'What do you think we should do?' Exploring self-efficacy in Youth Music projects

A research report by Esther Goodwin Brown

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Referencing project reports

Each project supported by Youth Music is given a unique four digit reference number (URN). Throughout this report URNs are used instead of organisation names, in order to maintain anonymity of organisations and participants. These numbers are shown in brackets, either after direct quotes from project reports, or to indicate that an organisation gave evidence of a particular concept in their report.

Introduction

In order for Youth Music to continue to support grantholders in their ability to reflect on project outcomes and to facilitate future learning, it is vital to disentangle the discrete areas of participant development reported by projects. Due to the natural synergy of personal and musical progression in music education, these outcomes are commonly viewed as holistic and integrated and often require further exploration.

Youth Music has a particular commitment to providing music-making provision for children and young people in challenging circumstances. As a result of their various circumstances, including being looked after, in care, young offenders, not in education or training, or having special educational needs, these young people more than others may be more likely to have a reduced belief in their ability to influence the events that affect their lives, and consequently show poorer resilience to adversity. One grantholder reflected on this in their evaluation:

> *"Compared to working with a group not at-risk or with difficulties, these young men needed extra encouragement, and demonstrated more frustration, tendency to give up, and a negative outlook."* [3369]

One of the intended outcomes of Youth Music's Elevated Risk module (a funding stream committed to projects working with looked after children, those in the youth justice system, or those not in education, employment or training) was *'to improve children and young people's self-efficacy and resilience to challenging circumstances'*. In line with this, this paper will explore whether and how projects supported by Youth Music have aimed to achieve this outcome, with a particular focus on processes that support improvements in self-efficacy.

Research questions and methodology

Through qualitative analysis of evaluation reports and case studies submitted by organisations funded under Youth Music's Music-based Mentoring and Elevated Risk modules (92 reports in total), the current paper will seek to answer the following questions:

1. How do projects funded by Youth Music support improvements in participants' self-efficacy and resilience?

2. What can limit the development of self-efficacy?

3. How has self-efficacy been measured in existing Youth Music projects?

4. What are the practical implications for the measurement of self-efficacy in future projects?

In conducting this research, key psychological theory related to self-efficacy was initially reviewed, followed by a literature review of academic research from educational psychology and research into musical efficacy. In response to the review, a set of research objectives were defined, followed by framework analysis of the suitability of these objectives to the current evidence base. In light of this, clear research questions were laid out, and with them a coding scheme with which to analyse Youth Music's evidence. Qualitative analysis of evaluation reports and case studies submitted by those funded under Music-based Mentoring and Elevated Risk modules was then undergone. The findings of this analysis form the main discussion in this paper, which will firstly address the processes of learning commonly cited by grantholders as having supported improvements in participants' self-efficacy.

Discussion will then be lent to the barriers faced by project workers in delivering on these personal outcomes. The latter part of this paper will focus on the measurement of self-efficacy in Youth Music projects, highlighting areas for improvement and examples of projects seen to be developing best practice in measuring self-efficacy.

What is self-efficacy?

Central to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory of self-regulation is the psychological construct of self-efficacy. This refers to a person's belief in their own ability to manage and succeed in prospective situations, operating over a constant process of self-evaluation and affecting emotions, motivations and behaviours. Perceptions of self-efficacy will consequently determine the level of effort given to tasks, with task engagement and goal-setting. Notably, Pajares (1996) highlights the extent to which efficacy beliefs will affect our approach to tasks we find more difficult stating that *"the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater effort, persistence and resilience"* (p.544). Within the context of working with young people who face challenges on a daily basis, the role of self-efficacy in learning positive coping strategies to overcome these adversities is of undeniable importance.

The role of self-efficacy in educational settings has been widely documented in academic research (Multon, Brown & Lent, 1991; Parares, 1996; Zimmerman, 2009, Schunk & Pajares, 2002), evidencing perceptions of self-efficacy to be positively related to self-rated achievement and academic attainment. Similar findings have been echoed in research into musical efficacy, outlining

that self-efficacy beliefs are instrumental in predicting musical performance in young musicians (McPherson & McCormick, 2006), and that musical instruction that encourages self-regulative strategies in learners results in greater improvements in performance and higher perceptions of self-efficacy (Miksza, 2013). Zimmerman, Bandura and Martinez-Pons (1992) also demonstrated a relationship between self-regulation and increased self-efficacy, with self-efficacy influencing both attainment and personal goal-setting. Low-achieving students who were encouraged to set their own short-term goals had higher perceptions of self-efficacy. Through taking responsibility for their own achievements and by meeting goals they set for themselves, young people feel more capable, reinforcing efficacy beliefs and enhancing motivations for engagement.

