Enhancing Pre-service Teachers' Self-Efficacy for Teaching Diverse Learners: Capturing Young Students' Attention through a Read-a-loud and Music

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Abstract: The sense of efficaciousness for engaging diverse learners was examined with twenty-four pre-service teachers concurrently enrolled in a junior-level Creative Arts methods course and a field experience course with placements in K-2 general education classrooms. The pre-service teachers participated in music and literacy activities in their university class, then planned and implemented standards-based music activities in literacy lessons with their young students. In this case study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, including a teacher self-efficacy scale, an attitude survey, written reflections, interviews, open-ended responses, and lesson plans. Results demonstrated a significant increase in the pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in pre-post rating analysis and indicated that this project contributed to their efficacy in engaging and meeting the needs of diverse learners in elementary classrooms. The pre-service teachers demonstrated proactive classroom management and reflected upon their students' increased focus in class. The pre-service teachers indicated that their success with these types of projects encouraged them to plan for similar implementation with their future diverse learners; therefore, providing the potential to positively impact their future performance. Additionally, this project emanated Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) by encouraging self-reflection; examining and applying effective teaching strategies; and advancing the field of teacher education.

Keywords: self-efficacy, pre-service teachers, creative arts, diverse learners, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).

Introduction

Teacher preparation programs are tasked with equipping teacher candidates with the skills and knowledge they need to develop efficacy in their abilities for instructing students, meeting the needs of diverse learners, and managing their classrooms. High efficacy has been shown to contribute positively to candidates' attitudes and their effectiveness in instruction and effort (Bandura, 1997; Bodur et al., 2012; Tschamannen-Moran, et al., 1998; Yost, 2006). *"What effect does integrating music in a read-aloud have on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy for meeting the diverse needs of K-2 students?"* The impetus for this research question is for the instructor to examine the teaching and learning in her classroom, and enhance pre-service teachers' experience by (a) equipping them to take skills gained from a creative arts class and apply them within their practicum experience, (b) providing them the opportunity for an increasingly richer and meaningful field experience through arts integration, (c) drawing from them a more critical level of reflection, and (d) stimulating within them a higher sense of efficaciousness for addressing diverse learners as they journey through their Early Childhood Education (ECED) program.

Pre-service teachers in our program typically need much support in the skills of identifying and addressing the needs of diverse learners in their lesson planning and implementation. According to a study conducted within the program (Arrington & Lu, 2014), our pre-service teachers frequently

pinpointed the following two diversities as challenging in their English Language Arts (ELA) classes in their first practicum experience: (a) attention or focus, and (b) auditory processing. This study focuses on these two areas of diversity. These two weaknesses, along with an influx of English Language Learners (ELLs), contributed to the pre-service teachers' concerns about meeting their students' needs.

In this study, pre-service teachers who were enrolled in a Creative Arts course had the opportunity to address the attention and focus of young learners in a Kindergarten, first- or second-grade English Language Arts classroom by sharing a read-aloud with music integration. The reflections on this experience with their young learners showed a positive impact on their ability to develop teaching strategies that meet the literacy needs of diverse learners and on their self-efficacy in teaching in this area. The use of this strategy resulted in an increased level of engagement and interaction of students in their lessons, thus improving teaching and learning in their Creative Arts Methods course and the practicum course (Methods I) in which they were concurrently enrolled.

The teacher/researcher employed these steps in the project: (a) determined the need in her classroom for equipping pre-service teachers with a variety of strategies for engaging and meeting the needs of their young learners in the ELA classroom, particularly those in focusing and processing; (b) conducted a study to determine the effectiveness of the applied pedagogy, implementing music activities with a read-aloud; and (c) disseminated recommendations for practice. Therefore, the progression of this project is reflective of Hutchings' and Cambridge's (1999) definition of *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (SoTL): "…problem posing about an issue of teaching or learning, study of the problem through methods appropriate to disciplinary epistemologies, applications of results to practice, communication of results, self-reflection, and peer review" (as cited in McKinney, 2007, p. 6).

The Literature

Music, Literacy, and Diverse Learners

Teacher preparation programs are challenged with empowering candidates with the tools necessary for coping with encounters, such as meeting the needs of diverse learners, they will face throughout their practicum experiences and as they begin teaching in their own classrooms. Using music activities is one way to involve diverse learners in lessons, and the use of music has benefits that contribute to literacy development in young students.

Research has demonstrated that music contributes to focused attention and enhances auditory processing. For example, Bayless (as cited in Wolf, 1986) contributes that focused listening provides students the opportunity to attend to specific sounds—a basic of music learning. Additionally, these focused opportunities using a variety of music, are essential in the development of auditory abilities and provide "opportunities for children to determine the music they like and to make new connections with sounds they have never heard before" (Isbell & Raines, 2013, p. 194). According to Richards (2020), well-planned chants with a read-aloud have been shown to help students remember concepts, learn vocabulary, and capture their attention and imagination. Additionally, their rhythmic acuity can be developed; and such skills as sequence, auditory memory, and expressive language may be enhanced.

