience differently than Sylvia. She stated that teaching in the small rural school was easier than her student teaching experience. One of the reasons she gave was that during student teaching, she worked with a band of nearly 100 students, whereas in her rural teaching position, her “band groups might max 15 students in a good year.” Anne shared that she appreciated the connections she made with students (verbal/social persuasion) because of the small school family atmosphere rather than the intensity of a larger sized school.

Molly stated that it was important for her to choose where she did her student teaching to get the experience that she needed for teaching in a rural school. She communicated that she knew she wanted a rural music teaching job where she would have to teach multiple areas of music—band, chorus, and general music—and she wanted to select student teaching placements where she would have the needed experiences (enactive mastery experiences) to be best prepared for that type of rural position. She explained:

I was able to pick and choose separate elementary, middle school, and high school locations and chose those based on situations where I knew that I would be placed in the classroom of really inspirational teachers that knew their craft well.

Molly disclosed that some teachers and professors tried to discourage her from taking a job in rural Maine. She stated: “They had the gall enough to express their displeasure that my career would be wasted on [rural] Maine,” citing that her music and teaching skills would serve more students if she worked closer to the university. She had previously voiced that she believed that rural students deserved to have quality and passionate music teachers and quality music programs, and she was happy to fill that role. Molly reported that she was empowered with strong self-efficacy estimations built upon her previous positive experiences with piano and woodwind playing (enactive mastery experiences) and her love for elementary-aged children. She declared: “So, here I am 23 years later NOT wasting my time teaching in rural [Maine]!”

Perseverance

Efficacy beliefs are grounded in past enactive mastery experiences. People’s positive achievement from perseverant effort through challenges and obstacles can build a sense of efficacy, which can promote a motivation for continued efficacious behavior (Bandura, 1997). The four self-efficacy sources (enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion, physiological/affective states) often work together to influence and shape one’s perceived level of self-efficacy, with the weight of influence from each of the four sources varying relative to the situation or performance task (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2014; Schunk & Usher, 2012; Usher & Pajares, 2006, 2008;

Zimmerman, 2000). In the following section, I describe instances where teachers demonstrated perseverance when faced with teaching challenges, and how different self-efficacy source influences contributed to their perseverance.

Every teacher spoke about challenges when teaching out-of-specialty music classes. They described how their teaching self-efficacy perceptions were much lower in out-of-specialty classes than when teaching in their specialty area. Embedded in every story was a thread where they described how they sought to improve their teaching in out-of-specialty music areas. The teachers viewed out-of-specialty music teaching as a challenge to work through in order to improve their teaching practice, which demonstrates perseverance in the face of obstacles.

Because many were the sole music teacher in a K–8 school, a large portion of the music classes they taught were outside the scope of their specialty. In the areas where they had less experience, they relied on their knowledge and strengths gained from their previous experiences in their music specialty areas to support their teaching. For example, Laura believed her specialty strengths helped her to teach out-of-specialty classes. She explained: “I don't see my out-of-specialty teaching being a negative thing, because I focus on the parts that I'm good at and that complements the stuff that I'm not good at.” Furthermore, the teachers sought support for their out-of-specialty teaching by observing similarly situated music teachers and by attending workshops and other professional development opportunities, which relate to verbal persuasion and vicarious experience self-efficacy sources.

Although she had been an instrumental major in college, Molly used enactive

mastery experiences from accompanying choirs and shows and vicarious experiences from observing the choral directors to support her out-of-specialty vocal teaching. She then used her early-career choral teaching experience to support directing a high school acapella group. Molly shared that teaching acapella felt awkward at first because she was not anchored to a piano. As previously discussed, she reported low teaching self-efficacy perceptions when teaching voice due to a lack of vocal training and vocal teaching experience. Molly realized that she had to improve her skills to teach acapella: “I’m really out of my element here teaching acapella choir...I really struggled with teaching the kids what to listen for in order to get their own pitches.” She focused on becoming a better listener to the students and to be engaged in her teaching. Molly explained: “I definitely have improved with the acapella choir. Definitely. I know what they need to make them better.”

Elsie was interested to learn about elementary students’ development levels and creative teaching strategies for teaching elementary general music classes. She shared that if she had more time to focus on elementary music, she “could do great things with general music.” Elsie was proactive and sought out strategies and resources from local music teachers (verbal/social persuasion) for teaching elementary general music.

Anne similarly sought out information and support to help her improve both her specialty music teaching and her out-of-specialty chorus teaching. She reported a lack of time and opportunity to observe and connect with other music teachers. To address the missing in-person interactions, she used online resources as a tool to gain knowledge and skills that she could use in her classroom, such as lesson plans and ideas for songs and

music games. In another example, Anne expressed that she felt badly after observing the middle school band at the regional honor festival because she would see “other people doing it [teaching band] better,” band directors who were playing more difficult music with a larger sized ensemble. In this case, the festival conductors were teaching bands that were much larger and at a higher skill level. We know that vicarious experiences are most effective when one views others who are similar (Bandura, 1997), in this instance other middle school band directors; therefore, this situation with a larger ensemble playing more difficult music was unrelatable for Anne, which had a negative effect on Anne’s teaching self-efficacy belief. She expressed frustration with having such small sized bands of 12 or 13 students at each of her schools, which made balanced instrumentation and a full sound a challenge. Furthermore, although she specialized on the clarinet and teaching band, she had stated that she had lower self-efficacy perceptions when teaching middle school aged students. To build her teaching self-efficacy beliefs, Anne invited a band director from a local high school to work with her students, and she combined the bands from the two schools for a better musical experience. Having the high school director visit and work with her band students gave her valuable opportunities to observe another music teacher and to receive feedback (verbal/social persuasion) about her teaching.

Sarah expressed that she felt challenged when forming a new jazz ensemble at her school. She struggled when teaching the rhythm section and relied on her previous experience playing cello and guitar to guide the bass player. She had to invest extra time with score selection, score reading, and part modification to adapt to students’ ability

levels. As she worked through her teaching difficulties, both students' individual playing skills and ensemble performance capabilities improved over time, which grew Sarah's self-efficacy perceptions for teaching jazz.

Sylvia encountered some of the same types of out-of-specialty teaching issues as the other teachers. Not having previously worked in rural schools, she experienced the challenge associated with a lack of school and community resources. For example, she persevered by researching online resources and networking with colleagues to build her skills and knowledge to improve her teaching. She engaged the community to donate instruments to the school that were not being used, she learned how to navigate travel time and resource allocation when traveling between schools as an itinerant teacher, and she was required to analyze and determine a course of action in order to build a music program in schools where there had been no music at all.

From a different perspective, Laura demonstrated perseverance for out-of-specialty teaching through her strong self-efficacy beliefs when teaching in her band specialty area. For example, she was not deterred by her lack of vocal experiences when teaching chorus. She explained: "I used my love of music and my instrumental music experiences to teach [students] their parts and fine tune their performance to the best of my ability." Laura persistently worked to improve her teaching craft: "I think that the areas that I was weakest in, I've found opportunities to learn to be better." One way Laura worked to become a better teacher was to seek local experts. She explained: "I am good at surrounding myself with people that I need and that will complement me and make me a better teacher." For example, she connected with local vocal teachers as a resource for

learning how to help chorus students shape their vowels when singing. She also worked with local community string players to help her to learn vibrato techniques so that she could teach her string students.

Enactive Mastery Experiences Summary

The strongest influence on teachers' self-efficacy estimations came from the enactive mastery experiences category, with four of the six teachers reporting it as their highest positive source influence. All the participants reported strong self-efficacy beliefs when teaching in their specialty areas (enactive mastery experience), whereas they reported low self-efficacy perceptions when teaching out-of-specialty classes. Two teachers stated that they felt their primary music teaching strengths were compromised due to the number of different out-of-specialty music areas they were required to teach.

All teachers demonstrated a higher level of self-efficacious behavior by their perseverance through difficult endeavors, as shown by their efforts to develop knowledge and skills to improve teaching in out-of-specialty areas. Positive self-efficacious beliefs built from their prior experiences and specialty music skills motivated them to persevere through out-of-specialty teaching challenges. Laura captured this concept: "I don't see my out-of-specialty teaching being a negative thing, because I focus on the parts that I'm good at and that complements the stuff that I'm not good at."

Vicarious Experiences

Self-Efficacy Source	Anne	Elsie	Laura	Molly	Sarah	Sylvia
Enactive Mastery	80 (2)	100 (1)	89 (1)	100 (1)	98 (1)	75 (3)
Vicarious	26 (4)	84 (4)	76 (3)	90 (3)	95 (2)	89 (1)
Verbal/Social	68 (3)	100 (1)	80 (2)	100 (1)	94 (3)	63 (4)
Physiological/Affective	84 (1)	92 (3)	51 (4)	97 (2)	93 (4)	81 (2)

Figure 8: Vicarious Experience: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

Vicarious experiences work most effectively when a person observes modeled actions by someone with whom they view to have similar performance abilities (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016; Usher & Pajares, 2008; Zimmerman, 2000). Therefore, it can be presumed that vicarious experiences for the rural music teacher would involve modeled actions by peer music teachers. The range of positive influence from vicarious experiences described by participants during interviews was generally high; however, their ranked scores for vicarious experience on the questionnaire trended toward the least amount of all four source influences, apart from one participant (see Figure 8). Three participants rated vicarious experiences as their lowest source influence, with the other participants rated as the first, second, and third source influence. Most participants reported that observing peer music teachers who taught in similar situations in a rural school had improved their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Alternatively, participants stated that observing teachers in larger schools and music programs were not relatable.

Observation

Sylvia shared a positive vicarious experience when she observed a colleague who

taught in a rural school: “I got more out of that day and a half I think than I got out of...both of my general music classes in college because it was a real school with the real struggle.” From observing other rural teachers, Sylvia disclosed that she learned that she could be her natural self and let her personality shine when working with elementary students. She explained: “You could have that give and take relationship with the kids...be fun but still have them be on task and have them be learning.” Sylvia’s most valuable observation experiences were with other teachers with whom she could relate—teachers who were doing well in small-school music programs. Vicarious experiences were Sylvia’s highest rated source influence on the questionnaire and positively influenced Sylvia’s sense of self-efficacy for music teaching.

Although Elsie’s positive source influence on the questionnaire for vicarious experiences was her lowest (84), she stated that her primary method to learn to support her out-of-specialty teaching was through observing other classroom and music teachers in rural settings. She emphasized the importance of watching role models to improve her skills working with elementary-aged students: “I think just watching and learning how a class is structured and gathering ideas of what you feel could work for your specific group of kids...is really vital.”

Laura recorded a moderate/high positive vicarious experience score of 76 on the questionnaire. She expressed that she felt inspired and validated with her own teaching when she observed other teachers who had similar teaching abilities as her teaching well. She stated: “I don't work with a lot of people who are like me in teaching style. It's nice to be validated and see that works.” She also relayed that after observing teachers that she

mentored, she benefitted from the post-observation lesson deconstruction dialog with her mentees, stating: “I think that sort of deconstruction of a lesson is helpful to me.”

Molly recorded high positive influence on her questionnaire scores in all categories, with vicarious experiences being her lowest score with a 90. She stated that her most valuable times to observe other music teachers was during her undergraduate courses and during student teaching. Molly shared that her undergraduate observations helped her to select the most inspirational teachers with whom to student teach. She explained:

I was able to pick...situations where I knew that I would be placed in the classroom of really inspirational teachers that knew their craft well...I think I made good choices about where I wanted to go.

Sarah’s recorded vicarious experiences score was a 95, which ranked second among her four sources scores. She stated that she had similar observation opportunities as Molly early in her career during student teaching and in the first few years of her teaching position. Sarah realized that the teachers she observed during student teaching were in larger schools and music programs, which were difficult to relate with her rural school and small music program. She recounted that observing music teachers at local schools that were similar to her school and music program to be the most helpful, although finding the time to travel and observe was challenging:

I feel like it's the opportunity to actually get out and have the observations that are just really pertinent or really applicable to my teaching, it has been really, really hard. It's not easy to find somebody on the same level in the same sort of

situation.

One observation of a local music teacher positively influenced Sarah's teaching self-efficacy perceptions. The teacher was instructing an elementary general music class that had an established routine and behavior norms, which created the opportunity for engaged and effective teaching. She stated: "The confidence kind of bled into me a little bit to kind of be like, 'oh, yeah, okay. I can, I can be in command of a class like this.'" Sarah was able to envision herself acquiring teaching skills and developing positive self-efficacy beliefs through this vicarious experience.

Observing Ensembles. When Anne observed other students and groups at the annual district honor festival, she expressed feeling a lower level of teaching self-efficacy when comparing the groups to her teaching situation. She explained: "I'd kind of feel a little badly, but I'd always have to tell myself, you know you have 20 kids in your fifth through eighth grade. There's only so much you can do." Laura shared the same type of experience when attending the Midwest Band Clinic where she attended performances by bands from what were considered small schools. The school and band sizes were so much larger than her school and music program, she stated: "This is not real. These people's reality is not my reality." This observing experience was not applicable or meaningful to Laura's teaching situation, which led her to not attend any other workshops for the remainder of the conference.

Isolation

Several teachers expressed that they felt a sense of isolation from teaching in their rural school. Sarah described that she felt distanced and out of touch with other local and

regional music teachers. She stated: “I feel I’m flying much more solo and don't really know what other people are doing.” First, she reported that finding the time to travel and observe was difficult due to travel distances, a thick schedule, and having to miss needed class time with students. Her second challenge was finding a similarly situated music teacher who was teaching K–8 in a small rural school who had a similar vocal background. Most of the other area teachers had instrumental specialties, and that made the meaningfulness of observations less relatable.

Anne’s lowest self-efficacy source score on the questionnaire was a 26 in the vicarious experiences category. This score represented a different experience for her than the other music teachers, who recorded moderately high to high vicarious experience scores on the questionnaire, and whose averages ranged from 76 to 95. Because Anne was the only music teacher in the two schools in which she worked, she expressed a sense of isolation from music teacher peers, noting limited opportunities to see or engage with other music teachers. Anne stated that her contact with music teachers from outside the school district was “non-existent except for going to the yearly honors festival. Once a year. Usually that would be my only contact with music teachers.” She also described barriers to having professional time to observe other teachers. She explained:

“It's so hard to take a day off and leave sub plans. There are no subs and then if you do take a day off, there's just no music for today, and I don't want classroom teachers having to take that on. So, I don't.”

Molly shared a similar experience about not having observing opportunities once she started teaching. She found it difficult to plan time to observe because there were no

substitute teachers, which left a burden on the classroom teachers who would lose their prep time if music class did not take place. She explained:

We don't do a lot of sharing or visiting, especially in [our] county. If you miss the day, those kids don't get music that whole week. So, nobody around you wants to take a day off to go visit another because then classroom teachers don't get a break.

A lack of substitute teachers, students missing music class for that week, and not wanting to burden classroom teachers because music teachers were away from the classroom affected both Anne and Molly's ability to have professional time to observe other music teachers. Although Molly's vicarious experience scores averaged as an overall score of 90, she marked a divergent score of 50 out of 100 regarding improving her music teaching by watching other teachers teach well. This lower score corresponded with her description of minimal observing opportunities.

Vicarious Experiences Summary

On the questionnaire, three of the six music teachers rated vicarious experiences as the lowest ranked self-efficacy source influence, whereas one teacher rated it their highest source influence. All teachers reported that observing other teachers who were similarly situated in rural schools and who taught similar classes was the most meaningful for building skills and positive self-efficacy perceptions in their teaching. Teachers described barriers to access observing other teachers, such as a lack of substitute teachers, a lack of available time, and few opportunities to connect due to travel distances, infrequent professional development opportunities, or scarce music

festivals. These limited opportunities for observing created a sense of isolation for several of the teachers.

Verbal and Social Persuasion

Self-Efficacy Source	Anne	Elsie	Laura	Molly	Sarah	Sylvia
Enactive Mastery	80 (2)	100 (1)	89 (1)	100 (1)	98 (1)	75 (3)
Vicarious	26 (4)	84 (4)	76 (3)	90 (3)	95 (2)	89 (1)
Verbal/Social	68 (3)	100 (1)	80 (2)	100 (1)	94 (3)	63 (4)
Physiological/Affective	84 (1)	92 (3)	51 (4)	97 (2)	93 (4)	81 (2)

Figure 9: Verbal and Social Persuasion: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

Verbal and social persuasion is most effective in developing self-efficacy perceptions when feedback is authentic, task-specific, and supports a person's further development of capabilities (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016, 2018). People who are administrators, mentors, teacher colleagues, parents of students, or community members may be sources of verbal and social persuasion for teachers. On the questionnaire, scores in this category ranged from the most influential to the least influential self-efficacy source (see Figure 9). Three teachers recorded high positive influence from verbal and social persuasion, two of whom recorded scores of 100 (out of 100), whereas three teachers recorded moderate influence. During interviews, the teachers who recorded more moderate influence levels from verbal and social persuasion on the questionnaire attributed the lower score to a lack of feedback from their principals and a lack of connection with other music teachers.