It has been widely acknowledged that constructs related to self-efficacy are more strongly related to task attainment in low-achievers (Finn & Rock, 1991; Hallam, 2009; Multon et al, 1991). Participation in extracurricular activities has also been identified as a protective factor against drop-out rates in students deemed 'at-risk' (Gilligan, 2008; Mahoney, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Research has increasingly painted a picture of the role of opportunities for non-formal education as instrumental in enhancing personal development in young people facing adversity (Dillion, 2010; Swanwick, 2008). It has been argued elsewhere (Lonie, 2011) that by removing external pressures (e.g. academic attainment or parent/carer expectations), non-formal music pedagogy actuates young people's intrinsic motivation, their *"natural*

inclination towards assimilation, mastery, spontaneous interest and exploration" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.70).

Zimmerman (2009) outlines contextual factors that influence students' efficacy beliefs, and the role of social and evaluative feedback coupled with formal instruction. Ryan and Deci (2000) present the supportive social conditions for self-determination and state that in order to foster personal development, our three innate psychological needs of competence, relatedness and autonomy must be satisfied. In other words; we need to feel we are acting out of personal choice and not due to extrinsic pressures, we need to feel a sense of belonging and acceptance from others, and we need to feel competent in our strategies and control beliefs. This is supported in research that finds feelings of belonging can protect against early drop-out and that contexts that are supportive of autonomy - in which there is a combination of choice and shared decision-making - will lead to better engagement (Connell, 1990; Osterman, 2000). In situations in which these three needs are supported young people will be intrinsically motivated, be more engaged and have enhanced feelings of self-efficacy.

Lonie (2010) discusses the role of these needs in non-formal music education, stating that in order to enhance personal development, young people *"must feel competent, be given opportunities to engage, and feel as if they are in control of their decisions"* (p.8). In a review of Youth Music evidence, Dillion (2010) states that by participating in music-making provision, young people will develop resilience to their circumstances through the acquisition of positive coping mechanisms.

How do projects funded by Youth Music support improvements in participants' self-efficacy and resilience?

Exploring issues through music-making and lyric writing

The process of music-making, and in particular lyric writing, provides young people with an opportunity to express their emotions and discuss the challenges they face. In a detailed case study of one Youth Music project, Dickens and Lonie (2013) highlight the emotional resilience facilitated through writing rap lyrics.

The Youth Music projects analysed in the current study reported that by encouraging participants to write lyrics about their personal experiences, significant improvements in self-efficacy and associated behaviour were observed [3389, 3986]. Where projects embedded the discussion of sensitive issues within the context of music-making, young people reported feeling more at ease to work through their problems, enabling inward reflection within a safe and trusting environment [3475, 3499, 3753, 4050]. This process of learning through music-making guides young people through their insecurities, enhancing their self-efficacy as they build confidence in their ability to express themselves, develop empathy through sharing with others and monitor their own feelings. These skills are closely related to the development of resilience and self-regulation, due to providing young people with positive coping mechanisms and a new context for understanding their issues, as one participant described:

> "Writing and making music helps me to express my emotions in a calm, productive way and helps me to deal with situations which I would struggle to deal with. It helps me understand and evaluate situations more clearly rather than have everything get confused in my head. It's a good way to get everything out and say everything I want to say." [3407].

A process of catharsis for participants is induced through enabling them to reflect on their issues, aligning difficulties in their mind in a way they may not have previously felt able to do. One participant commented that expressing their thoughts through music helped *"draw a line under [them]"* [3407]. There is a sense that once these issues have been voiced they can be let go and the individual can take positive steps to move forwards in their life. Music-making therefore contributed to the development of resilience through providing an outlet and means for discussing challenges they faced, as one project leader reflected:

> "Lyrics often reflected issues and difficult emotions that the young people were working through and in some cases they didn't know they could articulate before writing… All of the group expressed their pride at their achievement. They stated that many of the things that they said in the song were things they had always wanted to say but didn't know how to express." [3407]

One report highlighted the perceptive work of music leaders who paired up participants with similar difficulties, facilitating them to collaborate on a track and help each other work through their issues [3439]. Projects also reported that the supportive feedback given by music leaders facilitated further self-reflection on the content of their lyrics, as well as enhancing the participant's feelings of efficacy as a musician [4050]. By encouraging a reflective approach to music-making,

music leaders enabled participants to take ownership of their personal circumstances, reinstating autonomy within their often turbulent lives. Many of the situations these young participants face on a daily basis are largely outside of their control. The music leaders therefore re-established control in the hands of the individual, by encouraging autonomous exploration of their issues. The young people are in charge of telling their story and they may feel better able to decide what happens next.

