

Inner City Teachers' Sense of Efficacy
Towards Minority Students

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Annotation – The purpose of this study was to explore the inner city teachers' sense of efficacy and their perceptions and attitudes towards Latino, language minority, and low socioeconomic status students in three urban schools in Los Angeles. The study also explored the reasons they gave as factors that increased or decreased their confidence level in impacting student learning.

Abstract – Eighty-seven inner city teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District were surveyed. Five efficacy measures: *instructional practice, expectations, confidence level, external factors, efficacy*, through data reduction of 25 question items, and teachers' background variables, were used to explore inner city teachers' sense of efficacy, and their perceptions and attitudes towards students of Latino, language minority, and low socioeconomic status backgrounds in three low performing schools. The results showed high confidence level in instructional practices but low expectations of student achievement. Teachers' level of confidence was significantly correlated with expectations and instructional practices. Qualitative data analysis revealed the main source of high confidence for teachers was their positive previous teaching experiences with student learning. The results indicated that teachers viewed other teachers as having lower expectations of their students than themselves. They indicated that students other than their own would exhibit lower academic achievement. Though not significant, Latino teachers showed higher means, in all other efficacy measures. White teachers showed lower expectations than Latino teachers of the mostly Latino student population. Teachers with a masters degree tended to show higher means in all efficacy measures than those with a bachelors degree. In light of significant relationships that exist between teachers' sense of efficacy and higher student achievement and test scores, and in order to improve America's schools, teachers' low sense of efficacy in low performing urban schools should be seriously reconsidered.

Inner City Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Towards Minority Students

The extent to which teachers believe they are able to affect student performance is known as teacher efficacy (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Efficacy is related to setting goals and to exercising effort and persistence in their attainment (Bandura, 1997). It has been linked to teachers' instructional practices and attitudes toward students (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Midgley, Anderman & Hicks, 1995; Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

Current reform issues in education place great emphasis on raising the achievement level of all students, particularly the low performance of minority students. Research on the efficacy of teachers report significant relationships between teachers' sense of efficacy and higher student achievement and test scores. Teachers with high levels of efficacy are more likely to expect that all students can learn, and to feel responsible for that learning, than are teachers with low efficacy levels (Ashton & Webb, 1986, Tracz & Gibson, 1986).

While research has demonstrated that teacher expectations can affect students' achievement and attitudes (Bamburg, 1994; Cotton & Wikelund, 1997; Hurley, 1997; Lumsden, 1997; Reeves & Taylor, 1993), Bamburg (1994) showed that some teachers do not expect much from the students in their schools. According to Tauber (1998) the effects of verbal and nonverbal expectations can be detrimental. Early childhood and elementary age children are most at risk in believing teachers consistently delivered evaluations as either positive or negative.

Other factors have been identified that differentiate opportunities for students, in turn influencing their academic achievement. Good and Brophy (1972) observed that teachers interact differently with low and high achievers in the classroom. Low achievers

received general, sometimes insincere praise, less feedback, more interruptions, less attention, more criticism, less time to answer questions, were called on less often, smiled at less, given fewer nonverbal indicators of support, (such as head nodding), and were seated farther away. Alvidrez & Weinstein' (1999) suggestion that the higher the socioeconomic status, the higher the teacher rates a child's intelligence indicates that teachers' preconceptions and beliefs can have an adverse effect on a child's level of achievement. These misconceptions may be conscious or unconscious and reflect societal biases.

Teachers in urban schools increasingly find themselves guiding students who are very different from themselves. Cotton and Wikeland (1997) assert that educators differentiate among students based on gender, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, tracking, and negative comments about students. Teachers who exhibit such differential attitudes may not even be aware of their perceptions, yet some children will continue to be at a disadvantage in the classroom. Ethnic minority and poor children have been documented to be largely over-represented as targets of low expectations (Weinstein, 1995). According to Parson's study (as cited in Caruthers, 1997) teachers praise and encourage white students, respond to them, and pay more attention to them than to Mexican-American students.

