

**Relationship-Based Teaching: An Exploration of its potential role on Post-Primary
School Music Students' Self-Efficacy in the Republic of Ireland**

Douglas J. Carnes

A Dissertation submitted to the University of Dublin in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree Doctor in Music Performance

Royal Irish Academy of Music

Supervisor: Professor Denise Neary

March 2026

Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme leading to the award of Doctor in Music Performance, is entirely my own work, that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge breach any law of copyright, and has not been taken from the work of others, save and to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my work.

Signed: 

Date: 24/03/2026

ID No.: 20330761

Table of Contents

Declaration.....	i
Table of Contents	ii
List of Tables and Figures.....	vi
Table of Abbreviations	vii
Abstract.....	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Rationale	3
1.3 The Researcher/Assumptions	7
1.4 Purpose Statement/Research Questions	14
1.5 Aims.....	16
1.6 Research Design Overview.....	17
1.7 Conclusion	20
Chapter Two: Literature Review	23
2.1 Self-Efficacy.....	24
2.2 Self-Efficacy’s Effect on Students.....	31
2.3 Traditional Teaching Methods	42
2.4 Modern Teaching Methods	47
2.5 Relationship-based teaching	50
2.6 Post-Primary Music Education in Ireland: Pre-2000.....	60
2.7 Post-Primary Music Education in Ireland: Post-2000	70

2.8 Conclusion	70
Chapter Three: Research Design	79
3.1 Data Collection and Survey Design	79
3.2 Data Collection Procedures and Participants	82
3.3 Data Analysis and Management	84
3.4 Justification	88
3.5 Issues of Trustworthiness	90
3.6 Ethical Considerations	93
3.7 Reflections and Limitations	94
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion	98
4.1 Educators' Survey Results	99
4.2 Students' Survey Results	102
4.3 Analysis of Student Self-Efficacy Sources by Teacher	105
4.4 Comparison	115
4.5 Findings	118
4.6 Conclusion	120
Chapter Five: Conclusion.....	122
5.1 Implications of the Study	123
5.2 Recommendations for Future Research	125
Bibliography	127
Appendices.....	136
Appendix A: The Eight Conditions	136

Appendix B: Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale.....	137
Appendix C: Relationship-Based Educator Survey	140
Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet—Educator	145
Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet—Student.....	147
Appendix F: Participant Consent Sheet—Educator	149
Appendix G: Participant Consent Sheet—Parent	153
Appendix H: Participant Assent Sheet—Student	155

Acknowledgements

This dissertation could not have been accomplished without the guidance and support of numerous colleagues, family members and friends whom I wish to thank.

At the Royal Irish Academy of Music, my sincere gratitude goes to Denise Neary whose ability to guide, encourage and support is unparalleled by any educator I have worked with. Relationship-based teaching is all about understanding the students and ‘meeting them where they are at.’ Denise is a preeminent example of this methodology. Thank you, Denise, for being a superb educator and role model throughout this process.

Philip Shields and the RIAM library staff provided great assistance throughout my entire doctoral degree programme and helped significantly in finding obscure articles and lost treasures during this dissertation process, thank you.

Blanaid Murphy, thank you for your guidance and knowledge that you have passed down to me as I continue my choral career here in Ireland.

Thank you to David Tranter for sitting with me for hours to discuss relationship-based teaching. Your words gave me the final push I needed to dig deep into this research and perhaps more importantly, gave me inspiration to continue the work when this is complete.

Thank you to the many educators and students who selflessly took their time to take the surveys within this document and to Emily Johnson for helping me with the statistical data and analysis.

To the singers of Danu Young Women’s Choir and past pupils, you are the inspiration for this work. Anything I can do in my life to encourage, support and help you along in your journey, I will. It is my sincere hope that my love and dedication to relationship-based teaching has a positive effect on you for an extended period of your life.

To my parents and grandparents, thank you for the numerous life lessons and continuous support that led to the completion of this work. The first doctor in our family will not be the last Grandpa Bob, you were always an inspiration.

Finally, to my family: Taryn, and my son and daughter, this thesis took time away from you and creating more special moments together. I will work tirelessly to make up for that. I dedicate this work to you. Thank you.

List of Tables and Figures

Table 2.1 Relational Categories and Descriptions.....	51
Table 3.1 Data Management and Analytical Procedures.....	87
Table 4.1 Educators’ Mean and Standard Deviation of Highest Rated Statements.....	100
Table 4.2 Educators’ Mean and Standard Deviation of Lowest Rated Statements	101
Table 4.3 Students’ Mean and Standard Deviation of Highest Rated Statements.....	103
Table 4.4 Students’ Mean and Standard Deviation of Lowest Rated Statements	104
Table 4.5 Percentage of Influence by Bandura’s Four Sources of Self-Efficacy	104
Figure 4.1 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 1	106
Figure 4.2 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 2.....	107
Figure 4.3 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 3.....	108
Figure 4.4 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 4.....	109
Figure 4.5 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 5.....	110
Figure 4.6 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 6.....	111
Figure 4.7 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 7.....	112
Figure 4.8 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 8.....	112
Figure 4.9 Distribution of Students’ Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 9.....	114
Figure 4.10 Comparison of Students’ Self-Efficacy Source Scores by Teacher	117

Table of Abbreviations

Relationship-based Teaching (RBT)

Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES)

Popular Music Pedagogies (PMP)

Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB)

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)

Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI)

State Examinations Commission (SEC)

Musical Futures (MF)

Student Self-Efficacy (SSE)

Abstract

This dissertation examines potential correlations between Relationship-Based Teaching (RBT) and the self-efficacy of a set of post-primary school music students in the Republic of Ireland, placing the research within the historical and pedagogical developments of Irish music education. Self-efficacy, defined as individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to perform tasks successfully, has been widely linked to improved performance outcomes.

The relationship between teaching methodologies and student self-efficacy in post-primary music classrooms in Ireland remains underexplored. No research appears to have examined how post-primary music educators' methodologies in Ireland potentially affect their students' self-efficacy. This represents a gap in the literature and an opportunity for an original contribution to knowledge by integrating relationship-based teaching with self-efficacy in music classrooms in Ireland.

To study the potential correlation between relationship-based teaching and music students' self-efficacy, surveys were completed by 100 students and their 9 respective educators. A quantitative cross-sectional correlational analysis was then conducted to explore the level of relationship-based teaching that educators self-report, the level of self-efficacy that students reported and any relationships that may exist between these two variables.

The findings indicate that students in this sample reported generally high levels of music self-efficacy, while educators reported moderate to high engagement with relationship-based teaching practices. Among the four sources of self-efficacy, mastery experience emerged as the strongest contributor to student self-efficacy, followed by verbal/social persuasion, while vicarious experience was consistently the weakest contributor across student responses.

This study contributes new evidence to Irish music education research by highlighting the self-reported data of post-primary music teachers and students in Ireland as well as the exploration of potential links between relational teaching practices and student self-efficacy.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

This research investigates the role that music educators in the Republic of Ireland play in the development of their post-primary music students' self-efficacy. Many scholars have researched the concept of self-efficacy since Albert Bandura theorised and defined it in 1977. In the journal *Psychological Review*, Albert Bandura proposed the term self-efficacy for the first time and defined it as an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviours necessary to produce specific performance attainments.¹ He posits that the concept of self-efficacy is central to understanding and predicting behavioural changes across diverse methods of treatment. Bandura's findings support the hypothesis that cognitive processes encourage behavioural change. 'It is hypothesized that expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behaviour will be initiated, how much effort will be expended and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences.'²

The transitional period from childhood to adulthood marks a rapid physical, cognitive, emotional and social developmental period in a person's life. During adolescence, individuals experience significant changes, including puberty which often includes heightened emotional sensitivity, evolving social relationships and advanced cognitive abilities such as abstract thinking and problem-solving. In *A study of adolescents' self-efficacy and general wellbeing*, Sapna Jain and Trusha Desai examined fifty boys and fifty

¹ Albert Bandura, 'Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change', 191.

² *Ibid.*, 193.

girls between eleven and fourteen years old and assessed their emotional, social and school well-being. They found that self-efficacy had a direct impact on the general well-being of adolescents. Adolescents with higher self-efficacy demonstrated greater emotional stability, better social relationships and more confidence in school-related tasks, highlighting the crucial role of fostering self-belief during this transformative period.³

While the existing literature establishes self-efficacy as an important aspect of student achievement across disciplines, the application of these concepts within the post-primary music classroom context in Ireland appears to remain unexamined. The current research on self-efficacy amongst students has largely emerged from international contexts in both core academic subjects and music education systems that differ greatly from Ireland's. The Irish post-primary education system in Ireland treats music as an elective for the purpose of training basic music skills, and that is only when the schools choose to provide music at all. In contrast, internationally, music is often an integrated subject, built into the larger education programme, systemically included across grade levels or offered through multiple performance ensembles such as band, choir and/or orchestra. Consequently, it is essential to situate the construct of self-efficacy within the specific historical, cultural and institutional frameworks that shape Irish music education.

Educators throughout Ireland utilise various techniques and methodologies to teach their students a standardised curriculum that culminates in examination papers and practical presentations. Students then experience both emotional and tangible conclusions by way of

³ Sapna A. Jain and Trusha R. Desai, 'A study of adolescent's self-efficacy and general wellbeing', *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8 (2020), 716.

performances and grades. Throughout their post-primary careers these students will develop personal identity beliefs, such as self-efficacy, that will have a lasting effect on their lives. Relationship-based teaching (RBT) aims to encourage the development of all relationships found in an educational ecosystem and desires to create a positive impact on the growth and development of the students.

In particular, the success of music education depends not only on the content delivered but also on the quality of interactions between teacher and student, and on the extent to which teaching strategies respond to learners' individual needs, backgrounds, and aspirations. This recognition has prompted growing scholarly and practical interest in methodologies such as relationship-based teaching.

Having witnessed varying levels of success in my own teaching practice between the years 2013 and 2019 in New York City and Minneapolis, Minnesota, and as an observer from the years 2020 to 2025 in Ireland, there is a strong indication that students' belief in themselves and the manner in which educators teach their curricula both have a significant effect on student success rates in their music exams and performances.

1.2 Rationale

While most of the research and application of RBT can be applied to students in any subject area, the specific examination of students who study music provides a unique challenge. Due to the individual expectations that music places on students, such as singing or playing a solo in front of an examiner, students can feel particularly vulnerable. When singing, a wrong

note or intonational errors cannot be attributed to external factor, instrument's defects or even an incorrect position or fingering, only a person's decisions and body are at fault. The feeling of singing is an internal sensation that can only be learned through repetition and reproduction. When playing an instrument, 'mistakes' and being judged on artistry can be intimidating and subjective.

Michael Zelenak notes that measuring self-efficacy in music presents particular challenges because existing instruments often fail to capture the complexity and specificity of musical practices. He states that 'additional problems have been found in attempts to measure self-efficacy in music performance' and cautions that many scales lack 'the inherent flexibility to address the subtleties of different content domains.'⁴ Zelenak states that 'music performance is a unique activity requiring the simultaneous coordination of several types of skills.'⁵ 'A scale that measures self-efficacy in music performance must reflect the specialised demands of the activity.'⁶ It is with this in mind that self-efficacy becomes exceptionally important in music classrooms. Research suggests that students' positive beliefs about their performance abilities are associated with improved examination and performance outcomes.

Focused both on the teacher and the student, studies have been undertaken in most areas of music education. Specifically, regarding self-efficacy within music education, researchers and music educators have been studying how students' self-efficacy affects their performance. However, there has been no research conducted to discover how an educator's

⁴ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Self-efficacy in music performance: Measuring the sources among post-primary school music students' (PhD dissertation, University of South Florida, 2011), 41-44.

⁵ Ibid., 35.

⁶ Ibid., 35.

methodology, and specifically RBT, affects music students' self-efficacy in the classroom. This dissertation investigates how RBT and learning affect Irish post-primary music students' self-efficacy.

Of the fourteen potential years (eight years in primary school and five to six years in post-primary) in an Irish public school student's education, this dissertation studies post-primary school age students, which is influenced by my professional career educating at this level. Post-primary school is a particularly challenging time for students for numerous reasons. From a young age, students begin to develop their personalities, identities and form relationships. In post-primary school these personality, hormonal and physical changes are critical, as most students will experience puberty during this time, causing them to have challenges with their voices and bodily growth, which in turn can affect their music making as singers and instrumentalists.⁷ These changes can lead to feelings of frustration, embarrassment and a lack of confidence among young musicians. 'In Sweet's 2015 phenomenological study of fourteen female adolescent choristers, participants expressed a wide range of emotions in response to voice change symptoms, describing fear, frustration, and embarrassment around the difficulties, especially when feeling alone in the experience.'⁸ Their identities grow stronger as they are allowed to, and in some cases potentially forced to, become more independent. Finding meaningful relationships and forming bonds with their peers and new adults in their lives is possibly one of the most important parts of their

⁷ Bridget Sweet, *Thinking Outside the Voice Box: Adolescent Voice Change in Music Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 15.

⁸ Jamea J. Sale, 'Is Something Wrong With My Daughter's Voice? Parental Perceptions of the Female Adolescent Voice Change', *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, 10 (2022), 197-219.

development at this time.⁹ These bonds will have a powerful impact on the way they begin to question the world's workings and the new challenging emotions and situations that they encounter.

The research being done in the fields of RBT, music education and self-efficacy is extensive but no specific teaching methodology appears to have been identified that is effective in enhancing students' self-efficacy levels. There is, however, proven evidence that self-efficacy leads to better performance.¹⁰ This highlights a gap in current scholarship regarding the development and promotion of teaching methodologies that enable students to thrive through their educators' instructional approaches.

Relationship-based teaching is an instructional approach in which the teacher deliberately cultivates positive, supportive and meaningful interpersonal connections giving considerations to all of the possible relationships in their classroom. This is accomplished as a central mechanism for promoting learning. Rather than viewing instruction as the transmission of knowledge or technical skills alone, relationship-based teaching positions the relationship as an essential pedagogical tool. The teacher attends to students' emotional wellbeing, individual needs, prior experiences and developing identities of each student which in turn can create an environment of trust, care and mutual respect. These relational conditions can enable students to feel valued, safe and motivated, strengthening engagement, persistence and motivation to learn.

⁹ Robert W. Blum et al., 'Adolescent connectedness: cornerstone for health and wellbeing', *British Medical Journal*, 379 (2022), e069213, 1-4.

¹⁰ See 2.2 Self-Efficacy, 22.

In music education, relationship-based teaching recognises that musical growth is not solely technical but deeply personal. Teachers support students through encouragement, constructive feedback, shared musical experiences and modelling of musical behaviours. This is done with the intention of nurturing students' self-efficacy, autonomy and sense of belonging within the musical community.

1.3 The Researcher/Assumptions

In order to acknowledge potential researcher bias and to situate this study within my professional and educational background, it is necessary to outline any assumptions that may inform my engagement with this research topic.

Although the term self-efficacy was not formally encountered until after the completion of my undergraduate studies, my early educational experiences were characterised by a strong sense of confidence in my own abilities, occasionally even being classified as arrogant by my peers. This disposition was shaped in large part by supportive parenting and by educators who consistently encouraged autonomy, high expectations and personal responsibility. These experiences contributed to a sustained belief in my capacity to meet challenges and persist in the face of difficulty, qualities that are now understood to align closely with Bandura's conceptualisation of self-efficacy.

My parents raised me in an authoritative parenting style¹¹ where they demonstrated both high levels of love and warmth, while also maintaining clear expectations and structure within our household. I knew that they cared deeply about my successes while consistently encouraging me to become the best version of myself.

I was also fortunate to encounter strong examples of authoritative modelling throughout my primary and secondary education in the United States. In particular, two or three teachers found ways to maintain clear structure in their classrooms while also elevating learning beyond the subject material and connecting with students on a personal level. Much like my parents, they demonstrated care and compassion while simultaneously challenging me to learn and grow.

This, however, was not standard practice. As I grew older, I began to enjoy school less. Many teachers appeared to prioritise either students' emotional wellbeing at the expense of academic standards, or academic performance without regard for students' emotional needs.

The one class I always wanted to be in, regardless of my age, was music. This may have been attributed to my passion for singing and playing an instrument, the material being offered, the people in the room or the teacher. I allocated as much time as my schedule allowed, to studying music during my high school career.

¹¹ Diana Baumrind, 'Parental Disciplinary Patterns and Social Competence in Children', *Youth & Society*, 9 (1978), 239-240.

After graduating from high school, I enrolled in an undergraduate degree in music education, followed by a master's degree in music performance with the intention of pursuing a career as a professional musician. Over time, I recognised that this was not my true vocation and therefore chose to apply my training in music education. I wanted to be the kind of teacher I had admired while in school, one who made students want to come to class and who helped them become the best version of themselves. With that goal in mind, I chose to pursue full-time work as a music educator and accepted a teaching position in Harlem, New York.

Although, I studied music education in university, my teacher training began in Harlem, New York, where most students had little or no exposure to formal music education. I quickly realised that students were unlikely to participate before I established their trust and built a relationship that involved getting to know them on a personal level. While in Harlem, I deliberately designed a curriculum that focused not only on students' musical learning but also on the broader dimensions of their musical lives. I incorporated short three-minute assignments to deepen their personal connection to music by reflecting on their favourite lyrics, their reasons for choosing music as an elective, their musical upbringing (whether influenced by church, family, or particular artists) or even the music they encountered being busked in the subways. The intention was to learn more about students as developing musicians, and to encourage them to engage thoughtfully with their own evolving relationship to music.

While getting to know my students in Harlem, I experienced a realisation that led to a sustained commitment to researching, reflecting on, and practising relationship-based

teaching (RBT) throughout my professional career: the more positive the relationships in the room, the greater the students' outcome expectancy. Over the next five years, from 2014 to 2019, I developed a practice of RBT focusing on understanding my students more deeply as individuals and doing my personal best to understand who they were on a unique level.

Teaching through a relationship-based approach meant focusing on my students' growth and well-being through multiple relational lenses. This included not only my relationship with each student, but also the relationships students formed with one another, the ways both parties connected with the music itself and the external influences shaping their musical lives, such as their home environment.

In 2015 this work took me to Minneapolis, Minnesota. I used relationship-based teaching as a middle-school choral educator and helped grow the choral programme by over 300% in four years. I continued to use RBT practices when working with both adult and student choirs all over the United States of America and while coaching internationally. RBT was creating work settings that felt inspiring and comfortable for the singers with whom I was working.

During my time as a middle school music educator, utilising an RBT approach required teaching far more than choral or instrumental technique alone. I intentionally integrated relational strategies into the classroom environment, such as providing reflective prompts for students to complete before facilitating subsequent peer discussions based on their responses. I remained in my classroom during the lunch hour and invited students and colleagues to join me for informal conversation and games, creating an accessible and welcoming space. I

contacted parents to share positive observations about their children and to express a genuine interest in their personal and musical development. Additionally, I regularly attended students' athletic events and extracurricular activities, discovering that my presence held greater significance for them than I initially anticipated. Collectively, these efforts allowed me to build deeper, more authentic relationships with students, ultimately enabling me to challenge them more effectively in the classroom due to the mutual trust and shared understanding we had cultivated beyond the formal instructional setting.

After relocating to Europe, I taught and observed educators in Ireland between 2020 and 2023 and noted a distinct relational dynamic between teachers and their students. While coaching choral and instrumental music at the post-primary level in County Donegal, I observed that music educators demonstrated a strong commitment to engaging with students beyond the formal classroom setting. Teachers actively supported students' extracurricular musical pursuits, often investing additional time and, in this case, hiring an external specialist to ensure that students received high-quality instruction and opportunities for growth. One example involved a group of students who voluntarily formed an 'as Gaeilge'¹² cover band to compete against other post-primary schools. The ensemble from the school where I was working achieved first place nationally. The students' enthusiasm and pride expressed through their praise for both their teacher and one another reflected not only their musical accomplishment but also the strength of the relationships fostered throughout the experience.'

¹² Performed entirely in the Irish language.

During this period, I was also employed as a substitute music educator for Leaving Certificate¹³ students, supporting their preparation for the national examination. In contrast to my earlier experiences, I observed what appeared to be a weaker relational connection between some students and their teacher. This seemed to coincide with less self-confidence and a noticeable lack of assurance in their musical abilities. Such observations highlighted the potential impact of teacher–student relationships on students’ sense of competence and overall engagement in their work.

The specific role that these relational connections played within the wider educational Irish ecosystem remained unclear. These experiences prompted important questions regarding the interaction between relationship-based teaching and the Irish music education system: Are Irish teachers consciously or intentionally fostering these relationships within their classrooms? Do these relationships impact student engagement, motivation and learning outcomes?

To address some of these questions from the perspective of an Irish educator, this research was informed in part by my creation of Danu Young Women’s Choir (Danu) in 2022, a choral arts organisation based in County Donegal. The choral organisation, consisting of three choirs in separate age bands, comprises over 200 girls aged four to eighteen, engages in weekly rehearsals focused on choral music instruction delivered through a relationship-based teaching approach.

¹³ The final year of post-primary education in Ireland.

This relational approach, implemented with the choirs, was guided by three primary focus areas. The first involved developing an understanding of each singer on a personal level, a teacher-to-student relationship. To support this, the audition process consisted of two phases. Unlike a traditional singing audition, which typically focuses exclusively on vocal timbre, range and overall quality, Danu's audition also incorporated a five to seven-minute conversational component. This conversation served both to ensure that the singers felt comfortable and to allow me to become better acquainted with them as individuals. I asked questions about their musical background, their aspirations, their anxieties, as well as aspects of their family life, education and friendships. The purpose of this expanded process was to learn as much as possible about each singer prior to her formal entry into the choir. This information later informed our decisions during the annual summer retreat¹⁴, particularly when determining suitable pairings among the singers.

The second focus concerns the relationships that singers develop with one another, peer-to-peer interaction. This emphasis is integrated deliberately into the weekly rehearsal structure through multiple opportunities that are created for singers to engage in brief moments of reprieve from the musical work such as short movement or dance breaks, shared snack time and structured exchanges of positive affirmations and personal accomplishments, or daily struggles from the week. These practices are designed to cultivate a supportive, cohesive social environment that enhances both individual well-being and ensemble unity.

¹⁴ Danu Young Women's Choir begins each year with an overnight retreat designed to strengthen peer relationships through musical activities and wellness-focused programming. During this retreat, singers are paired with a new roommate, typically someone with whom they share common interests, to encourage meaningful interpersonal connection and to lay the foundation for what may become a lasting friendship.

The final component of the RBT approach implemented with the Danu singers involves attempting to cultivate a deep connection between the students and the musical repertoire, student-to-work relationship. A central priority is ensuring that singers are able to understand and convey the narrative, emotional content or thematic significance of each piece. This interpretive connection enables them to communicate why the work matters and to engage audiences more meaningfully. Such emphasis is particularly crucial when working with repertoire by historical composers or pieces in languages unfamiliar to the singers, where the underlying meaning may not be immediately apparent.

From the years 2021 to 2025, this work with Danu has deepened my interest in the subject and provided valuable insights that have informed this study. Through conversations with these singers, I have learned about many of their music teachers' practices and the students' perspectives of their relationships within their music classrooms.

These experiences have shaped my interest in the relational dimensions of music teaching and learning, while also informing my awareness of the assumptions I bring to this study. Recognising the potential influence of these perspectives, this research seeks to examine if there is a correlation between relationship-based teaching practices and student self-efficacy in this sample of post-primary school music classrooms.

1.4 Purpose Statement/Research Questions

The purpose of this doctoral dissertation is to examine the relationship between relationship-based teaching (RBT) practices employed by a selection of post-primary school music

educators and the self-efficacy of their students in the Republic of Ireland. Drawing on Bandura's theory of self-efficacy,¹⁵ the study investigates whether the extent to which educators implement relationship-based pedagogical strategies is associated with students' beliefs in their capacity to perform musical tasks successfully.

The findings aim to contribute original knowledge to the fields of music education and pedagogy by highlighting the role of relational teaching practices in shaping student self-efficacy, and by informing future practice, teacher education and policy within post-primary music education in Ireland.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do post-primary school music educators in the Republic of Ireland report the implementation of relationship-based teaching practices in their classrooms?
2. What levels of music performance self-efficacy do post-primary school music students report across Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between educators' reported use of relationship-based teaching practices and their students' overall music performance self-efficacy?

The first two research questions focus on describing the extent of relationship-based teaching practices and students' reported levels of music self-efficacy. The third research question is

¹⁵ Albert Bandura, 'Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change', *Psychological Review*, 84 (1977), 195.

explorative in nature. Given the absence of prior research examining the relationship between relationship-based teaching and post-primary music students' self-efficacy in the Republic of Ireland, this question seeks to explore whether any statistical association may exist between these variables. As such, the analysis is intended to identify potential patterns rather than to test an established causal model.

1.5 Aims

The aim of this dissertation is to advance understanding of the role that relationships play in post-primary music education in the Republic of Ireland. Specifically, the study seeks to explore how relationship-based teaching practices intersect with students' beliefs about their own musical capabilities within formal school settings.

This research aims to contribute to conversations and thought in music education in Ireland by clarifying the relevance of relational pedagogy to student motivation and confidence. It seeks to address an apparent gap in existing literature concerning the interaction between teaching methodology and psychological constructs in post-primary music classrooms in Ireland.

A further aim of the study is to inform future educational practice and teacher education by providing evidence to support the considered integration of relationship-based teaching principles within post-primary music instruction.

1.6 Research Design Overview

Understanding the interchange between teaching methodologies and student self-efficacy requires a research design that captures both measurable patterns. In this study, the chosen methodology was guided by the need to identify whether a relationship exists between RBT practices and students' self-efficacy in post-primary school music classrooms.

To address the research aims, this study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationship between relationship-based teaching practices and students' music performance self-efficacy. The investigation into post-primary school students' self-efficacy was carried out through the design, distribution, collection and analysis of structured surveys administered to two distinct groups: educators and their respective students. Data was gathered at a single point in time, making the study cross-sectional in nature. This approach allows for the systematic analysis of patterns and relationships within the sample using statistical methods. By examining self-reported quantitative measures, the approach ensured that statistical findings were grounded in the authentic voices of teachers and students, offering a perspective on the dynamics of music education in this subset of Irish post-primary school contexts.

The student survey was adapted from Michael Zelenak's *Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES)*,¹⁶ which is used to measure how confident musicians feel about their ability to prepare for and perform music successfully. The MPSES is based on Albert Bandura's theory of self-efficacy. The scale reflects four main sources of self-efficacy: past

¹⁶ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Development and validation of the music performance self-efficacy scale', *Music Education Research International*, 4 (2010), 41-42.

performance experiences, observing others, encouragement from teachers or peers, and emotional or physical responses such as anxiety or calmness. Zelenak's MPSES applies these ideas specifically to music performance by focusing on preparation, confidence during performance, perceived skill level and reactions to feedback. The adapted survey uses these elements to better understand students' confidence and beliefs about their music performance abilities.

