

## Sources of Efficacy as Predictors of Early Childhood Pre-Service Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Ghanaian Teacher Education Universities

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### Abstract

The thrust of the study was to determine the extent to which sources of efficacy predicted and explained early childhood preservice teachers' self-efficacy in Ghana. The study employed a survey design that selected 164 regular final year student teachers pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree in Early Childhood Education in two public universities in Ghana. The teacher self-efficacy scale and the sources of efficacy scale consisting of 60 items were used to gather data. Data was analysed using means and standard multiple regression. The study revealed that student teachers have high self-efficacy. Their self-efficacy beliefs is significantly predicted by the overall sources of efficacy. Specifically, mastery experiences significantly predicted preservice teachers self efficacy. When the effect of the various sources of self efficacy of the preservice teachers' self-efficacy was explored separately, it came to light that vicarious experiences predicted preservice early childhood educators' self-efficacy in engaging learners and using instructional strategies while enactive mastery experiences predicted their self-efficacy in managing classrooms and involving parents in their children's education. It was recommended among others that pre internship, internship and post internship seminars should be well structured for students to have enough practice sessions and observations; there should be regular supervision from lecturers and post teaching conferences to provide appropriate feedback to build student teachers' confidence and self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** self efficacy, preservice early childhood educators

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## **Background of the Study**

For the past four decades researches that interrogate teacher quality and effectiveness have gained prominence in the educational enterprise. One construct of teachers' belief that has consistently been associated with the numerous qualities of an effective teacher, and considered a professional prerequisite for curriculum implementation, is teacher self-efficacy (Abroampa & Wilson, 2013). Educational researchers have thus devoted enormous attention to how self-efficacy influences the motivation and behaviours of individuals in academic settings (Pajares, 2006).

Self-efficacy is one's conviction of his or her capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce desirable outcomes (Bandura, 1997). This is undergirded by the social cognitive theory propounded by Bandura which emphasizes the involvement and exercise of human capacity that enables people to exert some influence and control over what they do (Bandura, 2006). Teacher self-efficacy has been variously explained as a teacher's belief or judgment of his or her capabilities to attain intended learning outcomes, even among learners who may be difficult or unmotivated (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). This teacher characteristic has engaged the attention of many educational researchers, especially curriculumists, because most studies that examine teacher attitudes toward the implementation of new instructional practices have frequently found teachers' self-efficacy to be among the most powerful influences on receptivity to change (Shahid & Thompson, 2001). Indeed, Oh (2010) opines that in a model of teacher change, the majority of instructional improvement programmes fail because they do not take into account what motivates teachers to engage in professional development and the process by which change in teachers typically takes place. A Teacher's self-efficacy is thus seen as a factor that is inevitable in their implementation of new teaching strategies and the curriculum.

It appears most pre and in-service teacher preparation programmes do not adequately cater for the development of confidence and self efficacy. In Ghana and other African countries, the development of preservice teachers' conviction in their ability to perform is a by-product and not the planned focus of teacher development programmes. Yidana and Lawal (2015) assert that more weighting is placed on subject matter knowledge to the detriment of the formation of the core beliefs, values, and attitudes that eventually influence

teacher effectiveness. This makes it difficult for teachers to discover themselves, and develop the conviction that makes them tick throughout their teaching life. It on this account that an investigation into the sources of teacher efficacy or what makes pre-service early childhood teachers build confidence in the teaching and learning enterprise is deemed worthwhile.

Ghana like most other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, incorporate the following five elements in their teacher education programmes: subject knowledge, knowledge of learners, foundation courses, methods of teaching and immersion in field-based experience or practicum (Yidana & Lawal, 2015). Ideally, the internship or practicum programme which is a critical component of any teacher preparation programme is supposed to develop teachers' confidence and ability to perform. However, it seems pre-service teachers in both teacher education universities and colleges of education in Ghana are not adequately exposed to such experiences bearing in mind that most people in Ghana become teachers not because they want to (Abroampa & Wilson, 2013).

