Ready from Day One? The Relationship Between Length of Pre-Service Teacher Field Residency and Teacher Efficacy

Theresa Garfield Dorel, W. Sean Kearney, & Esther Garza
Texas A&M University-San Antonio

Abstract

The study examines the perceptions of pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy in a teacher preparation program to determine whether a relationship exists between teacher efficacy and the amount of time spent in field residency. The paper first examines the existing literature on efficacy and current field residency practices in teacher preparation programs. Following the literature will be an overview of the methodology and results. The findings indicate a significant correlation between length of time in field residency experiences and the pre-service teachers' sense of General Teaching Efficacy.

Keywords*:* teacher efficacy, field experiences, pre-service teacher experiences, teacher preparation

Introduction

Field residency experiences are a mainstay in many teacher preparation programs. Pre-service teachers gain practice through a variety of pre-service opportunities such as observation, small group instruction, whole group instruction, and student teaching. However, in this era of accountability, how are universities measuring the effectiveness and validity of these experiences? In this study, the authors explore the relationship between length of time in field residency experiences and its impact on the pre-service teachers' sense of teaching efficacy.

Review of the Literature

Studies have demonstrated that teacher efficacy is one of the strongest predictors of student achievement (Woolfolk-Hoy, Hoy, & Davis, 2009). Goddard and Salloum (2012) define teacher efficacy as a teacher's belief in his/her ability to complete a task. They have demonstrated efficacy has a stronger relationship with student achievement than either poverty or ethnicity. It may also be the entry-level ability of students (Jussim, Robustelli, & Cain, 2009). Accordingly, it is vital for teacher preparation programs to ensure their graduates not only possess advanced pedagogy and content knowledge, but also have a strong belief in their own ability to teach.

In a meta-analysis, Brown (2012) found that teachers are more likely to remain in the profession if they have a high sense of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one's perception of his or her

effectiveness (Bandura, 1986). This perception is both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. It is important to note that an individual's sense of self-efficacy can change based on situations and experiences. Bandura (1986) maintained that most experiences in life influence our sense of efficacy. Failing a task the first time may adversely affect self-efficacy. One may have the tendency to think that the task is impossible. However, if that same task is achieved the next time, that person's sense of self-efficacy increases (Bandura, 1998).

Theoretical Base for Learning and Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1977a), learning is rooted in direct experience and results from the positive and negative effects that actions produce. This learning is broken into three categories: informative function, motivational function, and reinforcing function (Bandura, 1977a). One attains learning through modeling of behavior, or observational learning (Bandura, 1986). Observers, Bandura contends, can acquire cognitive skills and new patterns of behavior by observing the performance of others (1986). Attentional processes are those which determine what is "selectively observed in the profusion of modeling influences to which one is exposed and what is extracted from such exposures" (Bandura, 1977a, p. 24). Retention processes affect what a person retains based on remembering. Memory must be in symbolic form in order to affect behavior after the person modeling the behavior is absent. Motor reproduction processes convert symbolic representations to appropriate actions (Bandura, 1977b). Finally, motivational processes drive the responses. If the outcome is one that is valued, it is more likely to produce an action. Efficacy, which is one's perception of their effectiveness, is therefore essential in effective psychological functioning (Bandura, 1986).

Familiarity with the content presented influences self-efficacy, which is also situation specific (Bergman & Morphew, 2015). A sense of self-efficacy is gained when individuals either observe others completing a task, or complete a task successfully themselves (Zulkosky, 2009). Therefore, one's sense of self-efficacy directly relates to the task. For example, based on observation and/or participation, one may believe they can play in a recreational softball team, but are not ready for the professional league. The amount of time that an individual has to practice a task has demonstrated a strong relationship with self-efficacy (Lamorey & Wilcox, 2005). Out of Bandura's seminal work, an emerging body of research has developed relating to teachers and their sense of self-efficacy.

Teacher and Teaching Efficacy

One early teacher efficacy study was conducted by the RAND Corporation in the Los Angeles Public Schools (Armor et al., 1976). The researchers designed this study to measure whether how a teacher felt about his/her control in the classroom influenced reading practices among teachers. This study led to the definition of two types of teaching efficacy: General Teaching Efficacy and Personal Teaching Efficacy (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). General Teaching Efficacy is defined as how much of an impact the respondents believed teachers could have on students, and Personal Teaching Efficacy is defined as how much of an impact the respondents believed they themselves could have on students (Leyser, Zeiger, & Romi, 2011).

