

**COLLECTIVE TEACHER EFFICACY
IN QUEENSLAND SECONDARY SCHOOL STAFFROOMS**

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**In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Masters of Educational Administration with Honours of
the University of New England**

27 February 2009

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



Abstract

This thesis examines the nature and strength of the relationship between collective teacher efficacy (CTE) at the staffroom level and student academic achievement in four secondary schools in Queensland, Australia. CTE refers to the aggregate beliefs of a group of teachers in their joint capabilities to positively influence students under their care. It is founded on Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986, 1997) and models of collective efficacy developed primarily by R. Goddard between 1998 and 2004. The study is unique in that it includes analysis of CTE at the staffroom level rather than only the whole school or individual teacher levels.

CTE was measured in the study by a survey instrument developed by the author - the Australian Collective Efficacy Survey (ACES). The survey is based on Goddard's 2002 Collective Efficacy Survey (CES) developed in the United States.

The principal analytical tool used in the study was one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA). This tested the strength of association between CTE, current student academic achievement and six other variables thought to be associated with CTE. Results indicated that CTE had a moderate effect on current student achievement. Differences in prior student achievement held the greatest power in explaining variance in current student achievement. There was also a strong association between student socioeconomic status (SES) and current student achievement.

Variance in CTE was explained mostly by variations in teacher experience and staffroom longevity. Student SES also had a large effect on CTE.

Results support the idea that a higher proportion of experienced teachers in secondary schools is more conducive for a stronger sense of CTE. However, the study did not demonstrate that this translated into improved student academic outcomes.

Principal Components Analysis (PCA) of the ACES indicated that the instrument displayed acceptable consistency and reliability for measuring CTE. Consistent with previous measures of CTE, two underlying survey components of CTE were identified: task analysis and group competence.

Results did not support the key assumption of social cognitive theory that perceived collective teaching expertise (mastery experience) influences CTE. The strong, positive association between prior academic success and CTE at the school level, indicated in previous studies, was not present at the staffroom level in this study. Further studies of CTE at a variety of levels are needed to determine whether teacher experience and staffroom longevity are embodiments of perceived teaching expertise (mastery experience).

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been completed without the support and understanding of many people.

Dr Dan Riley was my principal supervisor, advisor and motivator throughout the process. Suggestions and criticisms made by him drew on wisdom borne from extensive experience, professionalism and a sharp mind. His encouragement was always gladly anticipated and his gentle criticisms always pertinent. Thank you Dan.

Mr. David Gee also supervised the writing process. As an experienced educational administrator, David always sought to highlight the relevance of my findings to the complex task of leading schools. He partnered with Dr Riley to keep me focused and balanced. I appreciate his pragmatism and his deep knowledge about Australian school leadership.

Professor Larry Smith introduced me to the necessity of ‘telling the story’ with quantitative analysis. Listening to his criticisms and advice was like eagerly awaiting to discover a gem in the sand. I hold his academic rigor and creative brilliance in high regard.

Colin Carmichael is a fellow student who became my unexpected and informal mentor. Through many rich conversations he prodded me to be critical as I examined valid methods to analyse data. He guided me during those days of statistical twilight.

I am also indebted to the writings of Roger Goddard. His research on collective teacher efficacy (CTE) inspired me to examine its nature in an Australian context. From the late 1990s Goddard has prompted many to consider the importance of CTE in influencing student outcomes.

Many of my workplace colleagues were persistent in their encouragement right from the start. Special mention must be made of Andrew Pierpoint, Meg Englardt, Vanessa Crothers, Amanda Carney, Maree Rosier and Annette Cahill. When I made demands on their time, they remained flexible, empathetic and helpful.

I also thank the principals and staff at participating schools who freely gave their assents and time that enabled me to conduct the study. This includes the Year Level Coordinators and Deputy Principals who arranged meetings with students, parents and teaching staff. It also includes school IT coordinators who gladly accessed student academic data for analysis.

Finally, my family patiently believed in me throughout the process. Thanks go to my children, Jess, Millie, Sarah and Sam for trusting that it would all be worthwhile. The greatest thanks go to my wife, Alison who bore much of the emotional load during those moments of frustration, confusion and discouragement. During the journey, we have learnt much about each other.

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List of Key Terms and Acronyms

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Collective agency | people's shared beliefs that they can cooperate to achieve shared group purposes (Goddard <i>et al.</i> , 2000). |
| Collective efficacy | the sense of collective competence shared amongst members of a group who coact to allocate, coordinate and integrate resources for a required outcome (Bandura, 1997b; Zaccaro <i>et al.</i> , 1995). |
| Collective Teacher Efficacy (CTE) | the perceptions of teachers in a school that their efforts will positively influence student outcomes (Goddard <i>et al.</i> , 2000). |
| Efficacy | the capacity to produce desired results (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004). |
| Group competence | the cognitive process of assessing the relative importance of endogenous factors such as the presence or absence of skills, knowledge, strategies and personality traits that constrain or facilitate teaching (Tschannen-Moran <i>et al.</i> , 1998). |

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| Self efficacy | a cognitive process in which people build perceptions about their abilities to achieve set goals or standards (Tschannen-Moran <i>et al.</i> , 1998). |
| Socioeconomic status (SES) | an individual's position within a hierarchical social structure (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005). |
| Staffroom | a group of teachers in a secondary school who teach the same or similar subjects and whose interactions with each other derive from the close physical proximity of group members in a reported room. |
| Task analysis | the cognitive process of assessing the relative importance of exogenous factors such as student SES that constrain or facilitate teaching (Tschannen-Moran <i>et al.</i> , 1998). |
| Teacher efficacy | the beliefs held by teachers in their personal capacity to take courses of action that produce required results (Tschannen-Moran <i>et al.</i> , 1998). |
| Teacher experience | the reported length of time (in years) employed as a secondary school teacher. |

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| Teacher professional development | the reported length of time (in days) of formal work-related training that teachers participated in 2007. |
| Value added achievement score (VAAS) | the measure of relative value added by a teacher to a student's academic achievement. |