

Mountain Lake Colloquium, 2017

Presentation Proposal

Under Review

“You Can Do It”! Addressing Pre-Service Music Teachers’ Self-Efficacy To Implement Informal Learning Practices in General Music Methods Courses

Informal learning is culturally relevant and developmentally appropriate for adolescents (Powell, Vasil, & Weiss, in press). Thus, interest in the integration of informal music learning practices in educational settings has increased. Researchers have investigated how informal learning occurs in secondary music classrooms (Allsup, 2003; Green, 2008; Kastner, 2012; Vasil, 2015) as well as university settings (Beaumont, 2015; Powell, 2011). Five key characteristics of informal learning are: (1) learners choose the music themselves, (2) music is learned aurally, through listening to and imitating recordings, (3) learning takes place in friendship groups, (4) skills and knowledge are acquired through self-study or peer teaching, and (5) learning is integrated; learners are performers, composers, improvisers, and listeners, with an emphasis on creating music (Green, 2008; Wright, 2011).

While informal learning practices are being integrated into the university setting, it has been difficult for graduating music education majors to incorporate these techniques into their classrooms. Most preservice music teachers have learned formally and are uncomfortable implementing informal practices (West & Silveira, 2016). A practical way of framing this difficulty is through the construct of self-efficacy. Bandura’s (2001) social cognitive theory supports agentic views of human behavior, and self-efficacy is a major construct that emerged in this line of research. Self-efficacy is a judgement about one’s ability to complete a task. Beliefs about what one can and cannot do often dictates behavior (Pajares, 2003), and in turn, can influence environments (e.g., structure of learning environment) and behavior (e.g., skill level) across a variety of domains.

Changes of teacher self-efficacy stem from four primary sources: enactive mastery experiences (completing a task), vicarious experience (watching others complete a task), verbal and non-verbal persuasion (encouragement or deterrents), and physiological reactions (anxiety) (Bandura, 1986). By addressing these sources of self-efficacy in the general music methods classroom, we can raise our students’ competence beliefs to incorporate informal learning practices with their future students. As such, this presentation will address several best practices to potentially increase teaching self-efficacy for informal learning practices of pre-service music education majors in general music methods courses.

Christen Dillon is a PhD music education candidate at the University of Kentucky. Research interests include self-efficacy, learning theory, Orff Schulwerk, Dalcroze, music therapy, and music teacher education.

Martina Vasil is Assistant Professor of Music Education at the University of Kentucky. Research interests include the informal music learning practices, popular music, secondary general music, Orff Schulwerk, and culturally relevant pedagogy.