Teachers, in general, expect more from middle and upper class students than from working and lower-class backgrounds (Caruthers, 1997). It is easy to assess the socioeconomic status of students in schools where a majority of the students are enrolled in free and reduced lunch programs. Poverty becomes one more factor, along with race or ethnicity, to be associated with a low-status background. This can influence teacher expectations of children who belong to groups long impeded by legal and social

discrimination, as well as historically poor records of academic achievement. In the classroom, as in the streets outside the schoolyard gate, we see their faces, or we strive to perceive more, in hearts and minds.

The purpose of this study was to explore the sense of efficacy of inner city teachers and their perceptions and attitudes towards Latino, language minority, and low socioeconomic status students in three urban schools in Los Angeles, and the reasons they give as factors that increase or decrease their confidence level.

The questions for the study were:

1. What are teachers' efficacy level, expectations and confidence levels in low performing schools?
2. Do the efficacy levels differ by the grade level they teach or by school site?
3. What factors predict confidence level of teachers?
4. What are reasons for teachers' high and low confidence level in changing student learning in positive ways?
5. Is there a difference between teachers' own expectations and their views of their peer's expectations for student learning or academic achievement?

Method

Participants

A pool of 87 classroom teachers from grades Pre-Kindergarten through 12 from three inner-city schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District participated in the study. All schools serve predominately minority students of low socioeconomic status. All of the teachers surveyed work in classrooms where a majority of students is of Latin American Mexican origins. The three schools were ranked below the national average based on Stanford Nine, a national standardized test, at the end of the 2001-2002 academic year. The schools' Academic Performing Index (API) scores at the end of

academic year 2001-2002 were 650 (40th percentile rank, 57 points up from the previous year,), 501 (10th percentile rank, 64 points up from the previous year), and 442 (10th percentile rank, 12 points up from the previous year) out of 800 total possible points in each of the three schools. Compared to similar poorly performing schools in the vicinity, the first school ranked high at 90th percentile, and the second school and third school ranked at 20th and 10th, respectively.

The demographics of the 87 teachers surveyed were: 27% male and 73% female, teaching in primary (preK-5, 26%), intermediate (junior high/middle, 39%) and upper grades (high school, 34%). Over half of the teachers were Latino (52.9%, followed by 25.3% White, 10.3% Asian, and 5.7% African American). Over sixty-five percent (65.5%) received a bachelor's degree and 30% had received a master's degree. About half of the sample specialized in either multiple subjects (17.2%) or BCLAD (19.5%), and the others specialized or had a credential in the following other areas: national certificate, special education, educational credential, and preschool permit. The average age of the teachers was 35, with teaching experience ranging up to 35 years (mean = 8.63, SD = 7.95 years). The average number of years at the present school was just over 4 years (range: less than 1 year to 18 years).

Instruments and Procedure

Data were collected through a survey composed of three sections (see [Appendix A](#)). Participation was voluntary. In the first section, participants provided demographic information including age, gender, ethnicity, highest level of education, teaching level, and years of teaching experience. Teachers were instructed not to use names and each data sheet was numbered to ensure confidentiality. The second section consisted of a Teacher Efficacy Scale composed of 23 question items. The participating teachers were

asked to indicate their degree of agreement with each item by responding on a Likert scale from 1 *strongly disagree* to 5 *strongly agree*. The original scale used in the study was created by [Gibson & Dembo](#) (1984, later modified by Deemer & Minke in 1999). Deemer & Minke's modification was based on their finding that the efficacy scale influenced responses by the wording of the question items (either positive or negative). Therefore, both positive and negative items were used in the questionnaire to off-set possible differences as a result of wording in the current study.