The questions aimed to measure students' perceived self-efficacy and to explore whether verbal and social persuasion contributed significantly to their scores. The survey included five to seven targeted items for each of Bandura's four motivators, as well as general demographic questions (for example, current grade level, with optional gender and racial identity questions) to allow for the identification of potential secondary correlations based on demographic variables.

The educator survey was designed to assess the degree to which RBT practices were integrated into daily classroom routines. Items were developed using external resources, including an adaptation of *The Centre for RBT and Learning's* core belief system and examples of RBT best practices.¹⁷ David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland of The Centre for RBT and Learning created *The Third Path: A Relationship-Based Approach to Student Achievement and Well-being* in which they detail three distinct pathways for student achievement, a relationship-based approach and defining roles within the classroom. They

¹⁷ David Tranter, 'Core Beliefs of Relationship-Based Educators' <<https://www.relationshipbasedschools.com/network-news/2019/3/9/core-beliefs-of-relationship-based-educators-by-david-tranter-phd>> [accessed 15 April 2021].

assert ‘Students who are supported academically grow up to be academically strong (Path #1). Students who are supported socially/emotionally grow up to have good relationships and higher levels of life satisfaction (Path #2). The Third Path fully integrates Paths #1 and #2 to support the well-being of students, while also supporting academic development. It emphasises developing the whole student.’¹⁸

Using Tranter, Carson and Boland’s eight conditions,¹⁹ educators were surveyed and scored on a Likert-scale²⁰ of 1 to 7, where 1 indicated no evidence of RBT practices and 7 represented a pre-eminent example of RBT integration. Additional questions captured contextual information such as the number of years teaching their current classroom and the length of time they had taught their current students.

Following the survey collection, the data was analysed to determine the correlation between educators’ RBT scores and students’ self-efficacy scores. Quantitative data was statistically processed to examine the strength and significance of these relationships, while open-ended responses were coded for thematic patterns. The results of these analyses are presented in Chapter 3, with a discussion of their broader implications in the subsequent chapter.

¹⁸ David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland, *The Third Path: a Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2018).

¹⁹ See Appendix A.

²⁰ A Likert scale is a rating scale named after American psychologist Rensis Likert used to measure survey participants’ opinions, attitudes, motivations and more. It uses a range of answer options ranging from one extreme attitude to another, sometimes including a moderate or neutral option.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the context and purpose of this dissertation beginning by placing the study within the broader framework of music education in Ireland and highlighting the unique challenges and opportunities that naturally occur when teaching music to post-primary school students. It is evident that the emotional and psychological dimensions of music learning, particularly students' self-efficacy, play a role in shaping performance outcomes, engagement and long-term participation in music.

The rationale established the gap in existing research: while self-efficacy has been examined extensively in other academic disciplines, no study appears to have explored the relationship between RBT and self-efficacy within post-primary school music classrooms in Ireland. My personal connection to post-primary school music students in Ireland and America provided additional motivation and interest.

The aims and objectives clarified that this research seeks to examine how frequently and effectively RBT strategies are employed by Irish music educators, and how these strategies correlate with their students' self-belief, motivation and resilience. By adopting Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy as a guiding theoretical lens, the study is to provide a nuanced analysis of where students' confidence is nurtured or hindered, and to offer practical recommendations for strengthening teaching practices.

The literature review provided an overview of major contributions to the fields of self-efficacy, teaching methodology and music education. Additionally, it provided insight into the evolution of music education policy and practice in Ireland. The review revealed that while Irish music education has undergone significant reforms, the relational dimension of pedagogy appears to be unexamined. This establishes the importance of investigating not only what is taught in music classrooms in Ireland, but how it is taught and how those methods shape students' perceptions of their own abilities.

Chapter 2 will explore self-efficacy and its influence on music students, examining both new and traditional teaching methodologies. It will also provide an in-depth analysis of relationship-based teaching (RBT) including its core principles, techniques and observed outcomes. Additionally, the chapter will review the historical development, strengths and limitations of music education within the Irish public school system. Particular attention will be given to the methodological approaches employed by post-primary school music teachers in Ireland and how these approaches affect students' self-efficacy.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology used to investigate the relation between RBT and the self-efficacy of post-primary school music students in Ireland. It details the use of a quantitative approach, incorporating data gathered through specifically designed surveys for educators and students. The chapter explains the participant recruitment process, which included outreach via email and at a national music education conference, resulting in a final sample of nine educators and one hundred students. It also describes the construction of the survey instruments, which were informed by Bandura's self-efficacy framework and

Zelenak's Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale. Chapter 3 also addresses the rationale behind methodological choices, the procedures for data collection and analysis and the limitations encountered during the study, including challenges with participant recruitment and data completeness.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research study, analysing the data collected from both the educator and student surveys to assess the influence of RBT on students' self-efficacy in post-primary school music classrooms. The chapter provides an overview of the educator survey results, then details the results of the student surveys before further exploring how these student scores correlated with the RBT scores of their respective teachers. Finally, Chapter 4 identifies variations and patterns across individual teacher-student groups.

Chapter 5 culminates the key findings of the study and reflects on their significance within the wider field of music education in Ireland. It revisits the central research questions summarising how the evidence gathered through educator and student surveys clarifies the relationship between RBT practices and post-primary school students' self-efficacy. Chapter 5 also discusses the implications of these findings for classroom practice, teacher training and educational policy, detailing both strengths and areas for development within the current system. Finally, it outlines recommendations for future research, emphasising the importance of continued exploration into RBT and their role in shaping students' confidence, motivation and long-term engagement with music.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature relevant to the purpose of this study, which is to examine the relationship between relationship-based teaching practices and post-primary music students' self-efficacy in the Republic of Ireland. Guided by the research questions outlined in Chapter One,¹ the literature was selected to establish a foundation for understanding self-efficacy, its sources and its influence on student learning and performance, with particular emphasis on music education contexts. The chapter is organised into sections that first define self-efficacy and examine its effects on students, before reviewing traditional and modern teaching approaches. It then focuses specifically on relationship-based teaching and concludes with an overview of post-primary music education in Ireland.

Self-efficacy has been widely identified as an influential factor in shaping both teaching practices and student learning outcomes, especially in music education. In Ireland, educational reform and cultural heritage coincide in the public-school sector and the effectiveness of music instruction is influenced heavily by the educator's methodology and statewide curriculum. Educators are teaching the skills necessary to receive high marks on statewide examinations and their ability to do that greatly affects student outcome. As music education continues to develop in both primary and post-primary schools in Ireland, understanding how students feel about their music classes and lessons will become a valuable tool for student achievement.

¹ See Chapter 1, 15.

There is an abundance of ways in which researchers can examine students to determine how their students will achieve the highest success rates. For example, studies can be undertaken on students' study habits or educators' attention to organisation. For this dissertation, one of two primary focuses will be on students' self-efficacy or their belief in themselves as a strong indicator for success.²

2.1 Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy, defined by Albert Bandura, is the belief in one's capabilities to learn or perform behaviours at designated levels.³ He describes self-efficacy as a conceptual and methodological issue, while he clarifies its definition so as to not be confused with similar concepts such as self-esteem or outcome expectancies.⁴ He writes that self-esteem is a judgement of self-worth, while self-efficacy is completely different as it is concerned with a judgement of capability and potential. It also differs from outcome expectancies in that self-efficacy is concerned with the capability to complete the task rather than what will come of its completeness. Bandura explains that self-efficacy does have potential impacts on the other concepts such as self-esteem and expectancy outcomes. He states that perceived efficacy also will influence how people strategise, conceptualise and even put forth efforts when attempting to achieve something new. The efficacy belief system is not a global trait, but a differentiated set of self-beliefs linked to distinct realms of function.⁵

² Dale H. Schunk, 'Self-efficacy and achievement behaviors', *Educational Psychology Review*, 1 (1989), 175.

³ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York, New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997), 191.

⁴ Albert Bandura, 'Guide for Creating Self-Efficacy Scales', in F. Pajares and T. Urdan (eds), *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 309.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 307.

Although all of Bandura's sources (enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal/social persuasion and physiological states⁶) are important to the development of self-efficacy, this dissertation mainly examines the third source, verbal and social persuasion, which is the encouragement or discouragement from others, in this case the students' educators.

Bandura writes that enactive mastery or performance outcomes are positive and negative experiences that can influence an individual's abilities to perform a task. He continued that mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because 'successes raise mastery expectations; repeated failures lower them, particularly if the mishaps occur early in the course of events.'⁷ Successes build strong self-efficacy, while failures, especially early on, can undermine it. He asserts that 'As a result, improvements in behavioral functioning transfer not only to similar situations but to activities that are substantially different from those on which the treatment was focused.'⁸

Vicarious experience is Bandura's second self-efficacy source. It is defined as seeing and experiencing the accomplishments of one's peers. Bandura asserted that seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises the observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities to succeed. For this reason, relationships in music classrooms are vital to the success of the students. When post-primary school-aged students experience success either as a team, or vicariously through a classmate,

⁶ Bandura uses the terms physiological state and emotional arousal interchangeably. For this dissertation, I have chosen to use 'physiological state'.

⁷ Albert Bandura, 'Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change', *Psychological Review*, 84 (1977), 195.

⁸ *Ibid*, 195.

it can strengthen their belief in their own abilities to do the same. In music classrooms, this dynamic is especially relevant as students often learn in ensemble settings where peer modelling is a central part of the experience. For example, when a student witnesses a classmate successfully perform a difficult passage, it can provide not only technical insight but also reassurance that the task is achievable.

Vicarious experience has been linked to increased motivation, persistence and risk-taking behaviours, as students gain confidence from the knowledge that their peers have navigated similar challenges. ‘Because high arousal can debilitate performance, people are more inclined to expect success when they are not beset by aversive arousal...’⁹ This effect can be magnified in collaborative contexts such as choir rehearsals or group performances, where collective efficacy can reinforce an individual’s efficacy beliefs.

Social and verbal persuasion is Bandura’s third source of self-efficacy and, although Bandura claimed that this is one of the least likely predictors of high self-efficacy scores, it is the most important source to investigate in this dissertation. In 1994 Bandura asserted that certain overused pedagogical approaches could potentially have a diminishing effect on the self-efficacy of students who are not high-achieving academic students.¹⁰ These practices include comparing students’ performances to one another, which can in turn increase self-efficacy of high-performing students and lower self-efficacy for the others. A secondary thought is that

⁹ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York, New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997), 106.

¹⁰ Albert Bandura ‘Self-efficacy’, in V. S. Ramachandran (ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior*, (4 vols, New York, NY: Academic Press, 1994), iv, 80.

inflexible approaches like direct instruction do not allow collaboration with peers and that this could result in some students feeling confused and discouraged and remaining this way.

Physiological and emotional states of arousal, Bandura's fourth self-efficacy source, can influence self-efficacy depending on how these feelings are interpreted. People who have a high sense of efficacy are likely to view their state of affective arousal as an energising facilitator of performance, whereas those who are beset by self-doubts regard their arousal as a debilitator.¹¹ Managing anxiety and enhancing mood can improve self-efficacy whereas perceptions of fatigue, stress and stereotypically negative physical and emotional states can be interpreted as indicators of incapability.¹²

Bandura argues that a universal, one-size-fits-all, approach to developing self-efficacy scales is ineffective, as it limits both their explanatory power and predictive accuracy. He emphasises that studies using such general and broad measures often overlook the specific situational demands and contexts that influence self-efficacy.¹³ When developing a scale to measure perceived self-efficacy, it must be tailored to the specific domain of functioning being studied.¹⁴ There are many methodological and conceptual issues that need to be identified. Therefore, studying and creating self-efficacy scales mandates a unique process in which the author studies each aspect of this multifaceted approach. Since measuring self-efficacy focuses more on perceived capability than intention or commitment, the choice of

¹¹ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, 106.

¹² Barry J. Zimmerman, 'Self-efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn', *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25 (2000), 88.

¹³ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, 79-81.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 114.

language is crucial: for instance, using phrases like ‘can do’ instead of ‘will do’ can significantly influence responses.

In 1989 Bandura highlighted that self-efficacy influences people’s behaviours and emotional states toward accomplishing life’s goals.¹⁵ Understanding self-efficacy on a basic level is crucial to help students achieve their highest potential and Bandura claims that mastery experiences can be the most influential.¹⁶ Barry J. Zimmerman refers to this as enactive attainment and agrees that it is the most influential as it is based on personal experience.¹⁷ When students are successful in their work it can create a feeling of accomplishment that only helps to strengthen their self-efficacy. Educators can encourage this feeling by praising the work being done.

Zimmerman’s work in 2000 further defined and differentiated self-efficacy from numerous subcategories: outcome expectations, self-concept and perceived control.¹⁸ Zimmerman defines self-efficacy as a performance-based measure of perceived capability. He believes that self-efficacy is a belief in one’s own abilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments, which is a future-oriented judgment about capability in specific situations or tasks.

¹⁵ Albert Bandura ‘Social cognitive theory’ in R. Vasta (ed.), *Annals of Child Development* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1989), vi, 1-60.

¹⁶ Albert Bandura, ‘Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change’, 195.

¹⁷ Barry J. Zimmerman, ‘Self-efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn’, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25 (2000), 85-88.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 85-88.

James E. Maddux proposed a fifth self-efficacy source in his ‘Self-Efficacy: The Power of Believing You Can’ many years after Bandura’s main framework. Maddux introduces the concept of imagined experiences. Here, people go through the process of visualising themselves (or others) performing effectively or ineffectively in future situations or performances.¹⁹ He notes that ‘we can influence self-efficacy beliefs by imagining ourselves or others behaving effectively or ineffectively in hypothetical situations’.²⁰ These images can stem from past experiences or be induced through techniques like covert modelling and can have an impact on future performance. However, he emphasises that mental imagery alone has limits, stating that ‘simply imagining myself doing something well ... is not likely to have as strong an influence on my self-efficacy as will an actual experience’.²¹ Maddux also describes covert (imaginal) modelling, where clients vividly imagine models performing skillfully, which has been shown to ‘increase assertive behavior and self-efficacy for assertiveness’²²

Together, imagined experiences and modelling illustrate how people can build self-efficacy not only through direct action but also through symbolic and observational learning. Maddux presents them as powerful psychological tools for behaviour change, especially when used intentionally in therapeutic contexts.

¹⁹ James E. Maddux, ‘Self-Efficacy: The Power of Believing You Can,’ in Shane J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 277-287.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 280.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 280.

²² *Ibid.*, 283.

Maddux discusses collective efficacy which is a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required for producing given levels of attainments.²³ Collective efficacy is the belief that 'we can work together effectively to accomplish our shared goals'.²⁴ Collective efficacy has been linked to teacher effectiveness and student achievement, the success of self-managing work teams and group brainstorming effectiveness. It is believed that personal and collective efficacy are interconnected: a group of self-doubters is unlikely to form a highly efficacious collective.

Behaviour is more accurately predicted by individuals' beliefs in their overall ability to take the necessary actions to succeed, rather than by their confidence in just a single aspect of self-efficacy specific to a study.²⁵ If students know all of the aspects of a given task in order to accomplish solving a problem, they are more likely to have high self-efficacy. Therefore, when creating a self-efficacy scale the author must fully understand all aspects of the activity in question. Bandura's guide for creating and analysing self-efficacy scales and data are used in this dissertation to discover if post-primary school-aged music students have a higher perceived self-efficacy based on their respective educator's use of RBT models.

²³ Ibid., 277.

²⁴ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York, New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997), 477.

²⁵ Ibid., 42.

2.2 Self-Efficacy's Effect on Students

With scientific data indicating that self-efficacy is a major predictor of success in subjects like Mathematics,²⁶ English²⁷ and History²⁸ classrooms, several scholars have hypothesised that similar relationships may exist in music education that self-efficacy would translate into the music classroom as well.²⁹ Numerous studies have been conducted on students' self-efficacy, however, far fewer have focused solely on student musicians. John McCormick and Gary E. McPherson have been studying motivation and student musicians' abilities to perform and study music at a high level since 2000. They used a single question system to measure music students' anticipated results prior to music exams and laid the groundwork for numerous self-efficacy studies in the field of music education.³⁰ They wrote that teachers should pay more attention to their students' perceptions of their own personal competence, given evidence that these types of perceptions accurately predict their motivation and the future decisions they make about their desire to continue improving.³¹

From the mid-1990s to the present, Frank Pajares has undertaken research on the basic adolescent self-efficacy theory and has published numerous articles and essays. In his book with Tim Urdan, *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents*, Pajares discusses self-efficacy in adolescents through social, emotional, physical, familial and educational lenses that all

²⁶ Frank Pajares and David M. Miller, 'Role of self-efficacy and self-concept beliefs in mathematical problem solving: A path analysis', *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86 (1994), 193-203.

²⁷ Pär Sehlström, Christian Waldmann and Maria Levlín, 'Self-efficacy for writing and written text quality of upper secondary students with and without reading difficulties', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14 (2023).

²⁸ Sumar Aktan, 'Investigation of Classroom Teaching, Self-Efficacy and Motivation in Social Studies Classrooms', *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 5 (2019), 639-656.

²⁹ Barry J. Zimmerman, 'Self-efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn', 241.

³⁰ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, 'Self-efficacy and music performance', *Psychology of Music*, 34 (2006), 322-336.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 336.

culminate in one main thought: developing strong self-efficacy beliefs in adolescents is a critical responsibility of teachers and parents.³² By understanding the sources of these beliefs and implementing the practical strategies, adults can empower young people to embrace challenges, persevere through difficulties and ultimately achieve their full potential.³³ Pajares underscores the importance of using research-informed, context-sensitive practices in education, particularly when addressing children's and adolescents' self-efficacy and self-esteem.³⁴ Although many of his proposed ideas may appear to be common sense, he warns educators that traditional practices are often accepted without critical evaluation. He argues that overgeneralising any single teaching approach can result in rigid, one-size-fits-all, methods that hinder the adaptability and creativity vital to effective teaching and parenting. Pajares also asserts that 'teachers can influence their student's feelings about their own ability if they provide them with challenging tasks and meaningful activities to master, actively support and encourage them along the way, teach in ways that demonstrate that they believe in their students and convey these impressions in ways aimed at developing a robust sense of self-confidence,' furthering Bandura's theory of social persuasion.³⁵

Sandra K. M. Tsang, Eadaoin K. P. Hui and Bella C. M. Law, in their article 'Self-efficacy as a positive youth development construct: a conceptual review', discussed the crucial role of self-efficacy in shaping how young people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave, ultimately influencing their immediate and long-term development. They stress that the

³² Frank Pajares and Timothy C. Urda (eds), *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006).

³³ *Ibid.*, 355.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 365.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 350.

importance of early cultivation of positive self-efficacy in early adolescence is crucial and achievable. They assert that self-efficacy has a multifaceted nature with significant influence on various aspects of adolescent functioning and there is an importance of targeted interventions to enhance it early on, stating that adolescents' '... beliefs in their self-efficacy for different tasks and the cumulative effects of such beliefs will significantly influence their immediate and long-term development.'³⁶

The authors stress that cultivating positive self-efficacy early on is both crucial and achievable, noting 'plenty of research evidence indicating that timely and strategic cultivation of positive self-efficacy in early adolescence is important and possible'.³⁷ They describe self-efficacy as a multifaceted construct whose components vary in 'level, strength, and generativity' across different domains of functioning influencing areas such as academic performance, coping, and social behaviour.³⁸ Because these beliefs arise from multiple sources including mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion and emotional states, the authors argue that 'careful understanding and manipulation' of these processes can guide effective promotion of youth self-efficacy.³⁹ They conclude that targeted interventions are essential, pointing out that successful youth development programmes consistently include components that promote self-efficacy and must be tailored to age, gender, culture, and task demands to be most effective.⁴⁰

³⁶ Sandra K. M. Tsang, Eadaoin K. P. Hui and Bella C. M. Law, 'Self-efficacy as a positive youth development construct: a conceptual review', *Scientific World Journal*, (2012), 2.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

In 2011 Laura Ritchie and Aaron Williamon studied self-efficacy in children of primary-school age using a musical learning questionnaire. Their data was collected from 404 primary-school aged students in the United Kingdom and found that students enrolled in a music class had much higher self-perceived efficacy scores than those that did not partake in musical learning.⁴¹ Ritchie and Williamon's regression analyses⁴² revealed that prior experience with instrumental tuition was the strongest predictor of music self-efficacy. Additionally, prosocial behaviours were significant predictors for boys, while well-being was a significant predictor for girls.⁴³

Michael P. Hewitt found that 'self-efficacy appears to be a predictor of music performance, as the correlation between these two variables was strong and positive.'⁴⁴ Students who have high self-efficacy tendencies are more likely to have increased awareness around their learning environments and practice techniques.⁴⁵ He notes that 'students with higher self-efficacy tend to engage in tasks necessary for improvement, such as practicing their instrument for longer periods, and investing in tasks that they believe will help them to learn.'⁴⁶ He continues explaining that 'efforts to improve music students' self-regulation capacity are needed as the profession continues to examine ways in which young students learn. As practitioners develop effective methods and curricular materials for developing independent musicianship skills, they may also wish to be aware of gender and school-level

⁴¹ Laura Ritchie and Aaron Williamon, 'Primary school children's self-efficacy for music learning', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 59 (2011), 147.

⁴² Regression analysis is a statistical method used to model the relationship between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables.

⁴³ Laura Ritchie and Aaron Williamon, 'Primary school children's self-efficacy for music learning', 154.

⁴⁴ Michael P. Hewitt, 'Self-efficacy, self-evaluation, and music performance of secondary-level band students', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 63 (2015), 308.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 310.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 308.

differences among students' beliefs, so that they can adopt appropriate instructional approaches.⁴⁷

Zimmerman, Maria K. DiBenedetto and Dale H. Schunk determined that more efficacious learners also have high perseverance levels and show more determination when faced with increased challenges during their practice.⁴⁸ Zimmerman also differentiated self-efficacy from self-concept and outcome-expectations. Outcome expectation focus on the consequences, both positive and negative of any action taken, while self-efficacy focuses on the belief to perform those actions.⁴⁹

In 1986 Bandura asserted that self-efficacy plays a larger role because the types of outcomes people anticipate depend largely on their judgments of how well they will be able to perform in given situations.⁵⁰ Duane Shell, Carolyn Colvin and Roger Bruning's research supported this, finding self-efficacy a stronger predictor of reading and writing achievement than outcome expectancies.⁵¹

⁴⁷ Ibid., 310.

⁴⁸ Barry J. Zimmerman, Maria K. DiBenedetto and Dale H. Schunk, 'The Role of Self-Efficacy and Related Beliefs in Self-Regulation of Learning and Performance' in A. J. Elliot, C. S. Dweck and D. S. Yeager (eds.), *Handbook of competence and motivation: Theory and application* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2nd edn, 2017), 332.

⁴⁹ Barry J. Zimmerman, 'Self-efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn', *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25 (2000) 82-91.

⁵⁰ Albert Bandura, *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 392.

⁵¹ Duane Shell, Carolyn Colvin and Roger Bruning, 'Self-Efficacy, Attribution, and Outcome Expectancy Mechanisms in Reading and Writing Achievement: Grade-Level and Achievement-Level Differences', *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87 (1995), 386-398.

The term self-concept is a more general and self-descriptive theory that incorporates self-knowledge and the self-evaluation of feelings. For example, Frank Pajares and David M. Millers showed that in mathematics self-efficacy was a stronger predictor of problem-solving than self-concept.⁵² Perceived control or locus of control refers to general expectations about whether outcomes are controlled by one's actions or external influences. Ronald E. Smith's research indicated self-efficacy was a better predictor of improvement than locus of control in coping skills training.⁵³

Bandura's work has been used in continued efforts to help educate and understand students' self-efficacy levels. In 2001 Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy developed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale.⁵⁴ In 2010 Michael Zelenak embarked on understanding and developing a 'Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale' to scientifically analyse music students' self-efficacy and successfully created the ability to assign each student a relative score.⁵⁵ In 2016 Ilse-Renee Moss Long used this research, and that of Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk-Hoy, to further the exploration of music students' self-efficacy.⁵⁶ She studied how teachers' understandings of their own self-efficacy and self-efficacious teaching practices could improve students' self-efficacy, in turn affecting their performance. Moss Long found that teachers with great understanding of their self-efficacy and an understanding of

⁵² Frank Pajares and David M. Miller, 'Role of self-efficacy and self-concept beliefs in mathematical problem solving: A path analysis', 193-203.

⁵³ Ronald E. Smith, 'Effects of coping skills training on generalized self-efficacy and locus of control', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56 (1989), 228-233.

⁵⁴ Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk-Hoy, 'Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct.', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17 (2001), 783-805.

⁵⁵ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Self-efficacy in music performance: Measuring the sources among post-primary school music students' (PhD dissertation, University of South Florida, 2011), 116.

⁵⁶ Ilse-Renee Moss Long, 'Why can't I sing: the impact of self-efficacy enhancing techniques on student self-efficacy beliefs' (DMA dissertation, Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2016).

techniques to help students increase their level of self-efficacy increases the likelihood of students in their classrooms having higher perceived self-efficacy scores.⁵⁷

The central premise of James Maddux's self-efficacy theory is that an individual's belief in his or her ability to produce desired effects is a primary determinant of his or her behaviour, perseverance and overall psychological well-being.⁵⁸ His writings explore the definition of self-efficacy and its significance across various domains, including psychological adjustment, physical health, self-regulation and psychotherapy. It also introduces the concept of collective efficacy, which refers to a group's shared belief in its ability to achieve common goals. Maddux asserts that self-efficacy is a crucial 'ingredient in the recipe for success' and aligns with the principles of positive psychology by focusing on human potential and enablement.⁵⁹

Self-efficacy plays an essential role in the academic and personal development of post-primary school students. Increasing academic challenges, social pressures and decisions that influence their future call for critical thinking about their belief in their own abilities. A higher amount of self-efficacy would equip them with the confidence to tackle difficult tasks, endure through setbacks and take responsibility for their own learning. By fostering a sense of control and competence, students can achieve overall well-being. While Bandura indicates that verbal and social persuasion have little to no impact on a student's self-efficacy when

⁵⁷ Ibid., 108.

⁵⁸ James E. Maddux, 'Self-Efficacy: The Power of Believing You Can' in Shane J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 277-287.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 277.

delivered arbitrarily, delivering content with intentionality and highly specific feedback can make a vast difference in the outcome.⁶⁰

Building on the work of Bandura, Elizabeth Bucura published 'Fostering Self-Efficacy Among Adolescents in Secondary General Music' which suggested numerous ways that educators could potentially help increase self-efficacy amongst their students.⁶¹ She concluded that building self-efficacy is crucial for engaging students and fostering lifelong musical pursuits in post-primary school music classrooms. By understanding the four sources of self-efficacy and implementing the suggested strategies, teachers can create a learning environment where students feel more confident in their musical abilities and are willing to take risks.⁶² This in turn could lead to higher motivation in students and strengthen their own musicianship skills.