Opportunities for performance and sharing were commonly cited by grantholders as a vehicle for increasing participants' confidence [3579, 3407], supporting participants to showcase their achievements, collaborate with others and receive affirmation of their progress from mentors, parents and carers. For many participants who had previously struggled with self-belief and expressing their feelings, their ability to perform at events served to challenge their prior expectations of what they could achieve. As many performances came towards the end of the provision, opportunities for sharing also represented distance travelled for many participants, enabling them to feel pride in their achievements and solidifying their journey in their minds [3579, 3965].

Music-based Mentoring as a method for self-efficacy

Building on Deane, Hunter and Mullen's (2011) and Lonie's (2010) work on Youth Music mentors and the continued funding of music-based mentoring as a key strand of Youth Music's work, the majority of findings in this report come from music-based mentoring projects. These projects aim to support

participants musically, socially and personally through building strong and trusting relationships between mentor and mentee.

According to the Youth Music Mentoring Handbook, *"mentoring is a one-to-one non-judgemental relationship in which an individual gives time to support and encourage another"* (p.4). Grantholders widely recognised that their progress with participants was greatly facilitated by the provision of one-to-one mentoring. This relationship was vital in enabling mentors to address more deep-set personal issues, as one grantholder reflected:

> *"Young people are offered one-to-one sessions with youth workers during breaks and after music sessions. They have built strong, effective and supportive relationships which allow them to express their thoughts and feel listened to."* [4073]

One project, working with isolated young people not accessing education, described how mentors used 'scaffolding' support to slowly enhance one young person's self-efficacy. From initially providing a high degree of interpersonal support, mentors recognised when to step back and allow the young person to be more independent and competent in their own abilities:

> *"The young person's confidence is improving, alongside his routines and behaviour we are finding he is more able to attend independently and achieve whilst there. We are now using this model across all of our mentored students as a goal to work towards with the ultimate outcome being to break down their personal, social and emotional barriers to engaging and*

reintegrate them into school ensuring they are able to leave with some form of qualifications." [3623]

The decision by project leaders to emulate this level of provision as a model for future mentoring (citing early identification as key) highlights the active reflection by staff on which processes are most important for improving resilience, and their consideration of how they can continue to support improvements in self-efficacy for future participants. Another grantholder described how a young person was able to assist the police with an investigation into abuse, helped by the support they had received from their mentor. Examples such as these act as a direct demonstration of how music-making provision, and the associated support projects provide, helps to build resilience and participants' ability to tackle the very real challenges they face.

Grantholders commonly cited the use of a mixed approach of both mentoring and music-making as key to supporting personal outcomes in their projects [3432, 3623]. While projects reported integrating practical music-making and one-to-one mentoring to varying degrees, what was shared was a holistic approach to care and music-making across projects where improvements in self-efficacy were reported.

A number of grantholders reflected on the importance of having both music leaders and youth workers present throughout the project [3370, 3499] and how this permitted them to be simultaneously responsive to the musical and personal development of participants. By having a responsive team available, less-confident participants could withdraw

from music activity when needed and be joined by a youth worker, while the technical staff continued with the delivery [3370]. This has benefits both in terms of safeguarding participants and ensuring that whether they're taking part in music-making or talking with youth workers, participants are constantly engaged throughout the length of the session. The same project reported the use of 'break-out' spaces when tensions ran high, highlighting that it is not always those with low confidence, but also more 'expressive' participants, who may require interpersonal support. Another project highlighted that having different spaces available to participants (where they could choose to work with different staff members) increased feelings of informality and participant-choice [3369]. When staff were able to identify and manage personalities early on, groups containing mixed levels of ability and self-esteem could work together, with participants in need of further support being offered extra hours of mentoring [3407, 4085]. Grantholders also felt increasingly confident in their provision when all staff - including musical delivery staff - were trained in working with challenging learners:

> *"The Social Pedagogy Training showed me how important it is to build a relationship with the young people you are working with, also that it is important to guide the young people to take charge of their own lives so they can be a functioning part of society. It made me approach their music creation less as 'you should do' and more of 'what do you think we should do' which has created better results all round."* [4050].

