

A Mixed Methods Assessment of the Effectiveness of Strategic EMentoring in Improving the Self-Efficacy and Persistence (or Retention) of Alternatively Certified Novice Teachers within an Inner City School District

Taiwana D. Anthony
PhD Student in Educational Leadership
College of Education
Prairie View A & M University
Technology Applications
Dallas Independent School District
Dallas, Texas

William Allan Kritsonis, PhD
Professor
PhD Program in Educational Leadership
Prairie View A&M University
Member of the Texas A&M University System
Visiting Lecturer (2005)
Oxford Round Table
University of Oxford, Oxford, England
Distinguished Alumnus (2004)
Central Washington University
College of Education and Professional Studies

ABSTRACT

Unfortunately, alternatively certified novice teachers are not being properly prepared. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, the primary concern is that all classrooms are housed with highly qualified teachers. In the present, alternatively certified novice teacher attrition has increased significantly. Many classrooms across the United States have either an alternatively certified novice teacher or a non-certified person instructing students. Exceedingly, high rates of teachers are leaving the profession within the first five years. Clearly, a majority of the teachers leaving the field of education are working in indigent, urban, under privilege and or racially or culturally diverse populated schools (Education Week, 2003). In order for alternatively certified novice teacher reformation to undergo significant scrutiny and accountability; educators, lawmakers, stakeholders, and other constituents, need to make rigorous attempts to prepare, mentor, educate, and retain alternatively certified novice teachers. The ultimate goal is to help all students to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society and to interact, negotiate, and communicate with peoples from diverse groups in order to create a civic and moral community that works for the common good. In order to foster high student achievement, alternatively certified novice teachers plays a pivotal role in their success. Research indicates that an intricate pattern in alternatively certified novice teachers who possess high self-efficacy are more susceptible to be innovative in their

instructional strategies, their pedagogical techniques and they are more receptive to student ideas and their E- Mentor suggestions.

Introduction

Why is it important to study teachers' self efficacy? Teacher self efficacy beliefs have been studied in areas such as teacher education, academic achievement of students, mental health, counseling, sports and a variety of other areas. This can be attributed to Albert Bandura who defines self-efficacy as personal judgments of one's capabilities to perform tasks at varying levels. Prior studies and various research show consistent patterns in alternatively certified novice teachers with higher self efficacy are more likely to be effective in their classrooms by illuminating enthusiastic attitude towards teaching, they are open to students' ideas, they use innovative instructional methods that exhibits in their instructional practices, and they possess the ability to provide an environment that promotes and fosters motivation for students to learn.

Purpose of the Article

The purpose of this article is to discuss alternatively certified novice teacher self-efficacy, their ability to fully comprehend how teachers to develop their self-efficacy beliefs and how it inadvertently affects their high attrition rate. When capable teachers do not perform up to their potential despite positive environmental conditions, emphasis on the self-regulatory process within individuals that promote or their ability to perform should be monitored. From the social cognitive view, self-efficacy is an important factor that resides within the alternatively certified novice teacher and mediates between cognition and affect, which result in changes in their work performance (Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). The growth and reduction of self-efficacy is influenced over time by social comparison with peers and is therefore more pronounced as one grows older. Albert Bandura states, "*People who regard themselves as highly efficacious act, think, and feel differently from those who perceive themselves as inefficacious. They produce their own future, rather than simply foretell it.*"

Social Learning Theory

- Social Learning Theory explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences.
- Social Learning encompasses attention, memory and motivation.
- Social Learning Theory spans both cognitive and behavioral frameworks
- Coaching and Mentoring are commonly used in management development techniques that attempt to harness social learning in the workplace.

Adult Learning Theory

Knowles' theory of andragogy is an attempt to develop a theory specifically for adult learning. Knowles emphasizes that adults are self-directed and expect to take responsibility for decisions. Adult learning programs must accommodate this fundamental aspect.