The final section of the survey was designed to gather participants' explanations for their efficacy, beliefs and the factors they perceived to influence these beliefs and perceptions. The first item was designed to represent the main idea of the internal scale: "How confident are you that you can change student learning in positive ways?" Participants responded using a scale ranging from a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = *not at all confident* to 5 = *very confident*. This item was followed by the open-ended question, "Why did you rate your level of confidence as you did?" The second scaled item parallels the external dimension: "To what extent do/will factors beyond your control influence your confidence to impact student learning?" It was answered using a similar 5-point Likert scale: 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *very much*. This item was followed by another open-ended question: "What are these factors?"

Results

Analyses

There were two emerging themes from the 23 efficacy item questions on the survey: *instructional practices* and *expectations*. Through principle components analysis, these themes were constructed from five and six question items, respectively, to be used for analysis (see Table 1). Questions on instructional practices included items such as:

“If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know the technique to redirect him quickly”; “When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches.” Questions on expectations were questions on teachers’ expectation of students’ potential for learning such as: “Nearly all my students will be at or above grade level by the end of this year” and their expectation on a specific task on the national tests such as: “Most students in my school will perform at about the national average in academic achievement.” Each construct, *instructional practices* and *expectations*, showed Cronbach’s alphas: .65 and .72, respectively.

The survey items *Confidence level* and *external factors* were measured on a 5-point scale for the following questions, respectively: “How confident are you that you can change student learning in positive ways?” and “To what extent do/will factors beyond their control influence their confidence to impact student learning?”

Instructional practice, expectations, confidence level, external factors, and the total average of all 23 items, referred to as *efficacy* in the study, were used for descriptive analyses and means comparison by teachers’ background measures. *Efficacy* and *external factors* measures were used as outcome variables for predictability in the regression analyses.

Descriptive Analysis

Expectations, instructional practices and efficacy level. Although teachers were not sure about what to expect from their students, they showed strong instructional practices. Teachers in general showed a higher level of instructional practices but lower level of expectations. The teachers *agreed* that they were effective in their instructional practices (mean = 3.69, SD = .58), but they were *not sure* (mean = 3.11, SD = .65) about

what to expect from students (see Table 2). As a point of reference, the Center for Effective Schools at the University of Washington reported an average expectation level of 3.61 for 800 schools in four urban school districts in the Midwest over the last seven years (Bamburg, 1994). The current study's mean expectation level of teachers in the Los Angeles' low performing schools, by comparison is low. This shows that teachers in urban schools have low expectations for their students. Their overall efficacy level showed a mean of 3.42 (SD = .33) which indicates that on average they agreed that they can affect student performance.

Confidence level and external factors. Despite their low expectation level, when asked about their confidence level they indicated they were *confident* (mean = 4.20, SD = .70, scale, 1 ~ 5) they can change student learning in positive ways. When asked about external factors that would affect their confidence level (survey question: "To what extent do/will factors beyond their control influence their confidence to impact student learning?") they indicated that *in a few aspects* they felt there were external factors beyond their control that affect their confidence level in increasing student learning.

Expectations and instructional practices were both significantly correlated with teachers' confidence level ($r = .438, p < .01$; $r = .344, p < .01$, respectively) (see Table 3). Teachers with higher levels of confidence also showed higher levels of expectations and instructional practices. On the other hand teachers who lacked confidence showed lower expectations for their students' academic achievement.

Their sense of control over external factors that might influence their confidence level was not correlated significantly with Expectations, Instructional practices or Efficacy measure.

Religiosity was negatively correlated with efficacy level (-.327*) which indicated that efficacy level was higher for less religious teachers (indicated by less number of times they attended religious services). Religiosity was not significantly correlated with any other efficacy measures. Although the number of years of teaching experience was significantly related to the age of the teachers, as expected, teaching experience was not significantly correlated with any efficacy measures.

Table 4 compares mean efficacy measure by grade level of the teachers. There were no significant mean differences in the *expectations* and *instructional practices* among the three low achieving schools or by grade level: primary, intermediate and upper grade. However, upper grade teachers tended to say factors beyond their control influenced their confidence to impact student learning more than the primary and intermediate levels, but not significantly.