Principal Feedback

All the participants shared that they received little meaningful feedback or guidance from their principals. For professional supervision and evaluation of teachers, principals were to conduct ongoing prescribed evaluative observations every five years, while also measuring teacher written professional goals with a school-developed matrix of effective teaching behaviors and practices. Informal feedback came from informal observations and conversations with the principals.

Anne taught part-time at two different K–8 schools in a rural district. She stated that the evaluation process was “non-existent” as she rarely saw either of the two principals. What feedback she had received, either formal or informal, lacked constructive elements. She explained:

I don't even know what school I'm observed at. Both principals come and see me once in a while, but I don't know which one is actually writing things down. But when they do come in, they're like, ‘Oh, looks like you were having fun.’ That's about it.

Anne reported a lack of feedback from her principal concerning her professional development endeavors, as evidenced by her selection of a low score of 10 (out of 100) on the questionnaire item: “People have told me that my professional development effort has improved my teaching skills.” The lack of dialog or feedback negatively influenced Anne’s teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Elsie stated that she received substantial amounts of praise and feedback from her principal through both formal evaluations and regular informal conversations. She

welcomed the praise in evaluations yet felt the feedback could be more helpful by being more constructive. She explained: “I think often I'm left with a desire of more critique. That sounds silly, but I think really, in order to grow, you have to kind of hear some criticism.” The lack of constructive feedback from her principal did not appear to affect Elsie’s verbal and social persuasion source influence score (100) on the questionnaire.

Laura revealed that she had not been observed by her principal or received any formal feedback about her professional development in eight years. Laura explained: “This current principal is an entire cycle behind, and she just doesn't observe me, and she doesn't give me any feedback other than this, ‘Oh, Laura, you're so great,’ but there's nothing substantial behind the statements.” Laura stated that professional development that she was asked to do was unrelated to music teaching and did not meet her needs as a music teacher. The lack of feedback and the misaligned professional development negatively influenced Laura’s teaching and professional growth, as she selected a score of 0 on the item: “People have told me that my professional development effort has improved my teaching skills.”

Molly stated that she had only been observed by her principal three times in her career, with little constructive verbal or written feedback. She explained: “In the 21 years that I've taught, I have been observed three times for probably a total of 30 minutes maximum each time.” Verbal feedback included statements such as: “It was wonderful to be in there and to just see what you're doing,” and, “It looked like so much fun.” One of Molly’s principals acknowledged that they did not know what to be looking for when they observed and gave feedback on her music teaching. Although in interviews Molly

reported little positive influence from principal feedback, on the questionnaire she selected scores of 100 for positive influence from written and verbal feedback about her teaching.

Sarah stated that principal observations and evaluations were done only for elementary general music classes and never for lessons or ensembles. Although principal feedback was rare, she stated that the principal's evaluative comments were constructive and positively reinforced her self-efficacy perceptions with her teaching practice. She explained:

I'm constantly assessing what the kids are doing and I feel strongly that music is kind of like that because you perform and generally it is a constant assessment of seeing what skills they pick up. So, [the principal] always had really positive comments on that.

On the other hand, Sarah indicated that she did not have any feedback from her principal about her school-based professional development work. She stated: "I just don't feel how relevant they are actually to our jobs." Sarah shared that she did not find her professional development work meaningful for her music teaching due to the lack of any dialog with her principal.

Sylvia stated that she often received negative feedback or a lack of meaningful verbal and written support from some of her principals, which lowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained: "Most of the time the feedback I did get when I was getting observed wasn't what I needed." In one of her itinerant positions, she was in one school building for only four hours each week. The principal observed her for a formal

teacher evaluation, yet Sylvia questioned the level of helpful constructive feedback she could receive from a principal when she taught so few hours in that building. She explained, sarcastically: “It was the school I actually taught at for 4 hours a week, and I'm like, well, that totally makes sense to judge me on my job by that.” In her current position, Sylvia received positive feedback and support from her administration: “The positive [feedback] I think is so encouraging. They see me. They see what I'm doing.” The change to positive verbal feedback positively affected Sylvia’s teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

All the teachers in the study reported that opportunities to interact and dialog with similarly situated rural music teachers were the most helpful. For example, when Sarah had opportunities to interact with other local rural music teachers, she shared that she found the positive and supportive comments helpful for her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Sarah stated that “music teachers nudge my confidence up,” and that they push her to do her best when she is given quality feedback.

Elsie had previously taught at a large high school on Long Island, NY, and she missed having colleagues with whom to talk and process about ideas and teaching. She explained:

I find it very strange to be sitting in the music room by myself and not having somebody to just talk about the specific kids or just to throw ideas out, like, “What do you think about this unit? What else could we do here? How else can we enhance this program?”

Elsie noted that the daily connections and dialog with music teachers helped to enhance her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She stated: “I think most people in general work a lot better when they have that ability to converse with other people, and I think that it’s a really strong point in your teaching.” In her position at a small rural school, Elsie valued her music peers’ feedback the most. Through conversations with them, she discovered that they had many of the same issues when teaching out-of-specialty music classes and across numerous grades. She stated: “It’s just really validating to hear that other people struggle in the same way.”

Laura respected the feedback and the insights from music teachers who taught in similar positions and with similar experiences as she had. She stated that she benefitted from their feedback: “Peer music teachers, their positive feedback definitely is the driving motivator.” Laura expressed concern with negative comments about the small rural schools from music teachers who taught in larger schools and communities. She explained:

I feel like I have lots of music connections, but I feel like the K–8 music community is the second tier, third tier. ...One thing that irritates me is that many teachers in larger schools don’t give us [teachers] or our programs the credit they deserve.

Feedback and comments from other music teachers who were similarly situated positively affected Laura’s teaching self-efficacy, whereas comments from those who were not teaching in a similar rural, small school environment had a negative effect or no effect on her teaching self-efficacy.

Molly shared that she received positive comments from her students' families and from teacher friends. Family comments included words of gratitude and feedback such as "you always do such a good job." Teachers would ask her how she did a particular task so that they might also be able to do it as well, or they would give her words of encouragement when they noticed that she was tentative about teaching something. For example, one teacher at her school noticed that Molly was struggling with teaching acapella choir. The teacher gave Molly positive encouragement which helped her to improve her teaching with the acapella group. She explained:

I have a friend that I'm like, 'I can't do this acapella thing and there's only like eight kids, so maybe I shouldn't do it.' And [they replied], 'You can do it. You can play the piano; you can find the notes.'

When saying "You can play the piano; you can find the notes," the teacher suggested that Molly should use her previous choral teaching and piano performing experience as a framework to adapt to teaching acapella choir. Verbal persuasion from Molly's colleague positively influenced her teaching self-efficacy perceptions to improve her acapella choir teaching. She stated: "I definitely have improved with the acapella choir."

Although teachers reported dialog and interaction with similarly situated music teachers to be the most valuable, many of the teachers described that opportunities to interact with peer music teachers were limited. For example, Anne was the only music teacher between two different schools, stating, "I have no peer teachers." She explained that she did not have much opportunity to draw from other music teachers: "I've basically been on my own to figure things out for myself since I started teaching. I've taken a few

courses here and there but haven't really been given the opportunity to work with other music teachers.”

Sylvia expressed that it was difficult not having other local music teachers available with whom to connect. She explained:

The lack of fellow music teachers I think has been hard. When I was in [rural school district], there were three of us, but we were so spread out and so busy that we never got a chance to collaborate. You still felt very isolated and itinerant having to move place to place and not always having a space to use and having to make do.

Long distances between schools and traveling due to itinerant teaching made it difficult to make connections with other music teachers. The lack of opportunities to interact with other music teachers created a sense of isolation: “It was always like an island, and nobody got what you were doing, nobody understood anything you were going through.” Sylvia reported that the sense of isolation negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Online Connections. Because of limited occasions to interact with similarly situated music teachers, Sylvia and Anne connected with peer music teachers through online music teacher communities, with whom they interacted and gained knowledge and skills to build their teaching self-efficacy beliefs. They stated that teachers who were similarly situated in their teaching positions were the most relatable, whereas those who taught in larger schools were not as relatable. Sylvia became online friends with music teachers from around the country who taught in similar rural and small school teaching

situations. She described the breadth of online group possibilities:

You can actually talk to the developer of this music program, and she answers in a couple minutes and that's pretty awesome. A lot of it is a little overwhelming. I have to pare down from like 15 groups to force myself to get down to five of my favorites.

Molly found support from two other music teachers in her region, with whom she connected through email and social media because the large physical size of the county made travel distances difficult. Molly stated that her music teacher friends understood the music issues she faced and were supportive to her needs: “It’s good to have those two kinds of ‘music buddies.’” Although she maintained connections with out-of-state music teachers, she expressed that their music teaching concerns were very different from hers. Molly shared that these teachers were helpful to her in understanding new perspectives, such as socio-economic contrasts between rural and urban/suburban settings, and the differences in the type of student and community relationships music teachers can build with students in a rural versus an urban/suburban community.

Community Feedback

Anne thrived on positive feedback she received from community members at school concerts. She expressed that concerts were “the only place I ever get any feedback for anything that I do. Mostly positive comments. That makes me feel good.” Anne described that student feedback was also important. She explained: “They're the ones that tell me what they like what they don't like. I take what they say, and I really try to accommodate to what I think would be the best for them.” Anne responded to student

feedback to be more effective in designing lessons for better student learning. Positive feedback from students and community members boosted Anne's teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Elsie expressed that she felt validated in her teaching from the community response to her concert programming. She shared that she could be creative with her music teaching and not be limited by traditional teaching constructs. She explained:

The community is supporting what I'm doing, then that ensures that I can continue what I'm doing, but then also push forward and go with my own agenda. I don't necessarily feel like I need to be locked into a certain type of role or a certain type of teaching. I can do what I feel like is best for the kids and what's best for myself as an educator. So, I think that's probably what I value the most and what boosts me the most.

Elsie reported feeling empowered by positive comments from community members (verbal/social persuasion) to continue to make creative decisions and to try new ideas with her teaching.

Laura shared that she thrived from verbal and social persuasion through connections with members of the community and from people with whom she chose to surround herself such as volunteers, guest artists, and parent music boosters. She expressed that she appreciated having people with whom to collaborate, which supported her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Because she felt physically isolated due to her music room's physical distance from the rest of the classrooms in the school building, she stated that it was "good for my mental health to have more adults in the room."

Laura expressed that some negative comments from parents about how she dressed had a detrimental effect on her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained:

Those kinds of comments derail me because it's people not even validating what I'm doing for their kid. They're just judging me on my clothes and that part is weird to me...But definitely people's comments that are so not music related can lower my desire to teach, which I guess ultimately lowers my teaching capabilities.

She expressed that negative feedback (verbal/social persuasion) about how she dressed rather than how well she taught adversely affected how she viewed her teaching ability.

Molly reported receiving positive feedback (verbal/social persuasion) from families in the community who would share comments such as, "You always do such a good job." She found that in the rural communities she had worked, people supported their schools and music programs because music fostered pride and a sense of belonging. She indicated that positive comments and actions from community members helped to create a supportive environment that strengthened her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. "I certainly feel sometimes that the many challenges seem to outweigh the positives, but the positives do leave you with a much bigger high. The ups are usually much more memorable than the downs."

Molly described that the positive feelings made a more powerful impression on her teaching self-efficacy perceptions than the challenges that she faced, which represented a positive influence from an affective state. Furthermore, on the questionnaire she selected an overall average score of 97 (out of 100) for the four self-

efficacy sources, which indicated a very high level of positive source influence. It may be possible that Molly was able to develop a stronger sense of efficacy through persevering through the teaching challenges because self-efficacy is built from cognitive processing from the positive and negative experiences of past endeavors (see Bandura, 1997); therefore, she may have already had a strong self-efficacy belief as reflected by her questionnaire responses.

Sarah stated that she worked hard with students to be able to produce a strong concert performance, and the positive feedback from community members boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained:

That really boosted [me] especially coming into a new community, wanting to make a good impression; and I've had very similar comments on every concert that I have given saying that people just really enjoyed it and that it was a much better experience than they had had in the past.

Sarah recounted that occasionally she received negative feedback from parents, which caused her to reflect. She explained: "Those moments that have brought my self-esteem [self-efficacy perceptions] down or have hit me a bit harder personally. I do think back and just try to figure out ways that I can look at that differently in the future." Sarah reframed negative feedback from parents in a way that she could use to continue to develop her teaching skills. "I'm trying to let it go as well because it's not always something that should be affecting my teaching." Positive feedback from people in the community boosted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions, whereas negative feedback lowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Sylvia shared that she appreciated discussions with and feedback from other teachers and staff with whom she could relate because of similarities with scheduling challenges. Similarly situated staff who were itinerant, such as physical and occupational therapists, and physical education teachers who had a similar schedule where they taught all the students K–8 in the school, were relatable for Sylvia. Discussions with these similarly situated people were valuable to build her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained:

I used to always end up being friends with speech and OT people because they always got the itinerant part; and then nobody knows what you're doing and takes over your space part. And then I started relating [to the] PE teacher, at least they see everybody, and everybody [classroom teachers] just wants to just drop off their kids and run away. So, they sometimes get it.

Making connections with other people in her school community positively affected Sylvia's teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She expressed feeling boosted by positive written and verbal feedback from community members and other teachers: "Those people noticing something specific, that's nice. It makes me feel like I'm doing the right thing and I'm doing well." She stated that negative feedback from community members lowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions: "That kind of kicks you in the teeth a little bit. So, that's been tricky. That makes you feel badly."

Verbal and Social Persuasion Summary

All the teachers in this study reported that verbal and social persuasion from peer music teachers who were in rural teaching positions was the most meaningful and

valuable for boosting their teaching self-efficacy beliefs, whereas feedback and interactions from other music teachers who were not from small rural schools were not relatable. Peer teachers who were similarly situated were more likely to understand the issues involved with teaching in a small rural school and were more able to be supportive to a teacher's needs. Feedback that was most helpful and likely to boost a teacher's self-efficacy perceptions was positive, specific about the action, and constructive in a way that a teacher could build and grow their beliefs in their teaching abilities.

Many teachers described a sense of isolation from the lack of opportunities to dialog with other music teachers. Barriers to person-to-person interaction included being the only music teacher in the school or school district, long distances to travel between schools, and traveling due to itinerant teaching. Due to limited access to interact with similarly situated music teachers in person, three teachers used online music teacher communities, social media, and email to connect and dialog with peer music teachers.

Every teacher stated that they received little meaningful feedback from their principals' formal teaching evaluations, and that they received no feedback from the principals about their required professional development work that was associated with teaching evaluations. During interviews, some teachers attributed a lower verbal and social persuasion score on the questionnaires to a lack of feedback from their principals and a lack of connection with other music teachers. Participants reported a mix of both positive and negative feedback from members of the community.

Physiological and Affective States

Self-Efficacy Source	Anne	Elsie	Laura	Molly	Sarah	Sylvia
Enactive Mastery	80 (2)	100 (1)	89 (1)	100 (1)	98 (1)	75 (3)
Vicarious	26 (4)	84 (4)	76 (3)	90 (3)	95 (2)	89 (1)
Verbal/Social	68 (3)	100 (1)	80 (2)	100 (1)	94 (3)	63 (4)
Physiological/Affective	84 (1)	92 (3)	51 (4)	97 (2)	93 (4)	81 (2)

Figure 10: *Physiological and Affective States: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey*

Physiological and affective states are when people judge their capabilities from physical and emotional domains of function, such as considerations of physical abilities, health functioning, and stress (Bandura, 1997). During interviews, teachers in this study cited that stress, nervousness, and positive emotional responses contributed to their perceptions of teaching efficacy. In the questionnaire, scores in this category ranged from moderate to high positive influence, with one teacher ranking it as their greatest source influence, whereas two teachers ranked it as their lowest influence of the four sources (see Figure 10). Several teachers detailed negative physiological and affective responses when teaching out-of-specialty music classes.

Stress

Laura stated that early in her career, she experienced stress and anxiety when she taught strings classes, especially when tuning. She explained: “I used to dread tuning strings...all the frozen pegs, slipping pegs, unraveling/frayed strings, popped bridges, bows tightened to the point of arching.” At her first concert, Laura stated that she could not tune strings very fast, which led to her “feeling like I was going to die before the

concert trying to get all those freaking violins and cellos tuned.” Because she specialized on a band instrument, teaching strings classes was out-of-specialty for her. The lack of adequate enactive mastery experience with playing and teaching strings created anxiety and stress responses, which negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Laura described a music field trip with her chorus which caused her to feel traumatized for months. Several difficult incidents occurred during the event—several students became ill, the bus was vandalized, and rude and inappropriate behavior from strangers was directed at her and the students. She explained:

I had like teacher PTSD [Post Traumatic Stress Disorder] and I was still crying about it on Monday morning, and this was a Friday night event...I could cry about that for a good...six months. It could trigger like really bad PTSD.

Although this experience caused Laura to consider quitting her teaching job, personal resilience and support from her principal (verbal/social persuasion) helped her to persist with a belief in her capability to succeed with teaching.