Michael Hewitt's 'The Effects of Modeling, Self-Evaluation, and Self-Listening on Junior High Instrumentalists' Music Performance and Practice Attitude' explores the three practice strategies he outlines in the title of his paper: modelling or listening to an excerpt from a professional; self-evaluation which is assessing one's own performance using specific criteria; and self-listening including listening to recordings of one's own performance.⁶³ He studies these practice strategies examining the music performance skills and practice

⁶⁰ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, 101-103.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Bucura, 'Fostering Self-Efficacy Among Adolescents in Secondary General Music', *Journal of General Music Education*, 32 (2019), 5-12.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 6.

⁶³ Michael P. Hewitt, 'The Effect of Modeling, Self-Evaluation, and Self-Listening on Junior High Instrumentalists' Music Performance and Practice Attitude', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 49 (2001), 307-322.

attitudes of junior high school instrumental music students.⁶⁴ The study examined close to 100 students in grades seven to nine in America and utilised a factorial design⁶⁵ to analyse the interactions between these three strategies. Hewitt's findings concluded that modelling, particularly when combined with self-evaluation, can significantly improve performance in several musicianship skills. He also noted that self-listening alone shows no statistically significant effect. Surprisingly, none of the interventions had a statistically significant impact on the students' attitudes towards practice, which was generally positive across all groups.⁶⁶

Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick's work in music education and self-efficacy is utilised by every researcher that is studying these subject matters. Together, three of their publications, 'The Contribution of Motivational Factors to Instrumental Performance in a Music Examination', 'Self-efficacy and music performance' and 'The role of self-efficacy in a musical performance examination: An exploratory structural equation analysis', studied the motivational and self-regulatory factors that influence instrumental music performance examinations. In 'The Contribution of Motivational Factors to Instrumental Performance in a Music Examination' they analysed three hundred and forty-nine Australian instrumental students (aged nine to eighteen) prior to their Trinity College London music performance examinations. They found that students believe that their practice efforts and efforts during the exam are the predominant factors in the examination outcomes. They argue that

⁶⁴ Junior high school (or middle school) in the United States of America typically encompasses grades seven to nine for students aged twelve to fourteen years of age and is the bridge between elementary school and high school. Junior high school serves to prepare students for advanced curriculum and subjects in high school. Grades seven to nine in the United States of America is equivalent to year one, two and three of post-primary school in Ireland.

⁶⁵ Factorial design in statistics and experimental design refers to a study that examines the effects of multiple factors (independent variables) on a dependent variable, both individually and in combination.

⁶⁶ Michael P. Hewitt, 'Self-efficacy, self-evaluation, and music performance of secondary-level band students', 312-313.

successful musical performance relies not only on technical skill but also on motivational resources and how students think about themselves, the task and their performance. Their study highlights the significant predictive power of performance self-efficacy on their actual examination results.⁶⁷

In 2003 McPherson and McCormick published ‘The Role of Self-Efficacy in a Musical Performance Examination: An Exploratory Structural Equation Analysis’ in which they examined both intellectual and motivational factors that could potentially influence performance in graded music exams. They focused specifically on self-efficacy and used a structural equation model⁶⁸ on data from over 300 students undertaking Trinity College London exams. They found that self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of actual performance in the exam.⁶⁹

In 2006 they published, ‘Self-efficacy and music performance’ which studies self-efficacy in predicting the performance achievement of young musicians who are taking graded music exams.⁷⁰ This study utilised structural equation modelling to analyse data from 686 students undertaking Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) performance examinations. It concluded that self-efficacy is the most significant predictor of achievement in these exams. Self-efficacy was a stronger predictor in student success than practice or theoretical

⁶⁷ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, ‘The Contribution of Motivational Factors to Instrumental Performance in a Music Examination’, *Research Studies in Music Education*, 15 (2000), 31-39.

⁶⁸ A Structural Equation Model (SEM) is a statistical method used to analyse relationships between observed and latent (unobserved) variables, often represented as a diagram.

⁶⁹ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, ‘The Role of Self-Efficacy in a Musical Performance Examination: An Exploratory Structural Equation Analysis’, *Psychology of Music*, 31 (2003), 37-51.

⁷⁰ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, ‘Self-efficacy and music performance’, *Psychology of Music*, 34 (2006), 322-336.

strategies. These results were also compared using the Trinity College London examination system. McPherson and McCormick discuss the implications of these findings, emphasising the importance of self-efficacy in music learning, and offer practical recommendations for teachers and examination boards to foster students' confidence and ultimately enhance their performance.⁷¹ McPherson and McCormick assert that 'people with resilient self-efficacy have the ability to rebound quickly from difficulties and move forward. They assess the situations in which failure occurs to determine how they might perform better in the future.'⁷² In accordance with the Trinity College data, 'self-efficacy' is the best predictor of the students' performance results in the examination, but they also share an important understanding that while self-efficacy is crucial, it does not guarantee success without the necessary skills and knowledge. 'Self-efficacy alone will not produce a competent performance when requisite skills and knowledge are lacking. Put quite bluntly, students still need to do the work and the practice.'⁷³

In 'Developing Self-Efficacy to Improve Music Achievement' Michael Zelenak emphasises Bandura's theory that self-efficacy is 'dominant self-perception shaping action, effort, perseverance, resiliency, and achievement. He states 'along with its direct influence on achievement, self-efficacy contributes to the development of other factors, such as self-regulation, formal practice, and informal practice, that also affect achievement.'⁷⁴ While Zelenak states that 'all self-perceptions ... do not exert the same degree of influence'

⁷¹ Ibid., 335-336.

⁷² Ibid., 335.

⁷³ Ibid., 336.

⁷⁴ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Developing Self-Efficacy to Improve Music Achievement', *Music Educators Journal*, 107 (2020), 42.

he also recognises through McPherson and McCormick's work that self-perception can be important to outcome expectancies. 'Although practising is important, students' thoughts about themselves and their abilities to accomplish tasks is just as important as their practice efforts.'⁷⁵ Zelenak developed and introduced the 'Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale' (MPSES) which measures the four sources of self-efficacy among post-primary school band, choral and string students. The MPSES contains 24 items rated on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 100 (strongly agree). He suggests using the MPSES as a formative assessment to track students' self-efficacy and to further evaluate the impact of the teaching practices being utilised.

2.3 Traditional Teaching Methods

The second primary focus of this dissertation is the educator's methodological approach. Similar to the numerous ways that a student's behaviour can be examined, teaching methodologies vary widely among educators with an infinite amount of possible research concepts. New teaching methodologies are frequently being introduced and educators are often asked to adopt these methods with little or no training. In recent years these methodologies include concepts such as collaborative learning, experiential learning and even gamification, where almost the entirety of the lessons is done through interactive gaming, the use of digital or analog games in classroom instruction to promote active

⁷⁵ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, 'The Contribution of Motivational Factors to Instrumental Performance in a Music Examination,' *Research Studies in Music Education*, 15 (2000), 31.

participation, problem-solving and engagement through interactive, feedback-driven learning experiences.⁷⁶

The amount of teaching methods and belief systems to which educators could subscribe with the aim of informing their students successfully can overwhelm even the most seasoned teachers. These numerous teaching techniques can be separated into two sub-categories known as traditional and modern.

Traditional teaching methods involve a classroom often referred to as ‘teacher-centred’ where the main mode of informational delivery is through lectures, rote memorisation, textbooks, exercises and quizzes that lead to examinations. Traditional classrooms are often rigid and the curriculum consists of drills, practice worksheets, homework and traditional textbook studying. Research suggests that teacher-centred approaches may reduce student motivation, discourage collaboration and fail to cultivate higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and synthesis.⁷⁷ In music education specifically, such approaches can prioritise technical precision at the expense of interpretive understanding or emotional connection to the material. Traditional methods often neglect the relationship aspect of teaching with limited opportunities for peer interaction or student autonomy, which can hinder the development of communication, teamwork and self-efficacy. Some scholars argue that these limitations warrant consideration of alternative approaches that incorporate active learning,

⁷⁶ Manar S. Alotaibi, ‘Game-based learning in early childhood education: a systematic review and meta-analysis’, *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15 (2024), <<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1307881/full>> [accessed 10 October 2024].

⁷⁷ Proceedings of the 2022 25th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS, 2022) <https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-89-3_32> [accessed 9 January 2024].

creativity, and personal engagement to replace rigid traditional methods. While this method may benefit certain students, there are limitations and drawbacks that modern teaching methods may resolve.

Linda B. Nilson outlines traditional teaching methods and provides a comprehensive list of educational techniques ranging from direct instruction, where students listen to a lecture and have little time for guided instruction, to case-based learning where students apply course knowledge to devise one or more solutions or resolutions to dilemmas presented in a realistic story or situation.⁷⁸ This list highlights different learning outcomes based on approach and identifies that a lecture-based learning model has the potential to only impact knowledge, rather than having any effect on students' skills, attitude or behaviours. In contrast, teaching methods such as inquiry-based learning or problem-based learning have outcomes that are comprehensive and cover evaluation, cognitive, student development, analysis and synthesis.⁷⁹

In 'The Impact of Teacher feedback on Students', Manzoor Ahmed, Martin Thomas and Rimesha Farooq studied how three types of teacher feedback could affect students' self-efficacy: constructive, evaluative and corrective feedback.⁸⁰ Their data was gathered through a structured questionnaire from 336 students in Pakistan. They found that constructive and evaluative educator feedback had a significant effect on students' academic performance and

⁷⁸ Linda B. Nilson, *Teaching at Its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 4th edn, 2016), 107.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 203-215.

⁸⁰ Constructive feedback focuses on helping students improve by highlighting strengths and offering specific, actionable suggestions for growth. Corrective feedback is aimed at modifying behaviour or thinking to improve learning, often addressing errors or misconceptions. Evaluative feedback provides a judgment or assessment of performance, often in the form of grades or marks, and may or may not offer guidance for improvement.

that students' self-efficacy was impacted positively with these feedback techniques. They showed no significant correlation, however, between corrective feedback and students' academic performance.⁸¹

Although all teaching methodologies are utilised with the common goal of teaching students in order to expand their knowledge, more traditional approaches like teacher-centred learning encourage students to focus solely on their educator and learn content through the educator's lens.⁸²

Mustafa Altan says that traditional teaching methods like teaching-centred learning may lead to reduced motivation and engagement as learners often feel disconnected from the material and lack opportunities for active participation.⁸³ There is an emphasis on rote memorisation and lack of focus on analytical thinking or self-belief systems, which could potentially limit students' abilities to apply knowledge in the real world and think critically for themselves.

In most traditional-method classrooms, there is a lack of collaborative activities for students to engage in relationships with anything other than their own work. This can lead to a lack in development of the communication and teamwork skills potentially necessary to thrive as a

⁸¹ Manzoor Ahmed, Martin Thomas and Rimesha Farooq, 'The Impact of Teacher Feedback on Students' Academic Performance: A Mediating Role of Self-efficacy', *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 2 (2021), 408-464.

⁸² Laura Hilger, 'Teacher-Centered versus Learner-Centered Learning', *KnowledgeWorks*, 18 June 2019, <knowledgeworks.org/resources/learner-centered-learning/> [accessed 15 December 2021].

⁸³ Mustafa Altun, 'The Ongoing Debate over Teacher Centered Education and Student-Centered Education', *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 10 (2023), 106-110.

student musician.⁸⁴ There is an absence of student autonomy in the learning process of traditional-based classrooms which can stifle creativity and self-identified learning. These skills are crucial for lifelong learning and adaptability in various professional environments.

Some educators and researchers believe that traditional teaching practices limit, and in some cases negatively influence, student learning outcomes. Kathleen Klien, Jennifer Calabrese, Adam Aguiar, Sunny Mathew and Kimoni Ajani asserted that ‘traditional lectures, while convenient for delivering vast amounts of information, were critiqued by students for their potential to disengage students and faculty. Students reported struggling to maintain focus during traditional lectures, resulting in decreased information retention.’⁸⁵ On the contrary, Klien et al. also asserted that pre-lecture and post-lecture exam results still improved, indicating student learning.

Yang Yang and Graham Welch found that applying traditional methods like lectures and a rigid curriculum diminished student engagement and hindered the authenticity of the folk music they were performing. In the inherently informal and participatory folk-art form they were researching, they found that when using traditional teaching approaches there was a disconnect between students and the cultural essence of the art form leading to poor results.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Joseph Lathan, ‘Complete Guide to Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered Learning’, *University of San Diego Online Degrees* (2019), <onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/teacher-centered-vs-student-centered-learning> [accessed 1 June 2024].

⁸⁵ Kathleen Klien, Jennifer Calabrese, Adam Aguiar, Sunny Mathew, Kimoni Ajani, Rania Almajid and Jennifer Aarons, ‘Evaluating Active Lecture and Traditional Lecture in Higher Education’, *Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence*, 7 (2023) 48.

⁸⁶ Yang Yang, and Graham Welch, ‘Pedagogical Challenges in Folk Music Teaching in Higher Education: A Case Study of Hua’er Music in China’, *British Journal of Music Education*, 33 (2016), 61-79.

The limitations of traditional teaching methods could suggest the need for more balanced instructional strategies that incorporate both traditional and modern teaching techniques to foster a more inclusive and effective educational experience.

2.4 Modern Teaching Methods

Modern teaching methods are characterised by a student-centred approach in which learners are viewed as active and collaborative participants in the teaching and learning process.

Student-centred research and learning focuses on many areas of the education process, such as understanding students based on varying levels of cognitive development, or predicting student and classroom outcomes based on race or socioeconomic upbringing. Bryan Dunn asserts that, when utilising student-centred learning correctly, there is a shift in the relationship between the educator and the student, especially if there is a direct focus on self-efficacy, as opposed to achievement. 'If the focus of schooling shifts from achievement alone to the self-efficacy of students and their beliefs in their own skills and abilities, then perhaps a better understanding of student preparedness could be attained. This dynamic would not only shift the relationship between teacher and student, but also better prepare the student for the current workforce.'⁸⁷

Sujata Mehta defines modern teaching as a teaching method which focuses on the students improving their intellectual behaviour by using various new and innovative ideas, rather than making them recite the syllabus to pass an examination.⁸⁸ Here newer concepts are

⁸⁷ Bryan Dunn, 'Exploring student centered learning and its effect on the self-efficacy of students' (EdD dissertation, Northeastern University, 2018), 51-52.

⁸⁸ Sadjata Mehta, 'Modern Teaching Methods – It's Time For The Change', <<https://eduvoice.in/modern-teaching-methods/#0-what-is-modern-teaching>> [accessed 28 March 2022].

highlighted in an attempt to modernise the classroom. One such methodology is gamification where the educator leads students through the creation of games as their lesson plans.⁸⁹

Mehta also introduces the concept of a flipped classroom, where the teaching methods are reversed. In the flipped classroom setting, students are asked to study from their home with only necessary instructions given. Simultaneously the classroom setting is a place for only practical education.⁹⁰ This discussion is important to the work of relationship-based teaching (RBT) and self-efficacy because it illustrates how modern, student-centred approaches such as gamification and flipped classrooms shift the focus from rote learning toward active participation and intellectual growth.

Jacob Thompson-Bell found that a student-centred approach enhanced motivation, self-efficacy and deeper engagement among conservatoire musicians at Leeds Conservatoire.⁹¹ He introduced two strategies: critical response process and practice-as-research. Critical response process is a structure method that places an emphasis on peer-to-peer critical feedback. Thompson-Bell's students reported an increase in motivation and a deeper understanding of their creative process. Practice-as-research is a modern teaching method that provides students the opportunity to explore their artistic practices critically which leads to a more meaningful and self-directed learning experience.⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Jacob Thompson-Bell, 'Student-Centred Strategies for Higher Music Education: Using Peer-to-Peer Critique and Practice as Research Methodologies to Train Conservatoire Musicians', *British Journal of Music Education*, 40 (2023), 20-33.

⁹² Ibid., 20-21.

Martina Vasil, Lindsay Weiss and Bryan Powell wrote about a new modern teaching method, popular music pedagogies (PMP) which engages with students' interests and preference for informal learning and popular music. PMP music ensembles can be seen as student-led, requiring the students to run class rehearsals and create arrangements with their peers.⁹³ This can develop independence and build confidence working in teams and problem solving. The innovation of PMP is another concept yet to be explored in Irish music education and could help develop students' self-efficacy using the curriculum.

Student-centred learning encourages autonomy and develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills. These skills help students analyse, synthesise and apply knowledge rather than passively receiving information. In 2014 Scott Freeman et al. analysed 225 students and revealed that active learning significantly enhances student performance. Specifically, students in active learning environments⁹⁴ scored, on average, six percentage points higher on examinations and concept inventories compared to those in traditional lecture-based settings.⁹⁵

Alfredo Bautista, Guo-Xheng Toh, Zid-Niel Mancenido and Joanne Wong studied a music class in Singapore where collaborative learning highlighted how a teacher's designed lesson

⁹³ Martina Vasil, Lindsay Weiss and Bryan Powell, 'Popular Music Pedagogies: An Approach to Teaching 21st-Century Skills', *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 28 (2018), 87-88.

⁹⁴ Active learning is defined as a teaching approach that engages students in participating in and thinking about course material in a way that makes them active participants in the learning process. It goes beyond simply listening to lectures and involves activities like reading, writing, discussing and problem-solving, often requiring higher-order thinking skills like analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

⁹⁵ Scott Freeman, Sarah L. Eddy, Miles McDonough, Michelle K. Smith, Nnadozie Okoroafor, Hannah Jordt and Mary Pat Wenderoth, 'Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111 (2014), 8410-8415.

can foster student autonomy, creativity and collaboration.⁹⁶ In their study, teachers encouraged students to explore musical ideas collectively rather than individually. The data that they collected from interviews, classroom observation and the student compositions demonstrated that the approach enhances musical understanding and pride in his or her work while encouraging personal investment.

When taught appropriately, modern teaching methods such as student-centred teaching and learning have been associated in some studies with broader developmental outcomes. These approaches share conceptual overlap with RBT frameworks. Relationship-based teaching and modern teaching methods like student-centred learning can emphasise the importance of key educational elements such as trust, autonomy and personal relevance in classroom activities.

2.5 Relationship-based teaching

Whether modern or traditional, all methods are administered with the hopes of educating and providing knowledge to students. Relationship-based teaching and learning has come to the forefront of student-centred learning as a modern teaching method. While there has been no definitive definition of RBT, there are many ideals and concepts that cumulatively create a specific understanding of how to apply this technique as an educator.

RBT is a methodology where educators attempt to focus on each individual student and utilise his or her strengths and growth areas while creating a trusting bond between

⁹⁶ Alfredo Bautista, Guo-Zheng Toh, Zid-Niel Mancenido and Joanne Wong, 'Student-Centered Pedagogies in the Singapore Music Classroom: A Case Study on Collaborative Composition', *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43 (2018), 1-25.

themselves and their students. Based on years of observation and teaching in music classrooms internationally, I have identified nine key relationships that can be identified within an educational setting. Table 2.1 outlines these relationships, organised into two categories that educators can consider when implementing relationship-based teaching (RBT) practices.

Table 2.1 Relational Categories and Descriptions

Category	Relationship	Description
Educator	Educator-to-Content	How the educator understands, organises and delivers the subject matter.
	Educator-to-Student	How the educator interacts with, supports and guides individual learners.
	Educator-to-Class	How the educator manages and responds to the class as a whole group.
	Educator-to-Self	How the educator reflects on and regulates their own teaching practices and beliefs.
Student	Student-to-Content	How the learner engages with and understands the material.
	Student-to-Student	How learners collaborate, communicate and learn from peers.
	Student-to-Self	How the learner reflects on their abilities, motivation and learning habits.
	Student-to-Class	How the learner interacts with and contributes to the classroom community.
	Student-to-Home	How the learner's home environment supports or influences learning.

In RBT, the educator places specific focus on the educator-to-student relationships in his or her classroom and nurtures the other student-based relationships throughout his or her lesson.

Anita S. Charles defines RBT as ‘a relationship-based pedagogy, teachers must be reflexive about our place in a given context and receptive to the lived realities of our students.’⁹⁷ She discusses differentiated instruction, which relies on teachers getting to know their students and adapting their pedagogical approach to meet the students’ needs, and ‘culturally responsive teaching’ which has numerous overlaps in ideologies with RBT. Culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is an approach that challenges educators to recognise the importance of reversing underachievement and unlocking the potential of students of colour as well as that of other groups of underserved learners. In ‘Culturally Responsive Teaching: A 50-State Survey of Teaching Methods’, Jenny Muñiz states that the educators who practice CRT set rigorous learning objectives for all their students and that they continually build helpful bridges between what students need to learn and their heritage, lived realities and the issues that are important to them.⁹⁸ Importantly, Charles discusses the need for self-reflection and an openness to learn from students.⁹⁹

Charles Leadbeater discusses the potential importance of a more relationship-based approach in his *What’s Next? 21 Ideas for 21st Century Learning* and helps to define it further by realising that relationship-based learning is not simply about the relationship between the student and the educator, but that all the relationships in the classroom matter. Students’ relationship with their work, their colleagues and even themselves are all important.¹⁰⁰ He

⁹⁷ Anita Charles, ‘Relationship-Based Practices for Today’s Students’, <<https://medium.com/@heinemann/relationship-based-practices-for-todays-students-b09982d97403>> [accessed 20 April 2022].

⁹⁸ Jenny Muniz, ‘Culturally Responsive Teaching: A 50-State Survey of Teaching Methods’ (New America, 2019), 5 <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED594599.pdf>> [accessed 20 January 2022].

⁹⁹ Anita Charles, ‘Relationship-based Practices for Todays Students’.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Leadbeater, *What’s Next? 21 ideas for 21st century learning* (London: The Innovation Unit, 2008), 9.

asserts that ‘learning is best done with people, rather than to or for them.’¹⁰¹ Leadbeater believes that students need to be recognised for who they are, where they come from, their goals and contributions and achievements.¹⁰²

H. Richard Milner, who researched extensively into racial justice and relations in the classroom, described RBT as an environment where students and teachers co-build a classroom ethos that considers the evolving and conflicting nature of relationships. He stresses that effective teaching does not start with strict rules or content delivery, it starts with relationships. He describes this as the relationship factor: a foundation for rigorous, responsive and de-escalative teaching practices. It enables better instructional alignment with student learning, adaptation to student needs over time and smoother navigation of conflict. This factor is central, not optional in Milner’s opinion.¹⁰³ Milner asserts that ‘it was the relationship factor that would allow me to help de-escalate conflicts between my students and me, conflicts that emerged between them and other students, as well as conflicts that I would sometimes observe between students and other teachers. It was the relationship factor indeed that would allow me to work with families and communities to support students inside of our classroom.’¹⁰⁴

Milner also acknowledges that even well-intentioned teachers struggle against institutional constraints like rigid discipline policies, lack of administrative support, high turnover and/or

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 18.

¹⁰² Ibid, 19.

¹⁰³ H. Richard Milner, ‘Relationship-Centered Teaching: Addressing Racial Tensions in Classrooms’, *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 54 (2018), 61.

¹⁰⁴ H. Richard Milner, ‘The Relationship Factor in “Classroom Management”, *Corwin Connect*, <<https://corwin-connect.com/2018/12/the-relationship-factor-in-classroom-management/?utm>> [accessed 12 December 2025].

curriculum limitations. These barriers can impede relational practices, especially in under-resourced or high-stakes contexts.¹⁰⁵ He suggested nine practices for better relational practices: ‘talk to and with students; create ‘self-reflective assignments’; have dialogues with students at the center; attend extra-curricular activities that feature the students; visit sites and invest in the student communities; invest; engage; attend and immerse yourself within the students’ communities.¹⁰⁶ ‘The teachers who describe their students as out of control (1) rarely recognize the assets of their students, (2) place the onus of academic and social challenges on students and their families, and (3) ultimately do not realize and acknowledge the role of relationships in their practices. But we believe that students should not be “controlled” and that when relationships are at the core of a learning environments, students and teachers succeed.’¹⁰⁷

Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson discuss RBT as a place where safety, trust, student needs, teacher needs and modes of communication are considerations as important as history, language arts, science or other academic subjects.¹⁰⁸ They say that time spent creating safety and trust, meeting individual needs and improving communication skills actually creates what educators want most: a compassionate learning community where engaged learning flourishes.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, John Hendry describes a relationship as a basic ingredient list of

¹⁰⁵ H. Richard Milner, ‘Culturally Responsive Classroom Management,’ *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*, 4-14 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.782>> [accessed 13 August 2025].

¹⁰⁶ H. Richard Milner, ‘The Relationship Factor in “Classroom Management”, [accessed 12 December 2025].

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson, *The Compassionate Classroom: Relationship Based Teaching and Learning* (Encinitas, California: Puddledancer Press, 2004), 15.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 16.

trust, forgiveness, integrity, hope (optimism) and compassion.¹¹⁰ Russell Bishop also had similar findings. He found that caring for and nurturing learners, their language and culture (including their knowledge and sense-making progress) helps to create a family-like context for learning.¹¹¹

David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland write that to be relationship-based in education is to understand that relationships form the basis for all human development.¹¹² They assert that following a relationship-based approach is not simply to have an appreciation for the need of strong relationships but rather an understanding of student behaviour and learned habits to form a relational perspective.¹¹³ The authors then define eight conditions that educators can utilise to promote a relationship-based classroom including subjects such as regulation, mastery and engagement.¹¹⁴ These conditions - Safety, Regulation, Belonging, Positivity, Engagement, Identity, Mastery, and Meaning - represent the relational and emotional foundations students need in order to thrive. Tranter argues that students must first feel physically and emotionally safe and have support in regulating their emotions before they can fully participate in learning. A sense of belonging and consistent positivity from adults creates a climate where students feel valued and motivated. Engagement develops when students experience meaningful interactions and authentic learning opportunities, while identity is strengthened as students see themselves as capable, respected individuals within

¹¹⁰ John Hendry, 'Relationship Based Education,' (Australia: Parent Victoria Inc), 6 <<https://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Relationship-Based-Education.pdf>> [accessed 5 April 2022].

¹¹¹ Russell Bishop, *Teaching to The North-East: Relationship-Based learning in Practice* (Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press, 2019), 53.

¹¹² David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland, *The Third Path: a Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2018), 23.

¹¹³ David Tranter, interview via video call, 1 May 2025.

¹¹⁴ See Appendix A.

the school community. Finally, mastery and meaning emerge when students are supported in developing competence and understanding how their learning connects to their lives.

