

Narrative Research in Secondary Teacher Education: Examining the Self-Efficacy of Content Area Teacher Candidates

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Abstract : The purpose of this study was to examine the factors attributed to the self-efficacy of beginning secondary content area teachers as they moved through their student teaching experiences. This study used a narrative inquiry methodology to understand the variables attributed to teacher self-efficacy among a group of secondary content area teacher candidates. The primary purpose of using a narrative inquiry methodology was to share the stories of content area teacher candidates' student teaching experiences. Focused research questions included: (1) To what extent does teacher education preparation affect the self-efficacy of beginning content area teachers? (2) Which recurrent elements of teacher education affect the self-efficacy of beginning teachers, regardless of content area? (3) How do the findings from research questions 1 and 2 inform teacher educators? The findings of this study suggest that teacher education preparation affects the self-efficacy of beginning secondary teacher candidates across the content areas; accordingly, the findings of this study provide insight for teacher educators to consider the areas where teacher education programs are failing to provide adequate preparation. These teacher candidates emphasized the value of adequate preparation throughout their teacher education programs to help inform their student teaching experiences. In order to feel effective and successful as beginning teachers, these teacher candidates required additional opportunities to apply the practical application of their teaching skills prior to the student teaching experience, the incorporation of classroom management strategy coursework into their curriculum, and opportunities to explore the extensive demands of the teaching profession ranging from time management to dealing with difficult parents, to name a few referenced examples. The teacher candidates experienced feelings of self-doubt related to their effectiveness as teachers when they were unable to employ successful classroom management strategies, pedagogical techniques, or even feel confidence in navigating challenging conversations with students, parents, and/or administrators. In order to help future teacher candidates and beginning teachers in general overcome these barriers, additional coursework, fieldwork, and practical application experiences should be provided in teacher education programs to help boost the self-efficacy of student teachers.

Keywords : self-efficacy, teacher efficacy, secondary preservice teacher education, teacher candidacy, student teaching

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