Molly reported stress from teaching out-of-specialty, itinerant teaching, and having an unsustainable schedule with no planning periods. She explained:

I kept doing more and more, and more, and more and more. I had a zillion groups and I had like a zillion kids and it was a very big program for the capacity of my sanity to be able to do it all. So, I feel like I was probably not boosting myself because I kept having so much to do that I kind of ran myself into the ground... Because I had grown the program so much, it really began to take a toll on me mentally and physically.

One of her points of stress was the challenging schedule at one of her rural positions teaching grades 3–12. She explained:

I had seventh and eighth grade band, and then high school added to that and the seventh and eighth graders left halfway through [rehearsal]. And then I'd have third grade right after that. And then it would be seventh grade trumpets and it was so weird. And on those days where you didn't know what day it was because you thought it was Monday, but it's really Wednesday, and a whole group of kids would walk in I wasn't expecting. I'm like, why are you flutes here? And they're like, it's our lesson. Every day was just so crazy and different.

The stress affected her physically: “I was having a lot of physical reactions just to the stress in general. It was even to the point that my vision was spotty in front of me,” in addition to experiencing stomach problems. The weighty schedule affected how she perceived her teaching effectiveness. She explained: “I felt like that lowered how I felt about my teaching capabilities because I didn't have the time to give every kid what they needed because I was it. I was the only person.” Molly found a new teaching position that allowed her the time and space to reflect on her previous job. She explained:

Switching jobs has magically taken care of all the things that made me think I was dying. I actually feel a lot better and I'm a lot less stressed. I think my body just got used to the chronic stress. And I would always get sick like on a vacation third day, and I would get sick because I think I finally stopped moving.

With her new position, she had time to prepare and plan lessons, which positively affected her teaching self-efficacy estimations.

Nervousness

Sarah recounted that she felt nervous when teaching her jazz band:

Jazz band stuff I'm always nervous, always so, so nervous. Jittering my knees. I have a thing with my knees when I get nervous that I'm I kind of bounce my knees. I'll do it when I'm standing, I'll do it when I'm sitting. I kind of bounce my knees, and that has happened numerous times. But that's my nervous gesture.

She wanted to hide her physical presentation of her nervousness because she did not want it to affect her students, yet Sarah let the students know when she was nervous because she wanted to connect with them empathetically and model perseverance through times when she was feeling nervous. The nervous physical effects related to teaching jazz, an out-of-specialty area for Sarah.

Sylvia shared how she felt anxious and nervous when teaching out-of-specialty chorus and elementary general music during her first years of teaching. She explained:

As a beginner teacher, not having the basic teacher stuff down yet that you're still learning, and not having that specialty, and not having the preparation for it, it was *terrifying*. I felt like an idiot most of the time. I would get sick to my stomach thinking about it.

Sylvia was not trained in singing nor in teaching voice. She expressed that she felt nervous when singing while trying to teach students because she did not think she had a good singing voice. She explained: "I sound like a wildebeest, like this is awful. So, I've been embarrassed or avoided doing a part." She stated that she did not like hearing her own singing voice, that it made her "cringe" and "want to crawl under a rock" while

making her skin crawl. The lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences for teaching voice and elementary general music related to her anxiety and nervousness, which negatively impacted her teaching self-efficacy perceptions.

Anne shared that she felt nervous when teaching out-of-specialty middle school chorus. She stated: "I'm more nervous with the middle school kids just because I still feel young, I don't feel like a superior to them." She confessed she felt worried when talking with students about a topic which she was not expert, causing "flustered talking" from being nervous. Teaching chorus was especially trying for her. She stated: "My stomach churns whenever I get ready to teach chorus because I don't know what I'm doing. I just don't." Anne's nervousness when teaching middle school chorus was prominent, which negatively impacted her teaching self-efficacy estimations.

Frustration

Several teachers reported feeling frustrated with scheduling, access to students, and the small number of students. For example, Anne expressed frustration related to the difficulty of conducting quality middle school band and chorus ensembles due to the small number of students in the schools. She stated:

The performance group situation gets a little frustrating. When there are only 25 to 30 students in the whole middle school, it's tough making a balanced, good sounding band. I usually strive for 50% participation and most years I come pretty shy of that goal.

Anne stated that it was difficult to have a full sounding band with only 12 or 13 students and not being able to cover all the instrument parts because there were not enough

students.

Elsie expressed frustration with a packed schedule that included teaching many different grades and subject areas. She explained:

It's just impossible to feel like you can excel at everything. I feel like our schedules are so jam-packed. We're not full-time music teachers, and so and it's probably more honestly the expectations that we are putting on ourselves more than anybody else is putting on us. I always want to pretend like I'm the best at what I'm doing, and I want to feel as confident as possible. But I think it's very, very tricky when you're teaching that many kids.

Elsie stated that the varied responsibilities in her position hindered her from exceling in any area or her teaching. She explained:

I think there's a lot of frustrations in so many different areas. It just can really turn into quite the wormhole when you really start thinking about it. It would be really great to be feeling like you're at a mastery level, feeling like I was at a mastery level in all those regards, and it's just not something that I feel like I would ever get to in the future.

Furthermore, Elsie split her teaching time between music and gifted and talented (GT) classes. She indicated a sense of frustration due to role conflict from being a part-time teacher in two different subject areas. The gifted and talented teaching position involved extra professional development work, which required travel and securing a substitute for her music classes. She explained:

I think the tricky part of those two different positions are that oftentimes, I'm asked to wear two hats, and sometimes those hats create schedule conflicts because it almost looks like it's supposed to be two separate teachers...I find it difficult to maintain an 80/20 split between positions, often offering more of my time into each role than I am being compensated for.

Elsie raised concerns about how two separate teaching job responsibilities challenged her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She stated:

One job affected the other job, and that was tricky for me because I felt like I needed to be an advocate for my students with both positions and I didn't feel like my music kids should be affected because of my GT role that I was playing.

Teaching two subject areas created schedule conflicts and extra strain on her teaching and planning time, which negatively affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She stated: "Schedules are just really challenging. But I think it becomes really tricky when the kids are affected. And there's no answer to that." She remained persistent through her frustration, stating: "I'm happy to do it and I'm happy to grow as a teacher and as a musician in my out-of-specialty areas."

Sylvia divulged that student behavior was a serious issue for her at one of her assigned schools. She stated, "I don't know how to fix this. I've run out of tools in my toolbox. Please help me!" She expressed frustration with the poor behaviors and the lack of teacher or administrator support, which affected her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained: "It definitely made me feel unconfident because the stuff [behavior] was so bad, I couldn't even teach...I was trying everything, and nothing was working and that

was really frustrating.”

Positive Experiences

On the questionnaire, Anne recorded physiological and affective states as her highest self-efficacy source influence. Her questionnaire score was moderate-high at 84, where she recorded high individual scores of 90 for controlling nervousness and not worrying about making mistakes while teaching. Anne expressed enjoyment and fun when teaching younger students in the elementary grades. She stated that she loved teaching elementary general music classes, where she had experience playing the piano and knew many children’s songs and games. She explained:

I just I feel like I'm still young at heart and I love singing and dancing and being silly with the little kids...they always have smiles on their faces. They don't care if you mess up. They're always willing to try new things.

Anne showed a passion for teaching elementary students, and she spoke with a high sense of self-efficacy beliefs for teaching grades pre-K through four.

Sylvia taught at several schools where there had been no previous music program, yet she tackled the challenge to build the programs from the beginning stages. She celebrated student successes in learning as the programs grew and developed as a result of her teaching, which boosted her self-efficacy perceptions for teaching. She stated: “That made me feel really good that what I was doing was the right thing.” When her teaching went particularly well, she expressed excitement. She explained:

I have that moment, a touchdown moment almost. I get a little over excited sometimes when something is interesting to me and I'm geeking out on something

I'm teaching. I get like almost caffeinated sounding, talking fast and getting excited, and a little flush...I got to slow down, they're not going to understand what I'm saying.

Molly shared that in her new teaching position that she had time to properly think and plan, which helped her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She stated: "I think I enjoy teaching now that I actually have time to figure out what I'm doing." She reflected upon previous positive experiences teaching recorders to grade three students. She explained:

I have so many amazingly well things that have happened, like having cute little third graders that magically can play the recorders, and I actually loved teaching recorders because we could do some really great things and do really good ear training with them.

Molly also talked about the joy of teaching high school students who were beginners on their guitars and band instruments. She described:

I think the guitar class...actually has become a lot of fun! I did the modern band training kind of thing a couple years ago, and guitar class is a lot of fun because there are kids that have never had music. I have a lab band class that's like new kids to band, and so they learn to play flute and clarinet and trumpet, and they're like these almost grown-up size people that are just like fourth graders. They have the same problems with saxophones and trumpets. I think that those are good times when you have kids that get to make music that never thought they'd be able to. That's the joyful part. Bing!

The aforementioned three teachers shared that they had affirming teaching experiences that positively affected their teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Emotional Responses

Laura described that sometimes the music she was making with students felt so moving that she unabashedly burst into tears. For example, emotional moments occasionally occurred when her own children were in the music program:

There's something about making music with your own kids...when [my son] was in jazz band, we rewrote some parts, and he was just singing over the top of it with his trombone. I was just crying my way through it. And because I'm not ashamed to cry, the kids were feeling it at a higher level, and then it just feels so good.

Laura's crying demonstrated a positive affective state, which was an instance of vicarious experience for the students. Because of the teacher's positive affective state modeling, the students' sense of self-efficacy was potentially boosted by having a deeper emotional connection with the music.

In another example, Laura programmed a piece of music with her band in dedication to a middle school student who had passed from cancer. She shared: "I programmed it because I needed it...and the kids knew the story, a lot of them knew [him]." When the final performance came, "the kids were connected. I was connected. It wasn't just playing a song really well; it was like playing a song and feeling it all together. And that was a high." Laura modeled emotional reactions (vicarious experience, physiological/affective states) to powerful musical moments. Her modeling of emotional

reaction to music potentially helped her students learn to create their own emotional connections with music, thus fostering students' sense of self-efficacy.

Sarah stated that creating music with students positively impacted her both emotionally and physically. She explained getting goosebumps when performances and teaching moments were particularly emotional:

I feel like almost every music teaching experience gives [me] some sort of emotional or physical reaction...because I think that's part of what music is. It's supposed to give you these, it's supposed to help you feel emotions and to have physical reactions, and I always know when I've had a really good performance or had a really good teaching moment because I get goosebumps.

“Magical” musical moments and feelings of joy strengthened Sarah’s teaching self-efficacy perceptions. She explained: “It's just this overwhelming feeling of joy...I always feel kind of like I'm glowing just because it's just, it's amazing.”

Physiological and Affective States Summary

Teachers in this study cited that physiological and affective states including stress, nervousness, frustration, and positive emotional responses contributed to their perceptions of teaching efficacy. All teachers indicated having negative physiological and affective responses when teaching out-of-specialty music classes, notably when teaching chorus, voice, jazz, or strings. Several teachers indicated that they had teaching experiences that positively supported their teaching self-efficacy beliefs, for example when Sylvia would fill with excitement and passion when teaching, when Anne felt joyful when teaching elementary general music classes, or when Molly instructed high

school students who were beginners on guitars or band instruments.

Two teachers shared that they experienced emotional responses when powerful musical moments occurred during teaching. Laura shared that she cried when she was moved by the music that students were playing, a positive affective state, which modeled a vicarious experience for students, potentially boosting the students' sense of self-efficacy. Sarah recalled getting goosebumps and experiencing an "overwhelming feeling of joy" when performances and teaching moments were particularly effective. Emotional responses to music made with students contributed to these two teachers' perceptions of efficacious teaching.

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School

Every study participant stated that they were committed to teaching in a rural area. Teachers focused on the positive aspects of the rural place-based environment and culture to support their stated commitment. As previously discussed, in social cognitive theory, the external environment interacts with personal factors (cognitive, affective, biological) and behavior (triadic reciprocal causation) to affect people's sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986). Teachers in this study noted several factors that made teaching in a rural area a factor in building their perceived teaching self-efficacy, such as small schools and class sizes that enabled the ability to foster relationships with students; the verbal and/or written support they received from students, parents, staff, and community members; and the rural lifestyle. Most of the teachers grew up in a rural setting; therefore, they were aware of rural, small school challenges such as isolation, out-of-specialty teaching, and limited opportunities for observing and connecting with other

music teachers. The participants reported that positive self-efficacy estimations contributed to their commitment to teaching in a rural area.

Elsie expressed that she felt appreciated by her principal and community. She explained: “I am incredibly fortunate to work in a school where I am valued and appreciated and where music is viewed as a mandatory part of the learning process.” She valued the deep sense of community and the ability to connect with all students in her school: “Kids don't get lost in these schools because we know them so well, and we know their parents, and we know their friends, and we know what they're doing.” Elsie enjoyed seeing students grow over many years as she taught them from kindergarten to eighth grade. She explained the joy of the connections made in the small school: “Because of this rural setting you really get to know these kids very, very well and they get to know you. That's a pretty amazing thing about what we do here.” Elsie expressed that the small school size and the endearing sense of community made her feel welcome in this rural school.

Elsie appreciated the rural lifestyle, especially in contrast to previously working in a densely populated area on Long Island, New York. She liked to be outside and enjoyed the many nearby places to go hiking after work. She explained:

Driving seven minutes to school is pretty remarkable and stopping somewhere after school for a quick hike is pretty remarkable. ... We're still surprised that we live here... I'm fully committed. And as long as I feel like our community will support us as teachers, then this is the place that I can be for a very long time.

The positive support that Elsie received from members of the community and her

principal (verbal/social persuasion), and the rural lifestyle contributed to her commitment to teaching in this rural school.

Anne shared that she felt comfortable in her music teaching positions at her two schools, where she was able to build positive relationships with students. She described how her feeling of community at her schools related to her sense of identity and ability:

I believe where I am matches my personality and abilities in that I feel more comfortable in a small group setting. I like really getting to know my students and feeling like we're just a big family all learning together.

Anne enjoyed seeing students' progress from pre-K to eighth grade. She communicated that because of the small class sizes, she believed that students received more attention and were likely to have experienced greater learning. Because the schools numbered around 65 students each for grades K-8, she found that she was able to build positive relationships with all the students and teachers and had "good relationships with the principals and the community...It's kind of like family style at school," which were qualities that she valued. Anne's positive teaching experiences (enactive mastery experiences) from being in a small rural school, and the genuine relationships that she created with students, staff, and community members (verbal/social persuasion) contributed to her commitment to teaching in a rural area.

Laura also confirmed that she was committed to teaching in a rural school. She expressed that she was very comfortable living and working in the area, where she grew up and performed her student teaching, adding, "I don't know it any other way." Perhaps Laura's lack of enactive mastery experiences with suburban or urban areas and schools

limited her perceived self-efficacy beliefs to teach in a different environment. It also could be possible that the realm of her experiences (enactive mastery experiences) in her known community and local schools gave her the self-efficacy and expertise to teach in the rural environment. Laura explained that she could not foresee herself moving from where she lived; however, she shared, “I might move to a different school, but it would just be a different rural school because there are no other options.” She had deep roots in the area, where she enjoyed building relationships with all her students while also knowing her students’ parents and grandparents. These relationships with students and their families created a positive affective state for Laura. She explained: “I like that aspect of teaching in a small enough school that I know everyone's everybody. I know their grandparents; I know most of their aunts and uncles. I probably went to school with their parents at this point or someone in their family.” Laura’s relationships with her students and with people in the community (verbal/social persuasion, affective state) contributed to her commitment to teaching in a rural area.

Sarah detailed a strong sense of commitment to teaching in a rural school. She explained: “I definitely don't plan to go to a different area. I definitely don't. I do not want to teach in any kind of suburban type school. Like that's for sure not in the books for me.” Because Sarah grew up in the area where she worked, she understood the small communities, schools, music programs, and the inherent challenges. Sarah stated that she enjoyed the sense of community in a small school: “I love teaching in the smaller community because you do know the parents, you know the people around you.” Smaller class sizes allowed her to get to know students better both in and out of the classroom.

She explained: “I just love the personal connections. I love being able to talk with a kid during their lesson and see how they're doing and really kind of just check on them and have normal conversation.” Support from community members, and because of the small size of the school, the connected relationships she was able to build with all her students (verbal/social persuasion), positively influenced Sarah’s sense of commitment.

Sylvia stated that she was committed to teaching in a rural school because the sense of community was important to her. She explained: “I love the small schools. I love the getting to know people and being part of the community. I think it's kind of my jam, having to work at it a little and not be the cookie cutter.” Sylvia expressed that she did not want to live or work in a more populated area. She explained: “I feel like you miss out on so much that we get of making those connections and making an impact, and having it make an impact on you.”

Making meaningful connections with students and community members in small rural schools was important to Sylvia. “I love being part of the community...I love that part of the ruralness. Getting to know people and how everything fits in...knowing the families and how they connect.” She appreciated the support of people who “care about what you’re doing...even if its moral support.” Sylvia stated that she liked getting to know the students over several years in a K–8 school, and that “the closeness of getting to know the kids is great, having them multiple years.” The personal connections Sylvia built with students across time, and the support from families and community members who “care about what you are doing...even if it is moral support” (verbal/social persuasion) and the resulting affective states positively influenced her teaching beliefs

and supported her desire and commitment to live and work in a rural community.