Primary grade teachers tended to show the highest level of *efficacy level*. However, intermediate grade teachers showed the highest level of *instructional practices* and the lowest level of *expectations* from their students. Upper grade teachers showed the opposite; compared to other grade levels the upper grade teachers showed the highest level of *expectations* with the lowest level of instructional practices (see Table 4).

Efficacy level by teachers' background. The results of mean comparisons of efficacy measures by teachers' background measures are shown in Table 5. There were no differences in the efficacy level by gender. However, female teachers tended to show a higher efficacy level on average than male teachers. They also showed higher confidence level, a sense of control, and expectations than male teachers, while male teachers showed a higher mean on instructional practices. Despite these tendencies, there was no statistically significant difference between male and female teachers.

In terms of teachers' educational level, those who earned a masters degree tended to show higher means in all efficacy measures than those with a bachelors degree. There were no mean differences in efficacy measures between teachers who indicated they have a religion or not, or between small class size (20 or less number of students) and large class size (21-35 students in the class).

Latino teachers showed a significantly higher level of expectations towards the predominantly Latino student populations than White teachers ($p < .035$). Latino teachers also showed higher means, though not significantly, in all other efficacy measures. Married teachers showed a significantly higher sense of control than single teachers ($p < .063$). Married teachers also tended to show a higher mean in their instructional practices, though not significantly higher than their counterpart.

Peer expectations. The teachers were asked about their expectations of the students as compared to their peers. Teachers' own expectations for students' potential for learning were compared to what teachers' beliefs were of other teachers' expectations. The results showed that while 74.6% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students are *capable* of mastering grade level academic objectives, only 65.6% agreed or strongly agreed that teachers at the respective schools in general *believe* in students' potential.

The teachers' expectations for their own students' academic performance were compared to their expectations for students in general. While 48.4% of the teachers agreed or strongly agreed that nearly all of their students will be at or above the national average, only 27.5% agreed or strongly agreed that students in general will perform above the national average [$X^2(16, N=85) = 46.74, p < .001$]. The teachers had significantly higher academic expectations of their own students than those of others.

Qualitative analysis

Confidence level. Figures 1 and 2 display the themes that were prominent in the teachers' answers to qualitative questions that help to explain why they rated their levels of confidence as they did, and what external factors influenced their confidence to impact student learning. Boxes were drawn to show the themes most commonly mentioned and the amount of overlaps among the different themes. Seventy percent of the teachers who responded to the question indicated the main reasons that affected their high level of confidence was "teachers' experience" and "influence on students." Teachers believed that regardless of students' test scores or outcomes, if they believed that students were learning, it was a positive experience, that in turn gave them confidence. This main source of confidence was followed by other reasons, clustered into the order of indication following: "teachers' self-assessment, reflection and opportunities to role-model, and teachers' high expectations of students.

The main factor that affected their low confidence level was teachers' stress, due to external factors such as lack of administrative support and lack of time for individual attention to students, implementation of different "useful" programs, and perceived limits to affect achievement.

Some of the comments given by teachers as the source of their confidence were:

"I pay attention to students' learning, to how and what they learn and I pay attention to the models of instruction and the learners' experiences I provide for children. In these ways I observe what works and what doesn't, then I adjust in order to make a positive effect".

"Because I feel that I can reach the students in a positive way, I can relate to them and sometimes they can relate to me. Communication is a big part. Also I make my lessons humorous. Humor is a big part in keeping children's attention".

"Because I am a good role model for my students, they respect me, and most importantly they know that I care."

“When I see that my students are learning I’m very encouraged to push them more because I know they are ready for it and they are building confidence, but I haven’t seen that too much this year so I’m trying to stay confident in my ability, but I don’t really know how effective I’ll be”.