For some young people, the act of music-making and the increased feelings of

competency that come with this skill may be the main catalyst for improvements in self-efficacy. For others more prone to disengagement, music may be used as the initial basis to facilitate a trusting relationship with the mentor, with whom they can work on their wider issues. Where project workers were able to recognise problematic characteristics and internalised problems, they were able to challenge negative patterns of behaviour and self-perceptions:

"As they began to see the part they were playing within their own disaffection they began to think differently, seeing their frustration dwindle and learning journeys begin." [3869]

Personalised learning plans and autonomous decision-making

Personalised learning plans were used by mentors in many projects to set goals and highlight the expectations and concerns of the participants. In projects with prolonged engagement these goals could be defined, met and re-set according to progression, facilitating self-efficacy in feelings of mastery and competence. In shorter-term projects where attendance was less consistent, goals could be defined session-by-session [3965]. Whether long or short-term, personalised plans enable participants to take responsibility for their learning and choose the focus of their engagement. Although plans often involved working towards musical goals - for example recording a certain number of songs or building towards a live performance - the function of this in facilitating task completion and ownership over one's own participation has strong implications for self-efficacy. As previously

discussed, research has proven how the setting of short-term goals benefits the development of self-efficacy in at-risk groups (Zimmerman et al, 1992). Young people acted of their own volition through deciding on the focus of their participation, inducing autonomy and subsequently reinforcing confidence in approaching tasks, as they acknowledged and received affirmation for meeting self-set goals.

Most importantly, individualised plans involve participant choice and joint decision-making between participant and practitioner, enhancing the young person's autonomy (Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004). Projects in which adults presented themselves as facilitators rather than leaders, offering young people choice over the type of music they wanted to make, observed that participants took greater ownership over their learning [3439, 3654]. Where the choice of music genre is guided by the participants, and therefore culturally relevant, this will induce greater improvements in self-efficacy as young people apply personal knowledge to their learning, as discussed by Spruce (2013) in relation to the exchange of emancipatory knowledge in inclusive music-making environments.

Grantholders often discussed autonomy in the increased role participants took in planning sessions, as well as other incidences of leadership [3432, 3605, 3654]. Grantholders also evidenced new-found autonomy in examples of participants undergoing independent work outside of the provision, and the efforts young people made to consistently attend sessions in spite of external barriers [3407, 3439, 3463]. This is particularly poignant as many of the participants had relatively little

external support, meaning that individual efforts to attend on the part of the participant were illustrative of increased self-reliance and determination. However, project leaders working in more challenging contexts acknowledged that open-ended sessions which involved a high degree of participant-choice were not always appropriate to the needs of the young people and cited the need to develop models of provision that support developments in decision-making within more structured delivery:

"With all this in mind, our Project Manager continues to explore ways of incorporating decision-making in a structured way that gives young people creative choice whilst being careful not to trigger moments of crisis in the workshop, and it is likely that this will be one of the key learning points across the project." [3566]

Progression from mentee to young mentor

Although not all participants will want to take on dominant roles within the project, many grantholders felt that part of the legacy of their project was their ability to nurture young participants from their initial days of engagement to offering further opportunities to take on roles as young mentors [3623, 3753]. One project commented that mentees taking on new roles as young mentors was a natural path of progression, which enabled project leaders to engage in other opportunities [3753]. The trust placed in the young person through taking on new roles not only supports feelings of autonomy, but also acts as affirmation of their progress and skills, reinforcing their self-efficacy as they become role models to younger participants.

"Our mentors are young adults who have grown up through the project and wish to volunteer and share the skills they have learnt with others…Many of our young mentors have also been in similar situations whilst growing up and act as proof to our users that they can also develop and achieve." [3623]

Continuity of support and consistency of provision

The importance of consistency in non-formal delivery was widely acknowledged by project leaders, particularly due to the turbulent nature of these young people's personal lives [3369, 3499, 3654, 3662]. By establishing music-making sessions as a regular commitment, self-regulation is implicitly encouraged. Dependable session structures also served to reduce anxiety, as one project leader working within a pupil referral unit reflected:

"Our pupils need a structured session, preferably a similar structure each time. This allows them to understand what they are doing, they know what to expect, and it enhances their feeling of security…The expectations of the pupils have to be clear" [3566].