Molly grew up in a rural area and envisioned teaching in a rural setting: “I always had a strong love of both early elementary general music and ensembles (band/chorus), and I was excited to get into a small rural school and get cranking on all of the music making!” She was not interested in teaching in a more populated area. She explained:

I think at this point knowing how much energy it takes with a huge program, the thought of going to like a place where I had 900 students or something, I don't think I'd want to do that. I do like living in a rural area. And I like teaching in a rural area.

Molly noticed that in each rural school in which she taught that students, parents, teachers, and community members sincerely appreciated having a music teacher and a music program. Her first teaching job was in a small K–12 school with fewer than 150 students where there had been no music teacher for six years. Molly stated that the students, parents, and community members were grateful to her for bringing music into their lives. She described the recognition from the community:

The blessing was that whatever I did there was soaked up and appreciated an incredible amount. I was teaching in a very tight-knit community with not many outsiders, and the majority of the staff and students took me in, which was fantastic.

Molly called the appreciation from the community members a “blessing,” which created a sense of gratitude and belonging (affective states) for Molly as she was welcomed and supported wholeheartedly. The effect of her experiences with receiving gratitude and

support from students, parents, and community members (verbal/social persuasion; affective states), and her passion for teaching in a rural school positively contributed to Molly's commitment to rural teaching.

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School Summary

Every study participant indicated an avid commitment to teaching in a rural area. Teachers spoke in positive ways about how the rural setting was a comfortable lifestyle choice. The small schools and the many numbers of years they taught provided opportunities for teachers to develop close relationships with students, which contributed to the teachers' care and investment in teaching their students. The teachers' sense of commitment was influenced by the connections with and strong support from community members, and because of the small size of the school, the connected relationships they were able to build with students (verbal/social persuasion, affective states). As a group, the participants' moderate to high self-efficacy estimations reported on the questionnaire and in the interviews corresponded with their commitment to teaching in a rural school.

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

A commitment to engaged teaching relates to a teacher's personal investment in their students and their school (Day, 2008; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999), where higher self-efficacy levels support a greater investment in their teaching practice (Day, 2008). For example, committed teachers may demonstrate a passion for teaching, may focus on individual student academic and/or emotional needs, may be more likely to engage with the school community (Crosswell, 2006), and may be proactive with ongoing professional development (Crosswell, 2006; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Influenced by

the four self-efficacy sources, teachers in this study demonstrated these characteristics in exhibiting a commitment to engaged teaching.

Laura demonstrated commitment to engaged teaching as she described her passion for making quality and meaningful music with students. For example, she wrote about teaching complex music:

Even though this requires more work, it is by far the most satisfying and professionally fulfilling to take the kids from a lower level of musicianship/performance and guide them to performing high quality music that stretched them and provided the opportunity for them to connect with more complex music.

Laura stated that she set high expectations for her teaching and for student learning. She explained: “I strive to push the kids to the limits and to excite them with a challenging performance-based program.” When a student, Laura’s teachers challenged her with difficult music and high performance expectations (enactive mastery experiences). These prior experiences were reflected in her adopted teaching practices, when she stated that she challenges her students with learning and performing complex music. Her passion for teaching and her deep engagement with challenging students musically demonstrated Laura’s commitment to being an engaged teacher.

Sarah had a continued drive for excellence in her teaching. She stated, “I take things to 110%. I work really hard for everything.” To be as effective as possible teaching her students, she continued to strengthen her knowledge and skills in her out-of-specialty areas (enactive mastery experiences). Sarah recounted that she was positively

influenced by her observations of other local similarly situated rural music teachers (vicarious experiences), and she stated that working collaboratively with other teachers (verbal/social persuasion) built her teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Strong self-efficacy source influences, seeking professional development for teaching out-of-specialty music, and her drive to be an effective teacher reflected her commitment to engaged teaching.

Sylvia valued the work she performed teaching music, and she cared about the students that she served in rural communities. She explained:

I love that we're giving kids something that maybe they might not be able to get in another way. Some of the kids in rural areas may not ever be exposed to some of the stuff we get to teach them.

Sylvia shared that she believed her teaching was making a positive impact on the students, and that her teaching was influenced in positive ways by the students. She stated: “There's so much of that with the kids, that thing they give you back is just super cool.” She strove to build a music community for her students where all would feel welcomed. She explained:

I tried to make the music stuff kind of a family and have our own culture, like we're the band kids, we're the chorus kids. Especially the ensembles—this is a safe place and we're all together in this and trying to make that sense of community.

When feeling challenged with her out-of-specialty teaching, Sylvia demonstrated perseverance and a sense of resilience as she proactively sought out support from other

teachers (verbal/social persuasion) or researched for information to help her improve her teaching craft. She used the internet to find teaching resources, lesson plan ideas, and music teacher groups (verbal/social persuasion). She created opportunities to visit other teachers in rural settings to observe (vicarious experiences) how they taught in their out-of-specialty areas. She contacted colleagues (verbal/social persuasion) with whom she had studied at university who may have had general music experience while student teaching. Over time, Sylvia built her “toolbox” of teaching skills, ideas, and resources to improve her teaching (enactive mastery experiences), persevering through the challenging situations and focusing on the joyful aspects of her teaching experiences. Sylvia’s actions to seek supports to develop her teaching skills through professional development and her focus on supporting students’ emotional needs demonstrated her commitment to being an engaged teacher.

Anne’s commitment to engaged teaching was mixed. Anne expressed strong connections with grade K–4 students in elementary general music classes, stating that she loved actively engaging with them through singing, dancing, and spirited fun, activities that created her most memorable and meaningful moments. On the other hand, Anne stated, “I could do without band and chorus...because the size of the school, it’s hard to have a good quality.” The lack of sufficient vocal teaching mastery experiences may have influenced lower self-efficacy estimations for teaching chorus and a weaker commitment to engaged teaching, whereas enactive mastery experiences for teaching band and elementary general music may have supported higher self-efficacy estimations in those areas. Although teaching band was one of her specialty areas, she was frustrated with the

small numbers of available students because it was a challenge to have enough players to have balanced instrumentation. Teaching choir, elementary music, and band produced a tension with Anne's teaching self-efficacy perceptions, which may have led to her reported mixed levels of teaching commitment. Despite the small numbers of band students, Anne was positive about her initiative to combine the middle school band students from her two small schools for performances, thereby showing a stronger sense of engaged teaching.

Anne's frustration with the lack of teaching opportunities during the 2020-2021 pandemic negatively affected her perceived utility as a music teacher. She was challenged by her personal drive to be an effective and committed teacher. For example, Anne expressed frustration with not being able to teach music classes due to restrictions to music-making, such as no singing nor playing wind instruments, and schedules that had no music classes altogether. She saw the missed opportunities for engaging students with music learning as frustrating because of her values and beliefs in the importance of children learning music. Anne's stated discontent with the restricted music teaching environment demonstrated a tension between her commitment to engaged teaching and the situational constraints. Although Anne acknowledged that some of the teaching challenges that she encountered were just part of her job, she expressed adequate self-efficacy beliefs and commitment to her teaching, especially related to teaching elementary students. She stated: "I really enjoy teaching music. ...Overall, it's a very positive experience for me."

Molly expressed her commitment to and the importance of her engaged teaching:

“Kids in rural, poverty-stricken schools need music just as much as those in more affluent areas, maybe even need it more. And they certainly deserve to have a teacher that is well-educated and passionate for teaching.” She was committed to engaged teaching despite the rural teaching challenges she previously described and had experienced. She found that her vision of teaching did not align with the realities of teaching in a rural school, stating that it was “not what I considered when I thought I was going to be a teacher, just that kid getting the new shiny instrument.” Many families could not afford to rent or buy their child an instrument, and the school could only provide half of the instruments needed. Itinerant teaching at multiple schools with nearly impossible schedules added to a sense of frenzy. She related: “I never knew what was happening.”

As Molly adjusted to the challenges, she realized how important she was in the lives of her students as a music teacher and giving them the best that she could offer, stating: “It’s just what they get in the music room, that’s their music experience. It’s nowhere else.” Molly continued to set high expectations for her teaching and for student learning. She explained: “I feel effective for where I am and what I do. It’s producing good results and sometimes even great results.” Molly’s passion for music teaching and her care for both academic and emotional support for her students demonstrated her commitment to engaged teaching.

Elsie was committed to being an engaged teacher. She reported that she faced challenges when teaching out-of-specialty music classes, yet she viewed these challenges as obstacles that she could overcome, a perseverance which contributed to her sense of commitment. She expressed that she felt frustrated with a busy schedule that did not give

adequate time to any one area. She stated, “I do feel as if I will never gain the skills needed to be an extraordinary general music teacher or an extraordinary vocal teacher simply because of the lack of time spent with each age/discipline group.” Despite these difficulties, Elsie continually strove to develop her out-of-specialty teaching skills. She wanted to be the best at what she was doing, stating that she wanted “to be as confident as possible” in all her teaching areas.

Elsie expressed that she “could do great things” if only had more time to focus on an out-of-specialty area, such elementary general music. Positive feedback from local peer music teachers and community members (verbal/social persuasion) built her self-efficacy perceptions to try new teaching ideas. She stated: “If it works, that's awesome, and we'll go with it, and if it doesn't work, we'll just try something new.” Elsie shared that it was important for her to observe other teachers (vicarious experiences) and to reflect on feedback and ideas from other people (verbal/social persuasion) to improve her teaching self-efficacy beliefs.

Elsie demonstrated empathy and compassion with students as they navigated the extra-curricular participation pressures put on students to participate in school activities. Because there were so few students in the school, she was mindful of keeping the balance between the demand on students’ overall schedules and their music classes and activities. She explained:

You always have to remember to be an advocate for your kid and remember that they're 12, and that sometimes they're being pulled in many different directions because there's just so few kids in that school. And to give them an out every once

in a while, and say yep, you need to miss this because you're exhausted, and I need to be thinking about you and your well-being more than jazz band right now.

By being mindful of her students' scheduling pressures, Elsie demonstrated a commitment to engaged teaching by her personal investment through empathy and compassion for her students social and emotional needs.

Commitment to Engaged Teaching Summary

Teachers in this study exhibited a commitment to engaged teaching. They demonstrated personal investments in their students and their school while creating and fostering connections with people in the community. Because there were small schools and a strong sense of community in the rural environment, teachers had opportunities to create meaningful connections with and receive feedback (verbal/social persuasion) from people in the school and community. They cared about the effectiveness of their teaching and sought support from peer music teachers (verbal/social persuasion, vicarious experiences), and they pursued professional development to build their teaching skills in out-of-specialty areas (perseverance, enactive mastery experiences). Sylvia supported students' well-being by fostering a sense of community in ensembles; and Elsie was mindful to support students' emotional well-being by understanding and facilitating the balance between the demand on students' overall schedules and their music classes and activities.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Self-efficacy theory provides an avenue to better understand and inform the ways in which music teachers' self-efficacy beliefs inform their music teaching practice. The four self-efficacy sources—enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal and social persuasion, and physiological and affective states—may influence people's beliefs in their capabilities to perform a certain task, affect the amount of effort they expend, shape their response to stressors, and determine desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). To my knowledge, this is the first study to examine the self-efficacy beliefs of rural music teachers through the four sources of self-efficacy. A study using self-efficacy theory to explore issues specific to rural music educators may provide insights into how teachers in similar contexts might better understand and develop self-efficacy beliefs in their teaching capabilities (desired outcomes) (Bandura, 1997).

Music teachers in this study described their perceptions of efficacious teaching practice based on their experiences teaching in a rural school. In the following section, I discuss how the four self-efficacy sources influenced these rural music teachers' self-efficacy perceptions as they related to specialty music teaching, out-of-specialty music teaching, and how the rural setting environment affected their teaching self-efficacy beliefs and commitment to teaching. I then discuss emergent themes of perseverance and community relative to the participants' interactions with the four self-efficacy sources.

Self-Efficacy Sources

Enactive Mastery Experience

On the questionnaire and during interviews, participants reported that enactive mastery experiences had the greatest positive influence on their self-efficacy perceptions. Enactive mastery experiences typically have the greatest influence on a person's self-efficacy development (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016). Teachers in this study realized enactive mastery experiences relevant to rural music teaching from undergraduate coursework and student teaching, and from classroom teaching experience. Findings from this study align with self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1997) and with music teacher research. For example, researchers have shown that music teachers had high teaching self-efficacy levels who had effective training and experience with teaching in their music specialty area, whereas teachers that lacked sufficient training and experience described low self-efficacy levels for teaching outside of their area of music specialty (Andrade, 2022; Regier, 2021; Wagoner, 2011). Furthermore, music teachers with more teaching experience reported higher self-efficacy levels than newer teachers (Andrade, 2022; Biasutti & Concina, 2018; Regier, 2021; Wagoner, 2011). In general, in the current study, teachers with less experience teaching in out-of-specialty music areas viewed the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experience as an opportunity to grow through professional development work and perseverance. This finding aligns with research by Andrade (2022), who found that early-career music teachers developed an evolving sense of self-efficacy in their teaching practice in unfamiliar settings through perseverance and experience, whereas experienced teachers were able to reflect upon how early-career

teaching difficulties were opportunities for growth. All teachers in the current study reported using their specialty area skills and experiences to support their instruction in out-of-specialty music areas.

Specialty and Out-of-Specialty Music Teaching

Four of the six music participants recorded on the questionnaire that enactive mastery experience was their highest positive source influence; however, during the interviews all teachers described a lack of adequate enactive mastery experiences related to their out-of-specialty music teaching. The teachers' undergraduate coursework focused on strings, band, or choral music teaching, yet teachers were certified to teach all music grades K–12. Four teachers taught in a small rural K–8 school and one taught in a grade 5–8 school, where they were expected to teach band, chorus, classroom music, and sometimes orchestra. Five teachers had extra-curricular responsibilities, whereas one teacher also taught gifted and talented, another also taught math, and another was also the assistant principal. As is the case in the present study, May et al. (2017) found that that most states use a broad K–12 music teaching certification because of funding considerations, which creates music positions that are multiple grade levels, specialty areas, and/or in multiple schools or locations.

All participants reported that the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences for teaching outside of their area of focus had the greatest negative impact on their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. For example, in the current study, when teaching vocals, Molly stated, "I'm really out of my element here teaching an acapella choir," while Laura stated, "I had no clue what I was really doing. I had *no* vocal experience."

Anne recounted a lack of singing experiences growing up or when studying music in college, stating, “I was never taught how to teach singing.” Furthermore, Anne was aware of her missing knowledge and experience for teaching singing. She explained: “I really don’t know much about choral repertoire, singing techniques, the correct singing ranges for middle school students, and probably a lot more.” Jorgensen (2010) raised the issue that beginning teachers may feel a “sense of inadequacy due to not knowing all that we might wish or even need to know” (Jorgensen, 2010, p. 22). In Anne’s case, her missing knowledge stemmed from a lack of enactive mastery experiences in her undergraduate preparation, which was perhaps exacerbated by rural isolation, which then seemed to have limited the opportunities for observing (vicarious experiences) and interacting with music peers (verbal/social persuasion). Data suggest that Anne had little to no source input from prior experiences, observations, and peer interaction for teaching singing with which to positively influence her self-efficacy beliefs. The rural isolation issue is discussed further below in the sections on vicarious experiences and verbal and social persuasion.

The participants’ music teaching responsibilities, and sometimes teaching assignments in other subjects, were similar to findings in the literature for rural music teacher teaching assignments. For example, researchers found that rural music teachers may have many roles and responsibilities, including teaching other subjects, when teaching in a rural area, which may require an expertise for teaching across grades level and subject areas (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004; Spring, 2016). The diversity and busyness of rural music teachers’ schedules, which may include moving

between classrooms, schools, grade levels, and music disciplines (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016), made adequately preparing lessons difficult for the expanse of grades and music subject areas, which teachers found exhausting and mentally and emotionally stressful (Kuntzelman, 2016). Bates (2011) suggested that busy schedules in rural music teaching positions may not provide enough time to teach effectively, which may lead to frustration. These examples in the literature illustrate how teacher preparation and experience (enactive mastery experiences) and the emotional stress (physiological/affective states) could have an effect on rural music teachers' self-efficacy perceptions.

Several participants in this study described the teaching responsibilities of multiple grade spans and diversity of music disciplines as challenging when having to teach all aspects of a K–8, 5–8, or high school level music program. Two teachers used the term “jack of all trades” to describe their teaching responsibilities, which referred to the numerous different grade levels and music subject areas, including elementary classroom general music, beginning and middle school strings and band, chorus, and extra-curricular music. This type of schedule meant that the majority of classes taught are in out-of-specialty areas, where teachers do not have as much training. Similar to the demanding workload of participants in the current study, Ballantyne (2007) described the problem of the “one-man-band” from high workloads and broad responsibilities for music teachers who were the only music teacher in a school building. Four music teachers in the study reported that they felt a weight of expectations from the administration and the community, including responsibilities for operating the school

sound systems, running school music activities and extra-curricular music programs, and a heavy workload from a demanding schedule, and which for some teachers included itinerant teaching.

