Changes in General and Specific Teacher Self-Efficacy Related to:
Professional Development Follow-up, Assignment, and Career Stage

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July 30, 2021

Abstract

**Purpose:** The purpose of this project was to study the changes in general and specific teacher self-efficacy related to the frequency of Professional Development (PD) video conference follow-up, teacher assignment, and teacher career stage.

**Method:** This study was approved by the St. Ambrose University IRB in May, 2016. PD meetings were held at four elementary schools in four midwestern school districts. Each PD meeting had been requested by the early elementary staff. The topic of these meetings was training in the use of See the Sound/Visual Phonics (STS/VP), a gestural technique that represents all the sounds in English, as a supplement to literacy instruction. Seventy-four elementary educators attended these meetings. Attendees were assigned to preschool, kindergarten, first grade, and second grade classrooms. Attendees also included reading teachers, special education teachers, and speech-language pathologists. Attendees were grouped according to these assignment categories, as well as by career stage categories according to Huberman (1989).

All attendees participated in a video conference follow-up to the PD meeting. The topic of the PD meeting was the use of See the Sound/Visual Phonics (STS/VP) as a supplement to typical literacy instruction. They were given the option of participating in two individual video conference follow-up meetings, or one grade or assignment-level group meetings. Both types of follow-up conferences lasted for a total of 35-37 minutes. Sixteen attendees chose individual video conference follow-up, while the other fifty-eight attended group video conference follow-up.

All video conference follow-up was conducted in the time period between the end of the PD meeting and eight weeks after that meeting (PD+8). The two individual conference follow-up meetings were arranged depending on the attendee schedule. These were held at PD+2 weeks and PD+6 weeks. The group, assignment-specific, video follow-up was held at PD+4 weeks. These involved one meeting for each grade level. A Post-Conference Response Survey was filled out by both the attendee involved and the follow-up provider. Agreement between the two people was measured on a random sample of surveys. Agreement was defined for the purposes of this study using the criteria of (+/-) one scale point. Agreement was calculated at 67%.

All attendees completed a survey concerning self-efficacy in the three areas mentioned above. A copy of the survey is in Appendix B. All results were compiled according to teaching assignment and career stage. The survey was administered twice. Survey 1 was conducted at PD+8 weeks, and Survey 2 at PD+16 weeks. There were no scheduled follow-ups between PD+8 weeks and PD+16 weeks. Attendees were given the option of allowing the results of their two surveys for research purposes. This followed guidelines of the St. Ambrose IRB. The attendees were assured that the data would be grouped, and individual attendees would remain anonymous.

**Results:** Frequency of Video-Conference Follow-up: Attendees who chose the two-individual-conference option had higher efficacy ratings across all three categories than did those who chose the group conference option. This held for both Survey 1 and Survey 2. It is possible that the differences in the number of subjects in the two follow-up categories may have affected the results.

**Teacher Assignment:** Teachers were asked to indicate their current assignment on the initial survey. There were some differences in both general and specific teacher self-efficacy related to classroom assignment. For two groups, the preschool teachers and first grade teachers, the changes (Survey 2 compared to Survey 1) were greatest related to the specific self-efficacy measure of efficacy for STS/VP use. Overall assignment was slightly correlated with both specific teacher self-efficacy and
support efficacy.

**Teacher Career Stage:** The Huberman’s (1989) career stage categorization was used as a measure of career stage. Attendees at about mid-career (the “Experimentation” category according to Huberman) showed the greatest change in specific self-efficacy related to STS/VP use. There was a positive correlation between both specific teacher self-efficacy and support efficacy.

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