Guskey and Passaro (1994) define teacher efficacy as "teachers' belief or conviction that they can influence how well students learn, even those who may be difficult or unmotivated" (p. 630). Hoy and Miskel (2005) define teacher efficacy as "the teacher's belief in his or her capability

to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplishing a specific teaching task in a particular context" (p. 153).

The culmination of these bodies of research led to an integrated model of teacher efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). The authors of this research posit that teaching efficacy depends on context specific tasks. Teachers, who may feel particularly efficacious in one task, may not feel so within the context of another. Hoy and Miskel (2005) stated that teaching efficacy is cyclical in nature. Thus, when possessing greater efficacy, one tends to persist and put out greater effort, which will lead to even greater efficacy. Conversely, when one possesses lower efficacy, there is a tendency to expend less effort and give up, which leads to even lower efficacy. Effort and success directly relate to efficacy, which positively correlates with success in the classroom (Gushue & Whitson, 2006).

Similarly, Shore (2004) found that teacher efficacy is associated with a sense of accomplishment, greater job satisfaction, a sense of control in the classroom, and a willingness to try innovative strategies and practices. All of these attributes contribute directly to student success (Armor et al., 1976; Boz & Boz, 2010). This "empowerment" in the classroom is necessary to affect change in schools (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Evidence supports the idea that teacher efficacy is interdependent with several variables such as the challenge of the teaching task at hand, overcoming cultural barriers such as stereotyping, and the availability of resources (Milner & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2003; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2002). It is important to note that the construct of teacher efficacy crosses cultural lines. Teachers of different nationalities and ethnicities deal with the same efficacy issues (Milner & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2003; Tsouloupas, Carson, & Matthews, 2014). Furthermore, teacher efficacy issues are constant across those who are pre-service or novice teachers and teachers in various disciplines (Foster, Lewis, & Onafowora, 2005; Minor, Onwuegbzie, & Witcher, 2002; Utley, Moseley, & Bryant, 2005). Another contributing factor to the efficacy of teachers is the level of administrative support available (Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Borgogni, 2003; Shaughnessy, 2004; Tschannen-Moran &Woolfolk-Hoy, 2007).

Teacher Efficacy and Pre-Service Teachers

Much attention has been given to pre-service teachers' sense of efficacy in fields such as science and mathematics (Avery & Meyer, 2012; Bates, Latham, & Kim, 2011; Charalambous, Pilippou, & Kyriakides, 2008; Swars, 2005). Teachers who have a good understanding of the content in science and math, and who have more hands on experience with the material, are more efficacious. This consensus aligns with Bandura's (1986) stance that experience will influence the level of efficacy. For example, the amount of material a pre-service teacher was comfortable delivering may directly correlate with the level of efficacy (Choy, Lim, Chong & Wong, 2010).

Tatar and Buldur (2013) examined a teacher preparation program that scaffolds learning in an attempt to improve teacher self-efficacy. This program began with a workshop stage that prepared pre-service teachers to utilize specific strategies. They next moved to an observation stage during which pre-service teachers watched a teacher using those strategies. Finally, pre-service teachers applied their knowledge by leading lessons themselves in the practice stage. Tatar and Bulder (2013) found the pre-service teachers felt that of these three components, the practice part of the cycle was the most essential to achieving a higher sense of efficacy.

There are a number of job stressors, which have the potential to drive teachers away from the profession if they are not sufficiently prepared to deal with them during their pre-service training. Ross, Romer, and Horner (2006) examined self-efficacy in relation to some of the most frequently reported teacher stressors, such as students talking back and parents not holding their children accountable for their actions. What they found was that when educators had school- wide support, they were able to strategize solutions, and their self-perceptions of teacher efficacy increased.

Al-Awidi and Alghazo (2012) found that mastery experiences and vicarious experiences were the most influential sources of self-efficacy in pre-service teachers. Mastery experiences are one's interpretations of previous authentic experiences performing a task. Therefore, mastery experiences are subjective to a person's view on how well he/she accomplished a task in the past. Vicarious experiences are those in which a person sees the performance of others on a task and then estimates their own capabilities based on the other person's achievement (Bandura, 1986). It is imperative, then, that teacher preparation faculty structure field experiences to include practice and observation of master teachers.