“I am not completely confident because I feel I am a work in progress. I have a lot to learn but I feel that the teaching practices that I have learned have had a positive impact on my students’ learning”.

“I’m enthusiastic about seeing my students get involved with all learning activities. I try to prepare and present work that is fun and applicable to my students’ lives and development. Not every concept is grasped by every student every time but I feel my students this year enjoy coming to school and learning in my class.”

“There are many students that I can really reach even though there are also many I can’t. The amount of time I can spend with any individual student is somewhat limited and therefore limits how much impact I can have.”

“Too stressed with all the demands. Feel alone without peer help—am older—most teachers are younger- w/o connection”

“As a teacher, I try to continually inform myself of new strategies and techniques to teach the students”.

External factors that lower confidence level. When teachers were asked what factors beyond their control influence their confidence to impact student learning, the most common response was “lack of support and involvement by parents.” Other common themes indicated were: the effects of low socio-economic-status of the parents and poverty on students, lack of support from school administrators and demands that negatively impact time spent on teaching, perceived students’ lack of motivation, focus, and effort, and language: the effects of Spanish as the predominant language in the community.

Limitations of the Study

There are a variety of instruments and models for measuring efficacy although the majority of studies investigating teacher efficacy have used Gibson and Dembo’s (1984) scale. The scale items contain some awkwardness in wording. This can contribute

to measurement error if teachers have difficulty interpreting certain statements. A formidable obstacle exists in asking teachers' views of culturally different learners. The question leads to socially acceptable responses. Teachers do not like to think of themselves as people whose behavior or attitudes towards others might be influenced by language, appearance or culture. We do hope to better understand relationships that may exist. The results of this study will be useful for similar schools that serve low socioeconomic areas.

Conclusion/Educational Importance

As teachers' efficacy level were explored in the low performing schools in an urban district, the results reveal that the overall levels of efficacy, expectations of students and confidence in their teaching were low.

While not tested in this study, the study's findings are daunting in the context of previous research that established a relationship between teachers' high level of efficacy and an increase in students' achievement test scores (Ashton, Webb & Doda, 1982-1983). Ashton & Webb's later study (1986) and others showed that teachers with high levels of teaching efficacy are more likely to expect that all students can learn, and to feel responsible for that learning, than are teachers with low efficacy levels.

Although these low efficacy levels were not different by the grade levels they taught, Latino teachers had significantly higher expectations than White teachers for students, the majority of whom were Latino. Their higher level of expectation may be due to most of the students being Latino themselves. This finding is consistent with Oh, Ankers, Tomyoy & Llamas' (2004) study that showed that teachers' ethnicity affects their view of students of their same ethnicity. The results also showed that teachers' expectations differed significantly by the teachers' ethnicity.

According to the qualitative survey results, teachers' own expectations and their views of their peer's expectations for student learning or academic achievement were different. Teachers viewed other teachers as having lower expectations than their own expectations. They indicated their own students would exhibit higher academic achievement, and students other than their own would exhibit lower academic achievement. This finding that teachers believe their students had the capacity to learn and the promise to achieve, while they were less sure of other students and of their peers, points to low collegiality and collaboration among teachers in the inner-city schools.

Many obstacles threaten teachers' and students' quest for educational equality. The under-achievement of minority students has prompted many studies designed to identify factors that may contribute to academic disparities. Our educational practices are clearly unsuccessful for a vast number of these students. As ethnic minorities become the majorities in public schools, we must confront the issue of how we perceive and affect the children whose hopeful faces gaze back at us, lest we and they come to expect, persist, persevere, and hope, less.

Table 1. The Two Themes from the 23-item Teacher Efficacy Indicators and Their Reliability Test Results.