According to the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS, 2012), literacy instruction is the responsibility of all content areas, which includes music education. Similar themes are shared between CCSS for English Language Arts (ELA) and the National Standards for Music Education (NAfME, 2014). Some of the commonalities between these sets of standards include demonstrating independence, having strong content knowledge, comprehending, critiquing, and understanding other

perspectives and cultures (Weidner, 2013). Additionally, other learning-to-read skills correlate with music literacy skills. These include phonological awareness, sight identification, orthographic awareness, and fluency (Hansen & Bernstorf, 2002). Coleman (n.d.), one of the authors of the Common Core State Standards, developed the *Guiding Principles for the Arts* and made connections between these principles and literacy, such as in principle one: "Studying works of arts as training in close observation across the arts disciplines and preparing students to create and perform in the arts" (para. 2). The connection to literacy standards includes sustained observation and attention to detail in reading. In both of these areas, it is recommended that the curriculum is designed to enable students to develop observation and analytical skills as part of their college and career readiness.

Students with diverse learning styles, specifically in literacy, can be motivated through music. Chants are fun tools, and students at all levels of language acquisition can benefit from their use (Tavil & Isisag, 2009). Furthermore, the students benefit from being actively involved in the musical rhythms, memorizing and pronouncing words from repetitious use of vocabulary; and being able to participate with others (Leah, 2016). Heydon et. al (2017) noted that kindergarten students improved their oral language and literacy when participating in musical activities with senior adults in an intergenerational and collaborative literacy project. Similarly, third graders' reading and writing skills, along with their self-efficacy for completing tasks, improved as a result of engaging in a service-learning music project with local nursing home residents (Arrington, 2015). The researchers in each of these interactive studies attributed students' increased motivation and self-efficacy to drawing upon multiple modes of communication (singing, gestures, speaking) and not simply to print literacies.

Cornett (2015) reminds us that music is a form of communication and can provide students with the opportunity to understand and express their thoughts and feelings. Listening to and making music can bridge the cognitive, emotional, and aesthetic processes of varied learners. Cornett (2015) adds that Arts Integration (AI) teachers address diverse learning styles by using a combination of language arts and music to motivate, deliver content, and provide students with a wide range of opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

Asaridou and McQueen (2013) suggest that both the development of music and speech are *shared* – a "mutual interaction across domains" (p. 1). In recent brain research, musical rhythm has been shown to positively affect auditory processing and speech/music perception (Skoe & Kraus, 2012; Tierney & Kraus, 2013). Saffran (2002) conducted experiments with infants (head-turning) and adults (tone words) and concluded that lullabies and children's play songs, with their simple structure, are crucial to the acquisition of tones and language. Using music and print with children's song-based books has been shown to support children's oral language and early print literacy concepts, and incorporating musical activities with rhythm and pitch has been shown to support reading fluency (Gabriel & Countryman, 2014; Montgomery & Smith, 2014). Finally, Bernstorf (2013) reminds us that good music literacy can "provide the very same benefits as those who teach language reading, plus the enjoyment of an arts experience" (p. 2).

Teacher Self-Efficacy

In explaining the concept of self-efficacy, Bandura (1994) offers, "One's self-judgments of personal capabilities to initiate and successfully perform specified tasks at designated levels, expend greater effort, and persevere in the face of adversity" (p. 71). Later, Bandura (1997), adds "…beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p. 3). Perceived self-efficacy is not concerned with the amount of skill one has, but with what one believes can be done with what they have.

Four determinants of self-efficacy include (a) experience, or actual performance, (b) modeling, or vicarious experiences, (c) social persuasions, or verbal persuasion, and (d) physiological factors, or

cues (Bandura, 1997). Bandura asserts that experiences (referred to as Enactive Mastery Experiences) have the most influence on self-efficacy. For example, successes contribute to the building of self-efficacy, and failures may undermine it. Bandura (1997) further offers that difficulties can actually provide opportunities to learn how to turn failure into success. Pajares (2005) avers that this determinant of efficacy in life choices is critical for college-level students due to the many academic choices available to them; they will most likely participate in courses and activities in which they believe they can succeed and may avoid those that they perceive as beyond their confidence level.

Several other contributions to efficaciousness are noted, such as motivation, preparedness, and attitude. Tschamannen-Moran, et al. (1998) reported that pre-service teachers' self-efficacy tends to be established early on and becomes resistant to change. They further recommend that more opportunities for working with the students in a variety of contexts and levels of difficulty should be given to teaching candidates. Efficaciousness is affected by one's motivation, which further affects achievement and the ability to achieve and persevere (Tschamannen-Moran et al., 1998; Zimmerman et al., 1992). Being properly prepared contributes to pre-service teachers' efficacy in teaching. Berke and Colwell's (2004) survey confirmed that pre-service teachers' comfort level with teaching music in the elementary classroom increased significantly after participating in several assignments that integrated music activities into their curriculum. They further concluded that pre-service teachers' confidence in promoting the use of music in their classrooms is affected by their instructors' use of meaningful and appropriate activities to bolster their preparedness. Attitude also affects teachers' efficacy. Kaleli (2020) administered a Teacher Attitude Scale and an Individual Teacher effectiveness Scale developed by Turkish researchers Kahrmanoglu et al., and Sunbul & Arslan (as cited in Kaleli, 2020). Their findings demonstrate a positive relationship between teacher attitudes and self-efficacy beliefs.

Music integration in the setting of this study, alongside its emphasis on reflection, is a model that coincides beautifully with this insight provided by Yost (2006):

> Programs have the capacity to ensure that coursework is tied to field experiences and that critical reflection is interwoven throughout the educational experience…reflection requires real-life dilemmas and requisite problem-solving skills… Resilient teachers are those that can think deeply, problem solve and feel confident in their ability to meet the needs of their students. This leads to high levels of self-efficacy, which in turn leads to greater persistence and risk-taking (p. 74).