If participants are able to predict the format of sessions, they feel more competent in their ability to participate, and the provision is reinforced as a safe space for learning and exploration.

As well as providing consistency in the structure of delivery, there is an overarching responsibility for projects to ensure consistency in the interpersonal support they provide to participants. The current

paper has widely evidenced the influential role of the mentee-mentor relationship in enabling developments in self-efficacy and resilience, with consistent encouragement and positive feedback commonly cited as tools used by mentors. Music leaders and mentors alike acknowledge the need for project workers to act as the trusted adult role models, which these young people often lack in their everyday lives [3765].

Deane et al (2011) discuss the issues around 'dosage' of engagement within the mentoring relationship, citing Sanford's finding that young at-risk people benefited most from relationships with mentors which lasted at least a year (Sanford, 2007, as cited in Deane et al, 2011). This raises a question about which kinds of mentoring relationships are suitable in relation to the time frame of a project, particularly as Deane et al (2011) suggests that early termination of a close mentoring relationship will be detrimental and counterproductive to the young person's development.

Philip et al (2004, as cited in Deane et al, 2011) asserts the sensitivities around endings in mentoring relationships, suggesting that in order to tackle this, it should be one of the responsibilities of mentors to include next steps that stretch beyond the length of provision within any individualised plans or joint agreements made with mentees.

This may involve making connections with other provision, signposting young people to further opportunities accessible with their developed skillset and confidence or, as discussed previously, supporting them to become mentors themselves. In relation to the intended outcome of projects 'to improve children and young people's self-efficacy and resilience', it is vital that mentors play a role in ensuring that this progression continues beyond the immediate project setting.

What can limit the development of self-efficacy?

Barriers in recruitment, attendance and retention

One of the most commonly cited barriers to delivering on personal outcomes within the projects reviewed was issues surrounding recruitment, attendance and retention of participants. One grantholder gave insight by stating that disengagement with services was a fundamental characteristic of their target group and that they therefore accepted attendance of participants as an implicit and necessary challenge for them as project workers [3623]. With an aim to re-engage young people in services and education, the grantholders in question focused much of their efforts on initial engagement, taking a hands-on approach to ensuring the attendance of some participants:

> "This has involved phone calls and text message reminders and even driving to the young people's homes to wake them up and make sure they attend. We have found that if we can get them to attend one session initially they do want to come back." [3623]

In other projects working with looked after children where initial recruitment and attendance had been fruitful, changes in the circumstances and housing of the participants caused for a drop-off in numbers and irregularity of attendance [3605, 3552].

> "The groups changed a lot throughout the project. The transient nature of the places we were dealing with meant that we would often not have contact with the same individuals for more than four weeks at a time." [4097]

Grantholders commonly reflected that issues surrounding retention of participants were inherent in the group with which they were working and that the unstable nature of these young people's lives frequently saw them losing contact with services. Sporadic attendance was therefore regularly seen to limit planning of effective progress across sessions, with the biggest challenges cited by projects that had initially aimed to deliver accreditations such as the Arts Award within their programme [3370]. Grantholders reported barriers in terms of effectively embedding the Arts Award within their sessions in a way which was engaging for participants, reflecting that due to the complicated needs and lives of these young people, trying to enforce formal accreditation was sometimes counterproductive to the positive progress participants had made within open approaches to music-making, such as lyric development and improvisation [3986, 3932].

Across project settings and target groups, grantholders acknowledged that making contact with external partners (including parents, carers, teachers, social workers and referral agencies) was instrumental in engaging and maintaining retention of participants [3439, 3623, 4130]. Some projects relied heavily on referrals from youth services: where partnerships with these agencies were weak, they met significant issues with recruitment [4179]. Grantholders also felt less confident in their ability to support the individual needs when there was a lack of information attached to referrals [3858]. Such evidence suggests that it should be a particular priority to build close relationships with project partners, to ensure staff on all sides are able to respond accordingly and provide appropriate care.

Grantholders reflected that by forming relationships with parents, carers and youth workers, project leaders would be better equipped to assess the wider-reaching impacts the provision had on the young people's development after moving on from the project [3623]. Similarly, it should be a responsibility of project leaders and mentors to ensure that the progress of young people is fed back to referral and support agencies. Ensuring external agencies are aware of how participants have progressed during their participation encourages similar referrals and endorses the agencies to support participants in their access to further opportunities, be that a role as a mentor in other provision or opportunities for education and employment.