Teacher Preparation Program Approaches to Ensuring Highly Efficacious Teachers

District collaborative partnerships. Teacher preparation programs must provide their pre-service teachers active involvement in school contexts so that the application of teaching approaches and methods can be experienced (Derosier & Soslau, 2014; Goh & Matthews, 2011). In particular, Jenkins, Pateman, and Black (2002) found in their study of partnerships for dual preparation, that teacher education students need experiences in applying the knowledge gathered in the university classroom to the public school classroom setting under the supervision of an experienced mentor and supervisor.

Ledoux and McHenry (2008) address the pitfalls of school and university partnerships by identifying that school partnerships, if not carefully designed and supervised, can lead to some strong challenges that will not meet the university and school district's goals for pre-service teachers. There are a number of strategies universities can utilize in order to help foster strong partnerships. For example, constant communication between university and school partners can help ensure that master teachers are willing to work cooperatively with a university student. It is also important for universities to ensure the curricula are supportive of the realistic nature of the school classroom. Perhaps most importantly, university faculty must provide adequate supervision to ensure that all requirements for a successful field experience are met (Ledoux & McHenry, 2008).

There are a number of approaches universities can use to ensure they are producing highly efficacious teachers while addressing the needs of students who are interested in becoming the next generation of classroom teachers. In 2013, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) introduced new accreditation standards for evaluating the quality of teacher preparation programs. These new standards now hold teacher preparation programs accountable for the impact program graduates have on student achievement (Haefner, McIntyre, & Spooner, 2014). In light of the new CAEP standards, and given the proven relationship between efficacy and student achievement, teacher preparation faculty may benefit from considering ways to improve teacher self-efficacy beliefs.

Mentor teacher and pre-service teacher relationship. The relationship between the mentor teacher and the pre-service teacher is critical for the development of aspiring educators.

There are a number of potential pitfalls to this relationship. To begin with, there is a power differential in this relationship. Moreover, the mentor and the student have their own distinct needs as experts and learners within the relationship. Loizou (2011) observes that each person in the mentor and teacher relationship contributes to the classroom environment by demonstrating his or her power in different classroom situations. Therefore, Loizou (2011) suggests that mentors and students should engage in discussions about their respective roles in the relationship. Ideally, such a conversation can result in the empowerment of both parties.

According to Martin (2002), the mentor teacher working with pre-service teachers may lack the requisite skills in order to effectively mentor. Moreover, the mentor or cooperating teacher has already faced several challenging stressors that exist within the classroom setting and having a pre-service teacher to guide can result in an additional stressor for the mentor. Typically, the pre-service teacher enters the field experience with strong belief that they will learn from the mentor teacher; however, the mentor teacher may not have been involved in professional development that would have ensured that the pre-service teacher benefited from the field residency experience. In Russell and Russell's (2011) study, the mentor teacher had the opportunity to voice their reflections, after participating in a two-day workshop, about the mentor/student relationship. The findings from this study indicated that mentors demonstrated that following training, they better understood their roles as mentors, described as supportive role models, and coaches who were empathetic to the mentees (Russell & Russell, 2011). An additional outcome pertaining to mentors should be the understanding of the expectations for being a mentor and asking if they want to be a teacher mentor to a pre-service teacher. Field experience is critical in shaping a pre-service teacher's beliefs and knowledge base and can help determine the length of time spent in the teaching profession and the quality of the teaching experience (Borko et al, 2000).

University supervisor and pre-service teacher relationship. The university supervisor plays an important role in the triad of the field experience between the pre-service teacher and the mentor teacher. However, the university supervisor may be idiosyncratic within the triad, because of the "outside in" approach utilized by supervisor. Too often, the university supervisor may take a snapshot of the pre-service teacher's practice and not be fully embedded in the experience (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003). Moreover, the supervisor's role will depend on the personalities of each member of the triad and the context where the field experience is occurring (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003). If a pre-service teacher has a personality that requires much nurturing and external support, the university supervisor may play more of an active role in the field residency experience. Whereas, if the mentor teacher has a particularly strong personality and the pre-service teacher responds well to this, the university supervisor may only play a perfunctory role.