With findings consistent with Yost's conclusions, Bruinsma and Jansen (2010) assert that teacher self-efficacy had a positive correlation to the time the pre-service teachers intended to stay in the profession. Additionally, in a study of pre-service teachers in practicum courses (Bodur et al., 2012), teacher self-efficacy was reported higher among the pre-service teachers enrolled in the second-level practicum course than for those participating in the first-level practicum course. The researchers concluded that this could be related to their more intense level of involvement with their students at the second level of practicum experience. "The higher efficacious teachers appear, the more competent and confident they demonstrate in teaching practice" (Bodur et al., 2012, p.6). The goal of this project was to have the pre-service teachers more involved with their students, and to provide them with application-to-practice opportunities in their practicum classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Vignoli et al., 2018); thus, contributing to a higher level of efficacy.

Methodology

Participants

In this study, the terms pre-service teacher and candidates are used interchangeably; and the terms instructor and teacher/researcher are used interchangeably. The participants in this study included 24 second-semester Early Childhood Education (ECED) pre-service teachers enrolled in a P-5 Creative Arts Methods course. These pre-service teachers were second-semester juniors; 23 were female and 1 male; all, except one female, were of traditional college age. They were concurrently enrolled in a practicum course (Methods I) with their first teaching field experience placed in a Kindergarten, first, or second grade (K-2) classroom in a Partner School (public elementary school within a 60-mile radius of our university campus). In this experience, they spent approximately 200 hours during the semester observing their Clinical Supervisor (host teacher), writing plans for and teaching three stand-alone lessons, and planning/teaching a 5-day unit of instruction to be evaluated by the University Supervisor (instructor/professor supervising the field experience). They were also enrolled concurrently in a Children's Literacy class. Throughout the semester, the instructors in this block of courses (Creative Arts, Children's Literacy, and Methods I) encouraged the candidates to make connections across their courses, shared resources, and collaborated to support the pre-service teachers in creating developmentally appropriate, standards-based ELA lessons to implement in their practicum classes.

The instructor of the course earned a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction and is an Associate Professor in the Early Childhood Education program—a Bachelor-level program for training and certifying pre-service teachers for Pre-K to Fifth Grade (P-5). Prior to teaching full-time in higher education, she taught in a public school system at the elementary level—in both the elementary general classroom and the elementary music classroom; and she earned National Board Certification.

The course activities of P-5 Creative Arts Methods included the pre-service teachers studying the standards and elements of each area of the arts (Visual Arts, Music, Dance, and Theatre), participating in creative arts activities in class, and developing activities in the arts that could be incorporated into lessons in their elementary classrooms. The instructor of the Creative Arts methods course was awarded a mini-grant to develop a Creative Arts Resource Center. This repository consisted of various musical instruments, manipulatives, copies of children's literature titles, and other supplies for use in the Creative Arts classroom on campus. These resources were also made available for checkout by the candidates to use when they implemented their lessons in their practicum classrooms.

In this project, candidates were involved extensively in a special musical activity with the book *Tacky the Penguin* (Lester & Munsinger, 1988). In the Creative Arts class, the pre-service teachers were "students" involved in creating instrumental or vocal soundscapes, chants, and motions for characters and events in the book. Several characters had specific instrument sounds assigned to be played when their name was called in the story (e.g., a different bell pitch for each of the companion penguins, and a tambourine for Tacky); several groups of characters had chants assigned for their actions, which were accompanied with rhythms on drums; and some groups of characters had movements created to demonstrate their actions (diving, marching, etc.) during the story. Students practiced their instrument, chant, or action; and they were obligated to pay attention throughout the story for their specific cues. This activity, created and published by the teacher/researcher, has also been presented at educator workshops for both music educators and general classroom teachers (Arrington, 2013).

In preparation for the project, the teacher/researcher instructed candidates on the proper use of the instruments and other materials, demonstrated appropriate strategies for introducing these materials to young students, and involved everyone in the Creative Arts class in the *Tacky the Penguin* activity described above. The pre-service teachers had an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss their

experience after the activity by asking questions, submitting concerns, and making applications to other children's literature selections. This discourse focused on the two needs of diverse ELA learners previously identified: (a) attention/focus, and (b) auditory processing (Arrington & Lu, 2014). After participating in this and a variety of other similar musical activities with children's literature, the candidates were required to develop and submit their own standards-based, music-integrated read-aloud activities. The instructor provided feedback and approved the activities; then, each candidate included their approved activity in a lesson plan to implement during an ELA unit taught in their K-2 field placement classroom.

The candidates selected appropriate, endorsed children's literature titles (Cornett, 2015) for their read-aloud, in which they incorporated their approved music activity. See Figure 1 for titles used in this project.

Title	Author, Illustrator, Date, Publisher
Thanksgiving at Our House	Hallinan, P. (2006). Worthy.
Shake dem Halloween Bones	Nikola-Lisa W. & Reed, M. (Ill.). (1997). Houghton Mifflin Co.
Froggy Gets Dressed	London J. & Remkiewicz, F. (Ill.). (2014). Penguin Group.
The Little Old Lady Who Was Not Afraid of Anything	Williams, L. & Loyd, M (Ill.). (1986). Harper Collins.
Pete the Cat: The Wheels on the Bus	Dean, J. (2013). Harper Collins.
Tacky the Penguin	Lester, H. & Munsinger, L. (Ill.). (1988). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
Dooby Dooby Moo	Cronin, D. & Lewin, B. (2006). Atheneum Books.
The Shy Scarecrow	Packard, M. & Huang, B. (Ill.). (2001). Scholastic.
The Napping House	Wood, A. & Wood, D. (2014). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
Click, Clack, Moo: Cows that Type	Cronin, D. & Lewin, B. (Ill.). (2006). Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers.