The issue of high workloads and itinerant teaching for music teachers was what Rich (2004) called intensification, an issue exacerbated by isolation and marginalization. The author indicated that intensification from teaching so many classes (work overload), and extra preparation for special events, performances, and competitions outside of the regular teaching duties, made it difficult for music teachers to invest the time needed to effectively teach students. The study's participants indicated that the intensification and contextual teaching expectations affected teaching practice, often in negative ways. In the present study, the number of classes over multiple grade levels and specialty areas spread the music teachers more thinly (intensification), and several of the participants reported the amount of out-of-specialty teaching negatively affected their teaching efficacy for both specialty and out-of-specialty teaching.

Specialty skills affected. Three teachers expressed that they believed that their specialty music teaching skills were diminished because of the amount of out-of-specialty music teaching they were required to do. It is understood from previous research that, in general, music teachers who teach out of their specialty music area have lower teaching self-efficacy perceptions due to a lack of skills and experience (Grieser, 2014; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018; McCormick, 2008; Marshall, 2013). Findings from the present study align with prior out-of-specialty research, as participants acknowledged that their self-efficacy estimations were lower for out-of-specialty music teaching.

Notably, although several teachers recognized that the pressure from the heavy schedule of out-of-specialty music teaching meant that they were not able to focus as much on the areas that were actually their specialty (which they reported negatively impacted their music specialty teaching *skills*), these teachers did not report that their self-efficacy *estimations* for teaching in their music specialty area were negatively affected. This discrepancy created a tension between schedule constraints, what teachers knew they could teach well, and what they believed they could teach. Elsie stated:

How can I ever necessarily feel like a “mastery” teacher if I don't necessarily have the time to get there with all those different pieces [specialty and out-of-specialty teaching]? ...I do feel as if I will never gain the skills needed to be an extraordinary general music teacher or an extraordinary vocal teacher simply because of the lack of time spent with each age/discipline group.

Sarah continued: “I feel like my skills as being a really good vocal teacher are slipping because I can't focus on that as much. I have to focus much more on the things that I'm not good at.”

Many participants taught a dense schedule with varied grade spans and music areas which did not give adequate time to any one area. The teachers indicated that the time and energy required to teach this type of schedule left little time to focus on improving both specialty and out-of-specialty teaching skills. Adding to the schedule workload, Elsie had the responsibility to be the gifted and talented teacher and Sylvia taught an algebra class, which reflects similarly to participants' responsibilities in Kuntzelman's (2016) study. These teaching assignments align with Bates's (2011)

assertion that rural music teachers “wear many hats” (p. 92), which may lead to frustration (physiological/affective states) with the busyness of the schedule and the expertise required to teach the numerous multiple levels and music areas. Furthermore, rural music teachers who teach an additional subject in addition to music, and sometimes in different schools, described that they felt divided loyalty to both subject and school, which negatively impacted social connections (verbal/social persuasion) and contributed to feelings of isolation (physiological/affective states) (Conway & Christensen, 2006; Maltas, 2004).

The collective structural and systemic constraints from out-of-specialty teaching, schedule pressures, and job expectations were a disrupting force for participants’ self-efficacy perceptions. Teachers in this study had self-efficacy estimations that overall were high, yet for some teachers, their skills and opportunities for teaching did not match their estimations of what they could do in their area of specialty. Furthermore, their high self-efficacy estimations did not align with what they believed their capabilities were for improving their teaching of out-of-specialty music, where the teachers’ overall perceived strength of teaching efficacy empowered their resilience and perseverance for out-of-specialty teaching.

This finding can be viewed as a tension within triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1986) between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. In general, teachers in this study had high self-efficacy perceptions for teaching music (especially in their area of specialty), yet experienced negative pressures from environmental factors from out-of-specialty teaching and schedule demands. This tension was likely mediated

through cognitive self-regulation (Hendricks, 2009), yet their responses (behaviors) resulted in frustration due to the external pressures, which, in part, were outside of their control. This case illustrates how structural and systemic constraints may have a role in teachers' self-efficacy perceptions.

Teaching Preparation. Several teachers in this study described a dissonance between their undergraduate preparation, student teaching, and teaching expectations, with their rural teaching experience. A high workload from busy schedules and the sense of isolation is what Ballantyne (2007) termed “praxis shock” (p. 184) for early-career music teachers. Four participants in the present study described challenges with rural teaching from overloaded schedules, and three from itinerant teaching. The schedules involved constant shifts from back-to-back classes that jumped age spans and music subject areas, which required many different lesson preparations. For example, many schedules had consecutive classes such as grade four strings, grade one classroom music, and middle school band, with little or no time in between to prepare. Molly stated: “I don't even have time to reflect on it [her teaching] because I was like running with my hair on fire.”

For several participants, prior student teaching experience was a factor that contributed to a sense of praxis shock. Four participants did student teaching in a relatively larger sized and well-resourced school, whereas the rural schools where they taught were very small and were without the same level of resources. This finding aligns with Maltas' (2004) study where participants reported poor preparation for rural music teaching responsibilities because their student teaching was in larger and better situated

schools. In the present study, teachers described issues that were different from their student teaching experiences and their expectations, which included itinerant teaching; the need to re-write music parts to accommodate small-sized bands; varied teaching assignments that include instructing subjects outside of music, such as math and gifted and talented instruction; and managing an overly busy K–8 teaching schedule that encompassed elementary general music, band, chorus, and strings. These reports support previous literature (Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016) where some of the realities of teaching in rural areas were not typically addressed in undergraduate coursework and experiences.

One teacher in the present study described additional types of external challenges not experienced in undergraduate coursework or student teaching. Not found in previous literature, one of the external challenges included changing jobs every few years and adapting to the complexities of itinerant teaching in different schools. There were several issues related to job change. A teacher may have a job cut because of school system budget instability; or they may not be rehired due to what administration may consider less than optimal teaching, yet there may not be adequate induction programs or mentors in place to support the teacher. Second, in a school system that encompasses several small schools over a vast area, teachers may be moved in any given year to other multiple buildings and teaching assignments. These changes may create added stress as music teachers continually build new relationships with administration, staff, and students, and as they adapt to new facilities, materials, and operational norms. Another finding in this study was that there was not only a lack of resources in rural areas, but that missing

resources could include the lack of a previous music teacher or music program. These findings illustrate a tension between self-efficacy beliefs for music teaching and the possible constraints in a rural teaching environment.

Although participants recorded high source levels from enactive mastery experiences on the questionnaire and stated that they felt well prepared from undergraduate training, they also noted only modest preparation for teaching music outside of their area of focus. This finding aligns with Andrade's (2022) study where music teachers reported not having adequate preparation for teaching outside of their regular training and experience. Furthermore, Jorgensen (2010) suggested that undergraduate time spent on an array of technical skills do not address the broad music teaching skills required when a singular music teacher must cover multiple music teaching situations, often leaving teachers feeling unprepared for the position. The author suggested that the work required to teach leaves little time to engage with professional reading, to have discussions with music colleagues, and to reflect on their work. Another factor not experienced during student teaching in a larger school was the sense of isolation in rural areas from other music teachers, which will be discussed below.

Summary of Enactive Mastery Experiences

All study participants reported that enactive mastery experiences had the greatest positive influence on their self-efficacy perceptions, with the greatest positive influences coming from undergraduate coursework, student teaching, and teaching experience. Broad state-level K–12 teaching certifications enable rural school districts to have music teaching positions that are multiple grade levels, specialty areas, and/or in multiple

schools or locations, which create the issue of out-of-specialty music teaching. All participants stated that the greatest negative impact on their teaching self-efficacy perceptions was related to the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences for teaching outside of their area of focus. Some teachers stated that it was a challenge to be an effective teacher for both specialty and out-of-specialty music teaching when instructing multiple grade levels and specialty areas. An inconsistency between undergraduate preparation and skill expectations for teaching in a rural school may create a sense of “praxis shock” (Ballantyne, 2007) for music teachers as they navigate the teaching expectations in a rural setting.

Vicarious Experiences

Participants reported that the opportunity to observe other music teachers and a sense of isolation had the greatest influence on their self-efficacy estimations in the area of vicarious experience. Although three teachers rated vicarious experiences as the lowest source influence on the questionnaire, most participants stated that when possible, observing other teachers who were similarly situated in rural schools and who taught similar classes was the most meaningful for building self-efficacy perceptions in their teaching, whereas observing teachers in larger schools and music programs was not relatable. These findings align with literature about how observed, vicarious experiences are most effective when modeled by someone who is similar to a person in some way (Bandura, 1997; Hendricks, 2016; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022), in this case music teachers in rural schools.

Observation

Laura's negative experience when attending the Midwest Band Clinic (as described in chapter 4) illustrated how vicarious experiences must be relatable for the experience to be meaningful. The dissonance between what she thought she would see—small school band performances—and her experience teaching in a small school was so great that Laura chose to not attend any other workshops for the remainder of the conference. Laura's experience echoes a similar vicarious experience as Jordan, a teacher whose story was shared in *Compassionate Music Teaching* (Hendricks, 2018). Teaching in a rural, low-income high school, Jordan started a marching band program with one goal—to have students participate in a marching band competition. Students made tremendous musical progress, learned skills for a field show, and built a strong sense of belonging; however, when they saw performances by other better-resourced marching bands from more affluent communities, the students were left feeling devastated and Jordan felt a sense of failure despite having taught the students well. Such examples show that misaligned vicarious experiences may not be meaningful or may even be harmful to building self-efficacy for both students and teachers.

Although Laura indicated that she was positively motivated by observing other similarly situated music teachers teach well, she also expressed motivation from viewing what she considered poor teaching. She stated: "I think when I see great teaching, it inspires me and motivates me to aim for that, and when I see what I consider not great teaching, it motivates me to never let myself do that." As noted previously, in self-efficacy theory, a person's belief in their capabilities is generated through positive and

affirming processes from the four self-efficacy sources, and in the case of vicarious experiences, from a peer with similar abilities. In this instance, Laura stated that she was inspired and motivated when observing great teaching (vicarious experiences), building proactively on the modeling of a similarly situated teacher.

In the second part of her statement, “when I see what I consider not great teaching, it motivates me to never let myself do that,” it appears that Laura was engaged with cognitive self-regulation. It is known from previous research (Hendricks, 2009; Lewis, 2018; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022) that people who have a high sense of self-efficacy have the ability to regulate their thoughts to turn negative experiences into affirming ones. Laura’s strong sense of self-efficacy enabled her to observe negative vicarious experiences and regulate her thoughts to suggest that she has the agency and skills to avoid similar failure.

Isolation

Participants in this study reported that there were barriers that limited their ability to observe other music teachers, which reduced opportunities for vicarious experiences. Supported in the literature (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Bautista et al., 2021; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016), teachers described a sense of isolation due to geographical distances from other music teachers, being the only music teacher in a building or school district, itinerant teaching, a demanding schedule, and lacking available time due to a heavy workload. Some participants reported physical isolation within their own school building due to the location of the music room. This finding is supported by previous research about sources of music teacher isolation (Ballantyne,

2007; Krueger, 2000; Sindberg, 2011), where physical spaces within school buildings are physically distanced from other classrooms and people in the school. Additional barriers to observing other music teachers, detailed by participants in the current study, included infrequent professional development opportunities and scarce regional music festivals in the rural area in which they lived. Although opportunities to observe masterly modeling by similarly situated rural music teachers were minimal, what observations participants did have, in general, positively affected their self-efficacy estimations.

In this study, an important finding was that a lack of available substitute teachers made it difficult to have the time available to leave school to observe other music teachers in area schools. Several teachers described that if they were to take time to observe other teachers, not having available substitute teachers meant that students would miss music for that week, which would put extra strain on the classroom teacher because they would not have a preparation period for that day. For example, Anne stated:

It's so hard to take a day off and leave sub plans. There are no subs and then if you do take a day off, there's just no music for today, and I don't want classroom teachers having to take that on. So, I don't.

Molly shared a similar sentiment, stating:

We don't do a lot of sharing or visiting, especially in [our] county. If you miss the day, those kids don't get music that whole week. So, nobody around you wants to take a day off to go visit another because then classroom teachers don't get a break.

The lack of substitute teachers was a substantial barrier for participants' ability to observe

other music teachers, which contributed to the sense of isolation from limited vicarious experiences with other music teachers.

Vicarious Experiences Summary

Although participants generally rated vicarious experiences lower than other source categories on the questionnaire, most participants reported that observing similarly situated teachers had a positive influence on their music teaching self-efficacy beliefs. Observing teachers at larger schools with larger ensembles were not relatable, and therefore not a meaningful self-efficacy source. Through a high sense of self-efficacy for music teaching, Laura was likely able to use cognitive self-regulation to guide her thinking from her negative experiences at the Midwest Band Clinic and with her peer observations of what she considered “not great teaching” into personal agency. The teachers expressed a sense of isolation due to barriers that limited teachers’ ability to observe other music teachers and reduced opportunities for vicarious experiences. In addition to heavy workloads and schedules, itinerant teaching, geographical distances, and the sole music teacher in a building, a substantial factor that limited opportunities to observe was the lack of available substitute teachers to cover for teachers to be out of the classroom.

Verbal and Social Persuasion

In this study, three participants recorded very high scores from all self-efficacy source categories on the questionnaire. Two teachers scored 100 (out of 100) for both enactive mastery experiences and verbal and social persuasion, which perhaps reflected an overall strong sense of efficacious beliefs. The importance of verbal and social

persuasion in this study aligns with findings of Lewis et al. (2022), where college students indicated that verbal and social persuasion from their teachers was a more influential self-efficacy source for their learning experiences than were enactive mastery experiences. Furthermore, the finding in the current study that experienced teachers recorded high positive influence from verbal and social persuasion contradicts findings by Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy (2006), who reported that experienced teachers did not perceive verbal/social persuasion to be as valuable.

Principal Feedback

Verbal feedback is most influential when coming from someone who is perceived as credible and a significant other (see Bandura, 1997; Zimmerman, 2000), for example peer rural music teachers. According to participants, the positive feedback they received from school principals was brief and not substantive for positively influencing their self-efficacy perceptions for music teaching. The lack of meaningful, constructive, evaluative feedback had little or no effect on teachers' perceived self-efficacy. Several participants relayed that their principals had not given them formal evaluative feedback for as many as eight years, and that several principals shared openly that they did not know much about music. In these situations, principal evaluative feedback was not a factor in influencing any of the teachers' self-efficacy beliefs due to the lack of perceived credibility and musical understanding from the principals. Furthermore, given their moderate to high participant reported self-efficacy levels, teachers may have used cognitive self-regulation to mediate the influence from principal feedback (see Bandura, 1997; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Zimmerman, 1989, 2000). All the teachers in this study

wanted to have substantive and meaningful feedback from their principals to build their knowledge and teaching skills, which demonstrated high efficacious behavior (see Bandura, 1997).

Peer Music Teacher Feedback

Teachers in this study reported that verbal and social persuasion from peer music teachers who were similarly situated in a rural school was the most meaningful and valuable for boosting their teaching self-efficacy perceptions, whereas feedback and interactions from other music teachers who taught at larger schools in more populated areas was not relatable. This finding aligns with self-efficacy theory, where persuasive statements are most effective when one has confidence and credibility in the person because of their perceived skill level in the task or activity (Bandura, 1997). Participants communicated that peer teachers who were similarly situated were more likely to understand the issues involved with teaching in a small rural school and were more able to be supportive to a teacher's needs. Aligning with prior research, participants indicated that the types of verbal and social persuasion that boosted their self-efficacy perceptions was peer feedback that was positive (Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022), specific to the action (Hardy, 2014; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al., 2022; Schmidt & DeShon, 2010), and constructive in a way that a teacher could grow teaching skills and build self-efficacy (Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis et al. 2022).

Laura expressed irritation with negative comments about small, rural schools from other music teachers who taught in larger schools and communities in the state. Negative comments from these music teachers did not appear to affect Laura's belief in

her capabilities. This finding corresponds with self-efficacy theory, where persuasive appraisals by others are weighed against their perceived credibility and knowledge (Bandura, 1997). In this case, the persuasion came from music teachers from larger schools, whom Laura may have perceived as less credible due to a lack of understanding of rural schools.

Isolation. Many teachers in this study expressed a sense of isolation from the lack of opportunities to dialog with other music teachers for many of the same reasons as previously discussed with vicarious experiences. Barriers to person-to-person interaction included being the only music teacher in the school or school district, long distances to travel between schools, and traveling due to itinerant teaching, which aligned with prior research (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Bautista et al., 2021; Isbell, 2005; Jorgensen, 2010; Kuntzelman, 2016; Rich, 2004). Furthermore, researchers found that music teachers may feel isolated from other teachers and staff in their own building(s) due to a lack of meetings and dialog about music teaching, and the physical distance from others in the building (Sindberg, 2011; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005). This was the case in the present study with one teacher, Sylvia, who stated that she experienced personal/emotional isolation from other staff when itinerant teaching in multiple buildings when others did not recognize her as a staff member. The busy schedule, the transitory nature of itinerant teaching between different schools or buildings, and the limited connections with other music teachers or with regular staff contributed to her sense of isolation. These findings are supported by previous research about sources of music teacher isolation (Ballantyne, 2007; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005).

