



Review

Teacher efficacy in *Teaching and Teacher Education*[☆]

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 of 111 TATE articles on teacher efficacy reviewed.
- Articles provide sphere of growing teacher efficacy research.
- Researchers moving from teacher efficacy as elusive to engaging its complexity.

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ABSTRACT

The author reviews twelve of 111 articles focusing on teacher efficacy published in *Teaching and Teacher Education* since 1985. The twelve articles are placed in three sections that include a) instruments, factor analyses, and cultural influences, b) participants, contexts, and teacher instruction, and c) teacher wellness. These sections offer research and studies from various teacher efficacy investigators that share insights, understandings, and interpretations. The selected TATE articles provide a plausible (expanding) sphere of growing and developing research and studies in teacher efficacy.

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1. Introduction

Teacher efficacy (efficacy, self-efficacy) continues receiving attention in education research circles. The number of articles regarding teacher efficacy has steadily increased since the commencement of *Teaching and Teacher Education An International Journal of Research and Studies* (TATE) in 1985. For example, 18 (16%) articles were published between 1985 and 2000 (i.e., the first 15 years), while 63 (57%) articles were published between 2008 and 2013 in TATE concerning teacher efficacy. Authors during the first 15 years ($N = 18$) represented the United States (9 articles) along with Canada (4), Netherlands (2), Australia (1), Israel (1), and Lebanon (1), while authors since 2010 (through 2013) represented forty-one articles from the United States (16 articles), Australia (3), Netherlands (3), Belgium (2), Canada (2), Israel (2), China [Hong Kong] (1), Finland (1), Germany (1), Italy (1), Korea (1), Norway (1), Taiwan (1), Finland, United Kingdom, China, and South Africa (1), Finland and China (1), Germany and Netherlands (1), Italy and Norway (1), Netherlands and Switzerland (1), and Netherlands and

USA (1). One further notices in more recent TATE publications co-authors from different countries authoring together. Teacher efficacy holds international interest for researchers investigating preservice and inservice teachers in primary, elementary, junior, secondary, and tertiary learning environments.

One of the major topics of many manuscripts submitted for possible publication in TATE concerns efficacy, self-efficacy, and/or teacher efficacy. This article seeks to review (briefly) twelve articles published in TATE that deal with teacher efficacy and to discuss some conundrums of researching and writing about teacher efficacy. An initial focal point was to be aware of preservice and inservice participants' perceptions of efficacy, as well as context issues. Other focal points, among others concerning instruments, analyses, cultural influences, contexts, teacher instruction, and teacher wellness further assisted in developing this review article. The review first situates teacher efficacy within a theoretical backdrop highlighting some basic antecedents and rendering some historical groundings of teacher efficacy research. The selection of the twelve articles is then explained and considers how the ten most cited TATE articles dealing with teacher efficacy assisted in developing the three sections for this review. Next three sections briefly review teacher efficacy with four articles that reference foci encompassing instruments, factor analyses, and cultural influences; five articles with respect to foci comprising participants, contexts, and teacher instruction; and three articles that recognize

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teacher wellness foci of depression, burnout, and resilience. Ideas, practices, and theoretical insights help illustrate teacher efficacy research from international perspectives. The final section offers reflections and commentary briefly summarizing salient issues from the twelve articles and offering meaning making potential for teacher efficacy discussions and future teacher efficacy research.

2. A theoretical backdrop

I first encountered efficacy early in my academic development when learning about social organizational theory (e.g., Kleinsasser, 1993; Perrow, 1986; Rosenholtz, 1989; Thompson, 1967). Efficacy, “the power to produce a desired result or effect” (dictionary.com) has potential to help explain and clarify a social organizational typology of technical culture. Yet, a technical culture’s features (e.g., certainty/uncertainty, routine/nonroutine) are not (necessarily) equivalent or fully explanatory solely through efficacy. As Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) suggest, “A teacher’s efficacy belief is a judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated...” (p. 783). In reading various TATE articles on efficacy, self-efficacy, and teacher efficacy, I revisited connection(s) with my initial academic interests and was reminded of the antecedents to what I understood as efficacy by what Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) termed plausible theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of teacher efficacy. This consisted of two conceptual strands: Rotter’s locus of control and Bandura’s social cognitive theory.

I was particularly reminded (numerous times) of the Rand Study items (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977) and Bandura’s (1977) social cognitive theory when reading sections of TATE articles that dealt with theoretical or conceptual background information about teacher efficacy. The two Rand items that help operationalize Rotter’s ideas of locus of control and discussion regarding Bandura’s ideas (both empirical and theoretical) are briefly offered to help situate this review within teacher efficacy research and remind readers of their historical, contemporary, and continuing importance within teacher efficacy research.

Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) discussed some historical aspects of the Rand Study items emphasizing that “the two items were buried in an otherwise extensive questionnaire” (p. 784) regarding a larger study of teacher characteristics and student learning in the 1970s. Relying on Rotter’s (1966) work, “the Rand researchers conceived teacher efficacy as the extent to which teachers believed that they could control the reinforcement of their actions, that is, whether control of reinforcement lay within them or in the environment” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 784). Teachers in the Rand Study were asked to indicate level of agreement to the two items (below), and subsequently these two items were found to have strong links to teacher success and student performance (see Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 784; see also, Armor et al., 1976 and Berman et al., 1977).

Rand item 1. “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.”

Rand item 2. “If I really try hard, I can get through in even the most difficult or unmotivated students”

Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, pp. 784 & 785, italics original

Bandura (e.g., 1977; 1997) nurtured and promoted theoretical and empirical insights regarding teacher efficacy research, including Tschannen-Moran & Hoy’s (2001) turn to extend and consider specific empirical investigations. Early on, Bandura (1977) suggested

that “An adequate expectancy analysis, therefore, requires detailed assessment of the magnitude, generality, and strength of efficacy expectations commensurate with precision with which behavioral processes are measured” (p. 194). He postulated four major sources (and potential modes of induction which are given in parentheses) for expectations of personal efficacy that include performance accomplishment (e.g., participant modeling, performance desensitization, performance exposure, self-instructed performance), vicarious experiences (e.g., live modeling, symbolic modeling), verbal persuasion (suggestion, exhortation, self-instruction, interpretive treatments), and emotional arousal [physiological states] (e.g., attribution, relaxation, biofeedback, symbolic desensitization, and symbolic exposure) (see pp. 195–200). He subsequently “constructed a 30-item instrument with seven subscales: efficacy to influence decision making, efficacy to influence school resources, instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, efficacy to enlist parental involvement, efficacy to enlist community involvement, and efficacy to create a positive school climate” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 791). Yet, Tschannen-Moran & Hoy found validity and reliability information unavailable for these items and scales leading them to complete three studies. These eventuated in development of the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) consisting of three scales: Efficacy for instructional strategies, Efficacy for classroom management, and Efficacy for student engagement (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001, p. 800).

Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2000) concisely summarized the ideas used in this theoretical backdrop when they wrote: “Self-efficacy in psychological terms refers to a person’s perceived expectation of succeeding at a task or obtaining a valued outcome through personal effort (Bandura, 1986). For teachers, efficacy is based on their perceived ability to affect students’ learning (e.g., Ashton & Webb, 1986; Ross, Cousins, & Gadalla, 1996; Soodak & Podell, 1996)” (p. 651).

3. Scanning, reading, and selecting articles

In preparation for this review I read Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001), Tschannen-Moran, Hoy, and Hoy (1998), Pajares (1996), and Bandura (1977) to consider background of efficacy, self-efficacy, and teacher efficacy. I then accessed SCOPUS and entered efficacy, self-efficacy, self efficacy, student self-efficacy (the dash “—” was salient here and with other sets of words), student self efficacy, teacher self-efficacy, teacher self efficacy, teacher-efficacy, and teacher efficacy and developed numerous lists that were all cross checked, with the “Teacher Efficacy” list containing the articles from the various developed lists. “Teacher Efficacy” captures an essence of the 111 articles (published between 1985 and 2013) in TATE.

The international flavor of authors publishing the 111 articles was noteworthy. Overall, 24 countries were represented by 160 authors with 128 affiliations. The countries (in descending order with number of articles published in parentheses) included: United States (52), Australia (9), Canada (8), Netherlands (8), Israel (5), Belgium (4), China (4), Finland (4), United Kingdom (4), Taiwan (3), Germany (2), Italy (2), Norway (2), South Africa (2), Turkey (2), and one article each — Greece, Hong Kong, Lebanon, New Zealand, Singapore, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, and Venezuela (note—numbers do not add to 111 as there were multiple authors from multiple countries). The three authors writing the most TATE articles about teacher efficacy identified in SCOPUS information included A.W. Hoy (5), W.K. Hoy (3), and M. Tschannen-Moran (3); 19 authors authored or co-authored two TATE articles each about teacher efficacy.

I identified review articles ($N = 5$), research articles ($N = 106$), and separated the research articles into preservice ($N = 20$),

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