2012

# Pre-service generalist teacher's self-efficacy beliefs in their abilities to teach music in Primary schools

John Heyworth

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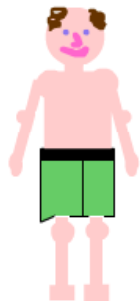
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# Main aim of this study

The aim of this study is to explore the potential of music technology to build the confidence and competence beliefs of pre-service teachers. The findings of this study would be particularly valuable given the diminishing time given to music in university courses as opposed to the increase national demands that generalist teachers carry increased responsibility for music education in schools.

This is a study that will investigate the use of technology to increase pre-service teacher's knowledge of, value of and competence in teaching music. In particular:-

*What is the impact of mobile looping technologies in building upon pre-service teacher's self-efficacy beliefs in their abilities to teach music?*

## *THE PLAYERS*

The Generalist Surfer          Training Board          Waves of Expectations

Naplan  Principals  Curriculum
Parents Naplan Community
Department  Self-belief Naplan
Children etc etc

# Background: confidence of the generalist

- In 2010 I conducted a short survey of undergraduate students at ECU (Edith Cowan University, n=70) and found that nearly 50% were worried about their own perceived lack of musical ability at the start of the music course.

- Holden and Button (2006) reported that respondents to their study ranked music as the lowest subject they had in confidence to teach. Respondents described feeling vulnerable due largely to their own inability to read music. Furthermore they described music as a specialist subject unlike any other subject in their national curriculum. Seddon and Biasutti (2008) also reported that students perceptions of music as a specialist area had a significant impact on their confidence to teach music in the classrooms. Jeanneret (in Sinclair et al., 2009, p.103) stated that *"teachers own musical experiences frequently shape their attitude towards, and confidence in, teaching music."*
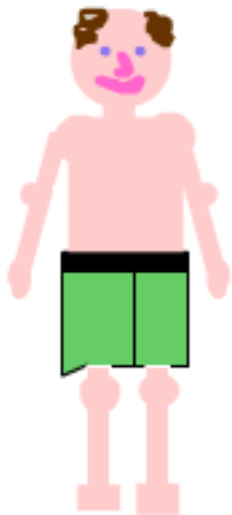
# Training Board:- Time factor

- The National Review of Music Education (Pascoe, Leong, MacCallum, Mackinlay, Marsh, Smith, Church and Winterton, 2005, p97) it was noted that now generalist will either have part or full responsibility for teaching music in their classrooms. Furthermore the review questioned the effectiveness of pre-service education in preparing students adequately due to time constraints (1005,p vi);

  *Hours for pre-service teacher education for music have contracted radically in the last ten years and do not adequately prepare generalist primary teachers for teaching music in schools.*

  The situation at ECU today is that the undergraduate generalist pre-service primary education is a four-year degree course at ECU, in which students have one unit of study in music which is the equivalent of about 36 hours of tuition to prepare them to teach music in the classroom.

# Waves of Expectations

- More responsibility for teaching music was being thrust upon the generalist teacher, as noted by Jeanneret, in Sinclair, Jeanneret and O'Toole (2009, p. 103):

  *Although some school systems maintain music specialists in primary schools, the reality of the situation is that a large number of generalist primary teachers in Australia, Great Britain, and North America have the responsibility for teaching music in their classrooms.*

- (Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008, p. 2) also noted this trend in America:

  – *Despite the inconsistencies in the data reported above, these studies imply a trend toward the hiring of fewer music specialists in the United States, suggesting that if general music remains in the curriculum in localities where music positions are cut, it likely will be taught by generalist teachers rather than music specialists.*

- The Australia Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2011), still in draft form for the arts, states that 'The Arts curriculum will be written to cater for both generalist classroom teachers and teachers with specialist arts backgrounds.
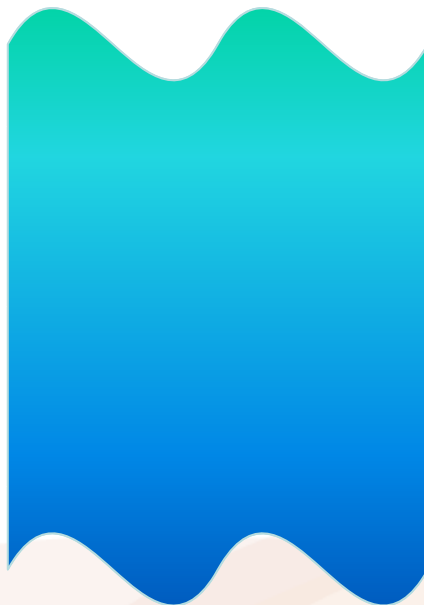
# Therefore

Nirvana
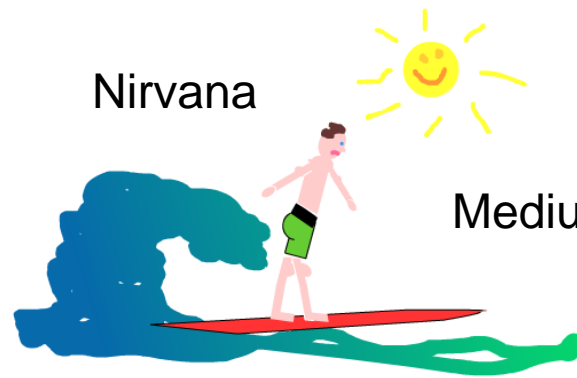
Medium waves  +large board =success

But, if the waves of expectations get bigger...                    ..and the training board gets smaller

## And so the cycle of low expectations continues...

- Wipe Out.