Together, these eight conditions form a holistic pathway that bridges caring and teaching what Tranter et al. call the ‘third path.’¹¹⁵

The student-to-student relationship refers to the relationship that students have with each other including friendships, peers and teamwork. Jill Yamasawa asserted that, in a positive learning environment, students lift one another up and create an atmosphere where it is the norm to take risks, ask questions, make mistakes and learn collaboratively.¹¹⁶ In order to set the stage for this type of environment, students not only need a good relationship with their teacher but also need to feel connected to their peers.¹¹⁷

Student-to-class can refer to two different relationships: the first is the feeling of belonging to the class as a whole and how each student fits into the grander scheme of the class or, secondly, the environment itself and how the students feel about the quality of space in which they are working. If students are uncomfortable in the culture of a classroom they will feel like outsiders and potentially engage less leading to feelings of seclusion. Mary Jane D. Aniñon et al. examined high school students in the Philippines and found that the decorations in a classroom can have dramatically different effects on student learning.¹¹⁸ Some students

¹¹⁵ David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland, *The Third Path: a Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2018).

¹¹⁶ Jill Yamasawa, ‘Strengthening Peer Relationships in the Classroom,’ *Edutopia* (2023), <www.edutopia.org/article/positive-student-student-relationships/> [accessed 15 May 2024].

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Mary Jane D. Aniñon, et al., ‘The Impact of Classroom Decors on Academic Performance: A Qualitative Exploration of Senior High School Students’ Experiences in Central Visayas, Philippines’, *Journal of Ongoing Educational Research*, 2 (2024), 140.

thrive in a minimalist setting, with bare walls and lack of clutter, which allows them to focus on the teacher and the content. Conversely, other students show a lack of engagement and motivation when they work in a minimalist classroom setting. These students tend to prefer to see their work and posters on the wall which encourages them and leads to more active participation.¹¹⁹

Student-to-content describes how the students understand and learn the content that is being delivered. Student-to-self is the student's beliefs about his or her own self-worth and self-efficacy. Michael G. Moore writes that without learner-to-content interaction there cannot be education, since it is the process of intellectually interacting with content that results in changes in the learner's understanding, the learner's perspective or the cognitive structures of the learner's mind.¹²⁰

Student-to-home refers to relationships external to school, for example, the student's home life, family or friends from other schools. While the student-to-home relationship is equally as important as all other relationships in the classroom, educators have little influence on this relationship and thus place a less significant focus on it during their lessons.

To cultivate strong relationships, educators must have an understanding of their students' backgrounds and beliefs as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Educators that use RBT attempt to foster and encourage meaningful and trusting relationships with each student as

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 140.

¹²⁰ Michael G. Moore, 'Editorial: Three types of interaction', *American Journal of Distance Education*, 3 (1989), 1.

well as deepen the many relationships that can be found in a classroom. The educator seeks to cater to the individual needs of each student while continuing to work with the class or ensemble as a larger entity.

In an interview that I conducted with David Tranter he stated that ‘good RBT is simply good teaching and that there must be a combination of both responsiveness and demandingness in a well-structured classroom.’¹²¹ Tranter stated that these two contributing factors, responsiveness and demandingness, were ultimately inspired by Diana Baumrind’s three main style of parenting: authoritarian, authoritative and permissive,¹²² and explains how these parenting methods helped inform RBT, along with many other educational methodologies. In parenting, the demands a parent makes on a child to become part of the family or to follow societal norms and how the parent responds to a child who is being noncompliant is called demandingness.¹²³

Responsiveness describes parents’ sensitivity and attentiveness to their child’s emotional, physical and developmental needs. It involves recognising and appropriately responding to those needs in a way that supports the child’s growth, independence and sense of self.

Additionally, responsiveness includes fostering a supportive environment that encourages autonomy while maintaining a healthy parent-child relationship. It also reflects how receptive

¹²¹ David Tranter, interviewed via video call, 1 August 2025.

¹²² Diana Baumrind, ‘Parental Disciplinary Patterns and Social Competence in Children’, *Youth & Society*, 9 (1978), 239-240.

¹²³ Nancy Darling and Laurence Stienberg, ‘Parenting Style as Context: An Integrative Model’, *Psychological Bulletin*, 113 (1993), 493.

and cooperative a child is when responding to his or her parent's expectations or guidance, indicating the mutual trust and communication between them.¹²⁴

Diana Baumrind studied different parental disciplinary approaches that affect children's social competence.¹²⁵ She defined the three unique categories: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. Authoritative is characterised by high responsiveness and high demandingness, authoritarian is low responsiveness and high demandingness and permissive is high responsiveness and low demandingness. Her results indicated that children with authoritative parents tend to display higher levels of social competence, including independence, social responsibility and self-control.¹²⁶

Examining these parental approaches, Jonathan F. Bassett examined teachers and students in two separate studies and found that students who expected better grades rated instructors as more authoritative and less authoritarian.¹²⁷ Students who described instructors as higher on the authoritarian style reported low levels of interest in the course and rated the instructor unfavorably. The authoritative teaching style was associated with setting high academic standards, greater student interest and more favorable student evaluations of instructors.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Eleanor E. Maccoby, 'The Role of Parents in the Socialization of Children: An Historical Overview', *Developmental Psychology*, 28 (1992), 1006-1017.

¹²⁵ Diana Baumrind, 'Parental Disciplinary Patterns and Social Competence in Children', *Youth & Society*, 9 (1978), 239-267.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 240-245.

¹²⁷ Jonathan F. Bassett, Timothy L. Snyder, Daniel T. Rogers and Courtney L. Collins, 'Permissive, Authoritarian, and Authoritative Instructors: Applying the Concept of Parenting Styles to the College Classroom', *Individual Differences Research* (2013), 1-11.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1.

The aforementioned studies are significant to this thesis because they all call attention to the need to evaluate not only how modern, student-centred methods such as gamification, flipped classrooms and PMP (popular music pedagogies) can foster self-efficacy, but also how their limitations might affect their integration into post-primary school music classrooms in Ireland, where examination pressures and curriculum demands remain influential.

2.6 Post-Primary Music Education in Ireland: Pre-2000

Ita Beausang wrote that in 1952 Donnchadh Ó Braoin emphasised that the only musical instruction offered in Irish public schools was during their primary school years. The prevalence of one and/or two-teacher schools necessitated that all teachers be proficient in music, a goal hampered by the inadequate musical foundation of teacher trainees.¹²⁹

Beausang discusses the changes in Irish music education over the past 80 years. In her two-part series, the ‘Changes of Music Education in Ireland’, she provides a historical overview from the 1940s to the early 2000s. Beausang says ‘Before stepping into the musical minefields I would like to refer to the seismic shifts which have transformed the socio-economic landscape in Ireland during the years at issue. It is against this backdrop that I shall chart the changes in music education.’¹³⁰ She explains that instrumental tuition was primarily provided by private female teachers who taught from their own homes, members of religious orders (acting as a ‘virtually peripatetic system’), and a limited number of Schools of Music, mainly in Dublin and Cork. She notes that there was a substantial increase in the number of

¹²⁹ Ita Beausang, ‘Changes in Music Education in Ireland; Part 2’, *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002) <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-2>> [accessed 11 April 2023].

¹³⁰ Ita Beausang, ‘Changes in Music Education in Ireland; Part 1’, *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002) <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-1>> [accessed 11 April 2023].

music schools across Ireland by the 1950s. These were developed by VEC Education Officers, County Council Arts Officers or private individuals to address regional gaps.¹³¹ However, despite the increase in schools, the nature of provision varies in quality and consistency, lacking formal quality control. The reliance on part-time teachers travelling between schools was also noted.¹³²

As the framework of post-primary school music in Ireland evolved throughout the mid-to-late twentieth century, attention internationally increasingly turned to the pedagogical approaches that could best serve a diversifying student population. While formalising examinations and expanding music requirements provides clear academic pathways, these developments do not in themselves address the relational and motivational dimensions of teaching that influence student engagement and achievement in music.

Beausang discusses the importance of music educators, explaining that the efficacy of music education at all levels is consistently linked to the quality and preparedness of teachers. She highlights shortcomings in teacher training and the impact of initiatives aimed at improving teachers' musical skills and confidence. Beausang argues that despite 'music holding a special position' in Irish national culture, music has often been 'taken for granted' in the educational context, leading to inconsistencies in its provision and support.¹³³

¹³¹A Vocational Education Committee (VEC) was a statutory local education body in Ireland that administered some secondary education, most adult education and a very small amount of primary education in the state. County Council Arts officers are public servants employed by local authorities to develop and support the arts within their jurisdictions.

¹³² Ita Beausang, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland; Part 1'.

¹³³ Ibid.

Beausang explains that music was not a core class subject but often an important extra-curricular activity. There was a shortage of registered music teachers and a gender imbalance with music being seen as a girls' subject. In 1948, Aloys Fleischmann, the first inspector of music for secondary schools was appointed, and from then, the number of inspectors fluctuated, with periods of heavy workload for single inspectors. Examination structures became more formalised over time, with the introduction of new Intermediate and Leaving Certificate syllabi in the 1960s and 1970s geared towards broader musicianship and university entry.¹³⁴

The Republic of Ireland's national public education system has embraced music in both its primary and post-primary public-school sectors.¹³⁵ As a school subject, music is often met with a moderate amount of contention by many scholars and educators who disagree on how music should be taught in schools, by whom it should be taught and what the curriculum should include. Frank Heneghan asserts that the problems of music education in Ireland are systemic and interrelated. Addressing them in isolation would be insufficient and holistic reform is necessary.¹³⁶ It is important to note although written in 1985, Heneghan's findings pointed towards music educators doing good work for their students. Heneghan states that 'by any standards the state of music education is not a happy one in Ireland. That so much

¹³⁴ Ita Beausang, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland; Part 2'.

¹³⁵ Also known as 'national school', primary school is a compulsory education level where children start learning at ages four or five and typically lasts eight years. This includes two infant level class years and classes 1 – 6. Post-primary school, broken into two cycles: junior and senior cycles, comprises an additional five or six years of education for the approximate ages of twelve to eighteen.

¹³⁶ Frank Heneghan, 'A Review of Music Education in Ireland: Incorporating the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate' (*MEND – Phase III*), Dublin Institute of Technology, 2001.

good work is being done by individual schools and teachers is all the more remarkable and encouraging. But this is not enough and should not be justified as being enough.’¹³⁷

Music education in Ireland in the past was primarily delivered by private tutors and religious orders.¹³⁸ The Music Committee of the Dáil Commission on Secondary Education (part of the national parliament of Ireland) was a specialised subcommittee established during the early 1920s in Ireland. This committee was part of the broader Dáil Commission on Secondary Education which convened from 24 September 1921 to 7 December 1922, ultimately presenting its recommendations to the Free State Minister for Education, Eoin MacNeill. Marie McCarthy notes that in 1922 the Music Committee of the Dáil Commission on Secondary Education acknowledged the inadequate status of music within the curriculum and proposed that every post-primary school should offer music, taught by a qualified teacher.¹³⁹ Although the Music Committee of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Ireland (ASTI) expressed support for music education in schools, this stance was not adopted in official Department of Education policy.¹⁴⁰ Despite calls for music to become a central part of the education system, it remained an optional subject, often grouped with science, domestic science and art. As a result, music continued to be an exclusive academic subject primarily intended for certificate examinations, largely inaccessible to the wider student population.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹³⁸ Ita Beausang, ‘Changes in Music Education in Ireland; Part 1’, *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002) <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-1>> [accessed 11 April 2023].

¹³⁹ Marie McCarthy, *Passing It On: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999), 129.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 127.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 128.

The Irish Certificate Exams primarily refer to two major state examinations in the Republic of Ireland's secondary education system: the Junior Certificate (Junior Cycle) and the Leaving Certificate. The Junior Certificate is taken after three years of post-primary school, usually around the age of 15 or 16, and covers a wide range of subjects. It assesses the knowledge and skills students have developed during their first three years of secondary education.¹⁴² Following the Junior Certificate, students typically continue for two or three more years before taking the Leaving Certificate, the final examination of post-primary school.¹⁴³ The results from the Leaving Certificate play a key role in the points system used for higher education entry in Ireland.¹⁴⁴ These exams are organised and administered by the State Examinations Commission (SEC), while the Department of Education oversees educational policy related to these certificates.

Ciaran Deloughry suggested that for most of the students who were not paying to take music as an examination subject, post-primary school music was simply an in-school, once a week singing classes that had low standards and low success rate.¹⁴⁵ Deloughry highlights a systemic inequity in Irish secondary education, where access to high-quality music instruction depended heavily on socioeconomic background and the willingness or ability of families to finance additional study outside the classroom.

¹⁴² Department of Education, *Junior Cycle*, Government of Ireland (2023), <<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/junior-cycle/>> [accessed 9 June 2025].

¹⁴³ Transition Year in Irish schools is an optional, additional one-year programme taken after the Junior Cycle and before beginning the Senior Cycle. It focuses on personal development, life skills and exploring a wide range of subjects beyond the traditional curriculum. Students often take part in work experience, community projects and extracurricular activities to prepare for future education and careers.

¹⁴⁴ Department of Education, *Leaving Certificate*, Government of Ireland (2023), <<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/leaving-certificate-2023/>> [accessed 9 June 2025].

¹⁴⁵ Ciaran Deloughry, 'Who pays and who plays? Mapping the discourse of publicly funded instrumental music education in Ireland' (PhD dissertation, University College Cork, 2014), 35.

Prior to 1957 music was seldom taught in post-primary schools but could occasionally be found in fee-paying or religious-run post-primary schools. Instruction lacked formality and there was no national examination for music education at the secondary level.¹⁴⁶ There was no state-standardised curriculum or assessment for music, which meant that the quality and/or existence of music teaching varied from school to school. Instruction might have focused heavily on liturgical singing, basic music theory or classical repertoire, often neglecting broader genres or practical musicianship.¹⁴⁷ This lack of uniformity also meant that students in many state-run post-primary schools had little or no access to music as a subject. This is a problem that still exists in some schools in Ireland today.

Music's place in the education system was shaped more by cultural tradition and local initiative than by national policy. Musical life for most young people was more likely to occur outside the classroom, through participation in community bands, traditional music sessions, church choirs or informal family music-making, than within the formal structures of school. The introduction of the Intermediate Certificate Music and Musicianship syllabus in 1972 marked the first major step towards recognising music as a legitimate, examinable academic subject, paving the way for greater consistency and wider access in secondary education, with the first examinations under this syllabus held in 1975.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Ita Beausang, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland; Part 1', *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, *Junior Cycle Music: Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Junior Cycle Music* (Dublin: NCCA, 2016) <https://www.ncca.ie/media/1240/jc_music_bgp.pdf> [accessed 12 April 2023].

During the 1960s and 1970s, participation in post-primary school music in Ireland began to rise steadily, particularly following the 1975 introduction of music as an examinable subject in the Intermediate Certificate. Still far from universal, the inclusion of music in a national assessment framework encouraged more schools to offer it, though provision was still uneven and often dependent on local resources and teacher expertise.

Statistical data from the period show that, between 1972 and 1977, the proportion of boys sitting the Intermediate Certificate music examination increased from approximately 3 percent to over 12 percent, and the proportion of girls rose from just over 5 percent to more than 20 percent.¹⁴⁹ The growth is partly attributed to the broader curricular reforms in the late 1960s, expanding opportunities for arts subjects and a gradual shift in cultural attitudes towards music education as a legitimate component of academic study.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, participation remained shaped by socio-economic and geographical disparities, with rural and underfunded schools still less likely to provide music at the examination level.

The current Leaving Certificate Music syllabus in Ireland was introduced in 1996 which replaced the curriculum from the 1970s. This syllabus aimed to follow the structure of the current Junior Cycle curriculum that was introduced in 2018 that replaced the Junior Certificate, with its first sitting in 1992.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁹ Frank Heneghan, *A Review of Music Education in Ireland: Incorporating the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate (MEND – Phase III)*, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2001.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ ‘Background Paper and Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Music’, <https://ncca.ie/en/resources/background-paper-and-brief-for-the-review-of-leaving-certificate-music/> [accessed 15 January 2025].

The 1996 syllabus sought to ensure continuity between the two cycles by maintaining a balance between practical performance, composition and listening skills, while also broadening the range of repertoire and musical styles studied.

One of the major changes to the 1996 syllabus was its flexible assessment structure, which allowed students to present 50 percent of their grade through performance or music technology, enabling them to play to their individual strengths.¹⁵² This was a change from the earlier curriculum which was more heavily weighted towards written and theory components often privileging students with classical training. Aligned with the Junior Cycle, the Leaving Certificate syllabus embraced active music-making and student-centred learning, aiming to reflect the diversity of musical experience in contemporary Ireland including classical, traditional Irish, jazz, popular and world music traditions.

In 1985 Donald Herron wrote a report commissioned by the Arts Council of Ireland called *Deaf Ears? A Report on the Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools*, which criticised the state of music education in Ireland.¹⁵³ Herron said the young Irish person has the worst of all European musical worlds. He reported systemic failures, including the absence of structured instrumental tuition, a fragmented curriculum and inadequate teacher training.¹⁵⁴ Herron noted that no formal scheme of instrumental music tuition takes place in the primary schools, save at the personal initiative of individual teachers.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² Gwen Moore, 'The Changing Landscape of Irish Higher Music Education: Findings from Policy and Practice', Technical Report (2015), <DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.1182.1608> [accessed 6 June 2025].

¹⁵³ Donald Herron, *Deaf Ears? A Report on the Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985), v.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 32-37.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vii.

The *Deaf Ears?* report directly inspired the Music Education National Debate (MEND) in 1994 which was an initiative aimed at critically examining music education in Ireland. Organised by Frank Heneghan and sponsored by Dublin Institute of Technology, with support from the Department of Education, MEND criticised the overemphasis of Western classical traditions and the limited accessibility of music education. MEND served as a foundational moment in the national music education trajectory and addressed curriculum, teacher training and cultural representation.¹⁵⁶

Following the Leaving Certificate reform in 1996, contemporary music programmes in most post-primary schools in Ireland now provide both Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate courses in music, enabling students to undertake up to six years of formal musical education during their post-primary schooling.

Teacher training has significantly improved in Ireland and the Teaching Council of Ireland provides specific details on how to become a music educator, stating that music educators are licensed professionals who have either completed undergraduate music education degree programmes and/or professional masters of education programmes in Ireland.¹⁵⁷ There are also pathways for international educators to have their certifications transferred if they meet specific requirements, which makes for more diversity and equity in the education system.

¹⁵⁶ Frank Heneghan, *A Review of Music Education in Ireland: Incorporating the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate (MEND – Phase III)*, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2001.

¹⁵⁷ The Teaching Council of Ireland is the professional standards body for teaching in Ireland. It regulates and promotes the profession to ensure high-quality teaching and learning across all schools in the country.

Integrated in these post-primary school programmes are two central focuses: musicianship and practical. These are divided into four sections for state exams: listening, composition, practical (performance) and an elective if taking the higher-level course, which can yield more performance pieces unless the student selects a different class offering such as music technology.¹⁵⁸ Unlike other countries, Ireland's post-primary schools seldom offer performance classes such as choir, band or orchestra. To make examining equitable, students are only required to be examined on repertoire at a level that they could potentially learn in their general music classrooms.

Much of the research on post-primary school music programmes in Ireland has been undertaken by researchers and educators such as Marie McCarthy,¹⁵⁹ Ita Beausang,¹⁶⁰ John O' Flynn and Patricia Flynn, all of whom offer different perspectives on the strengths and potential growth areas of the Irish public school music education curriculum.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Higher level courses refer to subjects studied at a more advanced level, particularly during the Junior Cycle and Leaving Certificate programmes. Students typically choose between Higher Level and Ordinary Level for each subject, with Higher Level offering more in-depth content and a greater challenge.

¹⁵⁹ Marie McCarthy, 'The Establishment of a Primary-Secondary Continuum in Irish Music Education', *Irish Journal of Education*, 30 (1999), 38-53.

¹⁶⁰ Ita Beausang, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland: Part 1', *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002) <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-1>> [accessed 11 April 2023].

¹⁶¹ John O'Flynn and Patricia Flynn (eds), *Music Education for the Twenty-First Century: Legacies, Conversations, Aspirations*, Studies in Irish Music Education, 1 (Cork: Cork University Press, 2023).

2.7 Post-Primary Music Education in Ireland: Post-2000

Post-primary music education in Ireland appears to continue a reflection of tension between curricular intention and classroom practice. While the Leaving Certificate Music syllabus appears to promote participation, creativity and social music-making, some research suggests these principles are not consistently realised within timetabled lessons.

There is currently a redevelopment of the Leaving Certificate music curriculum that will affect all post-primary school music classes in the near future. The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's document, *Background Paper and Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Music*, provides a context for the review of the current music curriculum and was informed by the views of teachers, school leaders and students gathered through school visits conducted in a representative sample of schools.¹⁶² A public consultation on this paper and brief was conducted from January to February 2025, with the findings published in May 2025.¹⁶³ These consultations have highlighted the importance of integrating digital technologies, diversifying musical genres and ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and engaging for students. The revised Leaving Certificate curriculum is scheduled to be implemented in post-primary schools from September 2027.¹⁶⁴

These reforms and upcoming curriculum developments represent significant progress in broadening access and modernising content; however, they do not guarantee improvements in the relational and motivational dimensions of music learning. The historical challenges of

¹⁶² 'Background Paper and Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Music' (2024), <<https://ncca.ie/en/resources/background-paper-and-brief-for-the-review-of-leaving-certificate-music>> [accessed 15 January 2025].

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

uneven provision, variable teaching quality and the absence of consistent performance opportunities illustrate that student outcomes are shaped by more than syllabus design.

While much of the research in Ireland regarding the music education programmes has revolved around the state examinations, curriculum and the primary to secondary continuum, research in new concepts such as the relationship between student and educators or RBT practices amongst post-primary school music teachers does not appear to have been undertaken.

There have, however, been researchers who have examined parallel topics. In 2023 Orla McCormack, Joanne O’Flaherty and Seamus Conboy studied the importance of student-teacher relationships in post-primary schools in Ireland.¹⁶⁵ They found that positive, respectful and caring relationships with teachers significantly influence students’ sense of belonging and engagement in school life. Participation and strong teacher-student relationships contributed to emotional well-being, academic motivation and reduced behavioural issues.¹⁶⁶

Students’ self-efficacy can be profoundly influenced by the nature of teacher–student interactions and the classroom environment. As such, curriculum reform should be considered alongside pedagogical approaches, such as RBT, that intentionally foster trust,

¹⁶⁵ Orla McCormack, Joanne O’Flaherty and Mags Liddy, ‘Students’ Views on Their Participation in Publicly Managed Second Level Schools in Ireland: The importance of student-teacher relationships’, *Educational Studies*, 47 (2019), 1-16.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

personalised support and a sense of belonging. This would address the psychological state and the academic conditions necessary for musical achievement.

Mairéad Berrill's national study of group music-making found that, despite strong examination uptake, ensemble performance is frequently positioned outside classroom pedagogy. 'First, although there *are* numerous presentations of group music-making at second-level practical examinations, many of these ensembles often rehearse and perform outside the classroom and some exist as a culture completely apart from the school environment. Student acts such as the céili bands, the rock group or the string quartet may never have performed or been integrated in any pedagogical manner into classroom group music-making activities' limiting equitable access to collaborative learning experiences.'¹⁶⁷

Through focus groups and action research, Berrill demonstrates that classroom-based group music-making can operate as a flexible pedagogical tool, integrating performance, listening and composition while supporting students' musical, social and personal development. She concludes that 'group music-making is a dynamic and flexible tool with the potential for implementation in a wide variety of Irish second-level classroom music-making situations.'¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Mairéad Berrill, 'Towards the Inclusion of Group Music-Making in Second-Level Classrooms' (PhD dissertation, Dublin City University, 2014), 3.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 280.

Berrill's findings highlight a potential significance of pedagogical approaches that prioritise collaboration, responsiveness and supportive classroom environments in contemporary Irish music education.

Regina Murphy and Claire Shortall's national study of school-based music programmes found that creative group music-making operates as a 'dynamic, collaborative and inclusive learning process' for students and teachers alike.¹⁶⁹ Their findings indicate that the musical learning extended beyond performance outcomes, supporting students' social connection, confidence and sense of belonging within their school communities. Their study highlights that students' musical engagement was strongest where teachers adopted facilitative, responsive roles and where students were afforded meaningful purpose within the creative process. They assert that 'cultivating a strong identity as a school, reflecting its unique social and cultural contexts, and generating individual stories of growth through the experience, were strong themes in each school's accounts of the process ... the musical strengths and unique [sic] of identities fused to create a wide range of social, cultural, creative and musical learning experiences that reached far beyond the short stage performance.'¹⁷⁰

In her article for *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*, Jean Downey examines the role of informal learning within the post-primary school system in Ireland. She explores how traditional Irish music, once marginalised in academia, has gained significant cultural

¹⁶⁹ Regina Murphy and Claire Shortall, 'Exploring processes of inclusion and creativity in music education showcases in schools [EPIC_MUSS]: A research project funded by the Creative Ireland programme.' (Dublin: 2023), 5.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 6.

status and is now a core component of the national curriculum. By comparing local traditions with Lucy Green's research on popular music, the text explains how students often learn 'by ear' through communal sessions and digital recordings rather than formal notation. Downey suggests that integrating these aural transmission methods into classrooms can increase student engagement and enjoyment and asserts that music educators would be willing to do so. She states, 'music teachers have always welcomed challenges, and I believe that they would welcome the opportunity to introduce their students to traditional Irish music performance and subsequently to the associated 'informal' learning practices.'¹⁷¹

Drawing on a national mixed-methods study of post-primary principals, Marie-Louise Bowe demonstrates that music education practices differ markedly across post-primary schools in Ireland, to the extent that provision has reached 'a point of insidious decline in many schools.'¹⁷² Although principals expressed strong philosophical support for music within the curriculum, this support was often not reflected in practical implementation, with 'glowing endorsements for music education' failing to translate into consistent timetabling, resourcing or access to music-making opportunities.¹⁷³ Bowe argues that principals occupy a pivotal gatekeeping role, describing them as 'arbiters of music education'¹⁷⁴ who possess the capacity 'to move music education forward or conversely, hold it back'.¹⁷⁵ As a result, the vitality of school music programmes is shown to depend heavily on leadership priorities and

¹⁷¹ Jean Downey, 'Informal Learning in Music in the Irish Secondary School Context', *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education*, 8 (2009), 53.

¹⁷² Marie-Louise Bowe, 'Post-primary music education in Ireland: Principals' perspectives', *Proceedings of the MISTEC 20th International Seminar*, 18.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

the presence of highly- committed music teachers who are frequently expected to act as the main proponent within their schools.