Ideally, pre internship, internship and post internship interactions designed for preservice teachers are meant to cater for comprehensive practical and reflective practices that would enable them imbibe the requisite values and attitudes that would set them on a life-long chosen carrier. It has been observed that while some teacher education universities and colleges do not make provision at all for some aspect of the experiences; such as post internship seminars/ conferences; others have but it is done haphazardly. For instance, the teaching practice model designed for colleges of education about a decade ago that required periodic conferences between link tutors from the colleges, interns and their mentors seemed quite useful in this regard. However, it looks as if it has fizzled out with time. Therefore, there are practically no well organised internship and post internship seminars, conferences or interactions to enable preservice teachers reflect on their experiences during their internship period and what their expectations should be to help them develop confidence and clearly define their expectations and beliefs. These will also make available opportunities to explore factors that contribute to the initial development of pre-service teachers' efficacy that will help them develop strong efficacy beliefs early in their career (Mulholland & Wallace, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001).

Anderson and Betz (2001) contend that little research has focused on the sources of self-

efficacy, in contrast to the amount of research on correlates or outcomes of self-efficacy. Scholarship has established the value and power of teachers' sense of efficacy, but the sources of pre-service teachers' efficacy beliefs have not been interrogated much (Poulou, 2007; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007; Oh, 2010). Also, the overwhelming majority of research in the area of teacher efficacy has been conducted on inservice teachers and relatively little is known about the knowledge base in this area among pre-service teachers. This study is thus both theoretically and practically significant to understand the sources of teachers' beliefs when making judgments about their capability for instruction (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). It therefore primarily focused on how well preservice early childhood education teachers' sources of efficacy predicted their self efficacy.

### **Sources of Early Childhood Educators' Self Efficacy**

Bandura (1997) indicates that the initial development of self-efficacy expectations emanate from four capability-related information sources: enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal or social persuasion, and physiological and/or emotional states. Enactive mastery experience is considered the most powerful of the sources. It refers to a teacher's experiences relative to their success and failure. These experiences generate evidence of teacher's previous performance in the classroom and school setting, with success leading to increased self-efficacy while failure reduces self efficacy (Oh, 2010). The level of teacher's efficacy is thus contingent on their perceived achievement which is likely to contribute to their proficiency in future. So, a kindergarten teacher who had experienced instructional related successes with the use of instructional techniques or some assessment procedures has a greater probability in using them again proficiently due to an appreciation in their belief to be able to use them. A lesser or lower success rate thus has the potential of reducing ones belief in their capacity to execute similar actions in future. With respect to preservice teachers, it may be hypothesized that the successes experienced due to some instructional management decisions taken while on internship or practicing teaching has the capacity to positively influence future courses of action they may take while on the field.

Vicarious experiences occur through the observation of others successes or failures.

Individual's belief in their ability to perform or succeed is a direct function of an existing successful model. The more an agent shares resemblance with a referral model the higher the belief in the ability to perform. That is to say that, when a model with whom an observer closely identifies performs well, the efficacy of the observer is enhanced. Poulou (2007) posits that when there are no absolute measures of adequacy and individuals' activities, people assess their ability through comparisons with others in similar situations. This becomes more relevant when an individual has no history of successes. He or she will resort to a relevant model available to make self efficacy judgments. Thus, modeling serves as an effective tool for promoting a sense of personal efficacy. In a school milieu a preservice early childhood teacher or an intern's level of self efficacy may be influenced by available models such as experienced mentors who is a regular teacher or other interns. A close observation of mentors or even colleague interns as they teach has the potential of influencing interns or preservice teachers' judgments regarding their ability to succeed as teachers. What preservice teachers perceive as mentors' level of attainment or achievement during the internship period may be critical in the formation of preservice teachers' identity and their ability to succeed or fail as early childhood educators. In the absence of an existing successful model, Maddux (1995) talks about imaginal experiences. This has to do with an individual imagining him or herself succeed or deal with challenges in order to improve on their ability to perform a task. Though, it may be argued that imaginal experiences might not be relevant in a teaching learning environment where there are other teachers, it is still important for preservice teachers to develop the skill of imagining and seeing themselves succeeding. It may not be enough to just observe an existing successful model, one would still have to imagine him or herself succeed like the referral model.