Due to limited access to professional development and the limited ability to interact with similarly situated music teachers in person, several teachers used online music teacher communities, social media, and email to connect and dialog with peer music teachers. The isolation from peer music teachers was a concern for many of the participants. For example, Anne stated: “I have no peer teachers...I’ve basically been on my own to figure things out for myself since I started teaching.” Aligning with previous literature (de Vries, 2017), participants in this study positively described that the online interface was an avenue to establish connections with music teaching peers, where dialog and feedback from people in online communities helped them to boost their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. To address music teacher isolation, several researchers advocated for online communities to support music teacher collaboration and professional development (Bautista et al., 2019) in rural areas (Bates, 2011; Bautista et al., 2021; Burkett, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Monk, 2007) and for mentoring (Bautista et al., 2021; Branch, 2018; Koerner, 2017; Monk, 2007; West & Frey-Clark, 2019).

Community Feedback

Participants recounted a mix of both positive and negative feedback from members of the community. Every teacher stated that they received positive feedback from community members and school staff, especially regarding school and community performances, which boosted their teaching self-efficacy perceptions by providing a sense of validation that they were doing well with their teaching. For example, Sarah was interested in creating strong concert performances with her students, which resulted in self-efficacy enhancing positive feedback from community members; and Elsie shared

that positive comments from community members empowered her to grow her teaching with new and creative ideas.

Several participants noted having received ongoing positive feedback and actions from parents, staff, and community members who wished to support and bolster the music program in their rural school. This verbal and social support was validating and an important factor in building teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Every teacher also disclosed receiving negative comments from people in the community, especially from parents, which negatively affected their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Although Molly experienced occasional teaching challenges from negative feedback, she noted that the majority of school staff and many of the people in the rural community created a positive environment through their affirming feedback. Researchers have highlighted that connections and relationships that are made by music teachers with students, parents, and people in rural communities can foster a sense of belonging, pride, community building, and may positively affect the teacher's quality of life (Bates, 2011; Spring, 2016; VanDeusen, 2016). In the present study, encouraging feedback from parents, staff, and community members fostered positive self-efficacy source influences for teachers from both verbal and social persuasion and physiological and affective states.

Verbal and Social Persuasion Summary

Participants in this study reported both positive and negative influences from verbal and social persuasion. The feedback given by school principals, both formal and informal, was not meaningful or constructive for teachers. Principal feedback did not affect teachers perceived self-efficacy, likely due to the lack of perceived credibility and

musical understanding from the principals. Peer feedback from similarly situated music teachers was the most valuable for boosting teaching self-efficacy perceptions, whereas feedback and interactions from music teachers who were not similarly situated was not relatable.

Participants described that the types of verbal and social persuasion that boosted their self-efficacy perceptions was peer music teacher feedback that was positive, specific about the action, and constructive in a way that a teacher could grow teaching skills and build self-efficacy. Teachers expressed a sense of isolation from minimal contact with other music teachers because of factors such as being the only music teacher in the school or school district, long distances to travel between schools, and traveling due to itinerant teaching. Teachers received both positive and negative feedback from members of the community. Limited access to other music teachers prompted several teachers to use online music teacher communities, social media, and email to make connections and dialog with peer music teachers. Positive comments from community members and school staff were centered around school and community performances, and support for the music program, which participants indicated boosted their teaching self-efficacy beliefs by validating their teaching.

Physiological and Affective States

On the questionnaire, scores in the physiological and affective states category ranged from moderate to high positive influence. Of the four self-efficacy sources, one teacher ranked it as their greatest source influence, two teachers ranked it as their second highest influence, and two teachers ranked it as their lowest influence. During interviews,

teachers cited that stress, nervousness, frustration, positive experiences, and emotional responses contributed to their perceptions of teaching efficacy. Several teachers reported negative physiological and affective responses when teaching out-of-specialty music classes, which corresponds with existing literature when teaching out of a specialty area (see Conway, 2002; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018; Ross et al., 1999).

Stress and Nervousness

Two teachers stated that they experienced stress when teaching out-of-specialty music classes, which negatively affected their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. The lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences in teaching certain areas of music created anxiety and stress responses. For Laura, the anxiety was heightened at concert time with the pressure of tuning her elementary strings. She stated that she was “feeling like I was going to die before the concert trying to get all those freaking violins and cellos tuned.” Although Laura had expressed stress and anxiety when tuning string instruments for a performance, she selected a score of zero positive influence on two survey items: controlling nervousness while teaching and not worrying about making small mistakes while teaching students in the classroom. She stated that she was never nervous or worried about making mistakes, especially when teaching out-of-specialty music classes, as it modeled lifelong learning. Laura’s strong teaching self-efficacy belief illustrates a high level of teaching self-efficacy, where people with high self-efficacy beliefs are better situated to work through difficult tasks (see Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996). Aligning with prior research, in addition to the stress from out-of-specialty teaching, Molly reported stress from itinerant teaching and teaching an overloaded schedule with

no planning periods (Ballantyne, 2007; Rich, 2004). She stated that these stressors took a toll on her both mentally and physically, which lowered how she felt about her teaching abilities.

Three teachers stated that they were nervous when teaching their out-of-specialty music classes, which had a negative effect on their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Pajares (1996) and Bandura (1997) asserted that people who have low self-efficacy perceptions may experience stress related symptoms when facing difficult tasks. Demonstrated in the current study, Sarah experienced physical manifestations of feeling nervous when teaching the jazz band, while Sylvia and Anne expressed that they felt nervous when teaching chorus. They stated that they felt unprepared from their undergraduate experience for teaching voice or jazz. Sylvia lacked singing skills and was embarrassed when modeling singing. Sylvia also lacked experience with teaching elementary general music, and she suffered both emotionally and physically when teaching younger students. For Anne, teaching middle school chorus was challenging, and had a substantial negative impact on her teaching self-efficacy beliefs. She stated that she felt young and unable to offer any particular insights that the students did not already know. For the three teachers, nervousness from teaching out-of-specialty classes contributed to low self-efficacy perceptions.

As previously discussed, all participants reported that the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences for teaching outside of their area of focus had the greatest negative impact on their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. The lack of skills and experience affected some of the teachers emotionally and physically with stress and

nervousness, which may have further exacerbated their negative self-efficacy estimations for teaching out-of-specialty music (see Pajares, 1996). Researchers found higher stress levels in teachers to be linked to lower levels of teaching self-efficacy (Klassen & Chiu, 2010); however, Harris (2017) discovered that work and student-related stress for teachers with high self-efficacy levels may positively affect teaching self-efficacy. In another study, music student teachers stated that they were nervous and had less confidence in their teaching abilities when placed in out-of-specialty assignments rather than in their specialty music areas (Regier, 2019), which reflected the reports from several participants in the present study.

In the present study, participants indicated that they felt uncomfortable when teaching out-of-specialty music classes, which caused both emotional and physical discomfort. This reported stress and nervousness could be similar to music performance anxiety. Researchers found that collegiate vocal majors with lower self-efficacy beliefs experienced negative aspects of nervousness from performance anxiety from negative thoughts; however, students in these studies who had high self-efficacy beliefs were able to self-regulate the nervousness into a more positive performance experience (Hendricks & Lewis, 2022; Lewis, 2018). This finding aligns with studies where self-efficacy was a predictor of a person's musical performance (González et al., 2018; McCormick & McPherson, 2003, 2006; Ritchie & Williamon, 2012; see Pajares, 1996). In contrast, researchers found that students communicated lower self-efficacy perception levels with less anxiety, and higher self-efficacy perception levels when more anxious; however, the authors noted that high self-efficacy perception levels may decrease performance anxiety

levels (MacAfee & Comeau, 2020). If this is the case, then cognitive self-regulation may be a mediating factor as found in the studies by Lewis (2018) and Lewis and Hendricks (2022).

Frustration

Packed teaching schedules and spread thinly across multiple age and grade levels and music specialties, and for some teachers, other subjects, lead participants to a sense of frustration that one could not be as effective at teaching as they wanted to be (see Ballantyne, 2007; Maltas, 2004; Rich, 2004) or that they knew they were capable of being. This sense of frustration connects with the discussion in the enactive mastery experiences section of this chapter where job expectations and schedule pressures caused a dissonance between participants' self-efficacy estimations for music teaching and their constrained music teaching opportunities. Bates (2011) suggested that the busy schedules and job expectations common to many rural music teaching positions may not provide enough time to teach effectively, which may lead to frustration for the music teacher.

For example, in the current study, Anne expressed that she was frustrated with perpetually few students in band due to the small school size, making it difficult to cover all of the band parts for a typical performance (see Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzleman, 2016). Another teacher disclosed lower teaching self-efficacy from frustration and stress related to poor student behavior. This finding aligns with studies where teachers with student behavior issues indicated low self-efficacy levels for classroom management (Klassen and Chiu, 2010), whereas teachers with high self-efficacy levels reported strong skills for classroom management (Regier, 2021). Reflected

in the literature (Ballantyne, 2007; Bates, 2011; Isbell, 2005; Kuntzelman, 2016; Rich, 2004), several teachers expressed frustration due to diverse, busy, and challenging teaching schedules.

Emotional Responses to Affirming Experiences

Three teachers described affirming experiences directly related to their music teaching that positively affected their emotions related to their teaching self-efficacy beliefs. The positive experiences tended to happen when teaching in their music specialty areas. Their teaching self-efficacy beliefs, bolstered from enactive mastery experiences, created space to deeply engage in emotional states with students and within themselves during their teaching process.

Two teachers recalled having powerful positive emotional responses when creating music with students. Sarah experienced an “overwhelming feeling of joy,” while Laura shared that she had bursts of emotional tears of joy, and that she created deep emotional connections with students through the music they were playing. Laura’s connections echo the story told about students who had lost a classmate and grieved together through playing music in their orchestral ensemble. Hendricks (2018) described an experience of “authentic connection,” where authenticity and openness to vulnerability helped to create meaningful musical connections with others. In the present study, Laura’s crying in front of students when playing a dedication piece of music showed her authenticity and openness to vulnerability, which created deep emotional connections with students and empowered her belief in her teaching abilities.

Physiological and Affective States Summary

On the questionnaire, participants' scores in the physiological and affective states category were either the lowest influence or near the highest influence as a positive self-efficacy source. In general, teachers noted that stress, nervousness, frustration, positive experiences, and emotional responses contributed to their perceptions of teaching efficacy. Several teachers reported negative physiological and affective responses from stress and nervousness when teaching out-of-specialty music classes. All participants indicated that the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences for teaching outside of their music area of focus created anxiety and stress responses, and had the greatest negative impact on their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Teachers expressed frustration with small numbers of students for ensembles, overly busy schedules, and poor student behavior, all of which contributed to stress and negative perceptions of teaching efficacy. Some teachers shared that they had affirming experiences and powerful emotional responses when teaching, creating, or performing music with students when teaching in their specialty areas. These deep and meaningful connections positively affected their self-efficacy beliefs for music teaching.

Perseverance

Most participants reported lower teaching self-efficacy levels when teaching out-of-specialty music classes; however, they described two ways to persevere in their out-of-specialty teaching. First, to build teaching self-efficacy for out-of-specialty music areas, teachers used specialty area knowledge, skills, and experiences (enactive mastery experiences) to support their instruction. This was especially true for Laura, whose high

teaching self-efficacy in specialty areas empowered her teaching in out-of-specialty areas. Second, they sought to improve their out-of-specialty music teaching by proactively interacting with and observing similarly situated local or regional rural music teachers, and by attending some of the few available workshops and conferences (vicarious experience, social/verbal persuasion).

In general, participants had an overall high sense of music teaching self-efficacy to be able to demonstrate efficacious behaviors for teaching out-of-specialty music. According to Bandura (1997), acquiring knowledge and skills requires perseverance through sustained effort despite challenges and setbacks. Theoretically, positive self-efficacy perceptions strengthen resiliency and beliefs in one's capability to be successful, and in new situations, efficacious people can proactively engage with positive and constructive courses of action. Ballantyne and Zhukov (2017) suggested that pre-service programs meet students' needs for both practical skills training and in the affective dimension by supporting teacher resilience. For example, Harris (2017) found that teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs have the agency to create an environment that fosters positive relationships and learning for students, creates connections with co-workers, and supports a strong work ethic. In the present study, participants displayed perseverance by building on their previous enactive mastery experiences in specialty areas to teach out-of-specialty music classes and by building teaching skills through active interaction with similarly situated rural music teachers, thus engaging self-efficacy source input from vicarious experiences and social and verbal persuasion.

Anne demonstrated perseverance when she turned to online music teacher

communities to support her teaching when she had no opportunities to observe or to talk with other music colleagues. Sylvia used social media to connect with music teacher groups, and she proactively created opportunities to observe how other rural music teachers taught their out-of-specialty areas. Both of these teachers taught in more remote rural areas with little resources, and both had the efficacious behavior and perseverance to be proactive to meet their needs to be an effective teacher by utilizing online music teacher communities and resources.

Molly described that the positive feelings from teaching made a more powerful impression on her teaching self-efficacy perceptions than the challenges she faced, which represented a positive influence from an affective state. On the questionnaire she selected an overall average score of 97 (out of 100) for the four self-efficacy sources, which indicated a very high level of positive source influence. Because self-efficacy belief is built from cognitive processing from the positive and negative experiences of past endeavors (see Bandura, 1997), she may have already had a strong self-efficacy belief as reflected by her questionnaire responses; therefore, it may be possible that Molly was able to demonstrate a stronger sense of self-efficacy beliefs through cognitive self-regulation in order to persevere through her teaching challenges.

Sarah shared that the negative comments from parents lowered her teaching self-efficacy perceptions; however, the comments prompted her to reflect on her teaching. She reframed the negative feedback into positive courses of action to continue to develop and refine her teaching skills, which aligns with Andrade's (2022) finding that experienced music teachers used self-reflection in their teaching practice to increase their self-efficacy

perceptions. Furthermore, as previously discussed, researchers suggest that people who have a high sense of self-efficacy have the ability to regulate their thoughts to turn negative experiences into affirming ones through cognitive self-regulation (Hendricks, 2009; Lewis, 2018; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis, Weight, & Hendricks, 2022). Sarah's strong sense of self-efficacy belief enabled her to take the negative feedback (verbal/social persuasion) and to regulate her thinking to suggest that she had the agency to persevere and improve her teaching.

Commitment to Teaching in a Rural School

Participants' positive self-efficacy estimations contributed to their commitment to teaching in a rural area. Although teachers in the present study reported a number of negative influences from all four of the self-efficacy sources, their agency from high self-efficacy perceptions, as Day (2008) suggested, was fundamental to their commitment to teaching. It is known from previous studies (Ballantyne & Retell, 2020; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016) that teachers with low efficacy for instructional strategies may be more likely to experience emotional exhaustion and have low job commitment compared to teachers with high self-efficacy levels. In the present study, teachers' self-efficacy estimations remained high overall despite their challenges with out-of-specialty music teaching, which reflected the affirming responses for all participants' commitment to rural teaching.

Rural Environment Influence

Participants noted a number of positive aspects of the rural, place-based environment that contributed to their sense of commitment. Small schools and class sizes

allowed teachers to foster student relationships, cultivate personal and program support from students, parents, staff, and community members (social/verbal persuasion), and experience the favorable and joyful aspects of the rural lifestyle (physiological/affective). For example, Spring (2014, 2016) found that music teachers in a rural area could use music to build community by connecting children, the local culture and heritage, and members of the community through the school music program. Bates (2011) and Kuntzelman (2016) described that rural music teachers found it beneficial to teach in a rural area because of the small class sizes, musical autonomy, and the ability to foster long-term student/teacher and community relationships that have a positive effect on the quality of life and sense of belonging in a rural community. For participants in the current study, these rural setting features generated positive self-efficacy source influences for social and verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states, which contributed to the teachers' strong sense of commitment to teaching in a rural community. Day (2008) found that teachers who received support from principals, colleagues, and family members reported a strong sense of commitment to teaching, which highlights in the present study the relationship of social and verbal persuasion and the subsequent affirming affective states with teaching commitment. Participants indicated stable commitment levels, with their range of teaching experience being from 8 to 20 years, which aligns with Wagoner (2011), who found that commitment levels for music teachers after the first five years remained steady across time.