External influences on participation

Implicit to working with young people in challenging circumstances is the influence extraneous conditions will have on their ability to participate. As discussed in relation to recruitment and retention, even young people with the best intentions for participation sometimes became unable to attend due to external factors relating to housing, care and incarceration [3662, 3986]. In an honest reflection, one grantholder acknowledged that they had underestimated the extent to which these external factors would present barriers to progression in the project setting, referencing one participant who left the provision due to incarceration for crimes committed prior to their engagement [4085]. Grantholders also reported disruptions from risky behaviours such as drug use, which impacted on the engagement of the group as well as the individual [3370]. However, one grantholder reflected that positive external outcomes had also influenced participation, with young people returning to school or being offered employment opportunities [4085].

Staffing

Across projects the strength, responsiveness and empathy of project workers was both explicitly identified in evaluations and implicitly demonstrated in the development of participants. Where challenges were identified in relation to the workforce, this was largely in relation to strains on capacity and restricted delivery time [3432, 4097]. These strains were seen to limit project workers in their provision, both in terms of their capacity to provide one-on-one mentoring and their ability to dedicate adequate time to building networks with parents and carers [3432]. In line with this, projects with an expanded workforce identified their capacity to deliver more focused individualised work. In some cases, expectations of project staff were identified as potentially affecting engagement: participants could feel overwhelmed by the inflated expectations of music leaders. Others became disengaged when visiting professionals were less encouraging of participant choice, largely dictating the content of sessions. Grantholders reflected that communication across staff and with partners were essential in ensuring everyone involved in the provision were working towards the same objectives.

How has self-efficacy been measured in existing Youth Music projects?

Across the projects reviewed here, grantholders demonstrated an ability to reflect and report on developments in participants' self-efficacy and resilience to varying degrees. In some cases the supporting evidence was limited, with grantholders relying on anecdotal descriptions to infer developments in confidence and self-esteem. These evaluations therefore lacked reflection about which specific processes of learning in the provision had led to developments in self-efficacy. Among the projects who cited improvements in participant self-efficacy as a key project outcome (n= 61) twenty-nine referenced using some form of measurement to capture these developments, with a further five projects working towards the development of suitable measurement tools as next steps. Eight projects exclusively used quantitative measures (including questionnaires and scales) either self-reported by participants or from project workers and external partners. Seven projects adopted solely qualitative measures, including group reflections, participant quotes, case studies and interviews. Ten projects reported the use of a combination of qualitative and quantitative measures, with stronger evaluations utilising qualitative evidence to illuminate quantitative findings. Evaluations were strengthened when self-efficacy was measured across time points, allowing for comparison between baseline, midpoint and end of engagement measures. As Youth Music evaluations are concerned with how processes within projects influence developments in resilience and self-efficacy, the validity of measurements is enhanced when the evidence can illustrate a percentage change or distance travelled as a result of engagement, although few projects reported their findings in this manner.

Among the projects reviewed several stood out as developing best practice in recording and evaluating improvements in self-efficacy. These projects enabled a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods, monitored over time, with evidence obtained from a number of sources; including mentors, key workers, music leaders or the participants themselves.

One project asked participants to rate themselves on a number of constructs relating to self-efficacy (including achieving set goals, coping with problems and confidence). This was measured at the beginning and end of the project, converting the findings into percentage averages which were compared to draw conclusions about participant progress [4439]. However, although self-reported assessments are valuable for providing first-hand data from participants, grantholders acknowledged issues relating to demand characteristics when young people were seen to 'massage' their feedback in line with their expectations of what project leaders were expecting [4111]. Issues were also raised in relation to ensuring self-reported data is capturing what it set out to measure, as many young people may lack the introspective ability required to reflect on their development appropriately.

Grantholders working in pupil referral units acknowledged that asking their participants to self-reflect on their emotions would have been distressing and therefore not appropriate to this setting [3566, 3953]. In response to this a 'thumbs up/down' measure was developed by one project manager, in order for students to comfortably express how they felt in each session, which was tracked over time [3566]. The same organisation continued to develop this monitoring

methodology within a subsequent project, triangulating the 'thumbs up' measure with teacher-tracking forms and participant self-reflection forms (when participants were happy to complete them) [4439]. This demonstrates that when project leaders are able to reflect on the evaluation processes in use, methods can be adapted and improved in line with the needs of participants and the progress of sessions.