Further, social or verbal persuasion that comes from professional development workshops, seminars and feedback from a supervisor who is a lecturer, fellow intern, or learners have the potential of improving teachers' self-efficacy. The nature and the source of the praise, rebukes, prompts and props, that serve as feedbacks, have implications for development of teachers' level of efficacy. When people are told they have the capacity to excel or execute a task inspite of the challenges, the belief in their ability to perform usually improves based on that feedback. For preservice early childhood educators it is more crucial. Feedback and verbal encouragements from learners, peers and especially mentors

in the schools of practice are critical in helping interns improve their self efficacy. Lastly, Physiological and/or emotional states also inform how people interpret their physical and emotional reactions. For example, tension and stress are often interpreted by individuals as signs of a lack of ability or of poor performance, whereas the feelings of joy or pleasure a teacher experiences from teaching a successful lesson may increase her or his sense of efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Teaching early childhood learners is perceived as daunting and sometimes stressful and requires an appreciable level of versatility. These may influence preservice teachers' feelings and attitude which may have implications for their expectations and beliefs in their ability to teach at that level. In Ghana, the public prejudice about the essence and relevance of early childhood education (Jinapor, 2014) coupled with the dearth of support and resources have the potential of influencing the emotional state of teachers. This may affect the belief in their ability to perform. This is why designing a comprehensive and effective practicum programme is essential in dealing with preservice early childhood teachers' anxieties and fears before they are deployed into classrooms.

In order to gather relevant data, four questions that guided the study were;

1. What is the general pattern of pre-service early childhood teachers' self-efficacy?
2. To what extent would pre-service early childhood teachers' combined sources of efficacy predict their total self -efficacy?
3. Which of the sources of efficacy better predicts preservice early childhood teachers' total self-efficacy?
4. To what extent would sources of efficacy predict their self-efficacy to engage learners, use instructional strategies, manage classrooms and involve parents?

## **Methodology**

A correlational design was employed for the study since information was gathered from a sample that was drawn from a predetermined population (Fraenkel, Wallen & Hyun, 2012) in order to determine the relationship and predictions among variables. All final year preservice teachers pursuing a degree in Early Childhood Education in two public universities in Ghana and had returned to campus from teaching practice or internship were involved in the study since they were not many. In all, 164 pre-service teachers were

selected for the study by census. A questionnaire with eight sections (A-H) with 60 items was used for data collection. Sections A-D with 30 items covered a teacher Self-efficacy scale (TSES) adapted from Tschannen-Moran and Hoy's (2001) Ohio Sense of Teacher Efficacy scale while sections E-H which entailed 30 items were crafted out of the Sources of Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (STSES). All items crafted in accordance with Bandura's (1997) descriptions of the sources of teacher efficacy. The questionnaire consisted of mainly close-ended items which demanded respondents to tick responses that best suited them and were all in a likert-type scale.

The questionnaire was reviewed by two lecturers in relevant departments of the two universities used for the study and later pre-tested with 20 pre-service early childhood education sandwich students in one of the universities to determine its content validity and reliability. The Cronbach Alpha used to ascertain the reliability generated coefficients of .950 and .766 for TSES and STSES respectively. Data gathered was edited and coded 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 for a great deal, much, quite a bit, very little and nothing for the TSES and 4, 3, 2 and 1 were used for the STSES. The TSES had negatively worded items which were coded in the reverse. With the help of SPSS version 21, means were used to analysed data for the first research question. The standard multiple regression was used to analyse data for research questions two to four.

## **Findings and Discussion**

Data analysis and discussion for the research question and hypotheses are presented below. Data in Tables 1 reflects the general pattern of preservice early childhood educators' self- efficacy. The following mean ranges were used in the analysis: nothing 1.00-1.49; very little 1.50-2.49; quite a bit 2.50-3.49; much 3.50-4.49; a great deal 4.50-5.00.

Table 1 presents the general pattern or level of preservice early childhood educators' self- efficacy. The data reveal that preservice teachers have a high self-efficacy in engaging learners. This suggests that they have a belief and are confident that they will be able to engage early learners. This was followed with the belief in their ability to use instructional strategies much and also manage their classrooms. Though, they also indicated they had high self-efficacy to involve parents in their wards education, it was the least. It could be

Table 1. *General Pattern of Preservice ECEs Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy variables	Mean	Remarks
Learner engagement	3.96	high
Instructional strategies	3.89	high
Classroom management	3.84	high
Parental involvement	3.79	high
General level of self efficacy	3.87	high

inferred that generally regular preservice early childhood educators have high self-efficacy.