In Gimbert and Nolan's (2003) study, the university and school district engaged in new collaborative efforts, different from traditional approaches to supervision and field placement, to bridge the pre-service teacher's transition between the university experiences to the classroom setting. Pre-service teachers began their field experience prior to the elementary school students first day of class and assisted their mentor teacher in setting up the classroom they would be a part of for an entire year. The field-based experience was renamed the Professional Development School (PDS) and the university supervisor label became known as Professional Development Associate (PDA). These terms were important for the reconceptualization of the pre-service teacher's field experience. The findings indicate that readiness and relationship building among the triad members assisted in supporting all the triad members in their established goals of guiding and developing the pre-service teachers into effective teachers. Even though there were several

challenges that occurred for the PDA such as discipline of elementary students and miscommunication between the mentor and pre-service teacher, the PDA was able to solve these challenges through the already established relationship and through the increase in readiness skills of the pre-service teacher. The PDA was successful in being more involved in the student teaching experience yielding more effectiveness as a member of the triad versus what had commonly occurred in traditional supervisory approaches (Gimbert & Nolan, 2003).

Methodology

As faculty in the College of Education at the university in which this research occurred, the researchers have a stake in measuring the effectiveness of the university's model of teacher preparation. This study is Action Research since this study not only attempts to add to the extant literature in the field, but also inform and improve local practice.

Research Design

This research was causal-comparative in nature which is non-experimental research that seeks to identify relationships between the selected variables. The researchers posed two central research questions:

1. What is the relationship between the amount of time spent in field residency and the perception of general teacher efficacy among aspiring educators?
2. What is the relationship between the amount of time spent in field residency and the perception of personal teacher efficacy among aspiring educators?

Definition of Terms

In order to understand the teaching efficacy of pre-service teachers in a field residency program, the following terms refer to the distinction between pre-service teachers' general and personal teacher efficacy. General Teacher Efficacy (GTE) is a construct that measures an individual's beliefs about the efficaciousness of all teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE) is a construct that measures an individual's belief about their own level of efficacy as a teacher (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001).

The term field residency is time on task that aspiring teachers or our participants, pre-service teachers, spend applying their theoretical knowledge of content and pedagogy into practice in active K-12 classroom settings (Thorpe, 2014). In this study, the researchers refer to field residency one, field residency two and field residency three. Field residency one and two are 64 clock hours each and require the pre-service teachers to teach lessons in their mentor teacher's classroom, journal and complete several other prerequisite activities. They occur in consecutive semesters. Field residency one focuses on small group instruction and classroom management. Field residency two encourages whole group instruction, and curricula development. Both semesters include activities such as lesson development, integrating into the school culture, and making accommodations for diverse populations.

Field residency three, also known as student teaching, is a 16 week, 40+ hours per week, fully integrated intern experience during which the student teacher gradually becomes responsible for the full day instruction of the students. The experience in field residency three is a scaffolded

experience that allows the student teacher to assume more of the class responsibilities until the student teacher undertakes teaching the entire day. The university in this study also structures this time during the 16 weeks so the student teacher slowly "backs out" of the full day teaching until the mentor teacher is once again in full control of the classroom. The experiences in field residency one, two and three, are the same format for all pre-service teachers.

Instrumentation

To measure the dependent variables of teacher efficacy, the authors of this study utilized the *Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES)* (Short Form) developed by Hoy and Woolfolk (1993). The *Teacher Efficacy Scale* (Short Form) is a two-factor instrument measuring Personal Teaching Efficacy (PTE) and General Teaching Efficacy (GTE). Participants rate themselves on each of the ten items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 6 (Strongly Disagree).

Data Collection

Once the institutional review board approved the study, the researchers distributed surveys during regularly scheduled field residency meetings hosted by the university's teacher certification center. At the time of survey distribution, the researchers explained the study, and ensured anonymity and confidentiality. Participants who elected to participate did so by signing informed consent documents and completing the survey.

Participants

Participants were pre-service teachers seeking initial teacher certification. In all, 462 pre-service teachers elected to complete the survey. They ranged in age from 21 to 62 (mean age 31.08). The majority of the respondents were female at 85%. The ethnicity of the respondents reflects 72% Hispanic, 23% Anglo, 4% African American, and 2% Asian/Pacific-Islander. Non-traditional students (students over the age of 25) comprised 62% of the population. At the time of the survey, 75% of respondents were serving as student teachers in elementary education settings with the remaining 25% serving as student teachers in secondary school settings.

Variables

The researchers utilized two separate dependent variables in this study: General Teacher Efficacy (GTE) and Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE). Sample items from GTE include, "The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background," and, "If students aren't disciplined at home they aren't likely to accept my discipline." Sample items from Personal Teaching Efficacy include, "When I try really hard, I can get through to most difficult students," and "If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to direct him/her quickly."