Gwen Moore conducted a pilot study of the Musical Future (MF) programme in Ireland, examining its implementation across two primary and two secondary schools. Musical Futures is a music education approach initiative funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, designed to transform how music is taught in schools by making it more practical, engaging and student-centred. Originating as a pilot project, it encourages learner-driven music making, drawing on informal and non-formal music learning practices (such as those used by popular musicians) and bringing them into the classroom.¹⁷⁶

Through her case study, Moore evaluates how informal learning and non-formal teaching strategies, specifically concepts titled ‘Just Play’ and ‘Informal Learning’, impact student motivation, confidence and ensemble skills.¹⁷⁷ The findings reveal that these modern, student-led approaches significantly boost engagement and help generalist teachers overcome feelings of musical inadequacy. Moore states that ‘pivotal to the success of MF was the impact that autonomy and choice as well as the multi-media ‘Just Play’ resources had on motivation for music learning and for music as a subject. It can be used to enhance the curriculum by embedding listening and performing skills in set works/pieces and

¹⁷⁶ Musical Futures: An Approach to Teaching and Learning, 2nd edn, (Musical Futures, 2022) <https://www.musicalfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Musical_Futures_2nd_Edition_Teacher_Resource_Pack.pdf> [accessed 14 January 2025].

¹⁷⁷ Gwen Moore, ‘Musical Futures in Ireland: Findings from a Pilot Study in Primary and Secondary Schools.’ *Music Education Research*, 21 (2019).

in developing musical understanding.¹⁷⁸ She suggests that these concepts ‘can boost confidence and musical knowledge and skills in generalist primary teachers and consequently enable more access to music for students at primary level.’¹⁷⁹

2.8 Conclusion

The literature consistently positions self-efficacy as a central factor of student learning and performance, with particular relevance to music education. Bandura’s four sources of efficacy comprise a foundational model for understanding how students develop competence beliefs. Although mastery experiences are regarded as the most influential, research highlights that targeted, intentional social and verbal persuasion from educators can meaningfully influence students’ perceived capabilities, especially in music settings where feedback, modelling and collaborative learning are integral.

Within music education, the work by McPherson, McCormick, Ritchie, Williamon and others demonstrates that students’ perceived competence influences their practice habits, engagement and performance outcomes.

A second major theme concerns teaching methodologies and their influence on student motivation, engagement and efficacy. Traditional, teacher-centred approaches characterised by lectures, rote learning and limited student autonomy appear to be associated with diminished motivation, reduced opportunities for collaboration and restricted development of higher-order thinking skills. The existing research in music education suggests that such

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 255.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 255.

methods may prioritise technical accuracy at the expense of creativity, critical thinking and relational dimensions of learning. Modern teaching methods, however, appear to position students as active participants in their learning and point towards more well-rounded and engaged student learning. While most methodologies fall under ‘teacher-centred’ otherwise known as traditional, or ‘student-centred’, known as new, there are methodologies that potentially can be categorised under what can be described as mixed-strategy, or very specific focused methods like technology-based approaches but many researchers would continue to allocate these methodologies into the ‘new’ methods category.

Relationship-based teaching emerges as a complementary modern teaching method framework that emphasises the educational significance of interpersonal relationships. Although it lacks a single definitive definition, RBT emphasises the multifaceted relationships that influence learning, including educator-to-student, student-to-student and student-to-self. RBT potentially draws on Baumrind’s concepts of responsiveness and demandingness, advocating a balanced approach that supports students’ emotional needs while maintaining high expectations. Tranter’s research indicates that classrooms characterised by trust, care and positive peer dynamics contribute to risk-taking, increased engagement and stronger self-beliefs. These relational elements form a potential mechanism through which teachers may positively influence students’ self-efficacy in music education.

A final theme concerns the historical and contemporary landscape of post-primary school music education in Ireland. The literature highlights a complex trajectory shaped by cultural heritage, policy development and systemic inequalities. Music’s place in the curriculum was

historically marginal, with inconsistent provision and significant reliance on private tuition. Key moments such as the Dáil Commission (1922), the introduction of examinable syllabi (1970s), the 1996 Leaving Certificate reform and the MEND report (1994) illustrate attempts to broaden access, modernise content and address structural shortcomings. Despite increased participation and improved teacher training over time, provision remains uneven and largely shaped by available resources, examination pressures and curricular constraints.

Chapter Three: Research Design

This chapter outlines the research design that was used to examine the personal perceptions of post-primary school music students' self-efficacy and their educators' use of relationship-based teaching (RBT) in select post-primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. The study aims to identify any potential correlations between these two constructs. Two quantitative surveys were utilised using structured self-report surveys administered to educators and their respective students to gather participants' self-perceptions. A minimal number of questions on these surveys provided basic participant information and additional insight of their feelings contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences and attitudes. This chapter details data collection procedures, data analysis and management, justification, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness and reflections and limitations ensuring transparency and rigour in addressing the research questions.

RBT is a style that focuses on fostering positive relationships in the classroom to increase a student's comfort and confidence. The purpose of this study is to explore any potential correlations between the survey results of two sets of participants: post-primary school music educators in Ireland who use high levels of RBT practices in the classroom and students with high self-efficacy levels.

3.1 Data Collection and Survey Design

Correlation research is used to test the strength of association between variables where the variables are only observed and no manipulation of data or intervention by the researcher is

present. Limited control is used in correlative studies and external validity is drawn upon the analysis of data.¹ The only control present in the current research is the age of students, between thirteen and eighteen years of age, and the location, all residing in Ireland. When researching self-efficacy in post-primary school music students and the RBT strategies used by their educators, quantitative data will help the researcher best understand the participants.

The educators' survey was created using information found in Albert Bandura's 'Guide for Creating Self-Efficacy Scales',² Michael Zelenak's 'Measuring the Sources of Self-Efficacy Among Post-primary school Music Students',³ and Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick's work in Self-efficacy and music performance.⁴ The educators' survey covered number of years teaching, number of professional development hours sought and personal teaching philosophies in short-answer format to identify potential patterns regarding the educators' perspectives about the work they were accomplishing. Twenty-three questions, ranked from strongly agree to strongly disagree, were asked covering topics such as the type of teaching practices the educators utilise, their personal philosophies, behavioural management, grading and student workload. These questions, in part, identified which educators had more of a relationship-based mindset compared to the educators who were more focused on other pedagogical approaches like direct instruction or teacher-centred learning.

¹ Pritha Bhandari, 'Correlational Research | When & How to Use'

<<https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/correlational-research/>> [accessed 21 January 2025].

² Albert Bandura, 'Guide for Creating Self-Efficacy Scales', in F. Pajares and T. Urdan (eds.), *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 307-337.

³ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Measuring the sources of self-efficacy among post-primary school music students', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62 (2015), 389-404.

⁴ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, 'Self-efficacy and music performance', *Psychology of Music*, 34 (2006), 322-336.

The student survey was an adaptation of Michael Zelenak's 'Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale' which is a 24-item instrument utilising a 100-point Likert-type scale. Zelenak designed and validated the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES) as a way to measure performance-related self-efficacy among post-primary school music students. Grounded in Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy, the MPSES was structured with items reflecting each of the four categories. Using a sample of post-primary school students, Zelenak conducted factor analyses, demonstrating that the four-factor model aligned well with Bandura's theoretical framework.⁵ The scale demonstrated strong measurement qualities. It showed high internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha of .88,⁶ indicating that the items work well together to measure the same underlying construct. In addition, the test-retest correlation of .87 reflects strong stability over time, meaning participants tended to receive similar scores when completing the scale on different occasions. Together, these values suggest that the scale is both reliable and stable as a measure of music performance self-efficacy.

The educator and student surveys were distributed via a google doc questionnaire to the educators who voluntarily signed up to participate in this study. The educators then distributed a google doc link to their students for voluntary participation. Upon completion,

⁵ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Development and validation of the music performance self-efficacy scale', *Music Education Research International*, 4 (2010), 38-39.

⁶ Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measure of internal consistency that indicates how closely related the items on a scale are. Higher values (typically above .70) suggest that the items reliably measure the same underlying concept.

the participants' responses were immediately uploaded to a private answer sheet where the data could be analysed.

3.2 Data Collection Procedures and Participants

Participants in this study were drawn from two distinct groups: educators and students.

Recruitment was conducted through a combination of email correspondence and informal social interactions. In total, 9 educators and 100 students returned completed surveys and were examined in this study.

According to the Department of Education and Youth 2019 statistical finding, there are 723 post-primary schools in Ireland.⁷ Of these, an undefined percentage offers music as an examined subject for Junior Cycle and for Leaving Certificate. With no government data on which schools offer music and which do not, every post-primary school in Ireland was sent an email with information regarding this research, together with a request to forward the information to its music educator, if applicable. The music educators were then forwarded the information email which included an information sheet⁸ and video⁹ requesting their voluntary participation. Responses were received from eighteen educators. Of these educators, sixteen responded and seven initially completed the survey.

⁷ Department of Education, *Education Statistics*, Government of Ireland (2019), <<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/education-statistics/>> [accessed 6 March 2026].

⁸ Participant Information Sheet-Educator, Appendix D.

⁹ Douglas Carnes, 'Relationship-based teaching and its effect on post-primary school music students' self-efficacy', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7SjPEeu9ak>> [accessed 14 January 2025].

At the Society of Music Education Ireland's national conference held each year, music educators and students gather to hear new research and meet with colleagues. In 2023, I participated in this conference, as both an attendee and presenter, and successfully encouraged six additional educators to enroll. From this group of six educators, two completed the survey.

Of the twenty-two educators who were initially signed up to participate in the study, thirteen returned surveys. Of those, four educators were omitted due to the lack of student participation, resulting in nine educators' data being fully complete. The educators all teach music courses that are electively selected by students in secondary public schools in the Republic of Ireland. Participants were located in six different counties: Cork, Donegal, Dublin, Kildare, Kerry and Mayo, both in large cities and rural communities. The educators ranged from newly qualified teachers, whom have taught for 5 years or less, to well-tenured teachers with over thirty years' experience.¹⁰

In adherence to ethical research practices, there was no direct communication between the researcher and student participants. Instead, music teachers served as intermediaries, informing their students about the study and its objectives. To ensure that students were fully informed prior to participation, they were provided with a detailed information sheet¹¹ and directed to an explanatory video uploaded to YouTube.¹² Students were given the opportunity to review these materials independently before voluntarily assenting to

¹⁰ See Table 4.10, 125.

¹¹ Participant Information Sheet—Student, Appendix E.

¹² Douglas Carnes, 'Relationship-based teaching and its effect on post-primary school music student's self-efficacy', Video.

participate in the study. All recruitment and consent procedures were designed and approved to ensure transparency, minimise potential coercion and uphold the principles of voluntary participation.¹³

112 students returned surveys. Of the 112, twelve were omitted due to failure to complete the survey or failure to follow directions. All student participants have taken music as a subject in post-primary school for at least one semester. The students have been in these educators' classes for varying amounts of times from one semester to five years. There were 64 students who identified as female and 36 student who identified as male. 20 were in first year, with 16 in second year, 21 in third year, 29 in TY/fourth year¹⁴ and 13 in fifth year. Of the 100 participants, 87 identified racially as white, one as Indian, one as Filipino-white, one as brown, four as black and six chose not to disclose.

3.3 Data Analysis and Management

Quantitative data was exported into SPSS¹⁵ for statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were calculated for each survey item. To examine the relationship between educators' use of RBT practices and students' self-efficacy scores, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was employed. Developed by Karl Pearson, this statistical test measures the strength and direction of linear relationships between two continuous variables, making it particularly appropriate for analysing the association between teacher and student survey responses. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) measures the

¹³ See Consent and Assent forms in Appendix F, Appendix G and Appendix H.

¹⁴ Transition Year (TY) is a one-year school programme, typically taken after the Junior Certificate (around ages 15–16) and before entering the Senior Cycle, which culminates in the Leaving Certificate.

¹⁵ SPSS, or Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, is a software suite used for statistical analysis.

strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. The value ranges from -1.0 to +1.0, where: +1.0 equals perfect positive correlation, -1.0 equals perfect negative correlation and 0 equals no linear relationship.¹⁶ Additional analysis compared results across demographic variables such as year group and years of teaching experience.

Responses from two open-ended questions were coded thematically using Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke's six-phase approach.¹⁷ Braun and Clarke outline six phases of thematic analysis as a flexible process for interpreting qualitative data. The first phase, familiarisation, involves immersing oneself in the data through repeated reading, note-taking and often transcription, which serves as an interpretative act. Next, initial coding requires systematically identifying meaningful features of the data, either driven by theory or emerging from the data itself, with the aim of capturing as many potential patterns as possible. Once codes are established, the researcher moves to searching for themes by grouping related codes together and examining relationships among them, often aided by visual tools like maps or tables. The fifth phase focuses on defining and naming themes by articulating their essence, organising data extracts into a consistent narrative, and creating clear, concise labels that contribute to the overall story being told. Finally, the sixth phase, production of the report, involves presenting a coherent and compelling account that not only illustrates themes with vivid examples, but also moves beyond description to offer interpretation and argument in relation to the research question.¹⁸

¹⁶ Elliot McClenaghan, 'Pearson Correlation', *Technology Networks* (29 April 2024), <www.technologynetworks.com/tn/articles/pearson-correlation-385871> [accessed 1 June 2024].

¹⁷ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2 (2006), 77–101.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 93-99.

Themes were identified around educators' use of RBT. These themes were used to contextualise and interpret relevant quantitative findings, strengthening the validity of conclusions.

Table 3.1 summarises the data management and analysis procedures used in this study. Descriptive analyses informed Tables 4.1-4.4.¹⁹ Student self-efficacy scores were aggregated by source (Table 4.5) and grouped by educator (Figures 4.1-4.9). Teachers' students were compared based on aggregated student self-efficacy scores (Figure 4.10). Correlational analyses examining relationships between educator relationship-based teaching scores and student self-efficacy outcomes are reported in Section 4.5.²⁰

The unit of analysis for the educator dataset was the individual teacher, with analysis conducted using all of the relationship-based teaching scores. For the student dataset, the unit of analysis was the individual student, with additional aggregation at the teacher level to facilitate comparative analysis. Correlational analyses explored relationships between educator's self-reported relationship-based teaching scores and aggregated student self-efficacy outcomes.²¹

¹⁹ See Chapter 4, [97].

²⁰ See Chapter 4, [112].

²¹ See Table 4.10, 125.

Table 3.1: Data Management and Analytical Procedures

Stage	Data Source	Data Management Procedures	Analytical Procedure	Reference
Data collection	Educator RBT survey (n = 9)	Electronic survey administration	N/A	N/A
Data collection	Student MPSES survey (n = 100)	Electronic survey administration	N/A	N/A
Data screening	Educator and student datasets	Data checked for completeness and consistency; incomplete responses removed; datasets anonymised and coded	Data screening	N/A
Descriptive analysis	Educator survey data	Means and standard deviations calculated for individual survey items	Descriptive statistics	Tables 4.1–4.2
Descriptive analysis	Student survey data	Means and standard deviations calculated for individual survey items	Descriptive statistics	Tables 4.3–4.4
Aggregation	Student self-efficacy data	Items aggregated by self-efficacy source	Percentage and mean analysis	Table 4.5
Grouping	Student data by educator	Student self-efficacy scores grouped by respective teacher	Data aggregation	Figures 4.1–4.9
Comparative analysis	Teacher-level outcomes	Visual comparison of self-efficacy source influence across teachers	Comparative analysis	Figures 4.1–4.9 + 4.10

3.4 Justification

A quantitative approach was employed in this study, incorporating primarily closed-ended survey items with two open-ended questions to gather basic participant information and additional insight. As Kamden K. Strunk and Mwarumba Mwavita emphasise, in quantitative research ‘data analysis is almost always done via one or more statistical tests,’²² with hypotheses specified in advance and tested against collected data. In alignment with this guidance and given the present study’s focus on examining the relationship between two continuous variables, educators’ reported use of relationship-based teaching practices and students’ self-efficacy scores, a correlational analysis was deemed the most appropriate statistical approach.

Quantitative research is particularly suited to studies that seek to examine relationships among variables and to explain or predict quantifiable outcomes, with research questions commonly focusing on ‘group differences, changes in scores over time, or the relationship among variables.’²³ Both relationship-based teaching practices and student self-efficacy were operationalised as numeric variables derived from survey instruments, enabling statistical examination of their association.

While the study adopts a predominantly quantitative approach, it is important to acknowledge that statistical measures alone may not capture the full complexity of participants’ perceptions of their own capabilities and beliefs, particularly in relation to the

²² Kamden K. Strunk and Mwarumba Mwavita, *Design and Analysis in Educational Research: ANOVA Designs in SPSS* (New York: Routledge, 2020), 9.

²³ *Ibid.*, 8.

music educator. This decision to include open ended questions was based on Michael Quinn Patton's recognition that reliance on a strictly single approach, either qualitative or quantitative could be insufficient in capturing the complexity of the participants' experiences.²⁴ He asserts that 'no single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors. Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of data collection and analysis provide more grist for the research mill.'²⁵ While it does not qualify this survey as mixed-methods, by integrating open-ended questions, individual experiences were more accurately represented, in an attempt to avoid constraining participants within pre-existing theoretical constructs. For example, examining educators' personal beliefs regarding their teaching philosophies yielded insights into their acknowledgment or their neglect of RBT practices. Additional quantitative measures, such as the number of professional development hours undertaken by educators, facilitated the identification of emerging patterns.

It is important to note that the interpretation of correlative data is often based on rules with some boundary values that help decide the strength of the correlation. Marcin Kozak writes that, in any correlation study, interpretation should always be context-dependent and based on the research question.²⁶

²⁴ Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (St Paul, Minnesota: Sage Publications, Inc., 2nd edn, 1990).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 187.

²⁶ Marcin Kozak explains that with no context many scientists use the following rules for correlation significance. $0 \leq |r| \leq 0.20$: the correlation is non-important; $0.20 < |r| \leq 0.50$: the correlation is weak; $0.50 < |r| \leq 0.70$: the correlation is strong; $|r| < 0.70$: the correlation is very strong. Marcin Kozak, 'What is Strong Correlation?', *Teaching Statistics*, 31 (2009), 85-86.

3.5 Issues of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of this study was evaluated using established criteria for assessing the quality of research design, data collection, analysis and interpretation, with particular attention given to validity and reliability.

Student Survey

Zelenak's Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale (MPSES) has already been established as a viable and credible instrument through prior peer-reviewed research demonstrating its theoretical grounding in Bandura's self-efficacy framework and its successful application across multiple music education contexts.

Educator Survey

In this study, credibility refers to the extent to which the educator survey accurately measured relationship-based teaching practices, while dependability concerns the consistency and stability of the data and results across participants and procedures. Important to this evaluation is the degree to which the survey instruments measured what they were intended to measure: educators' use of relationship-based teaching practices in post-primary music classrooms. The educators survey was not statistically validated.

Methodological validity was addressed by ensuring a strong alignment between the research questions, the theoretical framework and the methods used to collect data. The use of a structured educator self-report survey was well matched to the research questions, which sought to examine educators' perceptions and reported practices rather than observable

classroom behaviour alone. This approach is supported by existing research on teaching practice instruments, which emphasises that self-report surveys are an appropriate and commonly-used method for examining educators' beliefs, intentions and instructional behaviours when grounded in a clear theoretical framework.²⁷ The constructs measured by the survey were derived from established models of relationship-based and authoritative teaching, ensuring conceptual coherence between the logic of the method and the explanatory aims of the study.

Interpretive validity was addressed through careful data analysis and transparent interpretation of results. Survey items were designed to be clear, behavioural-focused and theoretically grounded, reducing ambiguity in responses and supporting accurate interpretation. While there is inherent bias based on my background in music education and relationship-based teaching, the analysis focused on identifying patterns and relationships consistent with the study's theoretical framework, rather than forcing results to fit predetermined expectations.

To mitigate potential researcher bias, the educator survey itself was designed by a professional industrial-organisational psychologist, ensuring that item wording, scaling and structure adhered to recognised standards of psychological measurement. It was subsequently independently reviewed by a second psychologist to further strengthen objectivity and measurement rigour. This contributed to inter-rater reliability at the instrument-development stage by providing an independent perspective during survey construction.

²⁷ Clinton D. Stevenson and Gabriel K. Harris, 'Instruments for Characterizing Teaching Practices: A Review', *North American College and teacher of Agriculture Journal* (2014), 102-108.

Further support for trustworthiness comes from the alignment of the educator survey with validated constructs found in the authoritative teaching literature, particularly the dimensions of warmth and control in the delivery of lessons by the educator. Prior research has demonstrated that these constructs are stable, measurable and suitable for self-report instruments, with evidence of satisfactory psychometric properties and consistency over time.²⁸

By grounding the survey in these established dimensions, the study strengthens both construct validity and dependability. The validation plan for the educator survey rested on several key elements: grounding the instrument in established theory and prior research; professional development of the survey by a qualified psychologist; use of clear, consistent rating scales; and alignment between survey items and the research questions.

Together, these procedures provide credence to the quality of the instruments used to elicit data and support confidence in the validity, reliability and interpretability of the findings. However, despite efforts to ensure trustworthiness, certain limitations may affect the credibility and dependability of the findings. Both educator and student data were collected through self-report surveys. While every effort was made to ensure reliability, self-report surveys are subject to social desirability bias and individual interpretation. In addition, while the educator survey was theoretically grounded and externally reviewed, it was newly developed for this study and therefore lacks extensive prior empirical validation. Finally, the

²⁸ Sigrun K. Ertesvåg, 'Measuring Authoritative Teaching', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27 (2011), 51-61.

relatively small sample size and cross-sectional design limit the extent to which the findings can be generalised and prevent conclusions about cause and effect.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Following formal ethical review and approval, this study was conducted in accordance with established ethical research standards. Ethical approval was reviewed and granted through the ethics committee at The Royal Irish Academy of Music. Careful consideration was given to issues of informed consent, anonymity, voluntary participation and the protection of participants, particularly given the involvement of minors.

The first step in the ethical process was the development of comprehensive participant information and consent forms. These documents clearly explained the purpose of the research, the nature of participation and the use of the data collected. All participants were informed that involvement was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, without penalty or the need to provide notice. Student participants completed surveys anonymously, with limited, non-identifying demographic information (such as age) collected to support analysis.

To ensure accessibility and understanding, all information provided in written form was also delivered verbally through a Youtube recording for youth participants. This approach helped to ensure that participants understood the research process and their rights before agreeing to take part.

Educators participating in the study were likewise provided with detailed information about the research aims and procedures and gave informed consent for the anonymous use of their data for research purposes. While educators were asked contextual questions such as the length of time teaching their current class and the duration of their professional relationship with the students, these questions were designed solely to support analysis of teacher–student relationships and were collected without identifying information. All data was stored securely in a password protected computer and used exclusively for academic research purposes in line with ethical approval requirements.

3.7 Reflections and Limitations

Due to the privacy and General Data Protection Regulation laws in Ireland, it was extremely difficult to contact educators via email because schools do not list their music educators email addresses on public-facing websites.²⁹ The initial intention was to recruit upwards of 20 educators and 200 students. Due to this challenge, I attempted to focus on utilising personal relationships and cultivating new personal relationships with educators from different counties in Ireland in an attempt to obtain more data. I also presented talks on ‘Relationship-Based Learning and Music Student’s Self-Efficacy: A Brief Introduction’ at both the Society of Music Education Ireland³⁰ and Amplify Research Day³¹ which generated

²⁹ In Ireland, general data protection laws are primarily governed by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Acts 1988-2018. These laws ensure individuals’ personal data is protected and processed fairly, legally and transparently. Organisations have a responsibility to collect and process data lawfully, keep it accurate and secure, and only retain it for necessary purposes. Individuals also have rights to access, correct and erase their personal data, among other rights.

³⁰ Society of Music Education Ireland is a national organisation dedicated to advancing music education across both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Their annual conference is the premier yearly event that brings together professionals and academics to share insights and innovations in music education. <www.smei.ie>.

³¹ Amplify Research Day is an annual event at the Royal Irish Academy of Music where MMus and DMusPerf students present their research in areas such as performance, education, musicology and composition.

more interest in this project. Therefore, the small sample size represents a limitation of this study, as it is not representative of the total population; the post-primary teachers pedagogical techniques nor the post-primary school students.

The surveys were designed with the assumption and expectation that all students had the capacity to understand and would be willing to read the directions thoroughly before beginning. However, possibly because the directions were not read aloud, three students completed their surveys incorrectly and were subsequently excluded from the final dataset. A video explaining exactly how to answer the questionnaire may have made this process easier for younger students. The decision to exclude the video was made to avoid exerting any influence on the candidates. The context and cohort for which Zalenek's survey was designed differ substantially from the Irish context. Specifically, the survey was developed for U.S. music classrooms that are typically performance-centred (e.g., band, wind ensemble, and choir), whereas the Irish context generally involves a broader general classroom setting. This contextual difference likely influences the interpretation of the findings.

The decision to use surveys in this study was made to limit the number of variables that could influence the students. While quantitative data enables patterns and relationships to be identified, Nicoleta Gaciu cautions that 'data is only raw material and the process of transforming data into information and knowledge has been seen as a linear and hierarchical process' and gains meaning through interpretation and contextual understanding.³² The

³² Nicoleta Gaciu, *Understanding Quantitative Data in Educational Research*, SAGE Publications, 2021 <https://methods.sagepub.com/book/mono/preview/understanding-quantitative-data-in-educational-research.pdf#_>, [accessed 31 Dec 2025], 15.

findings of this study should be understood as indicative of statistical relationships rather than comprehensive accounts of students' lived musical experiences. Further qualitative research could build upon these findings to explore how relationship-based teaching is experienced within music classrooms.

To change the method in which this data was collected researchers could potentially use a case-study design and qualitative methodologies with two sets of their own students. The experiment would have to be well-defined, but researchers could teach one class with a direct approach and the other class with a relationship-based approach before surveying their students' self-efficacy levels. While this study would have numerous variables, the outcome could show that the teacher who utilised the relationship-based approach led to higher self-efficacy levels in his or her class than the direct-instruction class: the opposite results are also possible.

A potential limitation of this quantitative approach was the risk of overgeneralisation based on limited or surface-level data. For instance, educators who endorsed direct instruction as their primary pedagogical strategy might be assumed to place minimal emphasis on relationship building, an assumption that could obscure more nuanced sub-beliefs. The inclusion of Likert-scale questions within the questionnaire helped mitigate this risk by revealing underlying attitudes and sub-beliefs, thus enhancing the depth and validity of the data interpretation.