In some cases, grantholders stated that engaging participants in repeated assessment would have been counter-productive to participation and the maintenance of positive relationships with the young people [4103, 4097]. In these cases it may therefore be more appropriate for project workers to complete quantitative measures. In response to similar issues, several project leaders developed alternative means of monitoring progress; including formative observations and participant-produced resources to document their 'journeys' through sessions. Another project used matrix forms to track participants on five constructs related to self-efficacy (including; disengagement, curiosity, involvement, achievement and autonomy) which were completed by practitioners at the beginning, middle and end of participation. These forms also had space for free-text comments on each child, enabling cross-comparison of qualitative and quantitative data [3439]. Another project used quantitative measures across five constructs relating to self-efficacy, which were completed by several professionals known to the child and cross-referenced. The grantholder then reflected on which processes within the provision had led to improvements in each of these constructs individually. For example,

when reflecting on participant's 'increased ability to listen to instruction', the grantholder cited the consistent format of sessions which had reduced participant anxiety, enabling challenging behaviour to be tackled and trusting relationships to be formed with staff [3662]. This grantholder was able to bring together evidence from multiple sources, and then interpret the processes within the provision that led to developments in self-efficacy related constructs.

It is acknowledged that many of the more extensive examples were often conducted in institutionalised settings, where professionals are likely to already be accustomed to completing similar forms of repeated assessment. In light of this, it is suggested that project leaders in any setting will be most successful in capturing self-efficacy where measurements are integrated into processes already utilised by project workers. If measurements could be integrated into mentors' already established one-to-one work with mentees (for example in the monitoring of personalised learning plans) this would enable ongoing evaluation and reflection by mentor and mentee together. Mentors should be encouraged by project leaders to take regular quantitative measures of participant self-efficacy, which can be combined with wider observations and participant self-reflections where possible. The strengths of utilising personalised learning practices to monitor participant progression was acknowledged by one grantholder at the development stage of their provision, who stated their intention to use personalised learning plans *"to track [participant's] journey and progress through the project" and to provide "rich data with which to design case studies"* [3963].

What are the practical implications for the measurement of self-efficacy in future projects?

It is evident that the development of a robust and comprehensive measurement of self-efficacy requires considerable investment from project workers. However, where project workers are able to dedicate time to integrating appropriate measurements of self-efficacy into their practice, and to reflect on the findings they obtain, this will inherently lead to greater insight and learning. By reflecting on the learning processes that have facilitated improvements in self-efficacy, we can continue to develop non-formal learning experiences that provide young people who *"see themselves as having limitations"* [3566] with a context for understanding their lives and approaching future challenges.

This paper has discussed evidence from a diverse range of projects, working across a range of project settings. In line with this, the measurement methods and forms of evaluation utilised by project workers have also been diverse. In projects which attempted to measure improvements in self-efficacy, project workers drew on many different constructs to illustrate this outcome (see appendices for a full list of terms). In the measurement of self-efficacy, no one scale or method is applicable to all projects, nor is it necessary to enforce a uniform and formal assessment of this kind. What is vital to all projects is the way in which grantholders interpret the evidence obtained, reflecting on how the specific learning processes within each project have been instrumental in supporting young people facing adversity to feel more competent in their ability to cope with life's challenges and to influence their own outcomes.

"I think it has affected the way they see themselves...It encourages them to
discover something new about themselves – self-discovery. 'Actually I can do this even though I felt that I can't'." [3566]

By reflecting on which specific aspects of the provision have had the greatest impacts on personal progression and by collecting evidence to illustrate this, projects can facilitate learning and the development of future models to support children and young people facing challenging everyday lives. Youth Music has a responsibility to support projects to develop these robust forms of measurement by presenting clear guidance on what is expected of grantholders, including a minimum standard of evidence required for the measurement in relation to the intended outcomes of each project.

Conclusions

Although the primary motivation for many participants in Youth Music funded projects may be an interest in music and developing music-making skills, the current paper has focused on how these projects support alternative forms of learning. Gilligan (2000) described resilience as *"a set of qualities that helps a person to withstand many of the negative effects of adversity"*. Resilience is an important resource for the participants of Youth Music's projects, who face a range of challenging circumstances on a daily basis. Self-efficacy - relating to an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish tasks and deal with life challenges - has strong links to resilience and the extent to which young people feel competent in their ability to persist in the face of adversity (Maclean, 2003).