Andragogy makes the following assumptions about the design of learning: (1) Adults need to know why they need to learn something (2) Adults need to learn experientially, (3) Adults approach learning as problem-solving, and (4) Adults learn best when the topic is of immediate value. In practical terms, andragogy means that instruction for adults needs to focus more on the process and less on the content being taught.

Figure 1-1 The Principles of the Adult Learning Theory

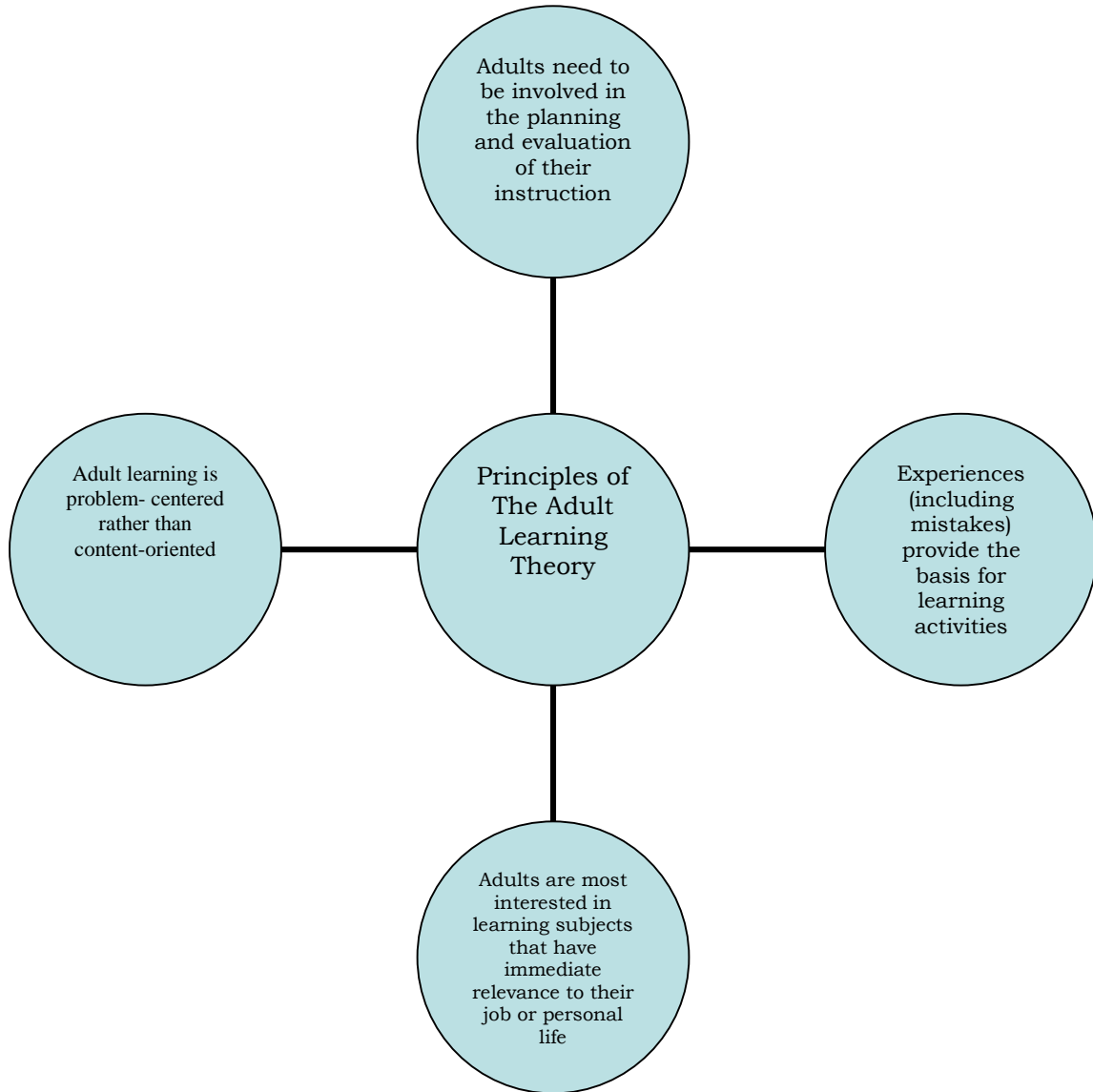


Figure 1-2 Bandura’s Teacher Efficacy Scale (unpublished)

