

Factors that Contribute to the Improvement of the Sense of Self-Efficacy of Special Educators in Inclusive Settings in Greece

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Abstract : Teacher's sense of self-efficacy can affect significantly both teacher's and student's performance. More specific, self-efficacy is associated with the learning outcomes as well as student's motivation and self-efficacy. For example, teachers with high sense of self-efficacy are more open to innovations and invest more effort in teaching. In addition to this, effective inclusive education is associated with higher levels of teacher's self-efficacy. Pre-service teachers with high levels of self-efficacy could handle student's behavior better and more effectively assist students with special educational needs. Teacher preparation programs are also important, because teacher's efficacy beliefs are shaped early in learning, as a result the quality of teacher's education programs can affect the sense of self-efficacy of pre-service teachers. Usually, a number of pre-service teachers do not consider themselves well prepared to work with students with special educational needs and do not have the appropriate sense of self-efficacy. This study aims to investigate the factors that contribute to the improvement of the sense of self-efficacy of pre-service special educators by using an academic practicum training program. The sample of this study is 159 pre-service special educators, who also participated in the academic practicum training program. For the purpose of this study were used quantitative methods for data collection and analysis. Teacher's self-efficacy was assessed by the teachers themselves with the completion of a questionnaire which was based on the scale of Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale. Pre and post measurements of teacher's self-efficacy were taken. The results of the survey are consistent with those of the international literature. The results indicate that a significant number of pre-service special educators do not hold the appropriate sense of self-efficacy regarding teaching students with special educational needs. Moreover, a quality academic training program constitutes a crucial factor for the improvement of the sense of self-efficacy of pre-service special educators, as additional for the provision of high quality inclusive education.

Keywords : inclusive education, pre-service, self-efficacy, training program

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