The researchers utilized one independent variable in this study. This was the amount of time spent in field residency 1/field residency 2/student teaching. The amount of time spent in field residency and/or student teaching is the independent variable based on the review of the literature, which indicated that time and experience with tasks influence one's sense of self-efficacy (Lamorey & Wilcox, 2005). Additionally, the focus university recently moved from a 2 semester

to a 3-semester field experience model. Accordingly, the authors wished to examine the impact of time spent in field residency in order to determine if the extended residency has had an impact on self-perceived levels of efficacy among aspiring teachers.

Statistical Analyses

This study measured efficacy at the group rather than the individual level. Data were collected and analyzed for four groups of students: (1) students entering their first semester of field residency, (2) students entering their second semester of field residency, (3) students entering their third semester of field residency (which is also referred to as student teaching), and (4) students who had completed all 3 semesters of field residency/student teaching.

Researchers utilized a confirmatory factor analysis in order to confirm the validity of the survey instrument. Next, descriptive analyses ensure the reader that no anomalies existed in the data. Finally, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) measures the variance in teaching efficacy by length of time in student teacher residency.

Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Descriptive Data

Results of the confirmatory factor analysis reveal an alpha coefficient of reliability for General Teacher Efficacy within this study of 0.76. The alpha coefficient of reliability for Personal Teacher Efficacy within this study was 0.74. These results are consistent with previous studies (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001) and serve to confirm the usefulness of this instrument. Data were collected from students at 4 points: entering the 1st semester of field-based residency, entering the 2nd semester of field-based residency, entering the 3rd semester of field-based residency (which the university identifies as the student teaching course), and exiting the 3rd semester of residency (student teaching). The analysis includes means and standard deviations for each of these variables (see Table 1). The reader will note that Table 1 demonstrates a minimum of 75 respondents per data point. This minimum threshold ensures a sample size that accurately reflected the views of the entire population of aspiring teachers within this university.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of Field Residency

	Entering 1st semester of Field Residency	Entering 2nd semester of Field Residency	Entering 3rd semester of Field Residency	Exiting 3rd semester of Field Residency
Number	130	75	154	79
PTE Mean	5.12	5.10	5.22	5.25
PTE Standard Deviation	0.66	0.59	0.58	0.78

GTE Mean	3.93	3.41	4.01	3.95
GTE Standard Deviation	1.14	1.11	1.10	1.03

MANOVA and Post Hoc Analyses

The primary focus of this study was to examine the relationship between the amount of time spent in field residency and teacher efficacy. In order to answer the central research question, the researchers conducted a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). The results of this analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between length of time in residency and Teacher Efficacy, $F(6, 830) = 3.683$, $p<.001$; Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.949$, partial $\eta 2 = .026$.

Tests of between-subject effects reveal how the independent variable (time in student teacher residency) varies between the two dependent variables (GTE and PTE). Results of the between subject effects reveal one significant and one non-significant relationship. There is a statistically significant relationship between length of time in student teacher residency and General Teacher Efficacy, $F(3, 416) = 5.84$; $p < .001$; partial $eta^2 = 0.04$. There is no significant relationship between time in student teacher residency and Personal Teacher Efficacy within this study, $F(3, 416) = 1.72$; p = n.s.; partial $\eta 2 = 0.01$ (See Table 2).

Table 2

MANOVA Between Subject Effects

Independent Variable (Source)	Dependent Variable	df	F	Significance	Partial Eta squared
Field Residency	PTE	3	1.72	n.s.	0.012
Field Residency	GTE	3	5.84	0.001	0.4

Tukey's HSD post-hoc analyses revealed an interesting pattern between length of time in student teaching and participants' perception of General Teacher Efficacy. Students entering their first semester of student teacher residency possessed a relatively strong view of teachers' ability to affect learning in students (M=3.93). This belief drops sharply in the second semester (M=3.41), before normalizing at the beginning (M=4.01) and end (M=3.95) of the third semester (See Table 3).

Table 3

Estimated Marginal Means for GTE over Time

	Entering Field Residency 1	Entering Field Residency 2	Entering Field Residency 3	Exiting Field Residency 3
General Teacher Efficacy	3.9284	3.4081	4.0066	3.9468

Discussion

The researchers were interested in learning whether the average level of teacher self-efficacy changed over the course of time for students throughout their field residency and student teaching experiences. The results demonstrate a significant difference in General Teacher Efficacy (GTE) between these groups, with the lowest levels of GTE being recorded after one semester of field residency, and the highest levels of GTE being espoused after two semesters of field residency. Differences in Personal Teacher Efficacy (PTE) did not rise to the level of statistical significance.