Figure 1. Children's Literature Titles Used in the Project

An IRB proposal was submitted for an expedited review and written permission was secured from Dr. Bandura at Stanford University to administer his Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (See Appendix) in this study. The IRB proposal stipulated that only K-2 students who had photo/video permission on file in their school setting could be represented in the pre-service teachers' presentations and that no identifying information would be shared about the schools or students.

Research design

Multiple methods were used for data collection and analysis in this case study. Quantitative data consisted of the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Bandura, 2006) as a pre- and post-test measurement; a beginning and endpoint Likert rating scale which contains five items from the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale related to addressing diverse learners' needs; and an attitude survey rating the pre-service teachers' perceptions during the implementation of creative arts activities in their classrooms. Data

were entered into SPSS, and independent samples t-tests were conducted to determine the differences between the candidates' pre- and post-test scores, their rating scale scores, and their attitude survey results.

Qualitative data consisted of written reflections, interviews, instructors' field notes and feedback, Creative Arts integrative lesson plans, and open-ended responses from the attitude survey. The pre-service teachers were encouraged to share artifacts from their experiences (e.g., photos of them engaging in their activities, and sample charts/graphs) to demonstrate the outcomes of their lessons. NVivo software was used to highlight and organize the data in order to reveal recurring themes. The quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to capture different dimensions of the experience and perception of the pre-service teachers during the project.

Results

Quantitative Results

The *Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale* (Bandura, 2006) was administered pre- and post-project. Quantitative results revealed a significant difference between the pre- and post-scale general teacher self-efficacy ratings (see Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1. Pre- and Post-Scale Statistics.

	N	Pre-test		Post-test	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
SE Scale	24	6.33	0.78	6.69	0.88

Table 2. Pre- and Post-S.E. Scale Ratings.

	Paired Differences			t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pre- Post-Assessment	-.36	.81	.17	-2.18	23	.04

P<.05

Additionally, five statements (# 5- #9) on the survey were specifically related to their self-efficacy for meeting the needs of diverse learners and included: (#5) getting through to the most difficult student, (#6) promoting learning when there is lack of support from the home, (#7) keeping students on task on difficult assignments, (#8) increasing students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons, and (#9) motivating students who show low interest in schoolwork. The candidates demonstrated a significant increase in efficacy for item #8, increasing students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons. (See Table 3.)

Table 3. Comparison of Means – S.E. Meeting Diverse Needs.

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2 tailed)
5	-.04	1.23	.25	-.17	23	.870
6	-.29	1.00	.20	-1.43	23	.166
7	-.04	1.33	.27	-.15	23	.880
8	-.63	.92	.19	-3.32	23	.003
9	-.08	1.02	.21	.40	23	.692

P<.05

The pre-service teachers also rated their attitude toward the effects of implementing their music-based activities. In some methods courses, candidates only have the opportunity to develop and demonstrate their lesson activities in class with their peers. In the Creative Arts class, they were fortunate to have opportunities to share their activities with their peers and to share with young students during their field experience in their concurrent practicum class. First, they compared the sharing of their activities with peers in class versus implementing the activities with their K-2 students, and then they rated the level of the activities' contribution to their (a) efficacy for meeting the needs of diverse learners in their classroom, (b) understanding of the integration of creative arts in the elementary classroom, and (c) efficacy for integrating creative arts in the elementary classroom. Only two candidates indicated that sharing with peers contributed most to the above-named criteria. Seventeen candidates indicated that implementing with peers and K-2 students contributed equally to their understanding of and efficacy for integration of creative arts, whereas only nine indicated that they equally contributed to efficacy for meeting the needs of diverse learners. Fifteen responded that implementing with their K-2 students provided the most efficacy for meeting the needs of diverse learners and less than seven indicated that K-2 implementation contributed to an understanding of and efficacy for creative arts implementation. (See Figure 2.)
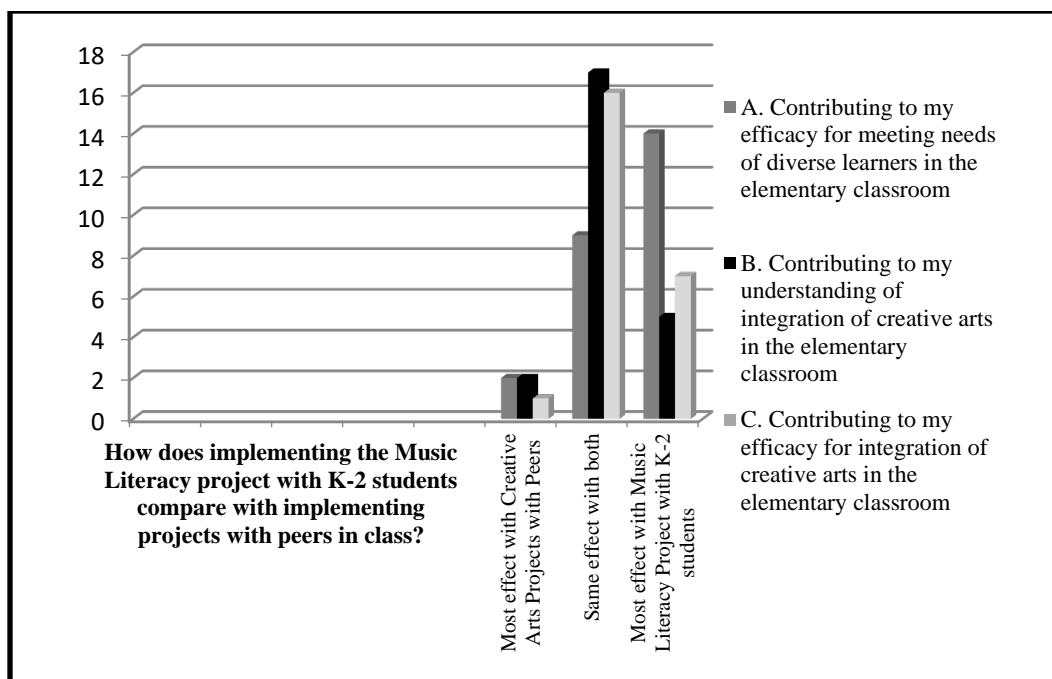