Preservice early childhood educators' high self-efficacy is in consonance with Flores (2015) admission that prospective teachers' self-efficacy may be significantly influenced by their teacher preparation programme and field experiences. Self-efficacy in prospective teachers may increase if engaged in context-specific learning experiences coupled with ongoing support from teacher preparation lecturers and mentor teachers in field experiences or during internship. In support, Külekçi (2011) also asserted that pre-service English teachers generally expressed positive efficacy beliefs. The findings further agrees with Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero's (2005) conclusion from a study that preservice teachers' sense of efficacy increased from the beginning to the end of a teacher preparation programme. Prospective early childhood teachers' self-efficacy may thus be high because of the various experiences they had been through such as the on-campus teaching practice in the two universities and also, the experiences they had on the internship programme and perhaps the post internship seminars.

From Table 2 it may be deduced that the four sources of efficacy (mastery experience, verbal persuasion, vicarious experience and affective state) when combined have a significant effect on preservice early childhood educators' self-efficacy  $F(4, 159) = 13.005$ ;  $p < 0.05$ . The joint prediction ( $R = 0.497$ ) accounted for 24.7% of the total variance on preservice teachers' self-efficacy. It may also be inferred that the four sources of efficacy made varied contributions to the prediction of the self-efficacy of preservice early childhood educators. Enactive mastery experience made the greatest significant contribution ( $\beta = .328$ ;  $t = 4.228$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) to predicting self-efficacy. It therefore explains 8% of the variance in the total self-efficacy of preservice teachers while vicarious experience ( $\beta = .205$ ;  $t = .190$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) contributes 3% to the explanation of variance in

Table 2. *Combined Effect and Contribution of Sources of Efficacy on Preservice ECEs Self-Efficacy*

Model	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	f	Sig.	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Regression	10269.754	4	2567.438	13.005	.000	.497	.247	.228
Residual	31389.490	159	197.418					
Total	41659.244	163						

  

Predictors	B	Standard error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig. p value	Correlation part
(Constant)	37.342	14.376		2.598	.010	
Enactive mastery experience	2.161	.511	.328	4.228	.000	.291
Verbal persuasion	1.534	.366	.111	1.460	.146	.101
Vicarious experience	1.300	.547	.205	.190	.019	.163
Affective state	-.493	.337	-.111	.145	.145	-.101

the total self efficacy as indicated by the part correlation coefficients of .291 and .163 respectively.

It is evident that the combined sources of efficacy significantly predicted preservice early childhood educators' self-efficacy with enactive mastery experience making the greatest significant contribution to predicting preservice teachers' self-efficacy. The two universities that train teachers have on-campus and off-campus teaching sessions that offer prospective teachers the opportunity to have several sessions of teaching experiences which occur throughout two separate semesters. These provide them with the opportunity to practice teaching. The various sessions of teaching have the potential of influencing later teaching sessions since preservice teachers may be able to do a self reflection, appraise their performances and address lapses in subsequent sessions. Repeated successes can lead to a strong sense of self-efficacy, but failures can decrease self-efficacy (Krizman, 2013). Again, throughout prospective teachers' teaching experiences in both on and off-campus sessions, their belief in their ability to teach early learners would have been influenced by what they saw models do. This could either be mentors they were assigned to, other regular teachers in their schools of practice or even colleague interns. Throughout the practice teaching sessions, prospective teachers were supposed to observe mentors and peers while they taught. According to Bandura (1997) and Krizman (2013) modeling is an effective way for individuals to raise their self-efficacy because it provides individuals with the ability to compare their performances to those of others, a process known as social comparison.

Social comparison is a key component in developing self-efficacy through vicarious experiences because without it, individuals would not be able to judge their own performance without knowing how others have performed. Social comparison is therefore a primary factor in the self-appraisal of capabilities.