Despite these challenges, the study has highlighted both the practical and methodological considerations of researching music education within the Irish context. The reflections outlined above show that, while the findings may be limited in scope, they also point towards promising directions for future inquiry. In particular, refining recruitment strategies, developing more accessible survey instructions, statistically validating the educator's survey and exploring comparative classroom-based approaches could strengthen future studies. Acknowledging these limitations situates the project within the complex realities of educational research and underscores the need for further investigation into the relationship between teaching practices and students' self-efficacy in music education. It is important to note that correlation does not imply causation. Students with supportive teachers may show higher self-efficacy but that does not prove that the teaching caused the confidence, other factors may be present.

Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of this study in direct relation to the research questions outlined in Chapter One.

1. To what extent do post-primary school music educators in the Republic of Ireland report the implementation of relationship-based teaching practices in their classrooms?
2. What levels of music performance self-efficacy do post-primary school music students report across Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between educators' reported use of relationship-based teaching practices and their students' overall music performance self-efficacy?

This chapter begins by addressing research question one, reporting the findings of the educators' survey in Section 4.1 Educator Survey Results, outlining the extent to which relationship-based teaching practices are reported by participating post-primary music teachers. The results of the student survey, addressing the second research question are then presented in Section 4.2 Students' Survey Results, detailing levels of music performance self-efficacy across Bandura's four sources. To explore research question three, the students' self-efficacy source scores are then grouped by teacher in Section 4.3 Students' Self-Efficacy Score Sources by Teacher, allowing for an exploration of variation across teaching contexts. Educator and student datasets are subsequently brought together in Section 4.4 through direct

comparison, highlighting patterns and contrasts between teachers' reported RBT practices and their students' self-efficacy profiles. The cross-sectional correlational analyses addressing the core research questions of the study are presented in Section 4.5 Correlations, identifying the strength and nature of relationships between relationship-based teaching practices and overall student self-efficacy, as well as each of Bandura's four sources. Finally, the chapter concludes in Section 4.6 with a summary of key findings and their implications for post-primary music education.

4.1 Educators' Survey Results

In response to research question one, the educators' survey used David Tranter's key elements of RBT to help identify the overall amount of RBT that they utilised in their classroom.¹ While the individual items in the survey had a moderate amount of variance, the overall amount of RBT did not. On a Likert scale of 1-7, where 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree, the mean scores for individual questions hovered between 3.5-7 indicating the lack of three category answers disagree, somewhat disagree and strongly disagree.

The average score amongst all nine teachers, which indicated their overall use of RBT beliefs, was 5.22 suggesting a general agreement with positive teaching beliefs and a relatively high use of relationship-based methods. This finding merits further exploration as it may expand current literature on RBT practices, and new teaching methodologies furthering the research of Alfredo Bautista, Guo-Xheng Toh, Zid-Niel Mancenido and

¹ See Appendix A – 8 conditions from David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland, *The Third Path: A Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2018), 26-27.

Joanne Wong who found that the student-centred approach enhances musical understanding and pride in students' own work while encouraging personal investment.² The relatively low variation in responses may indicate that many of the participating teachers reported similar beliefs and practices, or that the instrument created to explore the RBT practices in educators' teaching styles may need further development and require statistical validation.

The educators' results reflected a general sense of progressive and relationship-based philosophies with an emphasis on growth-mindset, personalising student accesses/feedback and innovative teaching. Table 4.1 summarises the highest rated responses that a majority of teachers agreed on, with low to moderate variation. The mean is their average score and standard deviation (SD) shows how spread out or close together the values in a set of data are. A low SD > 1.0 number means they are close and a high number means they are more spread out.

Table 4.1 Educators' Mean and Standard Deviation of Highest Rated Statements

Highest Rated Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I encourage students to challenge themselves in the classroom	6.78	0.44	Very high agreement; very low variation. Strong consensus
I define the success of each student differently	6.67	0.50	High individualisation; low variation
I try new ways to engage students in learning	6.44	1.01	High innovation; moderate variation

The educators' lowest rated statements indicated a low emphasis on control/compliance which again highlights a more relationship-based approach but with a focus on organisation.

² Alfredo Bautista, Guo-Zheng Toh, Zid-Niel Mancenido and Joanne Wong, 'Student-Centered Pedagogies in the Singapore Music Classroom: A Case Study on Collaborative Composition', *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43 (2018), 1-25.

A relationship-based educator may or may not have a focus on organisation and disorderly learning, settings where frequent misbehaviour, disruptions or poor structure make effective teaching difficult to impossible, which is why the final statement in Table 4.2 indicated mixed views. While a focus on organisation and disorderly learning is not specifically mentioned in the current research of relationship-based practices, this does align with Jenny Muñiz’s research on rigorous learning objectives for all their students which showed that these standards continually build help students in numerous ways.³

Table 4.2 Educators’ Mean and Standard Deviation of Lowest Rated Statements

Lowest Rated Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
My goal in the classroom is to ensure compliance	3.56	1.81	Low agreement; large variation
I view learning as disorderly	3.67	1.66	Majority disagree; wide variation
My primary focus is to strengthen my students’ areas of weakness	4.22	1.92	Mixed views

It is important to note that the data skewed towards educators with longer careers with the mean being 24.3 years of teaching experience with a range of 5 to 31 years, with only two teacher having taught less than 10 years. As seen in Figure 4.1 there was a moderately positive correlation between the years of teaching experience and the amount of RBT practices used by the educators surveyed.⁴ The two teachers with less than ten years experience self-reported less use of RBT practices. However, it is important to acknowledge that correlation alone does not establish causality.

³ Jenny Muniz, ‘Culturally Responsive Teaching: A 50-State Survey of Teaching Methods’ (New America, 2019), 5 <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED594599.pdf>> [accessed 20 January 2022].

⁴ fad, 125.

With more data, this could potentially indicate that more experienced teachers use more relationship-based practices and may lean slightly more towards student-centred beliefs.

When describing their teaching philosophies, six educators explicitly referenced student-centred learning, while five emphasised active and experiential approaches. This pattern could suggest that many participants were already employing principles consistent with relationship-based teaching, whether or not they identified their practice using RBT terminology. Student-centred pedagogy is closely related to relationship-based teaching in that it prioritises learners' individual needs, voices and experiences, positioning the teacher-student relationship as a central purpose through which engagement and learning are fostered. This aligns with Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson's research that RBT practices start at a place where safety, trust, student needs, teacher needs and modes of communication are considerations as important as history, language arts, science or other academic subjects.⁵

4.2 Students' Survey Results

Addressing research question two, adapted from Michael Zelenak's Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale, students were questioned using a google doc questionnaire that measured Albert Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal/social persuasion and physiological state.⁶

⁵ Sura Hart and Victoria Kindle Hodson, *The Compassionate Classroom: Relationship Based Teaching and Learning* (Encinitas, California: Puddledancer Press, 2004), 15.

⁶ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Development and validation of the music performance self-efficacy scale', *Music Education Research International*, 4 (2010), 31-42.

Within this sample, students reported relatively high confidence in their musical abilities and there was a broad consensus on personal success and enjoyment. The total mean score from 1 – 10, where 100 is the highest percentage, for all 100 students was 73.35 with the four sources ranging from 67.35 – 79.81.

Table 4.3 shows high mean scores (≥ 80) and relatively low standard deviations, suggesting strong and consistent agreement.

Table 4.3 Students’ Mean and Standard Deviation of Highest Rated Statements

Statement	SD	M
I enjoy participating in musical performances	19.77	83.63
Performing with my instrument makes me feel good	21.95	82.96
I have received positive feedback on music performance evaluations	17.93	82.12
I have had positive experiences performing simple music ⁷	15.02	87.08

Students displayed the least amount of agreement in vicarious and behavioural strategy questions seen here in Table 4 which potentially stems from individuals’ learning styles and contexts.

⁷ In the context of a student survey about music performance, the word ‘simple’ refers to music that is technically easy or appropriate for a beginner or early learner.

Table 4.4 Students' Mean and Standard Deviation of Lowest Rated Statements

Statement	SD	M
I do not worry about small mistakes during practice	26.3	52.15
I have used other music students as models to improve my performance skills	28.15	62.13
I have improved my music performance skills by watching professional musicians, who are similar to me in some way, perform well.	31.53	66.55
I have improved my music performance skills by watching other students, who are similar to me in some way, perform well.	25.62	67.12

Overall, the students' self-efficacy scores indicated that their beliefs were strongly influenced by mastery and verbal and social persuasion, less so by physiological state and the least amount by vicarious experience. The vicarious experience score being lower is consistent with the high standard deviations which may indicate that participants had varied modelling or peer exposure (Table 4.6). This is likely caused by the fact that there appears to be little or no ensemble playing in music classrooms and therefore learning through musical interaction with peers is a rarity. This is consistent with Berrill's research that asserts ensemble performance is frequently positioned outside classroom pedagogy.⁸

Table 4.5 Percentage of Influence by Bandura's Four Sources of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy Source	Mean	Interpretation
Mastery	79.81	High — strong personal experience in musical success
Persuasion	76.93	High — strong social feedback and support
Physiological	72.70	Moderate — somewhat confident in emotional regulation
Vicarious	67.35	Lower — less influence from observing others
Total Efficacy	75.35	High — overall self-efficacy in music performance

⁸ Mairéad Berrill, 'Towards the Inclusion of Group Music-Making in Second-Level Classrooms' (PhD dissertation, Dublin City University, 2014), 3.

The data indicates that students are divided on the use of modelling (vicarious experiences) and managing anxiety. Not all students use structured practice routines or feel secure during performances. Students may struggle with performance anxiety and vicarious experiences (modelling others) may be underutilised or ineffective for self-efficacy building in post-primary school music class.

4.3 Analysis of Student Self-Efficacy Sources by Teacher

To address research question 3, is there a statistically significant relationship between educators' reported use of relationship-based teaching practices and their students' overall music performance self-efficacy; students' self-reported self-efficacy scores, and educators self-reported use of relationship-based practices were analysed and compared.

Each teachers' self-reported use of relationship-based practices is identified along with their students' self-reported self-efficacy scores. The sources of student self-efficacy have been identified and presented in Figures 4.1 - 4.9. Figure 4.10 shows all teachers together with further information.

To protect all participants all personal details have been removed. The educators have been assigned numbers one to nine. Overall, student self-efficacy score results were relatively consistent across teachers.⁹ While there were small differences in RBT scores, it is important to note that 'teacher 6's' students self-reported notably low self-efficacy scores. However,

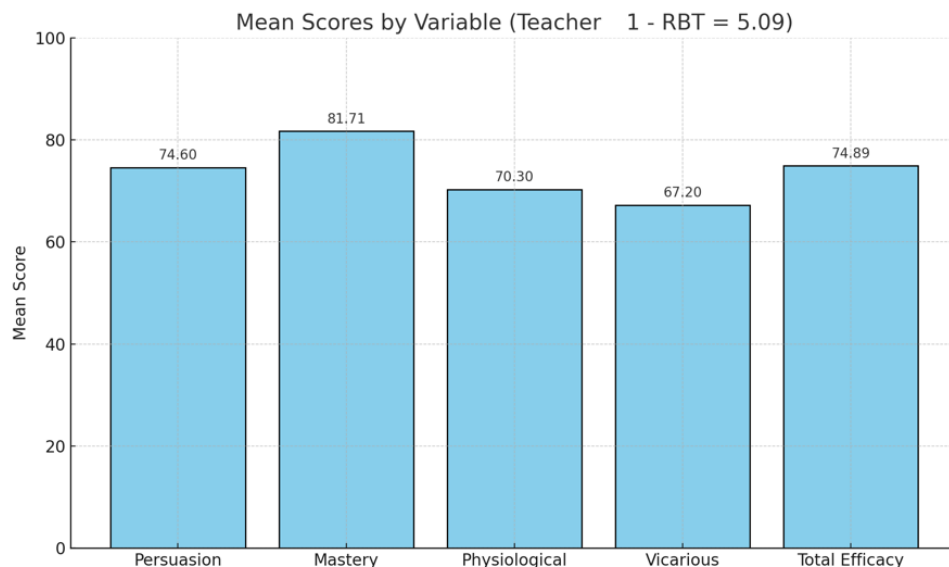
⁹ See Figure 4.10, 125.

this evaluation was based on feedback from only two students, which limits the reliability of any correlations being drawn. Again, it is important to remember that correlation does not equal causation.

4.3.1 Teacher 1: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The self-reported student data for Teacher 1 whose RBT score was 5.09 based on their own reporting, reveals that the student self-efficacy source of mastery is the highest-rated domain with a mean score of 81.71, indicating strong student confidence in personal capability based on past successes. Total efficacy and persuasion followed closely, with mean scores of 74.89 and 74.60, respectively. Physiological responses showed a moderate score of 70.30, while vicarious experiences received the lowest rating at 67.20, suggesting relatively lower influence from observing others (Figure 4.1). These results suggest that Teacher 1's student may draw more on personal experiences and verbal encouragement than on indirect or physiological cues when evaluating their own efficacy.

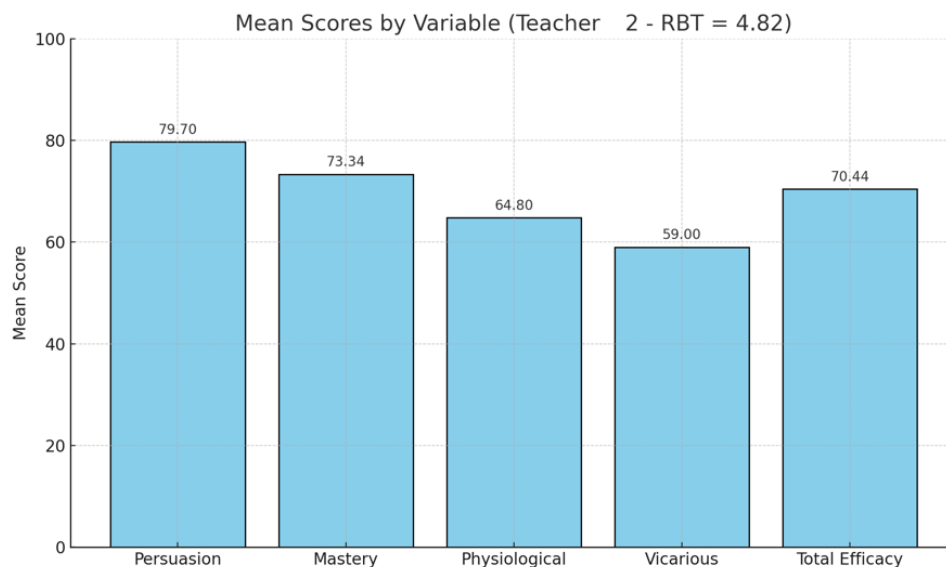
Figure 4.1 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 1



4.3.2 Teacher 2: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The data for the students of Teacher 2 (RBT = 4.82) show noticeable variation across self-efficacy domains. Persuasion had the highest mean score at 79.70, suggesting that encouragement and feedback could potentially influence his or her students' sense of efficacy. Mastery followed with a mean of 73.34, indicating moderate confidence drawn from personal achievements. Total efficacy was slightly lower at 70.44, while physiological responses (64.80) and vicarious experiences (59.00) received the lowest ratings, (Figure 4.2). These results suggest that Teacher 2's students may be more influenced by external affirmation and personal success than by internal emotional states or observational learning.

Figure 4.2 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 2

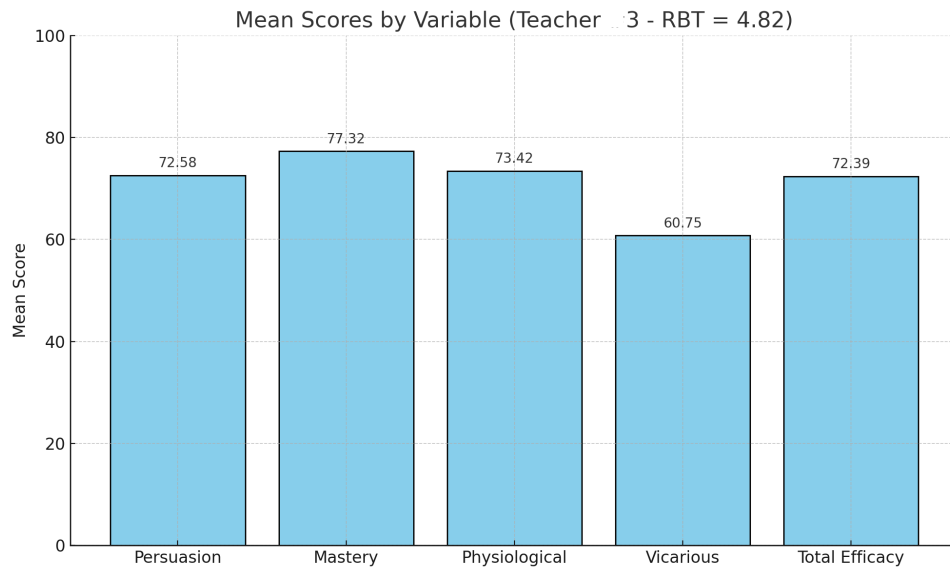


4.3.3 Teacher 3: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The student's data for Teacher 3 (RBT = 4.82) demonstrates moderate to high self-efficacy across domains, with some variability. Mastery had the highest mean score at 77.32, suggesting strong confidence built on personal accomplishments. Physiological and

persuasion followed with means of 73.42 and 72.58, respectively, indicating that both internal states and verbal encouragement play a role in the students' self-efficacy. Total efficacy was similar at 72.39, while vicarious experiences received the lowest score of 60.75, suggesting that observational learning is a less influential factor for this teacher's students. (Figure 4.3). Overall, the data indicates a self-efficacious profile of the student's, driven more by personal successes and internal regulation than by external modelling.

Figure 4.3 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 3

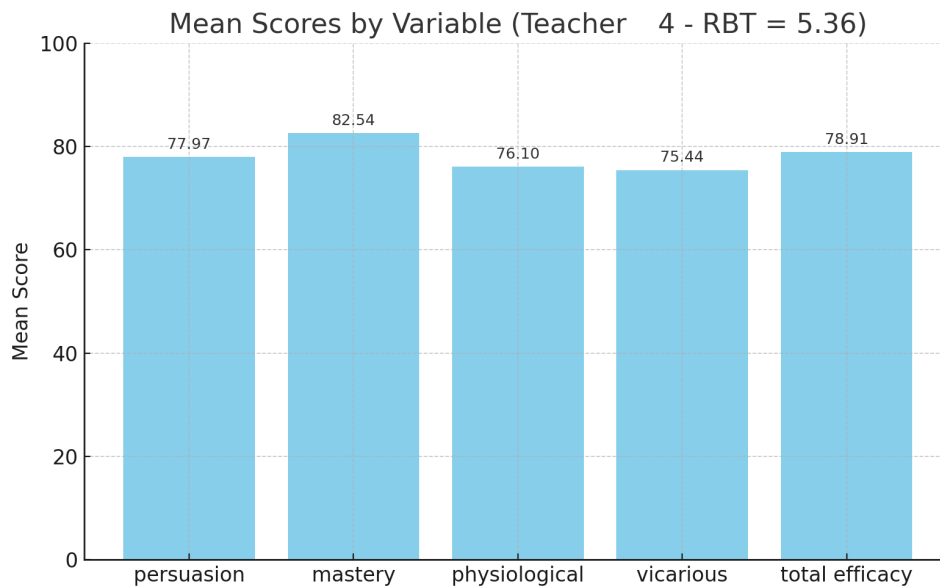


4.3.4 Teacher 4: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The data for the students of Teacher 4 (RBT = 5.36) indicates consistently high self-efficacy across all domains. Mastery received the highest mean score at 82.54, reflecting strong confidence potentially based on the past personal successes of his or her students. This was followed by total efficacy at 78.91 and persuasion at 77.97, suggesting a solid influence from both general confidence and external encouragement. Physiological (76.10) and vicarious

experiences (75.44) also showed strong scores, indicating that these students' sense of efficacy may be reinforced by a balance of internal and external factors (Figure 4.4). Overall, Teacher 4's students exhibit well-rounded and robust self-efficacy profiles.

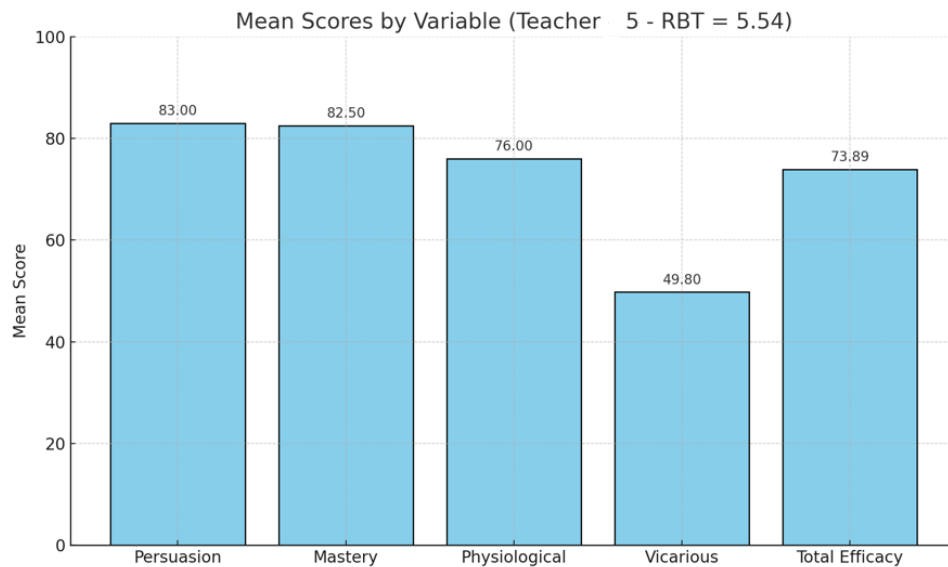
Figure 4.4 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 4



4.3.5 Teacher 5: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

Teacher 5's (RBT = 5.54) students continue to reflect generally high self-efficacy in most domains. However, this is based on a very small sample ($n = 2$). Persuasion had the highest mean score at 83.00, followed closely by mastery at 82.50, potentially indicating strong confidence fuelled by both external affirmation and personal success. Physiological responses were also moderately high at 76.00, while vicarious experiences showed a notably lower score of 49.80, suggesting limited influence from observing others. Total efficacy stood at 73.89, consistent with the overall strong self-belief (Figure 4.5). However, due to the limited sample size, these findings should be interpreted cautiously.

Figure 4.5 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 5

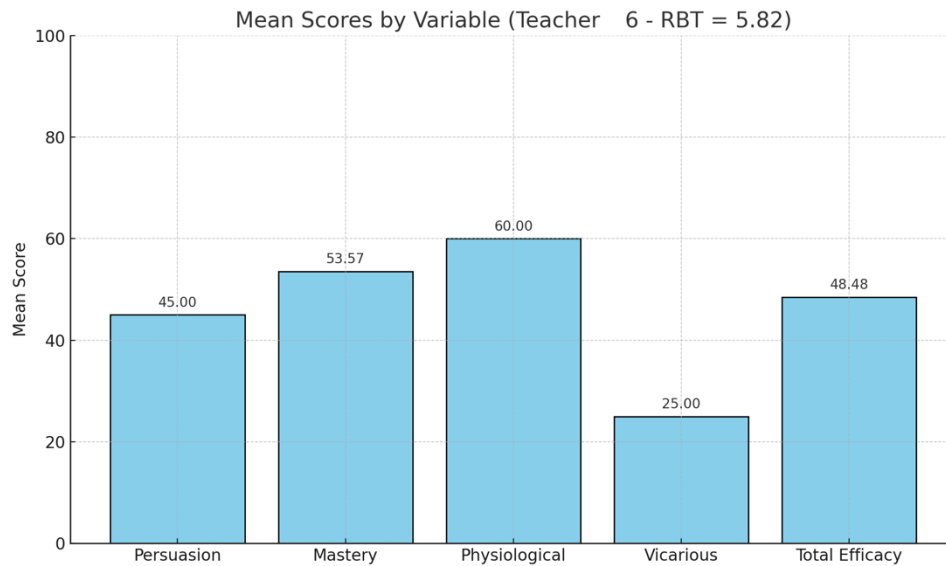


4.3.5 Teacher 6: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The data for the students of Teacher 6 (RBT = 5.82), based on a very limited sample ($n = 2$), indicates lower overall self-efficacy compared to other the other student groups.

Physiological responses had the highest mean score at 60.00, suggesting moderate confidence rooted in internal cues. Mastery followed at 53.57, while persuasion (45.00) and total efficacy (48.48) were lower, pointing to weaker influence from past success and external encouragement. Vicarious experiences received the lowest rating at 25.00, highlighting minimal impact from observing others (Figure 4.6). Given the small sample size, these results should be interpreted with caution.

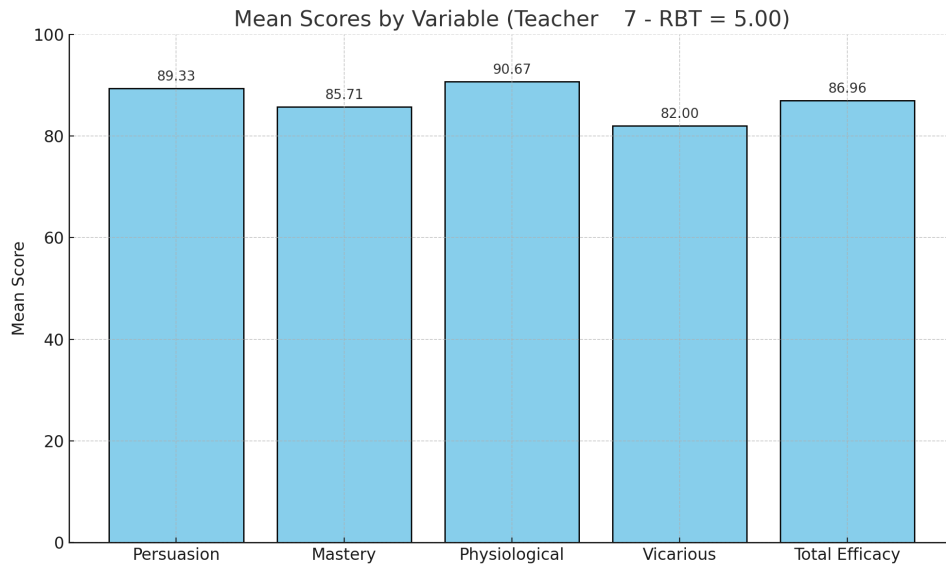
Figure 4.6 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 6



4.3.5 Teacher 7: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

Teacher 7's (RBT = 5.00) students again show consistently high self-efficacy across all domains, despite being based on a small sample ($n = 3$). Physiological responses had the highest mean score at 90.67, indicating potentially strong confidence supported by internal cues. Persuasion (89.33) and total efficacy (86.96) also scored very high, suggesting this teacher feels reinforced by both external encouragement and overall self-belief. Mastery (85.71) and vicarious experiences (82.00) were similarly elevated, reflecting a broad and well-balanced self-efficacy profile (Figure 4.7). While the sample is limited, the scores suggest a strong sense of confidence across all measured areas.