Figure 2. Attitude toward Contributions of Music Literacy Project

Additionally, the pre-service teachers rated their attitude toward the implementation of their music-based or similar activities in future classrooms. One pre-service teacher indicated that they were very unlikely to implement the music-based or similar activity in the future, and eighteen indicated that they were very likely to use similar projects in their future classrooms (see Figure 3).
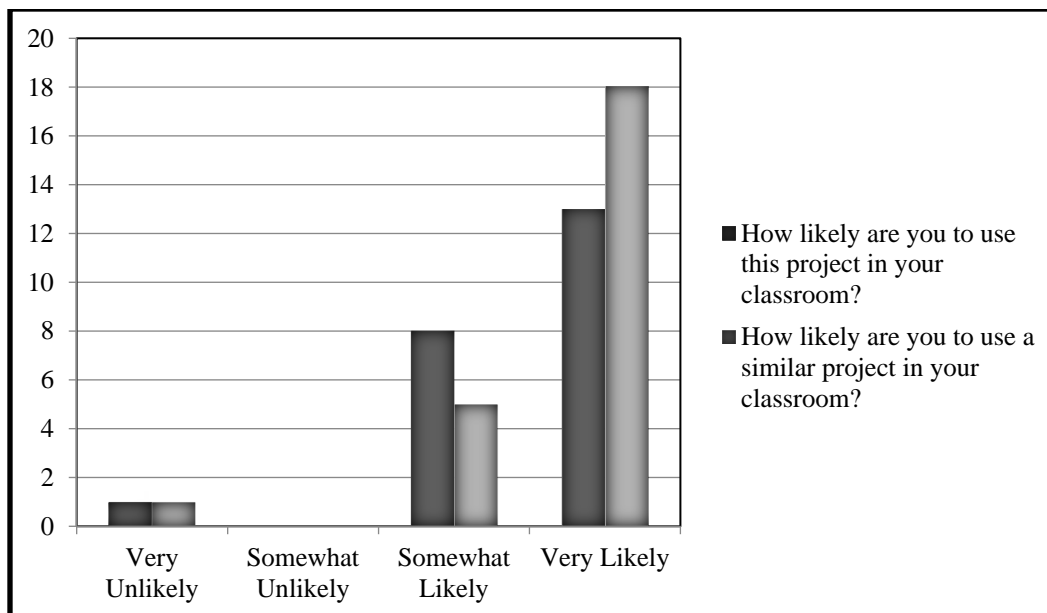
Arrington

Figure 3. Attitude toward Implementation of Music Literacy Projects in Future Classrooms

Qualitative Results

In qualitative analysis, the reflections and open-ended responses were coded. Three major themes emerged, as follows: (a) pre-service teachers became more aware of the benefit of providing a variety of learning experiences, including integrating music activities; (b) diverse students' learning was enhanced from this experience; and (c) pre-service teachers demonstrated augmented skills in planning behavior management strategies to organize activities for success in these types of lessons. Excerpts are provided in Figure 4.

THEME: Pre-Service Teachers' Awareness Increased
"It was hard work putting this together and setting this up. But it was worth it…It made me realize that with a little extra time and planning, music can be integrated into other curricular areas and the students can learn a lot from it…" (PST#1).
"It definitely helped me see the importance of using creative arts in the classroom" (PST#2).
"[I saw] firsthand by being involved that you can teach content in different ways…" (PST#2).
"I think this activity showed me to think outside the box when planning…" (PST#4).
"It also made me think of different aspects of creative arts that could be used to help diverse learners, especially if they are more drama filled or movement/dance filled. It would work best to incorporate all aspects of creative arts in the classroom to make sure that all students enjoy and learn in the classroom when creative arts are involved in the classroom" (PST#6).
"It made me want to incorporate music into my lessons more often. I saw that the students enjoyed making music with the instruments and that makes me want to see my future students enjoy using music in lessons as well" (PST#8).
"Implementing this activity impacted me as a teacher by showing me that a little effort in a lesson goes a long way" (PST #9).
"I really liked that we were able to do this with our elementary class instead of trying it on our fellow classmates. It gave me a better idea of how it would be if I used it in my future classroom" (PST #11).