Commitment to Engaged Teaching

All participants in this study demonstrated a commitment to engaged teaching

through their personal investment in their students, their school, and in the community, as found in previous literature (Day, 2008; Crosswell, 2006). Furthermore, Crosswell (2006) found that teachers' commitment to engaged teaching in rural areas was higher than in non-rural settings, which aligns with the high level of commitment to engaged teaching reported by rural music teachers in the current study. Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs demonstrated a greater investment in their teaching practice (Day, 2008) and were personally invested in their students and their school (affective states) (Day, 2008; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). In the present study, teachers demonstrated a passion for teaching, were willing to invest extra time outside of the regular school day, as supported by the finding of Crosswell (2006); and cared deeply about students' academic and emotional well-being, as supported by other research (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2007; Crosswell, 2006; Harris, 2017; Regier, 2019). Because there were limited enactive mastery experiences for out-of-specialty music teaching, all study participants were proactive with seeking ongoing professional development through peer music teacher support (vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion) and workshops and conferences (enactive mastery experiences), which is reflected in studies as characteristics for engaged teaching (Crosswell, 2006; Ebmeier & Nicklaus, 1999). Influenced by the four self-efficacy sources, teachers in the current study demonstrated commitment to engaged teaching through high self-efficacy behaviors.

Community

A strong theme that emerged in this study was the positive sense of community experienced by all the participants. Teachers embraced the deep connections and positive

relationships they built with students and community members in the rural, small school environment. Aligning with scholarship by Bates (2011), all teachers in this study shared that through relationship building and knowing many students' family members, teachers cared about students' wellbeing and were mindful of students' needs. The small school size and small class sizes, typically one classroom for each grade, created an environment where teachers could foster relationships and give more attention to students (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016). Supporting these connections was the ability to see students learn and grow over nine years, from kindergarten through eighth grade, as also found in research by Kuntzelman (2016). Several teachers expressed that they considered all of the students in the school to be "my kids," fostering a sense of belonging where teachers cared about all students in a close-knit school community.

In addition to the positive relationships with students, families, and community members, all participants expressed that they felt strongly supported by the community and that there was solid support for the school music program. Aligning with past research (Bates, 2011; Kuntzelman, 2016; Spring, 2016), the teachers embraced rural living for its calm, quiet, and relaxed atmosphere where they could enjoy the rural lifestyle, the feeling of belonging, and the sense of community. Spring (2016) noted that school "music programs are often the liaison between the school and community," (p. 96), which reflects the current study where teachers described the many dynamic connections they foster with their communities.

Some teachers relayed that some rural communities face challenges in sustaining music programs due to teacher availability. Obstacles to recruiting and retaining music

teachers to rural schools, supported by the literature, included low salaries (Jimerson, 2003; Kuntzelman, 2016; Monk, 2007), proper music teaching certification (Ingersoll, 1998; Jimerson, 2003; Kuntzelman, 2016; Maltas, 2004), no high-quality performing groups in the area with which to perform (Bates, 2011), professional isolation (Ballantyne, 2007; Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Bates, 2011; Bautista et al., 2021; Conway & Christensen, 2006; Sindberg, 2011; Sindberg & Lipscomb, 2005; Spring, 2016), geographic isolation (Kuntzelman, 2016), social isolation (Ballantyne & Zhukov, 2017; Kuntzelman, 2016), and outsiders sometimes being shunned (Conway & Christensen, 2006). These challenges may cause some rural music teacher positions to be left unfilled or staffed with people who do not have proper certification for music teaching.

Fostering relationships with people in the schools and in the community was important for participants' self-efficacy beliefs, as they reported a benefit from the positive influences from verbal and social persuasion. On the questionnaire and in the interviews, teachers in the current study indicated that verbal and social persuasion was their second highest source influence, which aligns with what Andrade (2022) found for source influence strength for music teachers, and with Lewis et al. (2022), where music teachers' verbal and social persuasion had the greatest impact on college student self-efficacy perceptions.

This finding about the potential strength of verbal and social persuasion highlights the important role that verbal and social persuasion may play in promoting people's self-efficacy perceptions, especially when working and engaging with the various people in a

school and community. Furthermore, it is possible that because most teachers in the current study grew up in rural areas, they were environmentally and culturally situated through rural community experiences for living and teaching in a rural area. The enactive mastery experiences and verbal and social persuasion they experienced from rural living may be reflected in their high self-efficacy source scores for rural music teaching on the questionnaire and from interview data.

Implications

The objective of this study was to provide insight into self-efficacy sources for rural music teachers and to better understand how self-efficacy beliefs and commitment to teaching in a rural area might be developed for music teachers. Results from this study show the importance to support rural music teachers' self-efficacy for teaching through the four self-efficacy sources; perseverant action; and building connections of community with students, staff, parents, and members of the community. Below, I offer implications for music education and recommendations for research based on the findings of this study and related literature. Implications are categorized by the four sources of self-efficacy and the emergent themes of commitment and community.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

An important finding in this study was that teachers expressed that they felt unprepared for out-of-specialty music teaching assignments, resulting in lower perceived self-efficacy levels, which relates to previous research (Andrade, 2022; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018). Teachers were able to articulate that they were not aware of some of the knowledge and teaching methods for teaching out-of-specialty music. Based on the

findings of this study, it may be important for undergraduate music teacher programs, especially in states with vast rural areas, to adequately prepare students with the specific pedagogical knowledge, skills, and teaching practices (see Grieser & Hendricks, 2018) for the types of rural teaching positions typically found in the region, which could include out-of-specialty teaching, itinerant teaching, and the part-time teaching of subjects other than music. Pre-service training could include student teaching assignments that reflect the realities of rural teaching rather than placements at the nearby, well-resourced schools. To improve out-of-specialty skills, researchers have recommended that music teachers build pedagogical content knowledge through enactive mastery experiences during teacher education programs (Arnold, 2018; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018), in-service training (Grieser & Hendricks, 2018; Jenkins, 1995), and through professional development by attending conferences and collaborating with colleagues (Arnold, 2018; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018; Maltas, 2004). Professional development work could be designed by music education organizations at regional, state, and national levels to address the specific needs of rural music teachers.

Cognitive self-regulation, or the ability to mediate negative influences into positive thinking (Hendricks, 2009; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022), was likely commonly present in participants' negotiation of input from self-efficacy sources. Based on this finding, it may be important for undergraduate programs and in-service professional development, especially during the early teaching years, to include training to become familiar with how to build self-efficacy, including from the four self-efficacy source input areas, as people with high self-efficacy beliefs have the ability to regulate their

thoughts to turn negative experiences into affirming ones (Hendricks, 2009; Lewis, 2018; Lewis & Hendricks, 2022; Lewis, Weight, & Hendricks, 2022). Based on this research, metacognition related to building teaching self-efficacy may increase music teaching self-efficacy beliefs, improve student learning, and strengthen commitment levels for music teaching in rural areas.

Vicarious Experiences

Based on the findings of this study, it is possible that rural music teachers may benefit more from opportunities to observe music colleagues in rural schools during undergraduate coursework than from inauthentic peer teaching exercises or observations of larger music programs. For example, Ballantyne (2007) and Ballantyne and Zhukov (2017) advocated for pre-service teachers to be better prepared for the music teaching profession for the practical and meaningful ways that they need for early career success, which in the case of the current study, could include observations at rural schools. Participants' undergraduate training included observing music teachers at local well-resourced schools, which became unrelatable for teachers who took rural teaching positions. Vicarious experiences were the lowest reported positive self-efficacy source in the current study due to the lack of opportunity to observe similarly situated rural music teachers; therefore, greater efforts may be needed to increase observing opportunities for rural music teachers who are pre-service and new teachers, where, as Sylvia described, they can see "a real school with the real struggle." For example, as part of the training process, universities might include observations of music teachers in a rural area to better prepare pre-service teachers. Furthermore, because teachers indicated positive self-

efficacy influence from observing similarly situated rural music teachers, efforts can be taken through school mentoring and induction programs, administrators, and music teachers in rural positions to seek opportunities for observing other music teachers in similar teaching situations, no matter their location.

Verbal and Social Persuasion

The strength of verbal and social persuasion in this study shows the significance of positively building and supporting rural music teacher self-efficacy. Teachers reported a strong influence from verbal and social persuasion from peer rural music teachers and from community-wide connections. Based on the findings of this study and from literature previously cited, it may be important that school mentoring and induction programs and administrators encourage school-based professional development that is relevant to supporting music teachers' specific instructional needs through connections with similarly situated rural music teachers. Further connections through community partnerships, workshop offerings, and events sponsored through memberships in professional organizations could positively support rural music teachers' self-efficacy perceptions (see Burkett, 2011; Grieser & Hendricks, 2018). Because of the geographic distances between music teachers in rural areas, professional and social online music teacher communities including university cohorts could be helpful to access connections and garner support and feedback from other music teachers.

Physiological and Affective States

The negative influence from physiological and affective states was likely the result of a lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences for teaching out-of-specialty

music classes. As discussed, a more comprehensive pre-service preparation program and opportunities to observe and interact with other rural music teachers might promote more robust self-efficacy estimations for teaching and can better equip music teachers' self-efficacy for teaching in a rural area. The positive influences came from positive interactions and feedback from students, staff, parents, and community members, and from the authentic connections (see Hendricks, 2018) that teachers made with students. Music teachers in rural areas will likely benefit from conscientiously fostering relationships as a way to build teaching self-efficacy and associated agency (see Andrade, 2022). University programs and professional development workshops could offer insights on how to create both interpersonal connections and to engage with local networks of people across rural communities.

Commitment

In this study, participants with high self-efficacy beliefs showed high commitment levels to working in a rural area and demonstrated high levels of commitment to engaged teaching; therefore, as previously discussed in the literature (Day, 2008; Ballantyne & Retell, 2020; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016), developing and fostering teacher self-efficacy would be an important factor in supporting teacher commitment. The low self-efficacy perceptions for out-of-specialty music teaching reported by participants in the current study demonstrates the need to support rural teachers in order to strengthen commitment levels, especially through enactive mastery experiences and verbal and social persuasion.

Another factor that contributed to commitment were the positive features of the

rural, place-based environment. Rural areas may be attractive to music teachers for several reasons, including small class sizes, greater teaching autonomy (Bates, 2011; Monk; 2007), and the community investment and support given to schools (Bates, 2011; VanDeusen, 2016). People who find a rural area appealing may strengthen their commitment level from the sense of community fostered through relationship building from verbal and social persuasion, and from the affirming affective states resulting from the rural lifestyle experience.

Community

The teachers in this study developed a strong sense of community with students, staff, and community members in their small schools in rural areas. The relationships they built through their interactions with people (which included verbal and social persuasion) positively influenced their self-efficacy perceptions for music teaching. Building meaningful relationships may lead to greater feelings of belonging and sense of community, which may positively support teachers' physiological and affective states. Therefore, it may be important for pre-service programs to integrate community and relationship-building as part of the teacher training practice.

Through developing a strong sense of self-efficacy, rural music teachers may be well-situated through their relationships and connections they build to have opportunities to contribute to and become part of the rich fabric of the community in enriching artistic and cultural ways (see Jorgensen, 2010). They may also bring broad perspectives to school-based ideas, programming, and procedures that may positively impact the music program and the students (Miksza, 2013). It may be important for mentors,

administrators, and colleagues to foster self-efficacy perceptions for new music teachers through verbal and social persuasion, and to support connection-making with students, parents, parent organizations, and the community.

On another level, individual music teachers may need to redefine the concept of what one considers successful teaching when working in a rural school. The small number of students in a rural school does not align with Western music norms of large, balanced, and competitive instrumental and vocal ensembles that are promoted and valued by the music education system. Pre-service music teacher educators could be instrumental in transforming (disrupting) implicit bias of social and economic privilege through teaching critical thinking that challenges underlying assumptions in systemic norms. Furthermore, teacher educators could build thinking that fosters the care and dedication to rural communities that music teachers in this study deeply valued. As suggested by Bates (2011), rural music teachers may benefit by understanding music teaching success relative to the rural environment, such as with amateur, family, and lifelong music; popular music; music technology; and music for social interaction. I suggest that rural music teachers may realize an enduring concept of success when they co-create meaningful experiences with students through an ever-evolving definition of success that is negotiated between the teacher, learners, and community stakeholders. Doing so would contextualize music teaching success in a way that celebrates the individual, place-based strengths and values of a rural area. How a person interprets success may impact self-efficacy beliefs; therefore, it is important to create and normalize a definition and understanding of teaching success in rural music programs that reflects

the deep and individualized learning and music making that happens in rural schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

Rural music teachers may benefit from greater understanding of the four self-efficacy sources and how these sources can build and influence self-efficacy beliefs. Further research into the intersections, implications, and practices of self-efficacy development with rural situated music teachers may inform teachers, teacher educators, and administrators with knowledge and skills to improve teaching self-efficacy, student learning, and strengthen a sense of commitment. Conducting both qualitative and quantitative research in other rural regions would bring a greater perspective to the regional cultural settings and situational environmental considerations that may contribute to self-efficacy influences for rural music teachers.

Participants in this study had between 8 and 20 years of teaching experience, and all teachers described a strong commitment to rural music teaching; however, researchers found teacher self-efficacy levels to be lower in the first years of teaching (Potter, 2021; Wagoner, 2011; West & Frey-Clark, 2019). Researchers could examine rural music teachers who are in the first five years of practice, and perhaps longitudinally over a year or more, to find how self-efficacy perceptions change over time. Acknowledging that participants in the current study demonstrated overall high levels of music teaching self-efficacy and commitment, research about the self-efficacy perceptions of rural teachers who left a rural area or left the music teaching profession would bring more detail and understanding to self-efficacy source influence for rural teachers. Because of the importance of self-efficacy source influence in this study from verbal and social

persuasion and physiological and affective states, research could examine more closely these two sources as a means of understanding how to foster greater self-efficacy perceptions for music teachers in rural settings.

Finally, in this study, I found two methodological aspects that were valuable for data gathering in a rural setting particularly. First, participants had opportunities for open-ended responses as part of the questionnaire, which allowed them to give valuable insights and details about questionnaire items. Second, the focus group interview was a highlight for gathering data. All of the participants were flush with excitement for the opportunity to talk, listen, and share with other rural music teachers from their region. They asked for the session to go longer than the scheduled time, and they all wanted to meet again. There was an apparent need for these rurally isolated teachers to connect with one another and to have an opportunity to talk about important issues related to their music teaching. The focus group was a joyful expression of the desire for and the importance of connection through verbal and social persuasion and the resulting positive affective state. I recommend that methods for future studies involving rural music teachers include written response options with a questionnaire, and a focus group interview for data gathering.

Summary

People's sense of efficacy in one domain may not transfer to another subject area (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 1996); therefore, music teachers in rural settings may not have the same beliefs in their capabilities when teaching outside of their specific music specialty. In rural positions, limited enactive mastery experiences with out-of-specialty

teaching assignments, in conjunction with little opportunity for vicarious experiences and/or verbal and social persuasion from observation of and interaction with other music peers, may contribute to lowering a music teacher's self-efficacy beliefs. A teacher's self-efficacy perceptions may also affect their teaching behaviors and may affect student achievement and performance. Teachers with low self-efficacy beliefs may experience feelings of inadequacy which could affect their affective and physiological states, such as with anxiety, stress, or nervousness. Furthermore, teachers' self-efficacy beliefs may affect their perseverance in the face of obstacles and stress and may impact their commitment to teaching.

The purpose of this study was to examine how rural music teachers perceive their self-efficacy and how self-efficacy in their jobs related to their commitment to rural music teaching. I sought to investigate from what sources rural music teachers may develop their teaching and to what degree they perceive self-efficacy across their teaching domains. I also aimed to gain a better understanding of their commitment to the teaching profession and their sense of engaged teaching through the lens of self-efficacy. My intent in this study was to improve rural music teaching practice and positively affect student learning, musical performance, and commitment to teaching by helping teachers better understand the factors that contribute to self-efficacy perceptions and the role that self-efficacy beliefs play in their teaching.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

Enactive mastery experiences had the greatest positive influence on the participants' self-efficacy perceptions for teaching in their area of specialty. Likewise,

limited enactive mastery experiences negatively affected their self-efficacy perceptions for teaching out-of-specialty music. Teachers viewed the lack of adequate enactive mastery experience for out-of-specialty music teaching as an opportunity to grow through professional development work, observing other similarly situated music teachers, and finding support from peer teachers and community members (vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion). Teachers used specialty area skills and experiences to support their instruction in out-of-specialty music areas.

Teachers reported challenging workloads when teaching numerous grade levels, music subject areas, or having extra responsibilities such as itinerant teaching, extra-curricular music, or teaching other subjects. These schedules meant that the majority of classes taught were in out-of-specialty areas, where teachers did not have as much training nor self-efficacy estimation as when teaching in their specialty area. Although teachers in this study had self-efficacy beliefs that overall were high, for some teachers, due to their diverse and busy schedules, their skills and opportunities for teaching did not match their estimations of how well they could teach in their area of specialty. Furthermore, their high self-efficacy estimations did not align with what they believed their capabilities were for improving their teaching of out-of-specialty music. There was a gap between pre-service preparation and the skills expected for teaching in a rural school, which may create a sense of “praxis shock” (Ballantyne, 2007) for teachers who are new to a rural school setting.