Bandura’s Teacher Efficacy Scale (unpublished)	
<p>Format: 30 items on a 9 point scale anchored at nothing, very little, some influence, quite a bit, a great deal.</p> <p>7 subscales: Influence on decision making, influence on school resources, instructional efficacy, disciplinary efficacy, enlisting parental involvement, enlisting community involvement, and creating a positive school climate.</p>	<p>Example Items</p> <p>How much can you influence the decisions that are made in your school?</p> <p>How much can you do to overcome the influence of adverse community conditions on student learning?</p> <p>How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?</p> <p>How much can you assist parents in helping their children do well in school?</p> <p>How much can you do to get local colleges and universities involved in working with your school?</p> <p>How much can you do to make students enjoy coming to school?</p> <p>How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?</p>

Building positive teacher self efficacy is the goal. Positive self efficacy within alternatively certified novice teachers will provide a rippling affect in which it will create and provide an atmosphere that will be geared towards positive student achievement. In relation to the formula listed below, if it is followed by school districts, and it is applied in the correct format, it will lead to lowering the attrition rates among alternatively certified novice teachers.

Figure 1-3 Formula

Alternatively Certified Novice Teacher Self Efficacy + Self Directedness / Strategic Mentoring (EMentoring) *

Effective Alternatively Certified Novice Teachers = Lower Attrition Rate for Inner-City School District Teacher Effectiveness + Accountable Talk + Rigorous Talk = Relevant Instruction to students. This will inadvertently create a rippling affect descending from the administrator, to the teacher, to the student. Effective teaching is a central point to student achievement. Strong leadership by the administrator is an essential element of effective teaching. The administrator’s role is integrally tied to effective teaching strategies, teacher retention and improvement. When principal expectations of teachers are unclear and the lack of poor quality principal support, these are frequently cited as problems for teachers and/ or some reasons leave the profession.

Many researchers support the notion that teachers' beliefs of personal efficacy affect their instructional activities, their orientation toward the educational process and their student outcomes. Novice teachers' sense of teacher efficacy is related to their beliefs about student control. Novice teachers who possess a low sense of efficacy tend to

hold a custodial orientation which causes a pessimistic view of students' motivation. Oftentimes, they emphasize rigid control of classroom behavior, and rely heavily on extrinsic enticements and negative sanctions to get students to study (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990).

Novice teachers with high instructional efficacy create mastery experiences for their students whereas novice teachers with low instructional efficacy undermine student's cognitive development as well as students' judgments of their own capabilities (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Cohn & Rossmiller, 1987). Teacher efficacy is an indicator of student achievement (Ashton & Webb, 1986; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

In contrast, people who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks, which they view as personal threats. They have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter, and all kinds of adverse outcomes rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They slacken within their efforts and give up quickly in the face of difficulties. The alternatively certified novice teachers are slow to recover their sense of efficacy following failure or setbacks. Because the alternatively certified novice teachers view insufficient performance as deficient aptitude it does not require much failure for them to lose faith in their capabilities.

To fully grasp how alternatively certified novice teachers develop self efficacy beliefs, research by various researchers focused on novice teachers and sources that influence the alternatively certified novice teachers' beliefs. Woolfolk, exposed novice teachers' self-efficacy is interrelated to positive relationships among administrators, mentors, and teaching support. Tekkaya, Cakiroglu, and Ozkan ascertained that alternatively certified novice teachers with higher science knowledge and; a positive attitude toward science teaching contributes to their own self-efficacy beliefs. Cakiroglu, scrutinized alternatively certified novice teachers' gender and course grades in regards to math teaching self-efficacy found no difference.

eMentoring

eMentoring is a convenient effective and efficient way to connect alternatively certified novice teachers with less than five years in education with more experienced veteran teachers. In addition to being mentored, alternatively certified novice teachers have a unique opportunity to serve as mentors to future alternatively certified novice teachers. Oftentimes, it is difficult to find the time to meet face-to-face, eMentoring provides the advantage of transcending geographic boundaries and time constraints through online communication.