Literature supports that the more time one spends on a task, the greater the sense of efficacy one gains (Feltz, Short, & Sullivan, 2008). In this study, however, pre-service teachers entered with a relatively high sense of GTE, which dropped significantly after one semester of field residency. This could be attributed to the "I didn't know as much as I thought I did" phenomena or the "Oh no! What did I get myself into?" effect. It may also be attributed to the fact that efficacy may be tied to active learning situations which influence individuals' sense of efficacy in completing specific tasks (Gaffney, Gaffney, Usher, & Mamaril, 2013). Students entering the first semester of field residency may have a strong sense of GTE because they have a good grounding in theoretical principles and have had practice in a university setting, but lose some of their sense of GTE when they see teaching principles in the realistic setting of a classroom. Quite often, experience supports that these eager first year teachers know just enough to be efficacious, but not enough to maintain efficaciousness. In response to the research questions, a significant relationship emerged between length of time in residency and general teacher efficacy among aspiring

teachers. While there was also a difference in the marginal means of personal teacher efficacy, these differences did not rise to the level of statistical significance. What is most encouraging within this study is to see that efficacy rose and then stabilized during the 3rd semester of field residency. One possible implication is that for the participants within this study, it takes at least three semesters in field residency in order for aspiring teachers' sense of self-efficacy to rise and stabilize. Shortening residency requirements could have a deleterious effect on program participants' levels of self-efficacy.

Limitations

Because this study explored perceptions of participants within one university in the southwest United States, the generalizability of the findings is limited. Survey data collected was absent of student identifiers, negating the possibility of comparing individual student responses over time, as this was not the intent of this study. Additionally, this survey only included pre-service teachers.

Recommendations

This research is of value to the field, as it provides an impetus for replicating this methodology with a wider array of teacher preparation models. It may also be useful to examine whether similar results are found in different regions of the United States or internationally. Other researchers may want to include populations that have a different demographic.

We feel it is important to follow up with graduates once they become practicing teachers. Accordingly, as a next step in our research, we intend to repeat this survey with program graduates in their first, second and third years as K-12 teachers to assess their level of teacher efficacy. This will help us not only assess the effectiveness of our teacher preparation model, it will also provide us with an opportunity to stay in touch with and provide support to program graduates.

Another suggestion when expanding this research is to use time sampling for the participants' responses. By doing this, one can gain a better sense of individual growth over the three field residency experiences. Future research may also include analyses of individual activities and the impact they may have on efficacy. This can possibly strengthen program recommendations.

Conclusion

In this study, there is a significant relationship between length of time in field residency experiences and the participant's perception of General Teacher Efficacy. The university utilized this data in a continuous improvement cycle in an effort to improve teacher preparation programs. This research also further validates the usefulness of the TES as a concise measure of teacher self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk-Hoy, 2001). K-12 schools are in need of teachers who understand the realities they will face on the job as educators. It is incumbent upon teacher preparation programs to continually evaluate and refine instructional models in order to ensure their graduates are as prepared as possible for these realities. This study suggests that while efficacy may drop after initial exposure to field experiences, students regain their sense of efficacy during the third semester of field residency. This helps solidify the university's decision to move to a three-semester field residency model.

Time spent on task is essential to increasing a teacher's sense of efficacy. The longer preservice teachers practice in the actual classroom setting, the more likely they are to increase their sense of efficacy, which in turn can positively affect student outcomes.

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Dr. Theresa Garfield Dorel is an Assistant Professor in Special Education at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. She has published articles in the fields of social justice, special education, and literacy, and has won numerous state and national teaching awards. Dr. Dorel is dedicated to working with students in urban settings and is a strong advocate for accessibility for all students.

Dr. W. Sean Kearney is an Associate Professor of Educational Leadership at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. He has experience as a school administrator, and has led regional consortiums of campus and central office administrators from across South Central Texas. Dr. Kearney has published in the areas of principal influence, change orientations, school culture and climate, and the confluence of administration, ethics, and emotionally intelligent leadership.

Dr. Esther Garza is an Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Her research interests are in the fields of teacher preparation, biliteracy, multiculturalism and bilingual education in the science content area. She has also served in multiple roles in higher education (ie. Bilingual Program Coordinator at TAMUSA, University Supervisor, Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) Public Relations Chair.