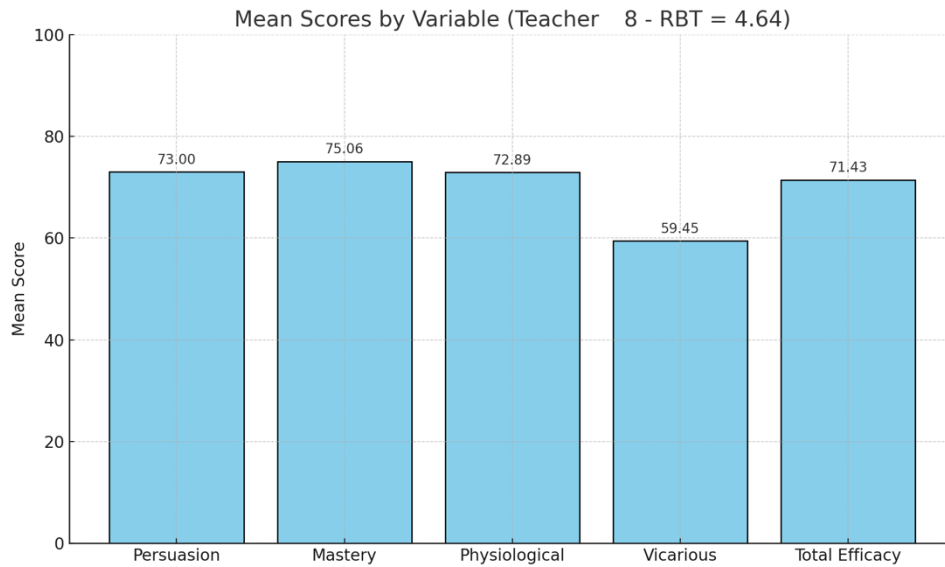
Figure 4.7 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 7



4.3.8 Teacher 8: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The data for Teacher 8's (RBT = 4.64) students show high levels of self-efficacy across most domains. Mastery had the highest mean score at 75.06, indicating a strong belief in their abilities based on prior successes. Persuasion (73.00) and physiological responses (72.89) were also relatively high, suggesting that verbal encouragement and internal states may contribute positively to these students' confidence levels. Total efficacy averaged 71.43, aligning with the overall trend. However, vicarious experiences were notably lower at 59.45, indicating less influence from observing others (Figure 4.8). These results reflect generally confident self-efficacy profiles, with some variability depending on the source of reinforcement.

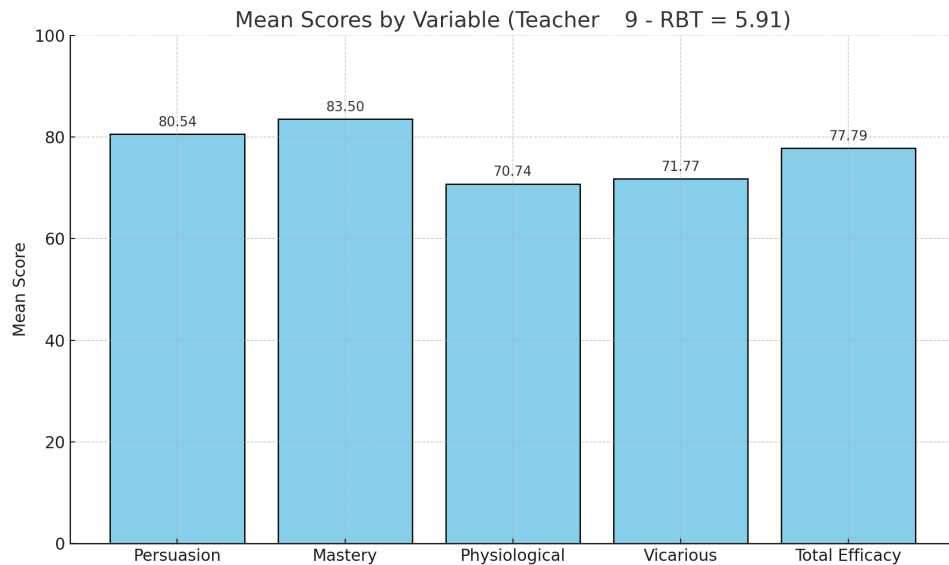
Figure 4.8 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 8



4.3.9 Teacher 9: Student Self-Efficacy Source Profile

The student data for Teacher 9 (RBT = 5.91) reflects moderately strong overall self-efficacy profiles. Mastery had the highest mean score at 83.50, highlighting high confidence rooted in personal successes. Persuasion followed closely at 80.54, suggesting that verbal encouragement and feedback may also play a significant role. Total efficacy was also high at 77.79, consistent with the overall trend. Vicarious experiences (71.77) and physiological responses (70.74) were lower, but still indicate moderate to strong influence (Figure 4.9). These results suggest that Teacher 9's students' self-efficacy is potentially primarily driven by personal achievement and external reinforcement, with secondary contributions from observation and internal states.

Figure 4.9 Distribution of Students' Self-Efficacy Sources for Teacher 9



4.3.10 Comparative Analysis of Student Self-efficacy Scores and Teacher RBT Scores

Data points from sections 4.3.1 to 4.3.9 show that the teacher's in this sample showed consistent results in their use of RBT practices and that their students' self-efficacy scores were reported as relatively high. Teacher 7's students demonstrated the highest overall self-efficacy score among all student groups with a score of 86.96. This demonstrates confidence across numerous self-efficacy sources. The students of Teachers 5 and 9 had the second highest self-efficacy ratings with their data reflecting consistent and strong self-efficacy amongst their students. These educators taught for 25, 31 and 26 years respectively, which may indicate that their experience has led to more well-rounded and thoughtful teaching in terms of their daily instruction and potentially could have influenced their students' self-efficacy. In contrast, Teacher 6's students had the lowest total efficacy score at 48.48, significantly below the group average, indicating a potential need for support or further

development. However, as previously noted, Teacher 6's student sample size only consisted of 2 students and more information would be necessary to draw any potential conclusions.

Teachers RBT Scores

Teacher 9 had the highest score at 5.91, indicating the strongest alignment with RBT practices. Close behind were Teachers 6 (5.82), Teacher 5 (5.54) and Teacher 4 (5.36), all showing high engagement with RBT principles. Teacher 1 (5.09), Teacher 7 (5.00), and Teacher 2 (4.82) followed in the mid-range, reflecting moderate implementation of RBT strategies. Teacher 3 also had an RBT of 4.82, tying with Teacher 2. Teacher 8 had the lowest RBT score at 4.64, suggesting comparatively less emphasis on RBT. However, the mean RBT score across all nine teachers is approximately 5.22, and the standard deviation from the mean is approximately 0.43 which indicates a moderately low amount of variation.

4.4 Comparison

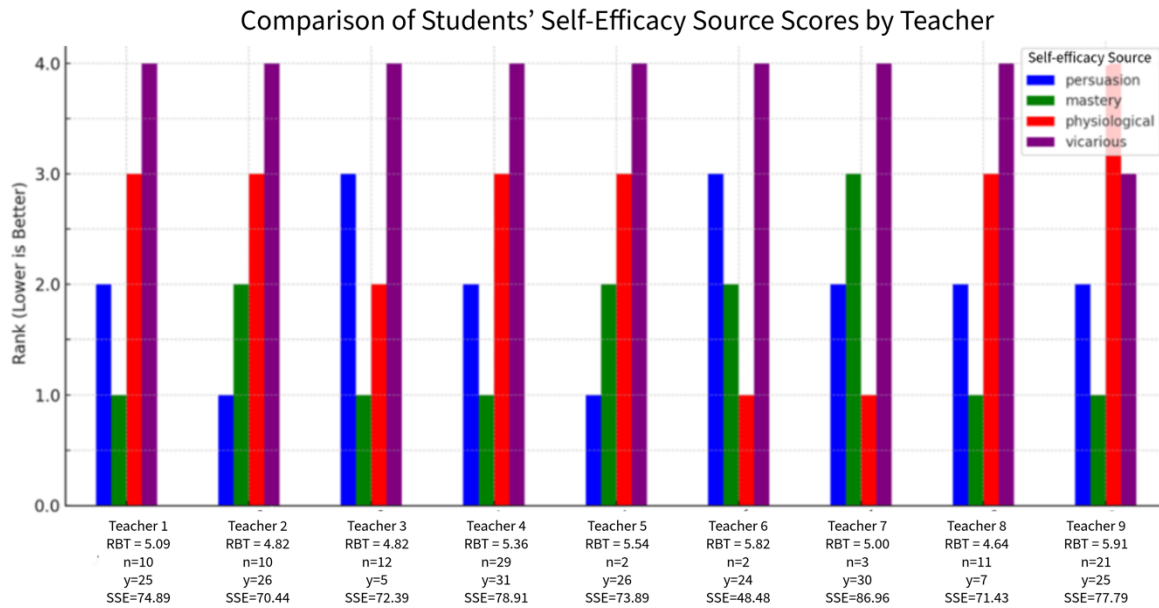
The comparison of all educators is based on the student self-efficacy source scores. Notably, the vicarious source was the lowest source by students for nearly all teachers, and it ranked second lowest for the remaining teacher. It is important to recognise that a correlation between variables does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship. This consistent trend suggests a potential pattern, highlighting the vicarious dimension as a relatively weaker source of efficacy across the sample. The vicarious source which is the learning by observing others or modelling is a key dimension of self-efficacy. Its consistently weak rating across educators, where even the outlier was a very close second to weakest, signals a targeted area where professional development might be needed. Albert Bandura asserts 'because high

arousal can debilitate performance, people are more inclined to expect success when they are not beset by aversive arousal...'¹⁰ Therefore, when students are calm and not experiencing unpleasant anxiety or stress, they are more likely to believe that they will succeed. This could also indicate a systemic issue in teacher training, school culture or instructional norms or importantly, a phenomenon challenging to capture by quantitative means.

In Figure 4.10, the bars are colour-coded for clarity: blue for persuasion, green for mastery, red for physiological and purple for vicarious. Each bar indicates the students' highest and lowest self-reported sources of their own self-efficacy scores. teacher's in that particular student source of self-efficacy, with lower values representing better performance. Here, N refers to the number of viable students per teacher, RBT denotes the self-reported that score each teacher reported on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, with 7 representing the highest possible score and use of RBT, y is the number of years the teacher has taught music and SSE is the students' own self reported self-efficacy rating.

¹⁰ Albert Bandura, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York, New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997), 106.

Figure 4.10 Comparison of Students' Self-Efficacy Source Scores by Teacher



It is important to note the limited variability in the teachers' RBT scores and/or limitation with the research design may have impacted the strength of any correlations. Similarly, while student efficacy scores showed some variation, it was not statistically significant. This lack of range likely constrained the potential for identifying meaningful relationships. For example, it is possible that including teachers with lower RBT scores could yield stronger or more interpretable correlations but such cases were not present in this dataset. The lowest RBT score observed was 4.64 (Teacher 8), which still falls within an average to moderately positive range, and student efficacy in that case was strong. Variations in student group sizes per teacher further complicate direct comparisons. While these patterns are worth noting, they are observational and limited in scope.

4.5 Findings

The data that were collected reveal three main findings. The first discovery addressing my first research question is that, based on this sample, students in post-primary school music classrooms in Ireland appear to have a relatively high and significant amount of self-efficacy. With a total average of 73.35 out of 100, the students confirm a shared belief in their own abilities in accomplishing musical tasks. The data in Figure 4.10 shows a slight trend towards mastery being the largest source of their self-efficacy. This may imply that if educators utilise a student's ability to accomplishing a skill as a motivator, his or her self-efficacy would continue to strengthen with each new completed feat. This aligns with Zelenak's findings in students of the middle and high school ages in the United States of America.¹¹

The second finding, addressing research question 2, indicates that the educators in post-primary school music classrooms in this sample display an above average amount of RBT in their methodologies and practices. With an average score of 5.22 out of 7, teachers were very unified in their beliefs and practices in terms of student-centred learning. There were no significant outliers and while some educators had lower average scores than others, this could have potentially been due to low participation by their students.

The third finding is that, exploring my thirs research, while there is no definitionally statistically relevant correlation between self-efficacy and social persuasion, based on the data collected in the educator and student's surveys there is a conceptual indication that relationship-based teaching (RBT) may align with students who have high self-efficacy

¹¹ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Measuring the sources of self-efficacy among post-primary school music students', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62 (2015), 395.

scores given that the mean student self-efficacy was reported at 75.35 out of 100 and the mean self-reported RBT practices utilised by educators was 5.22 out of 7.¹² It is important to acknowledge that given the limited sample size in this study, future research to test the strength of associations between these variables with larger participant groups, and a review of the research design and analysis management may be necessary to more conclusively establish a connection between self-efficacy and RBT.

The lack of a stronger correlation could have been influenced by several factors. For instance, the low variance in scores for RBT amongst teachers may have impacted the data negatively. With no notable outliers, it is difficult to define the significance of the correlations. One or two educators with extremely high RBT, or few to no RBT practices, may have resulted in students with corresponding scores. Michael Gibbert et al. stated that, in research, outliers can challenge existing theories and prompt the development of new ones. By examining these anomalies, researchers can identify patterns or variables previously unconsidered, enriching the analytical framework.¹³ A potential reason for the lack of variance may have been the little diversity amongst the teachers surveyed. Among the nine educators, eight were women, and eight had over 10 years of teaching experience which demonstrates their strong qualifications and tenure. When discussing their teaching philosophies, six educators referred to 'student-centred learning,' while five highlighted active and experiential learning. This indicated that many of the educators were like-minded and already used RBT knowingly or otherwise.

¹² See 4.2, 110.

¹³ Michael Gibbert, Lakshmi Nair Balachandran, Matthias Weiss and Martin Hoegl, 'Using Outliers for Theory Building', *Organizational Research Methods*, 24 (2020), 175.

A finding that may provide some insight for future research is that, among the four sources of self-efficacy, vicarious influence was rated the lowest by eight of the nine teachers and the second lowest by the ninth. Exploring this result further could inform strategies for fostering more collaborative classrooms, where students support and motivate one another through shared successes.

4.6 Conclusion

Addressing the three research questions, this study revealed the following findings. Firstly, the data points presented in this chapter show numerous themes amongst both teacher and student participants. Of the post-primary school music educators in Ireland that completed the survey there is evidence of a relatively high amount self-reported use of RBT being utilised in their classroom. Educators consistently reported valuing trust, encouragement and personalised feedback as part of their pedagogical approach.

Secondly, of the post-primary school music students who completed this survey, this sample reported comparatively high levels of music performance self-efficacy. Many students expressed confidence in their ability to meet musical challenges and continue on through difficulties and perform successfully in both individual and group contexts.

Based on the data collected, the correlations identified were not statistically strong due to the lack of differentiation in the participant responses, and/or potential limitations of the instrument used. As seen in Figure 4.10, Mastery Experience was reported as the strongest or

second strongest self-reported data point by students across all educators. Vicarious experiences was reported as the lowest self-efficacy source of students by all teachers. There is also a statistically weak but still present relationship between the use of RBT strategies and mastery experiences, as well as a potential growth area opportunity in vicarious experiences. These findings, while modest in strength, point toward a potential role of RBT in supporting students' self-belief and resilience. These results may also suggest that the benefits of RBT may not always be captured fully through quantitative measures alone but may be more evident in the lived experiences of teachers and students.

The analysis indicated a consistent ordering of self-efficacy sources within this dataset, with mastery experience emerging as the most influential, followed by verbal/social persuasion, physiological state, and vicarious experience. This pattern is consistent with previous research by Ellen Usher & Pajares.¹⁴

¹⁴ Ellen Usher and Frank Pajares, 'Inviting Confidence in School: Invitations as a Critical Source of the Academic Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Entering Middle School Students', *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, 12 (2006), 12-13.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Guided by Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, this research sought to explore to extent post-primary school music educators in the Republic of Ireland report the implementation of relationship-based teaching practices in their classrooms? What levels of music performance self-efficacy do post-primary school music students report across Bandura's four sources of self-efficacy? Finally, if there is a statistically significant relationship between educators' reported use of relationship-based teaching practices and their students' overall music performance self-efficacy?

To explore these questions, a quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design was used, drawing on survey data from post-primary music educators and their students. By integrating educator-reported measures of relationship-based teaching with student-reported music performance self-efficacy scores across Bandura's four sources, the study aimed to present a cohesive body of evidence situated within post-primary music education context in Ireland. This study sought to determine the extent to which post-primary music educators report implementing relationship-based teaching practices, to identify the levels of music performance self-efficacy reported by their students across Bandura's four sources, and to examine whether a statistically significant relationship exists between educators' use of relationship-based teaching and students' self-efficacy.

Students that report high levels of self-efficacy have shown significant advantages in their test scores and music performance.¹ Self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in influencing their motivation and performance outcomes. It allows students to set loftier goals, engage in purposeful practice and persevere through challenges contributing to improved musical achievements.² Michael Zelenak's development of the Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale highlighted the strong relationship between self-efficacy and key psychological factors such as mastery experiences and verbal encouragement, which are essential for fostering growth and resilience in music learners.³

5.1 Implications of the Study

The findings of this study carry potentially important implications for music education in Ireland. For educators, this suggests that fostering supportive peer interactions, modelling success and providing constructive encouragement can significantly enhance students' confidence and motivation in music. For policymakers and curriculum designers, the study points to the need for professional development opportunities that equip teachers with strategies to embed RBT principles into their daily practice. Seven of the educators indicated that they go to three or fewer professional development opportunities a year. More meaningful and purposeful professional development opportunities might drive higher attendance and participation from teachers. More broadly, the indication seen in Figure 4.10 that RBT scores could potentially be affected by educators teaching practices could reinforce

¹ Gary E. McPherson and John McCormick, 'Self-efficacy and music performance', *Psychology of Music*, 34 (2006), 322-336.

² *Ibid.*, 322-336.

³ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Self-efficacy in music performance: Measuring the sources among post-primary school music students' (PhD dissertation, University of South Florida, 2011), 35.

the importance of moving beyond examination-driven models of music education toward approaches that prioritise student well-being, engagement and long-term participation in music.

Initial teacher education programmes could focus on developing teachers' relational awareness, modelling techniques and strategies for nurturing peer-to-peer support, aligning with Tranter et al.'s emphasis on building classroom conditions of safety, belonging, positivity, engagement and mastery. Purposeful, well-designed training in these areas of responsiveness, demandingness parenting styles and the four sources of self-efficacy would support teachers in embedding relational principles into daily instruction, ultimately strengthening students' confidence, motivation and musical self-efficacy.

In my own practice, these findings will influence the way I design and organise my curriculum, prompting me to be more deliberate in embedding opportunities for learning through vicarious experiences. Students will have the opportunity to learn from one another on a deeper level and be influenced by their peers without being intimidated by their classmates' success. By approaching this angle with greater purpose, I can create richer learning environments that not only support direct engagement but also allow learners to benefit from observing, reflecting on and connecting with the experiences of others.

The dissemination and presentation of these results could provide valuable insights for my fellow Irish music educators by highlighting alternative ways of approaching curriculum

design and the potential role of RBT. Sharing these findings might encourage a deeper reflection on current practices and open up dialogue around teaching strategies.

Although it is unlikely that the findings of this dissertation will have a direct influence on the structure or content of the state examinations, they may serve as a valuable resource for educators. By engaging with this information teachers may be encouraged to explore alternative pedagogical approaches that nurture students' sense of self-efficacy.

Strengthening this dimension of learner development has the potential to enhance students' overall confidence, thereby better equipping them to navigate the challenges of the Leaving Certificate and other grade-level examinations with greater assurance and resilience.

5.2 Recommendations for Future Research

This study offers valuable insights into the presence of self-efficacy and RBT in post-primary school music classrooms in Ireland. While the vicarious source of self-efficacy was not significantly correlated with RBT, the constructs remain conceptually aligned and merit further study. The data highlight the importance of mastery experiences in shaping students' self-efficacy and open the door for further exploration into the role of vicarious influence within collaborative classroom environments. Future research could employ the exploration of how the sustained use of RBT practices influences student confidence and musical achievement over time. Comparative studies across different school types or geographic regions could shed light on contextual factors that shape the effectiveness of relational approaches. Studies could include performance ensembles such as choir, band and orchestra to see if conductors use self-efficacy motivators to improve performance results.

Additionally, experimental interventions, in which teachers are trained in RBT strategies and

their impact is systematically measured, could offer stronger evidence of causality.

Incorporating additional research design like case-studies and qualitative methods such as interviews or classroom observations would enrich understanding of the nuanced ways in which teacher-student relationships foster or inhibit self-efficacy in music learning.

Bibliography

- Aktan Sumar, 'Investigation of Classroom Teaching, Self-Efficacy and Motivation in Social Studies Classrooms', *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 5 (2019), 639-656
- Alotaibi, Manar S., 'Game-Based Learning in Early Childhood Education: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15 (2024), <<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1307881/full>> [accessed 10 October 2024]
- Altun, Mustafa, 'The Ongoing Debate over Teacher Centered Education and Student-Centered Education', *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 10 (2023), 106-110
- Aniñon, Mary Jane D., et al., 'The Impact of Classroom Decors on Academic Performance: A Qualitative Exploration of Senior High School Students' Experiences in Central Visayas, Philippines', *Journal of Ongoing Educational Research*, 2 (2024), 138-143
- Bandura, Albert, 'Guide for Creating Self-Efficacy Scales', in F. Pajares and T. Urdan (eds.), *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 307-337
- Bandura, Albert, 'Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change', *Psychological Review*, 84 (1977), 191-215
- Bandura, Albert, *Self-efficacy in Changing Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Bandura, Albert, *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control* (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997)
- Bandura, Albert, 'Self-efficacy', in V. S. Ramachandran (ed.), *Encyclopedia of human behavior* (4 vols, New York, NY: Academic Press, 1994), iv, 191-215
- Bandura, Albert, *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1986)
- Bandura, Albert, 'Social cognitive theory' in R. Vasta (ed.), *Annals of Child Development* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1989), vi, 1-60
- Bassett, Jonathan F., Snyder, Timothy L., Rogers, Daniel T. and Collins, Courtney L., 'Permissive, Authoritarian, and Authoritative Instructors: Applying the Concept of Parenting Styles to the College Classroom', *Individual Differences Research*, 11 (2013), 1-11
- Baumrind, Diana, 'Parental Disciplinary Patterns and Social Competence in Children', *Youth & Society*, 9 (1978), 239-267

- Baumrind, Diana, 'Effects of Authoritative Parental Control on Child Behavior', *Child Development*, 37 (1966), 887–907
- Bautista, Alfredo, Toh, Guo-Zheng, Mancenido, Zid-Niel and Wong, Joanne, 'Student-Centered Pedagogies in the Singapore Music Classroom: A Case Study on Collaborative Composition', *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43 (2018), 1-25
- Beausang, Ita, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland: Part 1', *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002) <<https://journalofmusic.com/focus/changes-music-education-ireland-part-1>> [accessed 11 April 2023]
- Beausang, Ita, 'Changes in Music Education in Ireland: Part 2', *The Journal of Music*, 2 (2002) <<https://journalofmusic.com/opinion/changes-music-education-ireland-part-2>> [accessed 11 April 2023]
- Berrill, Mairéad, 'Towards the Inclusion of Group Music-Making in Second-Level Classrooms' (PhD dissertation, Dublin City University, 2014)
- Bhandari, Pritha, 'Correlational Research | When & How to Use' (22 June 2023), <<https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/correlational-research/>> [accessed 13 January 2025]
- Bishop, Russell, *Teaching to The North-East: Relationship-based Learning in practice* (Wellington, New Zealand: NZCER Press, 2019)
- Blum, Robert W. et al., 'Adolescent connectedness: cornerstone for health and wellbeing', *British Medical Journal*, 379 (2022), e069213, 1-4
- Bowe, Marie-Louise, 'Post-primary music education in Ireland: Principals' perspectives', *Proceedings of the MISTEC 20th International Seminar*, 6-23
- Braun, Virginia and Clarke, Victoria, 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2 (2006), 77-101
- Bucura, Elizabeth, 'Fostering Self-Efficacy Among Adolescents in Secondary General Music', *General Music Today*, 32 (2019), 5-12
- Carnes, Douglas, 'Relationship-based teaching and its effect on post-primary school music students' self-efficacy', Video, < <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7SjPEeu9ak>> [accessed 14 January 2025]
- Carnes, Taryn B., 'Predictors of Discretionary Effort in a Men's Chorus' (MSc Dissertation, St Cloud University, 2018)

Charles, Anita, 'Relationship-based Practices for Today's Students' (Heinemann Publishing, 2019), <<https://medium.com/@heinemann/relationship-based-practices-for-todays-students-b09982d97403>> [accessed 20 April 2022]

Darling, Nancy and Stienberg, Laurence, 'Parenting Style as Context: An Integrative Model', *Psychological Bulletin*, 113 (1993), 487-496

Deloughry, Ciaran, 'Who pays and who plays? Mapping the discourse of publicly funded instrumental music education in Ireland' (PhD dissertation, University College Cork, 2014)

Department of Education, 'Background Paper and Brief for the review of Leaving Certificate Music' (2024), <<https://ncca.ie/en/resources/background-paper-and-brief-for-the-review-of-leaving-certificate-music>> [accessed 15 January 2025]

Department of Education, *Junior Cycle*, Government of Ireland (2023), <<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/junior-cycle/>> [accessed 9 June 2025]

Department of Education, *Leaving Certificate*, Government of Ireland (2023), <<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/leaving-certificate-2023/>> [accessed 9 June 2025]

Department of Education, *Education Statistics*, Government of Ireland (2019), <<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/publications/education-statistics/>> [accessed 6 March 2026]

Downey, Jean, 'Informal Learning in Music in the Irish Secondary School Context', *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education*, 8 (2009), 47-59

Dunn, Bryan, 'Exploring student centered learning and its effect on the self-efficacy of students' (EdD dissertation, Northeastern University, 2018)

Ertesvåg, Sigrun K., 'Measuring Authoritative Teaching', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 27 (2011), 51-61

Freeman, Scott, Eddy, Sarah L., McDonough, Miles, Smith, Michelle K., Okoroafor, Nnadozie, Jordt, Hannah and Wenderoth, Mary Pat, 'Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111 (2014), 8410-8415

Gaciu, Nicoleta, *Understanding Quantitative Data in Educational Research*, SAGE Publications, 2021 <https://methods.sagepub.com/book/mono/preview/understanding-quantitative-data-in-educational-research.pdf#_>, [accessed 31 Dec 2025]

