

Preservice Music Educators' Confidence in Teaching Students with Disabilities: A Comparative Mixed-Method Study

Proposal

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Field experiences may provide preservice music educators (PMEs) opportunities to develop their teacher identity (Tucker, 2020), cultural competencies and reflective practices (Kruse, 2015; McKoy, 2013; VanDeusen, 2019), and skills through service-learning (Burton & Reynolds, 2003; Conway & Reynolds, 2003). Field experience opportunities are common throughout a degree program. Experiences specific to teaching music to students with disabilities (SWD), however, may not be (Culp & Salvador, 2021; Salvador, 2010). Few researchers have examined field experiences specific to teaching music to SWD. VanWeelden & Whipple (2005) found that population-specific field experiences increased undergraduates' feelings of comfort, willingness, and preparation to teach SWD. Participants in Hourigan's (2009) study expressed increased confidence in teaching SWD after population-specific field experiences. Whipple and VanWeelden (2012) examined if pre-service music educators (PMEs) could determine instructional strategies that best supported the learning of SWD in various music settings during a five-week field experience.

The number of SWD receiving services through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) continues to rise (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). Therefore, PMEs ought to be provided experiences to bolster their confidence and prepare them to provide instruction to SWD. Culp and Salvador (2021) suggested that "researchers examine how music teachers are prepared. . .at the *program* level" (p. 55, emphasis original). The purpose of this explanatory

mixed-methods study (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2018) was to examine the difference in PME confidence to teach music to SWD between two groups of PMEs who completed a music-specific course and clinicals either blended or in-person. Specific questions guiding this study were a) What impact did coursework and field experience have on PME beliefs about SWD? b) What aspects of the course did PMEs state were most beneficial in developing self-efficacy? c) Does a difference in course format impact PME perceived self-efficacy and beliefs about SWD?

Table 1 (Study Two)

Survey Item Descriptive Statistics by Question Stem

	Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	M	SD
I am confident teaching students...				
... in an elementary school setting.	4.36	1.12	5.18	0.41
... in a secondary setting (general music/ensemble).	4.27	0.65	4.91	0.94
... in an online setting.	2.81	1.08	3.82	1.25
I am confident teaching students. . .				
... with physical disabilities.	2.91	1.22	4.55	1.13
... with cognitive disabilities.	2.73	1.27	4.46	1.29
... with emotional disabilities.	2.82	1.08	4.36	1.12
I am prepared to work with SWD (physical, cognitive, emotional)				
... in an elementary general music setting.	2.55	1.04	4.55	1.13
... in a secondary setting (general music/ensemble).	2.46	1.04	4.27	1.10
... in an online setting.	2.09	1.22	3.73	1.20
I am confident in my ability to teach SWD in a/an				
... elementary general music setting.	2.67	1.03	4.18	1.47
... secondary setting (general music/ensemble).	2.36	1.03	4.18	1.40
... online setting.	2.09	0.83	3.09	1.38
I believe . . .				
... SWD behave the same as other students their age.	3.18	1.25	3.73	1.62
... SWD can learn the same content as other students their age.	4.73	0.90	5.00	1.18

	Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	M	SD
I am confident teaching students...				
... in an elementary school setting.	4.36	1.12	5.18	0.41
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I am confident teaching students. . .				
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... with cognitive disabilities.	2.73	1.27	4.46	1.29
... with emotional disabilities.	2.82	1.08	4.36	1.12
I am prepared to work with SWD (physical, cognitive, emotional)				
... SWD should be provided the same music education as their same aged peers.	5.36	0.81	5.46	0.93
... accommodations and modifications should be included in the lesson plan.	5.46	0.69	6.00	0.00
Sum Score for Measure	52.8	10.4	71.4	12.7
	2	3	6	5

Table 2 (Study Two)

Dependent Variable by Question Strand
Significance at $p = .01$ and $p < .001$

	Pretest		Posttest	
	M	SD	M	SD
I am confident teaching students in setting.	11.46	1.97	13.91	2.17
	$t = 2.98$	$df = 10$	$p = .01$	$d = .90$
I am confident teaching SWD.	8.46	3.39	13.36	3.23
	$t = 8.71$	$df = 10$	$p < .001$	$d = 2.63$
I am prepared to work with SWD in setting.	7.09	3.15	12.55	3.01
	$t = 6.45$	$df = 10$	$p < .001$	$d = 1.94$
I am confident in my ability to teach SWD in setting.	7.09	2.70	11.46	3.98
	$t = 4.86$	$df = 10$	$p < .001$	$d = 1.47$
I believe...	18.73	2.83	20.18	3.13
	$t = 2.85$	$df = 10$	$p = .017$	$d = .86$

Table 1 (Study One)*Survey Item Descriptive Statistics by Question Stem*

	Pretest		Posttest	
	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD
I am comfortable interacting with...				
... a variety of ages.	1.56	0.62	1.22	0.55
... students in an elementary school setting.	1.61	0.98	1.44	0.78
... students in a secondary school setting.	1.28	0.46	1.33	0.49
... individuals with physical disabilities.	2.11	1.02	1.56	0.78
... individuals with cognitive disabilities.	2.11	1.18	1.44	0.78
... individuals with emotional disabilities.	1.78	0.81	1.33	0.77
I feel that this class has prepared me to work with SWD in a(n)...				
... elementary general music setting.	1.50	0.79	1.28	0.83
... secondary general music setting.	1.78	0.73	1.72	1.07
... ensemble setting.	2.22	0.88	1.83	1.04
... online setting.	2.44	1.04	1.33	0.84
I would be comfortable teaching SWD in a(n)...				
... elementary general music setting.	2.06	1.00	1.39	0.98
... secondary general music setting.	2.00	0.91	1.60	0.86
... ensemble setting.	2.39	0.98	1.72	1.02
... online setting.	2.44	1.10	1.44	0.98
I would be willing to provide music experiences to SWD in a(n)...				
... elementary general music setting.	1.22	0.91	1.11	0.86
... secondary general music setting.	1.17	0.98	1.11	1.02
... ensemble setting.	1.22	1.10	1.17	0.98
... online setting.	1.33	0.69	1.11	0.47
... special education setting.	1.33	0.77	1.11	0.47
I believe...				
... music education should be provided and accessible to SWD.	1.06	0.24	1.06	0.24
... SWD behave in class the same as other students their age.	2.17	0.99	2.06	1.16
... SWD can learn the same musical material as other students their age.	4.61	0.50	1.22	0.55
... accommodations and modifications for SWD should be included in the lesson plan.	1.39	0.38	1.02	0.51

	44.3	11.4	36.7	11.7
Sum Score for Measure	3	4	2	6

Explanatory Themes: Study One

Observations and Interactions Impact Perceived Preparation to Teach Music to SWD

Perceptions of How Students with Disabilities Learn and Participate

Participants' Perceptions and Shared Benefits of the Field Experience

Explanatory Themes: Study Two

- Course Content Affirms Beliefs about SWD
- Course Design and Content Influence PME Feelings of Preparation
- Professorial Expertise, Rapport, and Classroom Environment Increase PME Confidence
- PMEs Find or Desire Field Experiences
- PMEs Critiques and Suggestions for the Field (unexpected theme)

Cross Case Analysis

Related themes. Key differences were:

- Application of Content to Other Methods Courses Impacts Perceived Gains in Self-Efficacy
- Less Screen Time Increases Engagement
- Time with Professor Impacts Beliefs

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