Theme Constructs	Question Items	Cronbach's alpha
Instructional Practices (Question items: 3 7 8 9 12)		.65
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When I really try, I can get through to most students. ▪ If one of my students could not do a class assignment, I would not be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty ▪ If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know the technique to redirect him quickly ▪ When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches. ▪ If students have little discipline at home, they are unlikely to accept any discipline. 		
Expectations (Question items: 18-23)		.72
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most of the students in my school will be at about the national average in academic achievement. ▪ Most students in my school are capable of mastering grade level academic objectives ▪ Teachers in my school generally believe most students are able to master the basic reading/math skills ▪ I expect that most students in my school will perform at about the national average in academic achievement ▪ Nearly all my students will be at or above grade level by the end of this year ▪ I expect most students in my school will perform below the national average in academic achievement 		

Note. Instructional Practices is defined as teachers' sense of efficacy in their instructional practices. Expectations is defined as teachers' expectation of students' potential for learning.

Table 2. A Descriptive Table for Efficacy Measures (N=87, Scale: 1-5).

<u>Measures</u>	<u>Mean (interpretation)</u>		<u>SD</u>
Expectations	3.11	("Not sure")	.65
Instructional practice	3.69	("Agree")	.58
Efficacy	3.42	("Agree")	.33
Confidence level	4.20	("Confident")	.70
External Factors	3.12	("In a few aspects")	.75

Note. Expectations and Instructional practices are constructs from 23 item questions on Efficacy.

Efficacy is total efficacy measure of all 23 item questions averaged. Confidence level: "How confident are you that you can change learning in positive ways?" External factor: "To what extent do/will factors beyond your control influence your confidence to impact student learning?"

Table 3. Intercorrelations of Pertinent Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Confidence	--							
2. External factor	-.029	--						
3. Expectation	.438**	.133	--					
4. Instructional practices	.344**	-.006	-.102	--				
5. Efficacy total	.514**	.066	.621**	.483**	--			
6. Religiosity	.002	.152	-.108	-.128	-.327*	--		
7. Years of teaching	-.048	-.081	-.052	.049	-.093	.082	--	
8. Age	-.056	-.165	-.090	.035	-.249	.276*	.826*	--

Note. Religiosity measure was based on a survey question: *how often do you attend religious services.*

** $p < .10$, * $p < .05$.

Table 4. Means Comparison of Efficacy Measures by Grade Level of Teachers in All Three Schools.

Efficacy Measures	Primary Grades ($n = 23$)		Intermediate Grades ($n = 34$)		Upper Grades ($n = 30$)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Confidence Level	4.12	.711	4.29	.611	4.33	.778
External factor	3.08	.702	3.08	.669	3.17	.835
Expectation	3.07	.410	2.82	.423	3.17	.947
Instructional Practices	3.62	.586	3.81	.563	3.58	.802
Efficacy	3.45	.228	3.40	.270	3.28	.458

Note: Primary grade: preK-5 grades; Intermediate grades: junior high/middle grades; Upper grades: high school grades.

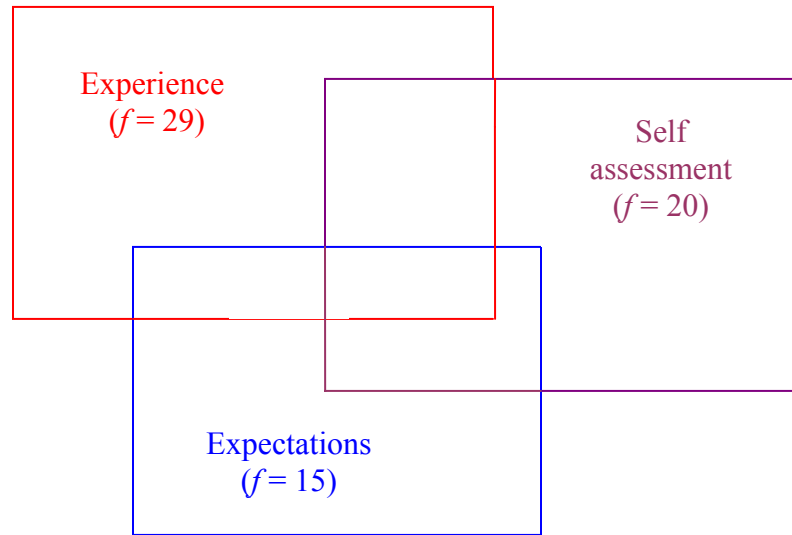
Table 5. Mean Comparisons of Efficacy Measures by Teachers' Background Measures.