Gibbert, Michael, Balachandran Nair, Lakshmi, Weiss, Matthias and Hoegl, Martin, 'Using Outliers for Theory Building', *Organizational Research Methods*, 24 (2020), 172-181

Goddard, Roger D., Hoy, Wayne K. and Woolfolk Hoy, Anita, 'Collective Teacher Efficacy: Its Meaning, Measure and Impact on Student Achievement', *American Education Research Journal*, 37 (2000), 479-507

Goodman, Stacey, 'The Importance of Teaching Through Relationships', <<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/importance-teaching-through-relationships-stacey-goodman>> [accessed 15 February 2021]

Hart, Sura and Kindle Hodson, Victoria, *The Compassionate Classroom: Relationship Based Teaching and Learning* (Encinitas, California: Puddledancer Press, 2004)

Hendricks, Karen S., 'The sources of self-efficacy: Educational research and implications for music', *Applications of Research in Music Education*, 35 (2016), 32-38

Hendry, John, 'Relationship Based Education,' <<https://www.parentsvictoria.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Relationship-Based-Education.pdf>> [accessed 5 April 2022]

Heneghan, Frank, *A Review of Music Education in Ireland: Incorporating the Final Report of the Music Education National Debate (MEND – Phase III)*, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2001

Herron, Donald, *Deaf Ears? A Report on the Provision of Music Education in Irish Schools* (Dublin: The Arts Council, 1985)

Hewitt, Michael P., 'Self-efficacy, self-evaluation, and music performance of secondary-level band students', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 63 (2015), 298-313

Hewitt, Michael P., 'The Effect of Modeling, Self-Evaluation, and Self-Listening on Junior High Instrumentalists' Music Performance and Practice Attitude', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 49 (2001), 307-322

Hilger, Laura, 'Teacher-Centered Versus Learner-Centered Learning', <<https://knowledgeworks.org/resources/learner-centered-learning/>> [accessed 15 December 2021]

Jain, Sapna A. and Desai, Trusha R., 'A study of adolescent's self-efficacy and general wellbeing', *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 8 (2020), 713-717

Klein, Kathleen, Calabrese, Jennifer, Aguiar, Adam, Mathew, Sunny, Ajani, Kimoni, Almajid, Rania and Aarons, Jennifer, 'Evaluating Active Lecture and Traditional Lecture in Higher Education', *Journal on Empowering Teaching Excellence*, 7 (2023) 40-51

Kozak, Marcin, 'What is Strong Correlation?', *Teaching Statistics*, 31 (2009), 85-86

Ladson-Billings Gloria, 'Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy', *American Educational Research Journal*, 32 (1995), 465-491

Lathan, Joseph, 'Complete Guide to Student-Centered vs. Teacher-Centered Learning' *University of San Diego Online Degrees* (2019), <onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/teacher-centered-vs-student-centered-learning> [accessed 1 June 2024]

Leadbeater, Charles, *What's Next? 21 ideas for 21st century learning* (London: The Innovation Unit, 2008)

Maccoby, Eleanor E., 'The Role of Parents in the Socialization of Children: An Historical Overview', *Developmental Psychology*, 28 (1992), 1006-1017

Manzoor, Ahmed, Martin, Thomas and Rimesha, Farooq, 'The Impact of Teacher Feedback on Students' Academic Performance: A Mediating Role of Self-efficacy', *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, 2 (July-Sep 2021), 408-468

McCarthy, Marie, 'The Establishment of a Primary-Secondary Continuum in Irish Music Education', *Irish Journal of Education*, 30 (1999), 38-53

McCarthy, Marie, *Passing It On: The Transmission of Music in Irish Culture* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1999)

McClenaghan, Elliot, 'Pearson Correlation', *Technology Networks* (29 April 2024), <www.technologynetworks.com/tn/articles/pearson-correlation-385871> [accessed 1 June 2024]

McCormick, John and McPherson, Gary, 'The role of self-efficacy in a musical performance examination: An exploratory structural equation analysis', *Psychology of Music*, 31 (2003), 37-51

McCormack, Orla, O'Flaherty, Joanne and Liddy, Mags, 'Students' Views on Their Participation in Publicly Managed Second Level Schools in Ireland: The importance of student-teacher relationships', *Educational Studies*, 47 (2019), 1-16

McPherson, Gary E. and McCormick, John, 'The Contribution of Motivational Factors to Instrumental Performance in a Music Examination,' *Research Studies in Music Education*, 15 (2000), 31-39

McPherson, Gary E. and McCormick, John, 'Self-efficacy and music performance', *Psychology of Music*, 34 (2006), 325-339

Mehta, Sadjata, 'Modern Teaching Methods – It's Time For The Change', <<https://eduvoice.in/modern-teaching-methods/#0-what-is-modern-teaching>> [accessed 28 March 2022]

- Milner, H. Richard, 'Relationship-Centered Teaching: Addressing Racial Tensions in Classrooms', *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 54 (2018), 60-66
- Milner, H. Richard, 'Culturally Responsive Classroom Management,' *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (2019), <<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.782>> [accessed 13 August 2025]
- Milner, H. Richard, 'The Relationship Factor in "Classroom Management', Corwin Connect (2018), <<https://corwin-connect.com/2018/12/the-relationship-factor-in-classroom-management/?utm>> [accessed 12 Dec 2025]
- Maddux, James E., 'Self-efficacy: The power of believing you can' in Shane J. Lopez and C. R. Snyder (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 277-287
- Moss Long, Ilse-Renee, 'Why can't I sing: the impact of self-efficacy enhancing techniques on student self-efficacy beliefs' (DMA dissertation, Boston University College of Fine Arts, 2016)
- Moore, Gwen, 'The Changing Landscape of Irish Higher Music Education: Findings from Policy and Practice', Technical Report (2015), <DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.1.1182.1608> [accessed 6 June 2025]
- Moore, Gwen, et al., 'Challenges for music in initial teacher Education: Perspectives from a Community of Practice of Teacher Educators in Ireland and Northern Ireland', *Research Studies in Music Education*, 47 (2025), 17-32
- Moore, Gwen, 'Musical Futures in Ireland: Findings from a Pilot Study in Primary and Secondary Schools.' *Music Education Research*, 21 (2019) 243-256
- Moore, Michael G., 'Editorial: Three types of interaction', *American Journal of Distance Education*, 3 (1989), 1-7
- Murphy, Regina and Shortall, Claire, 'Exploring processes of inclusion and creativity in music education showcases in schools [EPIC_MUSS]: A research project funded by the Creative Ireland programme' (Dublin, Ireland: 2023)
- Muñiz, Jenny, 'Culturally Responsive Teaching: A 50-State Survey of Teaching Standards', (New America, 2019) <<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED594599.pdf>> [accessed 20 January 2022]
- Musical Futures: An Approach to Teaching and Learning, 2nd edn, (Musical Futures, 2022) <https://www.musicalfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Musical_Futures_2nd_Edition_Teacher_Resource_Pack.pdf> [accessed 14 January 2025]

National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, *Junior Cycle Music: Background Paper and Brief for the Review of Junior Cycle Music* (Dublin: NCCA, 2016)
<https://www.ncca.ie/media/1240/jc_music_bgp.pdf> [accessed 12 April 2023]

Nilson, Linda B., *Teaching at Its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 4th edn, 2016)

O’Flynn, John and Flynn, Patricia (eds), *Music Education for the Twenty-First Century: Legacies, Conversations, Aspirations*, Studies in Irish Music Education, 1 (Cork: Cork University Press, 2023)

O’Flynn, John, et al., ‘Comparative music education in partnership: examining policy and provision of music in initial teacher education in Ireland and Northern Ireland’, *Music Education Research*, 24 (2022), 364-376

Padgett, Denicia, ‘Learning Theories: Understanding the 4 Major Ones for the Classroom’, (2020), <<https://www.leaderinme.org/blog/learning-theories>> [accessed 19 February 2021]

Pajares, Frank, ‘Self-efficacy During Childhood and Adolescence, Implications for Teachers and Parents’ in F. Pajares and T. Urda (eds), *Self-efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006), 339-367

Pajares, Frank, Johnson, Margaret J. and Usher, Ellen L., ‘Sources of writing self-efficacy beliefs of elementary, middle, and high school students’, *Research in the Teaching of English*, 42 (2007), 104-120

Pajares, Frank and Miller, M. David, ‘Role of self-efficacy and self-concept beliefs in mathematical problem solving: A path analysis’, *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86 (1994), 193-203

Pajares, Frank and Urda, Timothy C. (eds), *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Adolescents* (Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, 2006)

Pajares, Frank and Valiante, Gio, ‘Grade level and gender differences in the writing self-beliefs of middle school students’, *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 24 (1999), 390-405

Patton, Michael Quinn, *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (St Paul, Minnesota: Sage Publications, Inc., 2nd edn, 1990)

Proceedings of the 2022 25th International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS, 2022) <https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-494069-89-3_32> [accessed 9 January 2024].

Redmond, Brian F., ‘Self-Efficacy Theory: Do I think that I can succeed in my work?, Work Attitudes and Motivation’ (The Pennsylvania State University, World Campus, 2010)

- Ritchie, Laura and Williamon, Aaron, 'Primary school children's self-efficacy for music learning', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 59 (2011), 146-161
- Sale, Jamea J., 'Is Something Wrong With My Daughter's Voice? Parental Perceptions of the Female Adolescent Voice Change', *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, 10 (2022), 197-219
- Schunk, Dale H. and Pajares, Frank, 'The Development of Academic Self-Efficacy' in A. Wigfield and J. S. Eccles (eds), *Development of Achievement Motivation* (San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 2001), 239-265
- Schunk, Dale H., 'Self-efficacy and achievement behaviors', *Educational Psychology Review*, 1 (1989), 173-208
- Sehlström, Pär, Waldmann, Christian and Levlin, Maria, 'Self-efficacy for writing and written text quality of upper secondary students with and without reading difficulties', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14 (2023)
- Shell, Duane F., Colvin, Carolyn and Bruning, Roger H., 'Self-Efficacy, Attribution, and Outcome Expectancy Mechanisms in Reading and Writing Achievement: Grade-Level and Achievement-Level Differences', *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 87 (1995), 386-398
- Smith, Ronald E., 'Effects of coping skills training on generalized self-efficacy and locus of control', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 56 (1989), 228-233
- Stevenson, Clinton D. and Harris, Gabriel K. 'Instruments for Characterizing Teaching Practices: A Review', *North American College and teacher of Agriculture Journal* (2014), 102-108
- Strunk, Kamden K. and Mwavita, Mwarumba, *Design and Analysis in Educational Research: ANOVA Designs in SPSS* (New York: Routledge, 2020)
- Sweet, Bridget, *Thinking Outside the Voice Box: Adolescent Voice Change in Music Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)
- Thompson-Bell, Jacob, 'Student-Centred Strategies for Higher Music Education: Using Peer-to-Peer Critique and Practice as Research Methodologies to Train Conservatoire Musicians', *British Journal of Music Education*, 40 (2023), 20-33
- Tranter, David, 'Core Beliefs of Relationship-Based Educators' <<https://www.relationshipbasedschools.com/network-news/2019/3/9/core-beliefs-of-relationship-based-educators-by-david-tranter-phd>> [accessed 15 April 2021]
- Tranter, David, Carson, Lori and Boland, Tom, *The Third Path: a Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement* (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2018)

Tranter, David, interview via video call, 1 May 2025

Tsang, Sandra K. M., Hui, Eadaoin K. P. and Law, Bella C. M., 'Self-efficacy as a positive youth development construct: a conceptual review', *Scientific World Journal*, (2012), 1-7

Tschannen-Moran, M. and Woolfolk-Hoy, A., 'Teacher efficacy: Capturing an elusive construct', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 17 (2001), 783-805

Usher, Ellen and Pajares, Frank, 'Inviting Confidence in School: Invitations as a Critical Source of the Academic Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Entering Middle School Students', *Journal of Invitational Theory and Practice*, 12 (2006), 7-16

Vasil, M., Weiss, L. and Powell, B., 'Popular Music Pedagogies: An Approach to Teaching 21st-Century Skills', *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, 28 (2018), 85-95

Yamasawa, Jill, 'Strengthening Peer Relationships in the Classroom', *Edutopia* (2023), <www.edutopia.org/article/positive-student-student-relationships/> [accessed 15 May 2024]

Yang, Yang and Welch, Graham, 'Pedagogical Challenges in Folk Music Teaching in Higher Education: A Case Study of Hua'er Music in China', *British Journal of Music Education*, 33 (2016), 61-79

Zimmerman, Barry J., 'Self-efficacy: An Essential Motive to Learn', *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25 (2000), 82-91

Zimmerman, Barry J., Schunk, Dale H. and DiBenedetto, Maria K., 'The role of self-efficacy and related beliefs in self-regulation of learning and performance' in A. J. Elliot, C. S. Dweck and D. S. Yeager (eds), *Handbook of competence and motivation: Theory and application* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2nd edn, 2017), 313-333

Zelenak, Michael S., 'Developing self-efficacy to improve music achievement', *Music Educators Journal*, 107 (2020), 42-50

Zelenak, Michael S., 'Development and validation of the music performance self-efficacy scale', *Music Education Research International*, 4 (2010), 31-42

Zelenak, Michael S., 'Self-efficacy in music performance: Measuring the sources among post-primary school music students' (PhD dissertation, University of South Florida, 2011)

Zelenak, Michael S., 'Measuring the sources of self-efficacy among post-primary school music students', *Journal of Research in Music Education*, 62 (2015), 389-404

Appendices

Appendix A: The Eight Conditions¹

David Tranter’s eight hierarchical conditions support student well-being and academic achievement. Together these create an environment for students to flourish. Educators can start by strengthening any condition. However, if the educator finds one condition difficult, they should consider focusing on the condition that precedes it.

Level	Condition	Description
1	Safety	Students require more than physical safety; they need emotional safety too. They need to know that the adults in their lives truly care and are responsive to their needs.
2	Regulation	Stress is a necessary part of growth, and learning how to regulate—to successfully recognise and address stress—is a critical and lifelong challenge. School provides an opportunity to help students recognise their signs of stress, understand its impact, and develop successful coping strategies.
3	Belonging	The more connecting experiences students have, the more they feel they belong. Belonging can be strengthened by increasing the number and depth of connecting experiences that the student has with the school, their educators, and their peers.
4	Positivity	Positivity leads students to be motivated and open to discovery. It’s about spreading the joy of learning and believing in the extraordinary uniqueness and potential in each and every student.
5	Engagement	Engagement is about being fully open to learning, connected to others, able to take on complex challenges, and reach conclusions that are thoughtful and accurate. Engagement doesn’t just lead students to make good decisions, it also provides them with a deeper sense of satisfaction and confidence.
6	Identity	School is important for students’ exposure to a variety of ways of being, and for them to develop a stronger sense of who they truly are. They begin to form an identity that is their own, as well as come to appreciate and support the similarities and differences between themselves and others.
7	Mastery	Successful learning and development requires a sense of personal self-efficacy. Students need regular and accurate feedback along the way. Recognising the value of effort and experiencing success is critical to maintaining motivation to learn.
8	Meaning	Meaning is a powerful force for ongoing motivation and life satisfaction. Students are much more likely to commit to lifelong learning and personal development when they are able to experience the intrinsic.

¹ David Tranter, Lori Carson and Tom Boland, *The Third Path: a Relationship-Based Approach to Student Well-Being and Achievement*, (Toronto: Nelson Education Ltd, 2018), 26-27.

Appendix B: Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale¹

Michael Zelenak's Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale was adapted only minimally from its original format. Adjustments were made to align the terminology and grade-level references with the structure of the Irish post-primary school system.

Music Performance Self-Efficacy Scale

Directions: Respond to the following statements based on your current level of musical ability, experience, and primary instrument or voice. There are no right or wrong answers. Indicate to what degree you either agree or disagree with the statement by writing any number between

0 (Strongly Disagree) and 100 (Strongly Agree) on the line next to the statement. Carefully consider the number you choose.

0 _____ 10 _____ 20 _____ 30 _____ 40 _____ 50 _____ 60 _____ 70 _____ 80 _____ 90 _____ 100
Strongly _____ Strongly
Disagree _____ Agree

Part I - (Mastery experiences)

- _____ 1. I have had positive experiences performing music in the past.
- _____ 2. I have had positive experiences performing in large ensembles.
- _____ 3. I have had positive experiences performing solo, or, in a small ensemble.
- _____ 4. I have had positive experiences performing simple music.
- _____ 5. I have had positive experiences performing complicated music.
- _____ 6. I have overcome musical challenges through hard work and practice.
- _____ 7. I have used a practice routine to help me prepare for my performances.

Part II - (Vicarious experiences)

- _____ 8. I have improved my music performance skills by watching professional musicians, who are similar to me in some way, perform well.
- _____ 9. I have improved my music performance skills by watching other students, who are similar to me in some way, perform well.

¹ Michael S. Zelenak, 'Development and validation of the music performance self-efficacy scale', *Music Education Research International*, 4 (2010), 31-42.

- _____ 10. I have used other music students as models to improve my performance skills.
- _____ 11. I have compared my performance skills with those of other students who are similar in musical ability to me.
- _____ 12. I have watched other students of similar musical ability as me perform a piece of music, and then decided whether I could, or could not, perform the same piece of music.

Part III - (Verbal/Social persuasion)

- _____ 13. My friends think I am a good performer on my primary instrument.
- _____ 14. Members of my family believe I perform well.
- _____ 15. My music teacher has complimented me on my musical performance.
- _____ 16. People have told me that my practice efforts have improved my performance skills.
- _____ 17. I have received positive feedback on music performance evaluations.
- _____ 18. I have met or exceeded other people's expectations of being a good musician for someone of my age.
- _____ 19. Write only the number 9 for this answer (not 0-100 rating).

Part IV - (Physiological state)

- _____ 20. Performing with my instrument makes me feel good (Return to using 0-100 rating).
- _____ 21. I enjoy participating in musical performances.
- _____ 22. I am learning, or have learned, to control nervousness during a performance.
- _____ 23. I do not worry about small mistakes during a performance.
- _____ 24. I have positive memories of most, or all, of my past musical performances.

Place an "X" next to the correct response.

What is your gender? _____ (Fill in the blank)

What is your race? _____ Asian _____ Black _____ Hispanic _____ Indian
 _____ White _____ Mixed _____ Other

What is your grade level? _____ 1 2 3 TY 5 6

What is the teacher's name in whose class you took this survey? _____

Appendix C: Relationship-Based Educator Survey

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEACHING ON POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSIC STUDENTS IN IRELAND

In this study, educators will be assessed on the percentage of relationship-based teaching practices they utilise during their teaching practices. A quantitative result will be drawn from a Likert scale. This survey will take no longer than 30 minutes to complete for each educator.

1. Grades define a student's success in the classroom.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree

2. I allow my students to take risks without repercussions.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree

3. I take the time to get to know my students individually.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree

4. I know each of my student's individual strengths.
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree

5. My focus in the classroom is to ensure students get through the curriculum.
 - Strongly Disagree

- Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
6. Relationships play a central role in my classroom.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
7. My actions are purposeful in the classroom.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
8. I acknowledge each individual student's needs.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
9. I hold a strict classroom routine.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
10. Learning for my students is about exploration.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree

- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

11. I let students develop relationships in my classroom with: Other students, Myself, Themselves, Their work

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

12. My focus for professional development is: New instruction methodologies. New strategies to help with student behaviour. Building relationships in the classroom.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

13. I seek out personal development.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

14. Behaviour is a choice made by the student.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

15. I focus on tangible rewards for good work.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree

- Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
16. I encourage students to challenge themselves in the classroom.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
17. I believe student's behaviour is a choice made by them
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
18. My goal in the classroom is to ensure compliance.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
19. My primary focus is to strengthen my students' areas of weakness.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree
 - Neither Agree nor Disagree
 - Somewhat Agree
 - Agree
 - Strong Agree
20. I view learning as disorderly.
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Somewhat Disagree

- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

21. I try new ways to engage students in learning.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

22. My primary focus is to develop relationships in the classroom.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

23. I define the success of each student differently.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Somewhat Agree
- Agree
- Strong Agree

24. How many years have you been teaching your current grade level music classes?

25. How many professional development workshops or seminars do you attend per year?

26. What teaching philosophy/ies do you prescribe to the most?

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet—Educator

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEACHING ON THE POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT MUSICIAN’S SELF-EFFICACY IN IRELAND

Educator Information

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take the time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO AM I AND WHAT IS THE STUDY?

My name is Douglas Carnes and I am a music teacher and life-long learner in the final year of my doctoral studies at The Royal Irish Academy of Music. I have always been interested in how students’ belief in themselves (self-efficacy) can dramatically affect the way in which they perform. I am studying how music educators use of relationship-based teaching practices in their classroom can influence a post-primary school student’s self-efficacy. This study, if successful, will result in the receiving of a Doctorate in Music Performance degree from the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Music Educators will fill out a brief survey and send a link to their students who will take a separate survey at home. These surveys should take no longer than 10 minutes and will be kept 100% anonymous and confidential.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

If you are a music educator who teaches students in post-primary school or a post-primary school music student, you have been invited to take part in this survey to help identify ways in which educators can increase students' self-efficacy.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

This survey is optional, and you may decide to remove yourself at any time. There are no possible risks in taking part in this survey. There are no individual or personal benefits from taking part in this survey. All information will be stored electronically secured by password that only the head of my programme Denise Neary (Royal Irish Academy of Music) and I have access to. Signed consent/assent forms will be retained until after my degree has been conferred. Under freedom of information legislation you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The result of these surveys will be recorded, analysed and submitted quantitatively in my dissertation. No personal information will be shared.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

For further information please contact Douglas Carnes at douglascarnes@riam.ie or Denise Neary at DeniseNeary@riam.ie

Thank you and I look forward to seeing your responses.

Appendix E: Participant Information Sheet—Student

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEACHING ON THE POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT MUSICIAN’S SELF-EFFICACY IN IRELAND

Student Information

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide, I would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT?

My name is Douglas Carnes and I am a choir teacher and a doctorate student. Originally from New York, I spent six years teaching at St Louis Park Middle School in Minnesota. I now live in Ireland where I am studying choral conducting at The Royal Irish Academy of Music. In this study I am trying to find out if the way your teachers teach music has an effect on your belief in yourself and your own abilities. The belief in yourself is called self-efficacy.

This study is being undertaken as part of my Doctor in Music Performance degree at The Royal Irish Academy of Music.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

In this study you will be asked a few questions to help me try to figure out how much you believe in your own abilities to learn and potentially perform music. I will then compare those results to the results of your teacher. When all of this data is collected, I hope to find out data that shows if teachers can have an effect on students’ self-efficacy. This study will be done during class and will be given to you by your educator who will ensure it is taken

calmly and in a non-stressful manner. Choosing to/not to participate in this study will have no effect on your grade.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

This study specifically focuses on post-primary schools in Ireland. The reason that this age group is the focus of the study is because it was necessary to narrow the focus. Due to my passion for teaching and the importance of keeping students at this age singing and involved in music, it was a clear deciding factor for this initial study into relationship-based teaching to be done at the post-primary school level.

Appendix F: Participant Consent Sheet—Educator

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEACHING ON THE POST-PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT MUSICIAN’S SELF-EFFICACY IN IRELAND

Consent to take part in research—Educator

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering a brief survey about the educational I utilise to teach my students.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details from my survey which may reveal my identity.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities— they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Douglas Carnes DMusPerf Candidate

Email: douglascarnes@riam.ie

Royal Irish Academy of Music


Academic Supervisor

Prof. Denise Neary

deniseneary@riam.ie

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Signature of researcher 

Date 19/01/2023

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation is completely voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate.

Participants have the right to refuse participation, refuse any question and/or withdraw at any time without any consequence whatsoever. Choosing to participate in this study/or not will have no effect on your grade.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

The possible benefits of this research could conclude that certain teaching styles such as relationship-based teaching may/may not result in significant differences in students perceived self-efficacy scores. Once analysed there is potential for further study involving how students' self-efficacy scores affect their music learning outcomes and rehearsal practices. There is no risk in this study due to the anonymity of information that will be gathered.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All results will be completely confidential. The only situation in which the researcher may have to break confidentiality is if the researcher has a strong belief that there is a serious risk of harm or danger to either the participant or another individual (e.g. physical, emotional or sexual abuse, concerns for child protection, rape, self-harm, suicidal intent or criminal activity.) All non-anonymised data in the form of signed consent forms that are collected and retained as part of the research process will be kept completely confidential.

HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

All research data including signed consent forms and survey responses will be stored on a private and locked school outlook drive. Only my supervisor and I will have access to this

information. Under freedom of information legislation you are entitled to access the information you have provided at any time.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The conclusion of the final research product will include the submission of all research for completion of my dissertation and may include publishing and/or future studies and lecture series.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?

The dissemination of the final research product will include the submission of all research for completion of my dissertation and may include publishing and/or future studies and lecture series.

WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?

Douglas Carnes M.M

Prof. Denise Neary

Royal Irish Academy of Music

Royal Irish Academy of Music

douglascarnes@riam.ie

deniseneary@riam.ie

THANK YOU

Appendix G: Participant Consent Sheet—Parent

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEACHING ON THE POST- PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT MUSICIAN’S SELF-EFFICACY IN IRELAND

Consent to take part in research – Parent/Guardian

- I..... voluntarily agree to allow my child to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to allow my child to participate now, they can withdraw their responses at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I/my child can withdraw my/their permission to use data from their survey within two weeks after the data is collected, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves my child answering a brief survey about their own belief in their abilities as a student – ‘Self-efficacy’.
- I understand that I or my child will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I understand that all information I/they provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my child’s identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by disguising any details from their survey which may reveal their identity.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself, my child or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities—they may discuss this with me first but will be required to report with or without my permission.

- I understand that under freedom of information legislation my child is entitled to access the information that they have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that my child is free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Douglas Carnes DMusPerf Candidate

Email: douglascarnes@riam.ie

Royal Irish Academy of Music


Academic Supervisor

Prof. Denise Neary

deniseneary@riam.ie

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study.

Signature of researcher 

Date 19/01/2023

Appendix H: Participant Assent Sheet—Student

THE INFLUENCE OF RELATIONSHIP-BASED TEACHING ON THE POST- PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENT MUSICIAN’S SELF-EFFICACY IN IRELAND

Assent to take part in research - Student

- I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves answering a brief survey about my own belief in my abilities as a student – ‘Self-efficacy’.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details from my survey which may reveal my identity.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities-they may discuss this with me first but will be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

- I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Douglas Carnes DMusPerf Candidate

Email: douglascarnes@riam.ie

Royal Irish Academy of Music

Academic Supervisor

Prof. Denise Neary

deniseneary@riam.ie

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

I believe the participant is giving informed assent to participate in this study.

Signature of researcher



Date 19/01/2023