"I am very happy that I had to do this music literacy lesson this semester. I have never really enjoyed music or wanted to teach with it but after the lesson I will definitely be doing it more often in my career" (PST#9).
THEME: Diverse Students' Learning Enhanced
"This activity impacted the diverse learners by keeping their interest and it gave them something to do hands on, which really helped them stay focus [*sic*] and on task" (PST#3).
"During this lesson students needed to pay special attention to their specific roles, listening carefully for their cues to play their instrument. Specific students were assigned certain instruments for a reason. For example, an ADHD student was assigned to play a horse during the lesson, allowing him multiple opportunities to stand up and move during the lesson. Additionally, a QUEST student and other higher level students were assigned bells, which required them to listen more frequently for their cue to play. Students with an IEP were placed in a large group with other students, this group acted as a guide to help these students know when to play. However, regardless of the instrument assigned, all students were able to stay engaged during the lesson as everyone was actively listening for their assigned cue. On top of this, by hearing the sounds and seeing the motions, both visual and auditory learners were able to more closely follow along with the story, thus aiding their comprehension of the text" (PST#9).
"The students were really excited because they are always eager to have a specific role in the lesson and they love singing" (PST #4).
"I have a class that normally misbehaves a lot. But conducting this activity got everyone involved and they loved it. I was actually shocked at how well they all participated" (PST#2).
"It was so much fun and the students loved it. They would have loved just reading Tacky and doing an activity about it for ELA, but they loved it even more with the integration of musical aspects and instruments" (PST#1).
"I think doing activities like this can really help you get your students involved and actually want to participate" (PST#3).
"After hearing 'Wow, this is fun! and I wish we could do this a lot more,' I realized the impact that the instruments had on their interest and overall participation and comprehension of the reading and the story. I will definitely use music in my future classroom" (PST#5).
THEME: Pre-service Candidates' Behavior Management Skills Augmented
"This lesson had the potential to go horribly wrong. I was very nervous to give a group of six year olds musical instruments, but with a well thought out behavior management plan and a little enthusiasm I was surprised at how well it went" (PST#9).
"I loved watching the students during this activity as they had such a good time! At first I was rather apprehensive, thinking I would have a hard time controlling the students while they all were playing. However, the lesson far exceeded my expectations. Every student had a smile on their face during the lesson, and it was so lovely to see" (PST#10).

Figure 4. Themes from Candidate Reflections. PST = Pre-service Teacher.

Triangulation of Data

Data were compared across multiple sources of collection to enhance the validity of the results. As presented in Table 3, pre-service teachers significantly noted that diverse learners' ability to remember past content was affected in their lessons (p=.003), and was confirmed by reflections that resulted in the second theme of Figure 4: Diverse Students' Learning Enhanced. In Figure 2, candidates indicate that implementing the activities with their young students was most beneficial to their understanding of meeting diverse needs (as compared to implementing with peers in their methods course), and was

reiterated in all themes of Figure 4 as they described the engagement and excitement of their learners. Both Figures 3 and 4 indicate that pre-service teachers are likely to implement music activities with literature in their future classrooms.

Discussion

Findings

Pre-service teachers became more aware of and adept at implementing multiple strategies

Tomlinson (2020) reminds us that a variety of strategies, approaches, and methods are necessary to successfully teach reading; and teachers must understand "teaching methods and the human beings to whom we apply those methods" (p. 93). As indicated earlier, the pre-service teachers were enrolled in the Creative Arts course concurrently with their first practicum course. Previously, they had developed and presented arts integration lessons to their peers in class and had discussed how they would implement them in their assigned grade levels. In this project, however, they actually implemented the activity with young children in their field placement classrooms. Traditionally, some of the candidates enrolled in this course had been hesitant to "think outside the box" to integrate the arts—sometimes due to a lack of confidence or experience in the arts, sometimes due to a perceived lack of time during their lessons. During their self-reflections on this project, the pre-service teachers indicated they will actually utilize their fine arts lessons or similar activities in their future placements and classrooms with comments such as "…definitely be doing it more often in my career;" " …makes me want to see my future students enjoying using music in lessons…;" "…makes me think of different aspects of creative arts that could be used to help diverse learners" (excerpts from student reflections). Additionally, during class meetings, candidates shared that they were already planning to create read-aloud activities with other books similar to those demonstrated in class. They asked questions about where to acquire some of the instruments (specifically the woodblocks, tambourine, and small drums); other materials (specifically the scarves), etc. I reminded them that while enrolled in the teacher education program, they would have access to the Creative Arts Resource Center for checking out these items. Additionally, I provided them with websites of sources of inexpensive basic items to start collecting for their future classrooms. I also recommended that when they begin teaching, they put out requests to their students' parents at the beginning of the school year. I shared from my experience in previous years of elementary-level teaching, that parents were willing to donate art supplies and small items for these types of projects—some had even donated specific instruments! The excitement of this project reached beyond their field-placement classrooms, as several candidates created and presented a research poster at an international conference. During their discourse with the attendees, the pre-service teachers very confidently illuminated their ideas for the implementation of these types of projects with their future students. I also noticed that while they were discussing their own projects, they gleaned knowledge from experienced teachers who provided the candidates with additional ideas for creating arts projects and acquiring resources. The Students' Rating of Instruction (SRI) completed at the end of the course indicated that the hands-on opportunity better-equipped candidates to implement music activities in the future; and they noted that the course textbook (Cornett, 2015) was a great resource, providing a variety of creative arts strategies they could readily implement within their future elementary classrooms. As a result of this project, these pre-service teachers have indicated a higher level of self-efficaciousness for implementing these experiences in their future lessons.