# Self efficacy

- Confidence and competence are likely to go 'hand in hand'. As noted in (Wiggins & Wiggins, 2008, p. 3):

    *Much attention has been paid to generalist teachers' confidence to teach music (Jeanneret, 1997; Russell, 1996) and factors that contribute to that confidence (Hennessy, 2000). However, Bartel, Cameron, Wiggins, and Wiggins (2004) drew on Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) work on self-efficacy to make the point that confidence alone is meaningless if it is not accompanied by competence.*

- However Bandura (1997, p3) states quite clearly that if one doesn't belief they can achieve a task then they are likely not to try and do it:-

    *Unless people believe they can produce desired effects by their actions, they have little incentive to act. Efficacy belief, therefore, is a major basis of action. People guide their lives by their beliefs in personal efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.*

- There will be varying levels of pre-service teacher's experiences and beliefs on music education that pre-service teachers will bring into university, with a large percentage of them with low expectations of their own ability to teach music. To what, if any, degree will these value and competence beliefs change after the intervention of one unit of music tuition incorporating technology is the main thrust of this study.

Rather than risking a wipe out,
the surfer walks away.....

FOR SALE

# Technology to the rescue!!!???

- Technology can play a big part in students' musical experiences being more inclusive as well as creative. Williams and Webster (2006, p. 19) believe that technology should be used to improve musical experiences, with a focus on artistic and pedagogical end products. O'Toole (Sinclair, et al., 2009, p. 34) makes the point that:-

    *young people spend a great deal of time expressing and discovering them in cyberspace. For instance, young people today enjoy themselves with online activities like creating Facebook homepages or inventing wikis and blogs that are 'full of design and intricate narratives and problem solving.*

- O'Toole thinks it is important to give students critical and skilful tools to understand and manage the *'creative tools that the professional designers and manipulators themselves use'.* Looping software is a tool for creative music making. The software allows the user to cut and paste patterns of sound along a timeline to create a digital sound file. Using patterns of sounds to create musical works is not a new concept. *Ostinato* is a term for a repeated pattern of sounds. In popular music 'digital loops' are a modern extension of an ostinato.

    - *Ostinato: constantly repeated musical pattern, rhythmic or melodic.* (Farmer,982, p. 337)
    - *Loops: loops are simply recurring sections of digital audio.* (Williams &Webster, 2006)

- For the purposes of this research, I will use the term loops to describe repeated patterns of sound, whether generated acoustically or digitally.

# Looping technology

- Music making of any style, supported by creative looping technologies, may just be a pathway to engage students from a wide variety of musical backgrounds and experiences. This engagement should then develop student's motivation and confidence to participate in further creative activities. As stated by Bandura (1997 p. 239): *'Creativity constitutes one of the highest forms of human expression.'* Bandura goes on to talk about innovation through restructuring and synthesising knowledge. Importantly he reports that being innovative requires 'an unshakable sense of efficacy to persist in creative endeavours.'
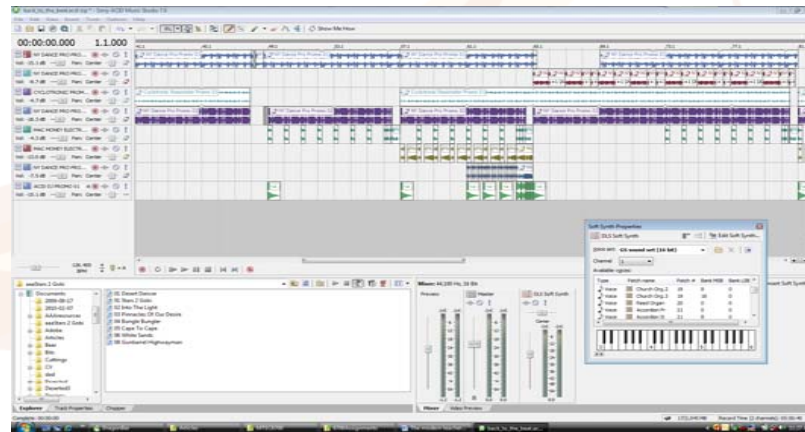
# Research design and methods

- The research question implies the need for statistical data to determine students' self efficacy beliefs in their abilities to teach music before and after their one unit of study in music education. Pre-test/post test data will be statistically analysed to examine if any significant change has occurred after the students have completed one unit of music tuition which incorporates looping concepts and technologies.

- This data will be entered into a SPSS Statistics program to measure any significant changes form pre to post test stages. T-tests will also be utilised to establish if there are any significant difference between pre and post test scores. (Allen & Bennett, 2008

- The results will help me determine the effectiveness of this approach in preparing pre-service teachers to effectively teach music in the classroom .

Hopefully avoiding the desire to :-

Go North young man!



Thankyou for listening