Efficacy Measures		Gender		Ethnicity		Education level		Marital status		Religion		Class size	
		Male	Female	White	Latino	Bachelors	Masters	Single	Married	Yes	No	≤ 20	>20
Confidence Level	Mean	4.09	4.26	4.14	4.36	4.20	4.31	4.35	4.18	4.22	4.08	4.21	4.20
	SD	.67	.71	.77	.61	.64	.79	.61	.87	.73	.52	.68	.76
External Factors	Mean	3.04	3.14	2.95	3.14	3.06	3.23	2.88	3.45*	3.14	3.09	3.18	3.03
	SD	.77	.74	.72	.71	.69	.86	.72	.82	.76	.70	.72	.87
Expectation	Mean	2.92	3.16	2.82	3.26**	3.06	3.19	3.27	3.20	3.11	3.02	3.09	3.09
	SD	.66	.65	.63	.63	.55	.86	.72	.59	.66	.56	.64	.73
Instructional Practices	Mean	3.72	3.69	3.70	3.72	3.67	3.77	3.67	3.86	3.66	3.96	3.69	3.71
	SD	.47	.63	.68	.61	.48	.77	.44	.57	.54	.75	.58	.62
Efficacy	Mean	3.30	3.46	3.39	3.46	3.40	3.46	3.49	3.45	3.42	3.57	3.45	3.36
	SD	.38	.31	.35	.32	.28	.43	.36	.41	.33	.22	.35	.33

Note: Confidence level: "How confident are you that you can change learning in positive ways?" External factors: "To what extent do/will factors beyond your control influence your confidence to impact student learning?" Expectations and Instructional practices are constructs from 23 item questions on Efficacy. Efficacy is total efficacy measure of all 23 item questions averaged.

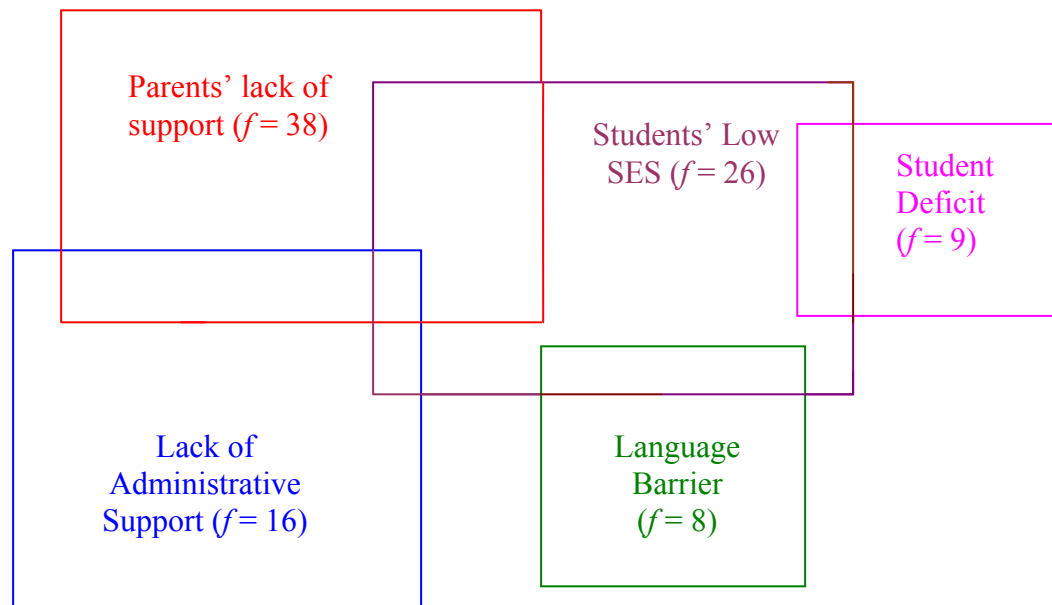
* $p < .10$. ** $p < .05$.