Pre-service teachers developed more understanding of their students' interests and learning styles

As they engaged students in lessons with various formats, they were helping the students "shape and assemble their literacy identities' (Parry & Taylor, 2018, p. 109), thus enhancing their reading experience. Tomlinson (2015) reminds us that in the 21ˢᵗ century, students will require classroom teachers to be more responsive to the "broadening array of cultures, languages, experiences, economics, and interests represented in most contemporary classrooms…" (p. 203). A major component of this project addressed how the arts can be used to accommodate diverse learning styles and cultures in their classrooms, and it became evident in the pre-service teachers' Creative Arts lesson plans that they are becoming more experienced in assessing their students' needs and in planning a variety of developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant activities to address those needs. Based on the reflections of successful experiences during the music integration lessons, this project has enriched pre-service teachers' planning and teaching in both courses—Creative Arts and their Methods I Practicum Course.

Pre-service teachers avoided potential issues that had previously occurred when students found some reading exercises meaningless

We are reminded by Tomlinson (2020) that when students encounter some reading activities/texts they deem boring or frustrating, they may "become 'behavior problems' as a means of escape" (p. 93). Several pre-service teachers reflected upon the experiences in which those students (who had previously demonstrated challenging behavior) showed more interest in the activities, became engaged, and did not display behavior problems.

Pre-service teachers demonstrated a need for developing deeper self-reflection skills

The instructor/researcher noted that some of the reflections were very brief and lacked depth. As our teacher education program continues to prepare our pre-service teachers for completing their certification requirements, there will be more emphasis placed on the intense reflective component during practicum experiences. Inasmuch as reflection was a vital component of this project, the pre-service teachers' experiences contributed to the development of skills needed to reflect at a level exemplary of teachers who are "ready for the job." This ongoing development of reflection skills will ultimately contribute positively to the required review of their work, based on the edTPA requirement for aspiring teachers: "demonstrate readiness to teach through lesson plans designed to support their students' strengths and needs; engage real students in ambitious learning; analyze whether their students are learning, and adjust their instruction to become more effective" (AACTE, 2023, para. 4). As a result of their music integration lessons, our candidates will be better prepared to teach all students—being better able to identify and accommodate their K-2 students' diversities, and becoming more self-efficacious in the process.

Recommendations for Practice

Share Expertise

Implementing this project allowed the instructor to teach within a "comfort zone" based on her experience and expertise from years of teaching elementary students—in the general education classroom enhancing lessons with music integration, and in the music education classroom connecting with the general education curriculum. During those years as an elementary practitioner, she gained

valuable knowledge about the developmental appropriateness of the activities, which were modeled in the Creative Arts class. This expertise of an instructor is applauded in a study by Nature (2007), who emphasized that faculty in academia should provide creative and passionate teaching and that students have a chance to build upon specialized knowledge under the leadership of an expert. As other instructors embrace this type of *Enactive Mastery Experience* (Bandura, 1997) for their own pre-service teachers, they will gain efficaciousness in their own teaching; this, in turn, will radiate to the pre-service teachers studying under their charge.

Utilize Resources

Much of the success of this project can be contributed to the hands-on experience and the ability to check out materials—this was made possible by the teacher/researcher equipping the university classroom with the Creative Arts Resource Center and expertly demonstrating the varied resources (instruments, books, scarves, recordings). Literature titles conducive to music-integration activities recommended by Cornett (2015) were included in the Center, and a list was provided in the course textbook for the students' convenience. Using these resources, the instructor involved the teacher candidates at two levels: (a) first as "students of the arts," participating directly in the activity; then, (b) as "teachers of the arts," discussing how they will implement and make connections with the young students in their classrooms. As pointed out in several pre-service teachers' reflections, their young students were more engaged as a result of the hands-on materials and instruments they brought to their lessons.

Be Reflective

The results from data analysis forced the teacher/researcher to examine and reflect on practice. For example, the analysis of pre-service teachers' reflections revealed their challenges and successes in identifying and meeting diverse learning styles of students in their field placements, and in implementing their music-integrated read-aloud activities. The instructor will revise and adjust future courses and activities accordingly based on these insights from the candidates enrolled in the course. According to Bernstein (2010), "...the best instructors in all fields are those who read what others are doing, evaluate their own successes, and refine their teaching through careful consideration of the evidence before them" (p.1).

Extend to other Arts Areas

The pre-service teachers, for the most part, were receptive to the music activities in which they participated. Limitation: A few expressed that they were not as comfortable in music as in other areas. In the future, the instructor plans to encourage the candidates to work in an arts area (Visual Arts, Music, Dance, and Theatre) that is most relevant to their lesson, and to capitalize on their own personal learning style, experience, and/or comfort zone. By incorporating musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and other identified areas of multiple intelligence (Gardner, 1993), these pre-service teachers will be empowered to further develop their self-efficacy for teaching diverse learners through the arts.

Make Connections

In this type of study, it is practical to make connections to both teaching and research. The pre-service teachers were deemed students and teachers simultaneously, but some of them also became researchers as a result of this study.

Connection to Teaching

One of the most gratifying outcomes of this project was how the pre-service teachers connected knowledge, skills, and activities developed in their Creative Arts Methods class to their lessons in their Methods I practicum course. These connections were noted by the University Supervisors who evaluated their practicum experience lesson plans and instruction. Kindle and Schmidt (2019) made a similar analogy with the constructivist theory (Vygotsky, 1978) in their study on scaffolding: Just as working with children in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), the teacher is considering them as future students; working with pre-service candidates, the instructor is considering them as future teachers. With their hands-on arts-integrated lesson planning in this project, the teacher/researcher is deeming her candidates as future successful teachers. This type of project has the potential to enrich their planning and teaching during this course and in subsequent practicum courses. Furthermore, it is hypothetical that this knowledge and skills development will extend into their future classrooms of employment. Darling-Hammond (2006) concludes that it is critical for teacher education programs to provide ample application time for their pre-service teachers to be effective. As a result of the pre-service teachers applying their creative arts skills to their language arts lessons in this project, they are now better equipped to apply these skills in future lessons in various content areas.

