

Teacher's Efficacy: Review and Update

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Abstract: *Many factors are associated with teacher effectiveness. Factors such as training, background, and preparation certainly affect the ability of teachers to reach their students and make a meaningful difference in their education. However, some believe that in order for teachers to be effective in their profession they must believe they are effective. If teachers do not feel as though they are "reaching" their students then this may have a direct impact on their teaching. One of the major challenges facing university teachers is to adapt and include student-centred strategies, methodologies and techniques that foster the competence to be learnt and encourage independent learning. The success of these teaching activities and practices depends to a great extent on teachers' self-perception and confidence in their professional capacity to face up to the changes involved in learning-centred models. Herein the present article, the author has tried to explore the meaning of teacher's sense of efficacy and its applications to improvise pedagogy in modern era of education.*

Keywords: efficacy, pedagogy, pre-teacher, education

1. Introduction

Teacher efficacy can be defined as the "teachers' confidence in their ability to promote students' learning" (Hoy, 2000). It was first discussed as a concept more than 30 years ago when these two items were included in studies conducted by researchers at the Rand Corp.:

- "When it comes right down to it, a teacher really can't do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment."
- "If I try really hard, I can get through to even the most difficult or unmotivated students" (Armor et al., 1976, in Henson, 2001).

Teachers were asked to express their degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the two statements and their responses initiated the concept of teacher efficacy. From the beginning, this "early work suggested powerful effects from the simple idea that a teacher's belief in his or her ability to positively impact student learning is critical to actual success or failure in a teacher's behavior" (Henson, 2001).

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy has been widely researched since the concept was pioneered by Albert Bandura as part of his Social Learning Theory in the late 1970's. Bandura posited that self-efficacy is the ability of a person to judge how they will react to a situation and/or the influence they have on the outcome of a situation. (Bandura, 1997)

There are four primary sources of self-efficacy according to Bandura:

- 1) Mastery experiences,
- 2) Vicarious experiences,
- 3) Social persuasion, and
- 4) Physiological factors" (Guskey, 1988).

In other words, the belief that one possesses the ability to perform their job or tasks with mastery is dependent upon previous experiences, training, and environment. Considering Bandura's notion of self-efficacy several researchers have examined teachers' sense of self-efficacy. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy developed the

Teacher Self Efficacy Scale (TSES) (2009), sometimes referred to as the **Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scales**, for purposes of measuring the level of teacher self-efficacy beliefs. The instrument is available to the general public <<http://people.ehe.osu.edu/ahoy/files/2009/02/tses.pdf>> and has been validated by other researchers who have utilized it in their research.

Heneman, Kimball, and Milanowski (2006) concluded: "Our results, coupled with those of Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), suggest that the TSES should be the preferred measure of teachers' sense of efficacy in future research. Its replicable psychometric properties, behavioral richness in capturing the teacher role, and predictive capacity for explaining significant variance in teacher classroom performance all support this conclusion." A majority of the studies conducted on teacher self-efficacy utilizing the instruments designed by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy focused on differences in the years of experience teachers had spent in the field of education and it was found that this variable is unrelated to teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001; Putnam, 2012; Tanriseven, 2012).

Many studies also focused on comparing pre-service and classroom teachers and they found that classroom teachers showed a higher level of efficacy in regards to their implementation of new instructional practices (e.g. Wolters and Daugherty, 2007 and Fives and Buehl, 2009). Holzberger, Philipp, and Kunter (2012) studied the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and instruction in Germany. They found "... teachers with higher self-efficacy beliefs showed higher instructional quality" (p. 782). A study conducted in Connecticut by McCoach and Colbert (2010) researched collective teacher efficacy in several schools and compared the results with reference to the socio-economic status of the schools in which the teachers were employed. They defined socioeconomic status as the number of students on free/reduced lunch, the number of English Language Learners (ELLs), and the percentage of minority students within a school. While this research focused on collective instead of individual teacher efficacy it did look at schools with different socio-economic demographics. McCoach and Colbert also factored in the academic

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achievement of the school with students' success/failure on standardized tests. McCoach and Colbert found that those teachers who collectively identified themselves as "high-ask and high confidence" were more likely to work at schools with a student population from higher socio-economic status (2010, p. 43).

This self-perception, called self-efficacy, plays a major role in how teachers select assignments and activities, shaping their efforts and perseverance when addressing certain challenges, and even in their emotional response to difficult situations. Self-efficacy ultimately accounts for a cognitive construct that mediates between knowledge and action. Along with other variables, this determines the success of the actions themselves (Prieto, 2003).

Effects of self-efficacy on teaching and learning

Numerous studies point out that teachers with high self-efficacy levels are more open to new ideas, show greater willingness to try new teaching methods, design and organise their classes better, and are more enthusiastic and satisfied with their teaching (Allinder, 1994; Ashton, 1985; Bamburg, 2004; Guskey, 1998; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). In short, self-efficacy beliefs affect teaching practice and the attitude towards the educational process and therefore, the quality of teaching and learning.

In recent decades, there has been a huge interest in analysing the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and students' academic achievement (Chacón, 2006). McLaughlin y Marsh (1978) were the first researchers to demonstrate the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and student achievement (Prieto, 2007). Since then, other scholars on the subject have confirmed this relationship (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Caprara, Barabaranello, Steca & Malone, 2006; Dee and Hoy, 2008; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Hoy and Wollfolk, 1990; Muijs & Rejnolds, 2001; Ross, 1992; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Wolters & Daugherty, 2007).

How Do teachers Develop a sense of efficacy?

An important factor in the determination of a teacher's sense of efficacy is, not surprisingly, experience, or what Bandura (1977), a leader in the development of self-efficacy theory, calls performance accomplishments. Has he or she been able to make a difference in student learning? Hoy (2000) suggests that "some of the most powerful influences on the development of teacher efficacy are mastery experiences during student teaching and the induction year." Thus, "the first years of teaching could be critical to the long-term development of teacher efficacy."

Building on the work of Bandura, Hoy (2000) discusses other factors that can impact a teacher's sense of efficacy:

- **Vicarious experiences:** For example, a teacher might observe another teacher using a particularly effective practice and thus feel more confident that, through its use, she could be more successful in reaching her students.
- **Social persuasion:** In a school setting, this could take the form of either pep talks or feedback that highlights effective teaching behaviors while providing constructive and specific suggestions for ways to improve. However,

such "persuasion" is likely to lose its positive impact if subsequent teacher experiences are not positive.

Hoy (2000) views the school setting itself—especially the ways in which teachers new to the profession are socialized—as having a potentially powerful impact on a teacher's sense of efficacy. For example, is a new teacher encouraged to view asking for help as not only normal, but desirable? This can be an important way to ensure that such a new teacher does not experience a series of failures that in turn affect mastery experiences, the prime determinant of a sense of efficacy.

2. Conclusion

Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs are significantly, but moderately related to students' perceived learning, except in the Planning and Assessment dimensions. Teachers' self-efficacy beliefs in general and in the Involvement and Interaction dimensions have a significant, positive, and moderate correlation with students' perceived learning outcomes, but not with the Planning and Assessment dimensions. Teachers with higher levels of overall efficacy have students with higher perceived learning levels than teachers with lower self-efficacy levels. It can be observed that, as teachers feel more confident when successfully performing the tasks analysed, students also have a higher perception of their learning achievement, except in the tasks related to Planning and Assessment, where the level of perceived efficacy does not affect students' perceived outcomes.

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