Among the projects reviewed, a number of learning processes stood out as supporting developments in self-efficacy and resilience, including encouraging autonomous exploration of young people's issues through lyric writing, and providing facilitated opportunities to become young mentors, enhancing feelings of mastery and self-belief, and demonstrating profound empathy. One-to-one mentoring delivered alongside music-making provision was instrumental in enhancing feelings of belonging for many participants who receive little to no support outside of the provision. Close mentoring relationships also enhanced learner autonomy through the use of personalised learning plans which encouraged personal goal-settings and participant choice. Provision often supported the three needs of autonomy, competence and relatedness which Ryan and Deci (2000) define as essential criteria for enabling personal development and human motivation. Facilitated opportunities were often characterised by a high degree of interpersonal support, enhancing feelings of mastery and self-perceptions of competency.

The responsibility of mentors to provide continuity of support beyond the immediate project setting was highlighted, suggesting that (where possible) mentors should actively support mentees as they move forwards from the provision, through the planning of next steps. Forming networks with parents, carers and external agencies is also important, in order to support the recruitment, retention and engagement of participants, as well as enabling more detailed feedback on outcomes of projects and the wider-reaching impacts of engagement.

Despite the aim of this paper to highlight both the barriers and facilitating factors for the provision on self-efficacy, there are clear limitations to drawing on evidence obtained from evaluations submitted to a funding body. Grantholders are likely to over-report on the positive aspects of their projects, limiting the ability of this paper to fully explore the challenges project workers may have faced in delivering on personal outcomes.

This paper has highlighted the importance of understanding how grantholders interpreted their findings, particularly when developing methods of capturing personal progress. In order to provide young people facing adversity with transformative learning experiences it is important that grantholders are able to reflect on both their practice and methods of evaluating the outcomes of their provision, leading to greater insight and future learning.

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Appendix

Table of terms used in Youth Music projects in the measurement of self-efficacy

	Constructs used in the measurement of self-efficacy
3432	Increased ability to connect with people and improved social well-being **(Evidenced by completion of Youth Music Development Scale and reports/ observations by key workers)**
3439	Disengagement Curiosity Involvement Achievement Autonomy Making Relationships Managing Feelings and Behaviour **(Evidenced by baseline, midpoint and end evaluations using observation matrix)**
3523	I work well with others I usually turn up to things on time I am respectful of others I make a positive contribution to my community I am good at committing to things **(Evidenced by completion of Attitude & behaviour, Agency & Citizenship Scales and participant diary sheets for each session)**
3579	Increased confidence and self-belief **(Evidenced by participant evaluations)**
3662	Improved self confidence Improved emotional well-being (happiness and enjoyment) Increased ability to listen to instruction Increased ability to engage in an activity Increased ability to work as a group **(Evidenced by evaluation forms completed by project worker and professionals)**
3753	Ability to express feelings – (Song writing, self-expression, sharing ideas) Remains in regular contact with the service – (Attendance and retention rates) Social skills gained/improved – (Group work, developing friendships) Development through new experience/interests – (Opportunities, ownership, tips/visits) Positive socialisation with peers – (Safe environment to share ideas/skills) Increased choice of activities/ opportunities – (Recording studio, film making, residential, singing and song writing) **(Evidenced by baseline and movement measured on scale 1-5)**

3991	Gives purposeful attention Participates constructively Connects up experiences Shows insightful involvement Engages cognitively with peers Is emotionally secure Is biddable and accepts constraints Accommodates to others Responds constructively to others Maintains internalised standards (Evidenced by project workers completed of Boxall profiles)
3953	Able to express themselves in front of others Able to make decisions that they feel are good for them Listened to by other people More confident Complete the progression programme Work well in a group Parent reported improvements Young people evidence resilience (Evidenced by participant feedback forms and music leader session logs)
4097	Self-esteem Confidence Well-being (Evidenced by participant feedback forms and completion of Wheel of Well-Being)
4179	Able to make sense of what others are expressing through music Could express their own thoughts, feelings, emotions through music-making (Evidenced by participant experience survey forms)
4185	Confidence Able to share their views Altitudinal changes (Evidenced by participant feedback, staff feedback on attitudes and journey portfolios)
4205	Behavioural change Well-being Benefit of music making to wider lives (Evidenced by completed of Youth Music Well-being Scale, Youth Music Development Scale and outcomes information)
4439	Confidence Coping with problems Achieving set goals Satisfaction with life (Evidenced by participant baseline and end ratings on scale of 1-10)