eMentoring is a viable and useful tool to add to the armor of inner city schools who seek to raise student achievement. Mentoring programs can significantly improve outcomes for alternatively certified novice teachers, but only if relationships between mentor and mentee are long-term and intensive and if the eMentoring program is well structured. eMentors are encouraged to communicate with mentees on a regular basis and initiate discussions that offer guidance and advice. Through recurrent communication, mentors will foster trust by making mentee's feel their questions and concerns are carefully considered and they are warranted.

In summation, Parault and Haverback followed a line of investigation in regards to language and reading acquisition, they compared two groups of novice reading teachers, and learned that tutoring reading to elementary school children did not significantly change their self-efficacy, compared to those without the experience.

Despite teacher's completion of a four-year degree, including observation and student teaching opportunities, nearly 50 percent of teachers in the United States leave teaching in the first five years of their profession. Some school districts experience even greater attrition rates. Even worse, research shows that the most gifted and talented of these novice teachers are most apt to abandon their teaching careers (Halford, 1998). Oftentimes, many school districts have discovered that the turnover rates among young and novice teachers are high--and that the positions the school worked hard to fill one year are open again prior too or at the end of the next year.

Recommendations

- Positive reinforcement
- Provide a sense of security to become self direct and independent; not Co-dependent
- Provide strong guidance and leadership
- Make sure their basic needs are being met
- Model multiple teaching strategies and pedagogical styles
- Create an environment that is conducive to the needs of the alternatively certified novice teachers
- Provide opportunities for the alternatively certified novice teachers to have voice
- Respect them as adults and that they are professional

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, by working with mentors, alternatively certified novice teachers; will be able to contribute to their teachers' self efficacy beliefs in a variety of settings, contexts, and content areas, this article will constitute a spectrum of practical research using Bandura's Social Learning Theory- - the theoretical framework of teachers self efficacy scale in order to provide a comprehensive comprehension of alternatively certified novice teachers' self efficacy in relation to lowering the attrition rate of alternatively certified novice teachers using the practical application called EMentoring.

References

- Ashton, P.T., & Webb, R. B. (1986). *Making a difference: Teachers' sense of efficacy and student achievement*. New York: Longman.
- Bandura A. (1977a) *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura A. (1989) Social cognitive theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annals of Child Development*, 6, 1-60. Greenwich, CT: Jai Press LTD.
- Cakiroglu, E. (2000). *Preservice elementary teachers' sense of efficacy in reform oriented mathematics*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University.
- Cohn, E., & Rossmiller, E. (1987). Research on effective schools: Implications for less developed countries. *Contemporary Education Review*, 31, 377-399.
- Gibson, S., & Dembo, M. (1984). Teacher efficacy: A construct validation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 76, 569-592.
- Halford, J.M. (1998, February). Easing the way for new teachers. *Educational Leadership*, 55, 33-36.
- Parault, S. J., Schwanenflugel, P. J., & Rogers-Haverback, H. (in press). The development of interpretations for novel noun - noun conceptual combinations during the elementary school years. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, 91, 67-87.
- Midgley, C., Feldlaufer, H., & Eccles, J. S. (1989). Change in teacher efficacy and student self- and task-related beliefs in mathematics during the transition to junior high school. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 81, 247-258.
- Tekkaya, C., Cakiroglu, J. & Ozkan, O. (Nisan, 2002). *Turkish preservice science teachers understanding of science, self efficacy beliefs and attitudes toward science teaches*. NRST 2002. National Association for Research in Science Teaching. New Orleans, USA.
- Woolfolk, A. E., & Hoy, W. K. (1990). Prospective teachers' sense of efficacy and beliefs about control. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 81-91.
- Woolfolk, A. E., Rosoff, B., & Hoy, W. K. (1990). Teachers' sense of efficacy and their beliefs about managing students. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 6, 137-148.