Vicarious Experiences

Vicarious experiences were the lowest recorded source influence, which was

likely due to the lack of opportunity and access to observe other music teachers. Teachers experienced a sense of isolation from several barriers that limited their ability to observe other music teachers. These barriers included geographical distances from other music teachers, being the only music teacher in a building or school district, itinerant teaching, a demanding schedule, lacking available time due to a heavy workload, infrequent professional development opportunities, scarce music festivals, and a lack of substitute teachers, which made access to professional time difficult. Most participants stated that when feasible, observing other music teachers who were similarly situated in rural schools and who taught similar classes was the most meaningful for building teaching self-efficacy perceptions, whereas observing teachers in larger schools and music programs was not relatable.

Verbal and Social Persuasion

Verbal and social persuasion was a strong source influence for participants' teaching self-efficacy. Feedback from peer music teachers who were similarly situated in a small school and in a rural area was the most meaningful for boosting their teaching self-efficacy perceptions, whereas feedback and interactions from other music teachers who were not teaching in rural areas were not relatable. The types of verbal and social persuasion that positively influenced their self-efficacy perceptions was peer feedback that was positive, specific about the action, and constructive in a way that a teacher could grow teaching skills. Isolation was a factor that limited opportunities to dialog with other music teachers, and for some teachers, to connect with people within their own school due to scheduling, the distant physical location of the music room, and itinerant teaching.

Because of limited access to other music teachers, several teachers used online music teacher communities, social media, and email to connect and dialog with peer music teachers, which had a positive effect on their teaching self-efficacy perceptions. Teachers shared that they felt validated in their teaching when receiving positive comments from community members and school staff, which boosted their self-efficacy beliefs for teaching.

Physiological and Affective States

Teachers cited that stress, nervousness, frustration, positive experiences, and emotional responses contributed to their perceptions of teaching efficacy. Several teachers reported that stress and nervousness were negative physiological and affective responses that lowered their teaching self-efficacy perceptions when teaching out-of-specialty music classes. These negative responses stemmed from the lack of sufficient enactive mastery experiences for teaching outside of their music area of focus. Teachers expressed frustration when they could not be as effective at teaching as they wanted to be or were capable of being due to packed schedules across multiple age levels, grade levels, and music specialties. Several teachers had affirming experiences and emotional responses related to their music teaching, typically when teaching in their music specialty area, which positively influenced their self-efficacy beliefs. When teaching, creating, or performing music with students, teachers created affirming deep and meaningful connections.

Perseverance

Participants demonstrated two ways to persevere when teaching out-of-specialty

music classes, where they had lower teaching self-efficacy levels than when teaching in specialty areas. First, teachers used specialty area knowledge, skills, and experiences (enactive mastery experiences) to support their out-of-specialty instruction. Second, they improved their out-of-specialty music teaching by proactively interacting with and observing similarly situated rural music teachers when possible, and by attending some of the few available workshops and conferences (vicarious experience, social/verbal persuasion). Because teachers had an overall high sense of music teaching self-efficacy, most were able to demonstrate efficacious perseverant behaviors for teaching out-of-specialty music classes despite some teachers reporting low self-efficacy estimations for teaching out-of-specialty.

Commitment

Although teachers encountered challenges with out-of-specialty music teaching, their overall positive self-efficacy beliefs contributed to their affirming commitment to rural music teaching. Favorable aspects of the rural, place-based environment contributed to the teachers' sense of commitment through positive self-efficacy source influences for social and verbal persuasion and physiological and affective states. For example, small schools and class sizes allowed teachers to foster student relationships; the ability to cultivate personal and program support from students, parents, staff, and community members; and the opportunity to experience the beneficial and joyful aspects of the rural lifestyle. Teachers also demonstrated a commitment to engaged teaching through high-self-efficacy behaviors, such as showing a passion for teaching, investing extra time outside of the regular school day, being personally invested in their students' academic

and emotional well-being, and seeking ongoing professional development through peer music teacher support and workshops and conferences.

Community

Participants embraced the positive sense of community through the deep connections and relationships they built with students and community members in the rural, small school environment. Fostering relationships with people in the schools and in the community was important for participants' self-efficacy beliefs, as they benefited from the positive influences from verbal and social persuasion. Small class sizes and a close-knit school community fostered a sense of belonging, while the calm, quiet, and relaxed atmosphere of the rural setting made for a pleasingly suitable place to live and work. Some rural communities may face challenges with sustaining music programs due to teacher availability, with obstacles that may include low salaries, proper music teaching certifications, professional, geographic, and social isolation, and outsider status.

Implications

Results from this study show the importance of supporting rural music teachers' self-efficacy for teaching through the four self-efficacy sources, perseverant action, and building connections with students, staff, parents, and members of the community. Based on the findings of this study and previously cited literature, it is important to adequately prepare pre-service music teachers with the specific knowledge, skills, and teaching practices for rural teaching positions typically found in rural areas, which could include out-of-specialty teaching, itinerant teaching, and the part-time teaching of subjects other than music. This training could include student teaching assignments that reflect the

realities of rural teaching rather than placements at nearby, well-resourced schools. Enactive experiences through comprehensive skills training can better equip music teachers' self-efficacy for teaching in a rural area, and therefore improve teachers' self-efficacy estimations for teaching music areas that may be considered to be out-of-specialty.

Due to issues of rural isolation, rural music teachers may benefit from more vicarious experience opportunities to observe similarly situated music colleagues in rural schools. The positive influence from verbal and social persuasion in this study demonstrates the importance of supporting music teachers' instructional needs by facilitating connections with similarly situated music teachers through school mentoring and induction programs, administrative support, community partnerships, and school-based professional development. Creating authentic connections by fostering relationships with students, staff, parents, and community members may also positively influence teachers' self-efficacy perceptions for rural teaching. During pre-service training and the early teaching years, teachers could be trained to become familiar with how to build self-efficacy beliefs from the four self-efficacy source input areas, as metacognition may increase music teaching self-efficacy, improve student learning, and strengthen commitment levels for music teaching in rural areas. People who find a rural area appealing may benefit from the sense of community fostered through relationship building from verbal and social persuasion, and from the affirming affective states resulting from the rural lifestyle experience. Rural music teachers may realize an enduring concept of success when they co-create a definition of success that is negotiated

between the teacher, learners, and community stakeholders, which would contextualize music teaching success in a way that celebrates the individual, place-based strengths and values of a rural area.

Conclusion

The primary focus of this study was to explore the role of self-efficacy sources in informing the self-beliefs, teaching practices, and commitment of rural music teachers. This research confirms previous music self-efficacy scholarship and builds upon previous studies by investigating the ways in which self-efficacy beliefs might be developed for rural music teachers. The results of this study show that the four primary self-efficacy sources played a major role in influencing participants' self-efficacy perceptions for both specialty and out-of-specialty music teaching. The strengths of the participants' perceived self-efficacy enabled them to persevere through music teaching challenges, especially those with out-of-specialty music teaching, which contributed to their teaching resilience and their commitment to teaching in a rural area.

Developing rural music teacher self-efficacy beliefs may be an important tool for supporting and strengthening the teaching practice for music teachers in rural areas. Helping music teachers to understand self-efficacy development and the cognitive processing of the four self-efficacy sources may motivate them to persist and improve their teaching practice through perseverant action, improve student learning, and strengthen commitment levels for music teaching in rural areas. Furthermore, fostering relationships and building connections of community with students, staff, parents, and members of the community may be important to develop rural music teachers' self-

efficacy beliefs. Rural music teachers may discover an enduring concept of teaching success when they co-create meaningful experiences with students and community members that celebrates the individual strengths and values of a rural area.

APPENDIX A: Study Information and Survey
Rural Maine Music Teacher Study

Dear (Participant Name),

My name is Ed Michaud, and I am a DMA candidate at Boston University. I am performing a research study about rural Maine music teachers and their beliefs and commitment to their teaching. I am hoping you may be willing to participate in this study in order to help music teachers and music educators better understand how to foster positive self-beliefs and commitment to music teaching. The study includes an online survey (approximately 25 minutes), one group video interview (75 minutes), two journal prompts (1 page), and one individual video interview (60 minutes).

Clicking the “Agree” link below confirms your agreement to participate in the study and takes you to the survey web page. Once you have completed the survey, I will send further information about the remaining portions of the study.

Your study participation is voluntary. You may pass on any question and you may withdraw from the study at any time. Your identity and responses will be kept confidential and pseudonyms will be used for names and places in reporting to ensure confidentiality.

The only anticipated risks from participating in this study are that you may not feel comfortable answering some of the questions, and the possible loss of confidentiality, especially regarding the focus group interview. One potential benefit you may gain from participating in this study is a better understanding of your perceived sense of self-efficacy related to your teaching practice. One possible benefit society may gain from this study is a better understanding of the ways in which self-efficacy may contribute to more effective music teaching, leading students to more meaningful experiences and greater success with music in their lives.

I will share the study results with you after completing the data analysis.

(Link: Agree to Participate and Survey)

You may contact me with any questions by email at [REDACTED] or you may also contact my dissertation advisor Dr. Karin S. Hendricks at khen@bu.edu. You may obtain further information about your rights as a research subject by calling the Boston University CRC IRB Office at (617)-358-6115.

Sincerely, ~Ed Michaud [REDACTED]

Study Title: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy: A Case Study
IRB Protocol Number: 5750X
Consent Form Valid Date: 25 November 2020

APPENDIX B: Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey

Rural Maine Music Teacher Study

Dear (Name of Participant),

Thank you for filling out the Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey. Please respond to each statement based on your sense of self-efficacy—your current belief of your level of music teaching ability and experience. Indicate the measure of your belief by selecting a number between 0 (strongly do not believe) and 100 (strongly believe). Be mindful as you consider each selection, thinking about all of the classes that you teach.

Enactive Mastery Experiences

1. I have had positive music teaching experiences in the past.
2. I have had positive experiences teaching large ensembles.
3. I have had positive experiences teaching small groups or individual lessons.
4. I have had positive experiences teaching simple music.
5. I have had positive experiences teaching complicated music.
6. I have overcome teaching challenges through hard work and practice.
7. I have used a preparation routine to help me prepare for my teaching.

Vicarious Experiences

8. I have improved my teaching skills by watching other skilled music teachers, who are similar to me in some way, teach well.
9. I have improved my music teaching by watching other teachers teach well.
10. I have used other music teachers as models to improve my teaching skills.

11. I have compared my teaching skills with those of other teachers who are similar in teaching ability as me.
12. I have watched other music teachers with similar music and teaching ability as I teach a piece of music, and then decided whether I could, or could not, teach that same piece of music.

Verbal/Social Persuasion

13. My friends think I am a good teacher.
14. Members of my family believe I am a good teacher.
15. My principal has complimented me on my teaching.
16. People have told me that my professional development effort has improved my teaching skills.
17. I have received positive feedback on teaching evaluations.
18. I have met or exceeded other people's expectations of being a good teacher.
19. I do not worry about making small mistakes while teaching.

Physiological and Affective States

20. Teaching music makes me feel good.
21. I enjoy teaching music.
22. I am learning, or have learned, to control my nervousness when teaching a lesson.
23. I do not worry about making small mistakes when teaching a lesson.
24. I have positive memories of most, or all, of my past teaching experiences.

Written Responses

Please select one item from each section (enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal/social, and physiological/affective) and write about the reasons why you selected your particular score for that item.

Enactive Mastery Experiences: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Vicarious Experiences: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Verbal/Social Persuasion: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Physiological and Affective States: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Next, please select two of your responses to share aloud, if you choose, during the focus group interview. Your responses will serve as discussion topics for the group interview. Mark the two responses above that you may wish to share and make a copy for your reference.

Following the completion of this survey, I will be sending an email to invite you to continue with the study with follow-up interviews. Please provide your name so I may connect you with your survey responses when we meet. Thank you for filling out this survey!

~Ed Michaud

Name _____

APPENDIX C: Focus Group Interview Format

Rural Maine Music Teacher Study

Dear (Participant),

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the focus group interview with other music educators from your area. Before the interview takes place, please read through this focus group interview format and review your two saved responses from the Music Teacher Self-Efficacy Survey, and if you choose, you may read them aloud as discussion topics when we meet for the group conversation.

Thank you,

~Ed Michaud

Part 1: Overview

Welcome to the interview and introduction of the researcher.

Overview of the topic:

- We are here to share thoughts about your beliefs in your music teaching abilities.

Guidance for a productive discussion:

- Be mindful of others' perspectives.
- Be mindful to let others finish speaking.
- I would like to hear from everyone to share their perspectives.
- We will take about 5 minutes for each written response shared to discuss as a group.
- I ask that comments made during the interview not be shared outside of this session. Be as open as you can with your discussion, yet also be mindful that I am not able to guarantee confidentiality with a group discussion.
- What other guidelines may be helpful to ensure your and everyone's comfort?

Part 2: Opening

Please introduce yourself and share:

- How many years have you taught music?

- How many years have you taught in rural schools?
- How many years have you taught in your current position?
- What other teaching positions have you had?
- What are your teaching assignments, including classes, subjects, and grades?

Part 3: Sharing of Written Responses

From the self-efficacy survey, you selected one item from each section (enactive experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal/social, and physiological and affective) and wrote about the reasons why you selected a particular score for that item.

Please select two of your responses to share aloud, if you choose, during the focus group interview. Your responses will serve as discussion topics for the group interview.

Enactive Mastery Experiences: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Vicarious Experiences: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Verbal/Social Persuasion: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Physiological and Affective State: Item Number _____. I plan to share this topic.

Part 4: Highlights

What have been the most important elements of today's discussion?

APPENDIX D: Individual Interview

Rural Maine Music Teacher Study

Dear (Participant),

These are the questions for the individual interview. Before the interview takes place, please read through the questions so you may think ahead of time about some examples to share when we speak. I look forward to our discussion!

Sincerely,

~Ed Michaud

Enactive Mastery Experiences

- What is your most memorable teaching experience?
- Can you think of an experience that made you feel less confident in your teaching abilities?
- Can you think of an experience that made you feel more confident in your teaching abilities?

Vicarious Experiences

- In what ways has observing other music teachers influenced your teaching skills?

Social/Verbal Persuasion

- How do teaching evaluations by your principal, both positive and critical, affect your teaching? In what ways have what peer music teachers said affected your teaching skills or process?
- What types of feedback have the greatest impact on your teaching?

- What types of statements have peer teachers, family, friends, and community members said that boost or lower how you feel about your teaching capabilities?

Physiological and Affective States

- Can you give examples of having emotional or physical reactions directly related to your teaching process? For example, feeling embarrassed, perhaps your face flushing, not knowing an answer to a student's question; feeling nervous when teaching music skills that are not your forte; or moments of joy when something you are teaching goes amazingly well or brings you to another place emotionally.

Out-of-Specialty Music Teaching and Teaching Commitment

- For you, what is challenging about teaching music in a rural area?
- How well were you prepared for your teaching role in a rural school?
- How effective do you feel in meeting the teaching expectations of your music program and music teaching position?
- How effective do you think you are when teaching “out-of-specialty” music classes, for example if you play a band/orchestral instrument (your specialty) and you also teach choir (not your specialty)?
- What type of supports do you have for you and your music program? What types of supports would you find helpful to you?
- What do you enjoy about teaching music in a rural area?
- How committed are you to teaching in a rural area?

Is there was anything else you wish to add from the focus group discussion?

APPENDIX E: Journal Writing
Rural Maine Music Teacher Study

Dear (Participant),

Please think about memorable experiences that you have had as you consider and write about the following themes. Write up to a half of a page for each topic.

Please detail your thoughts about ‘out-of-specialty’ music teaching experiences. Out-of-specialty refers to teaching music classes different than your area of focus, for example a trumpet player who teaches strings. Reflect on both a notably positive and a difficult/challenging experience of your choosing.

Please detail your thoughts about your commitment to teaching music in a rural area. Reflect on both notably positive and difficult/challenging experiences that influence your level of commitment.

I appreciate you sharing your responses via email when completed.

Thank you!

~Ed Michaud

APPENDIX F: Teaching Position at the Time of the Study

Teaching Position at the Time of Study

	General Music	Beginner Band	Band	Chorus	Other Teaching Responsibilities	Extra-Curricular	Other Jobs or Activities
Anne	Grades Pre-K-8	Grade 4	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8			Community Band; Karate Student
Elsie	Grades K-4	Grade 4	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Gifted & Talented Teacher 20%	Middle School (MS) Jazz Band; MS Show Choir	Community Dixieland Band
Laura	Grades K-4	Grade 4	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Assistant Principal	MS Jazz Band	
Molly	-	Grades 9-12 Beginner Band	Grades 9-12 Band	Grades 9-12 Chorus	Guitar Class	Acapella Choir, Jazz Ensemble	Accompanist for Choirs and Shows
Sarah	Grades K-3	Grade 4	Grades 5-8	Grades 5-8	Grade 8 Guitar	Middle School (MS) Jazz Band; MS Show Choir	Community Choir; Church Choir; Assists with small jobs for the family business
Sylvia	Grades 5-8	Grade 5	Grade 6 Band; Grades 7 & 8 Band	Grades 6-8	Gifted & Talented Teacher 20%; Advisor- Civil Rights Team		Board Member of the State Music Educators Association; Community Concert Bands (Board Member and Performer); Community Orchestra (Board Member and Performer); Community Dixieland Band; Community & School Pit Orchestras

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