Connection to Research

As mentioned earlier, a product of the initial project was the excitement and desire of several of the pre-service teachers to contribute to the research by sharing the results from their respective music and literature read-aloud activities. They collaborated, under the direction of the teacher/researcher; developed a poster presentation; and very professionally represented the university as they confidently presented as *Student Researchers* at an International SoTL Conference (Hartman et al., 2015). This student-sharing of the results further confirms the enhancement of pre-service teachers' self-efficacy in the project!

Experience Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

This inquiry into the teaching and learning process with the overall intention of improving student learning (McKinney, 2007) exemplifies the SoTL reciprocal relationship. This project emanates key components of SoTL: encouraging self-reflection, examining and applying effective teaching strategies, and advancing the field of teacher education. This SoTL project is more than a model of "good teaching" for the candidates. It goes beyond the best practice of assessing students and using the results to revise instruction. It is a more systemic and reflective approach to meeting the needs of the teacher candidates, with the potential that they will glean from this model and employ similar rigor in their practice, becoming more efficacious in meeting the needs of their future students. Providing the opportunity for the teacher/researcher's candidates to share their own experience in a professional conference boosted their confidence, allowed them to disseminate their results first-hand, and participate in discourse with other researchers—this, in turn, enhanced learning by all (McKinney, 2007; West, 2014). Broadening scholarship and leading to advancements in the professional field of

teaching are other benefits of this project. For example, feedback from the critical peer review process further contributes to the teacher/researcher's reflective process to enable effectual scholarly decisions for teaching and research. Further dissemination of the results from this project will illuminate the erudition of music integration and its effect on literacy and has the potential to promote the advancement of creative arts methods in teacher preparation programs in the professional field.

Make Program Contributions

Embracing the assertion by Bruinsma and Jansen (2010), this boost to self-efficacy has the potential to encourage pre-service teachers to stay in the profession longer—a critical performance standard measured in teacher education assessment programs. Moreover, the pre-service teacher program will glean from the data, enabling the faculty to make informed and purposeful program decisions. Ultimately, the teacher educators will be enabled to positively address the essential question, *"Is a new teacher ready for the job?"* (AACTE, 2023, para. 1)

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that enhancing pre-service teachers' self-efficacy during their practicum experience contributes to their confidence in teaching in their future classrooms (Dogutas, 2016; Frazier et al., 2019; Pajares, 2005). Equipping the candidates with the knowledge of what needs to be done (meeting the diverse needs of students in attention and auditory processing); developing their skills required to do it (selecting developmentally appropriate literature and honing their personal music proficiencies); and providing them sufficient practice with varied strategies (specifically, incorporating appropriate music and literature activities effectively in their ELA practicum lessons) heightens the development of their self-efficacy for teaching (Bandura, 1997; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Pajares, 2005). Finally, the aspiration of the teacher/researcher in this project was to provide opportunities in the creative arts method course for pre-service teachers to increase their self-efficacy for enhancing the literacy of their diverse learners through the use of music activities with children's literature. It is her hope that the efficacy developed through this project will continue with the candidates throughout their program, and that it has equipped them to become successful teachers who exemplify the elementary teacher education program motto: *"Reflective Educators for Diverse Learners"* (COE, 2022, para. 1).

Appendix

Appendix 1. Bandura's Instrument: Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale.

TEACHER BELIEFS		How much can you do?								
Directions: This questionnaire is designed to help us gain a better understanding of the kinds of things that create difficulties for teachers in their school activities. Please indicate your opinions about each of the statements below by circling the appropriate number. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not be identified by name.		Nothing		Very Little		Some Influence		Quite a Bit		A Great Deal
1	How much can you influence the decisions that are made in the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	How much can you express your views freely on important school matters?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3	How much can you do to get the instructional materials and equipment you need?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4	How much can you do to influence the class sizes in your school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5	How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
6	How much can you do to promote learning when there is lack of support from the home?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
7	How much can you do to keep students on task on difficult assignments?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
8	How much can you do to increase students' memory of what they have been taught in previous lessons?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	How much can you do to get students to work together?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
11	How much can you do to overcome the influence of adverse community conditions on students' learning?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
12	How much can you do to get children to do their homework	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
13	How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14	How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

15	How much can you do to prevent problem behavior on the school grounds?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
16	How much can you do to get parents to become involved in school activities?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
17	How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
18	How much can you do to make parents feel comfortable coming to school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
19	How much can you do to get community groups involved in working with the schools?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
20	How much can you do to get churches involved in working with the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
21	How much can you do to get businesses involved in working with the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
22	How much can you do to get local colleges and universities involved in working with the school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
23	How much can you do to make the school a safe place?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
24	How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
25	How much can you do to get students to trust teachers?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
26	How much can you help other teachers with their teaching skills?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
27	How much can you do to enhance collaboration between teachers and the administration to make the school run effectively?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
28	How much can you do to reduce school dropout?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
29	How much can you do to reduce school absenteeism?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
30	How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

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