Figure 1. The interrelated common themes from the Teachers' answers to the question regarding reasons for their high confidence level



Note: Frequencies (*f*) reflect the number of times teachers referred to themes in their answers.
Experience: their experience that students were learning, Self assessment: teachers' self-assessment, reflection and opportunities to role-model, Expectations: teachers' high expectations of students.

Figure 2. The themes from the external factors indicated by teachers that negatively impact their confidence level in their ability to impact student learning



Note: Frequencies (*f*) reflect the number of times teachers referred to themes in their answers. Parents' lack of support: lack of support and involvement by parents; Students' Low SES: the effects of low socio-economic-status of the parents and poverty on students; Lack of administrative support: lack of support from school administrators and demands that negatively impact time spent on teaching; Student Deficit: perceived students' lack of motivation, focus, and effort; and Language barrier: language: the effects of Spanish as the predominant language in the community.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographic Information

Please fill in the blanks and check the appropriate boxes.

1. Age _____ 2. Male 3. Female

4. Ethnicity:
African American Anglo Asian Hispanic Native American
Other _____

5. Marital Status: Single Married Divorced Separated Widowed

- 6a. Religious Affiliation _____

- 6b. How often do you attend services?
Once a week More than once a week Once a month
More than once a month Seldom Never

7. Highest degree held: PhD Masters Bachelor

8. Other specialization? Credential _____

9. Years of teaching experience _____

10. Years at present school _____

11. Teaching level:
Primary PreK-5 Jr. H.S. Sr. H.S.

12. Your average class size _____

13. Predominate ethnic make-up of your school:
African American Anglo Asian Hispanic Native American
Other _____

14. Your principal is: Male Female

Section 2: Teacher Efficacy Survey

Please circle or write the most adequate response.

1. When a student does better than usual, many times it is because I exerted a little extra effort.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
2. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I often have trouble adjusting it to his/her level.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
3. When I really try, I can get through to most students.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
4. When a student gets a better grade than he/she usually gets, it is usually not because I found better ways to teaching that student.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
5. If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concepts.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
6. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would not know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
7. If one of my students could not do a class assignment, I would not be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
8. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know the techniques to redirect him quickly.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
9. When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective teaching approaches.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
10. The time spent in my class has little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
11. The amount that a student can learn is not related primarily to family background.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
12. If students have little discipline at home, they are unlikely to accept any discipline.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
13. Even though a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement, I am not limited in what I can achieve with him/her.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree

14. If parents would not more with their children I could do more.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
15. The influences of a student's home experiences cannot be overcome by my teaching.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
16. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
17. I am a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
18. Most of the students in my school will be at about the national average in academic achievement.
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
19. Most students in my school are capable of mastering grade level academic objectives
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
20. Teachers in my school generally believe most students are able to master the basic reading/math skills
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
21. I expect that most students in my school will perform at about the national average in academic achievement
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
22. Nearly all my students will be at or above grade level by the end of this year
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree
23. I expect most students in my school will perform below the national average in academic achievement
Strongly disagree disagree not sure agree strongly agree

Section 3: Explanations for and influence of beliefs, open-ended questions

1. How confident are you that you can change student learning in positive ways?
Not at all confident doubtful somewhat confidence confident very confident
2. Why did you rate your level of confidence as you did?
3. To what extent do/will factors beyond your control influence your confidence to impact student learning?
Not at all undecided in a few aspects in most aspects very much
4. What are the factors?

Please use other side of paper for written responses as needed.