Table 3. *Relative Contribution of Sources of efficacy to Preservice ECEs Ability to Engage Learners*

Predictors	B	Standard error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig. p value	Correlation part
(Constant)	17.527	3.695		4.744	.000	
Enactive mastery experience	.265	.131	.163	2.018	.045	.145
Verbal persuasion	.210	.94	.178	2.231	.027	.161
Vicarious experience	.323	.141	.207	2.298	.023	.165
Affective state	-.232	.87	-.212	-2.683	.008	-.193

It may be deduced from Table 3 that the four sources of efficacy made varying contributions to the prediction of preservice early childhood educators' ability to engage early learners. Vicarious experience made the greatest significant contribution ( $\beta = .207$ ;  $t = 2.298$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) to predicting preservice early childhood educators' belief in their ability to engage learners. It therefore explains 3% of the variance in the efficacy on learner engagement while verbal persuasion ( $\beta = .178$ ;  $t = 2.231$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) also contributes 3% to the explanation of variance in preservice teachers' efficacy to engage learners as indicated by the part correlation coefficients of .165 and .161 respectively.

Fletcher (2005) explains learners' engagement as learners' willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process promoting higher level thinking for enduring understanding. Learners are engaged when they are involved in their work, persist despite challenges and obstacles, and take visible delight in accomplishing their work. The consequences of not engaging learners in learning are reportedly dire (Taylor and Parson, 2011). It is thus considered significant in any interaction with early learners. The finding presupposes that preservice teachers would have been influenced by how their mentors and peers engaged pupils in class who constituted the existing models. Besides, their self-efficacy to engage learners would have also been affected by verbal persuasions; which may be in the form of interactions with peer assessors and comments from their mentors and supervisors who visited periodically. Oh's

(2010) contends that verbal persuasion by way of encouragement, support and feedback provided from mentors are essential sources of novice student teachers' feelings of efficacy

Table 4. *Relative Contribution of Sources of Efficacy to Preservice ECEs Ability to Use Instructional Strategies*

Predictors	B	Standard error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig. p value	Correlation part
(Constant)	9.943	3.997		2.488	.014	
Enactive mastery experience	.457	.142	.254	3.217	.002	.247
Verbal persuasion	-.029	.102	-.022	-.280	.780	-.022
Vicarious experience	.540	.152	.312	3.545	.001	.271
Affective state	-.191	.094	-.158	-2.043	.043	-.143

It is evident from Table 4 that the four sources of efficacy made different levels of contributions to the prediction of preservice early childhood educators' ability to use instructional resources. Vicarious experience made the greatest significant contribution ( $\beta = .312$ ;  $t = 3.545$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) to predicting preservice early childhood educators' belief in their ability to use instructional strategies. It therefore explains 7% of the variance in the efficacy on the use of instructional strategies while enactive mastery experience ( $\beta = .254$ ;  $t = 3.217$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) also contributes 6% to the explanation of variance in preservice teachers' efficacy to use instructional strategies as indicated by the part correlation coefficients of .271 and .247 respectively. This signifies that the confidence and the belief in preservice teachers' ability to use various instructional strategies with early learners improved by observing mentors, peers or others teachers.

The findings are in agreement with Oh's (2010) results that vicarious experiences are significant sources of novice student teachers' feelings of efficacy. Yeung and Watkins (2000) also intimated that beliefs about teaching capability of Hong Kong student teachers were mainly acquired through their teaching practice and observations of pupils' learning. It also endorses Charalambous, Philippou, and Kyriakides' (2008) claim that the opportunity to observe, imitate and analyze lessons taught by inservice teachers provided vicarious experiences to student teachers thus observing mentors' teaching was a worthwhile experience. The results of this study further underscores Knoblauch and Hoy's

(2008) contention that an efficacious model positively correlates with prospective teachers' efficacy beliefs. Consequently, preservice teachers who perceived their mentors as efficacious were more efficacious themselves.

Table 5. *Relative Contribution of Sources of Efficacy to Preservice ECEs Ability to Manage Classrooms*

Predictors	B	Standard error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig. p value	Correlation part
(Constant)	6.411	4.314		1.486	.134	
Enactive mastery experience	.750	.153	.385	4.890	.000	.342
Verbal persuasion	.820	.110	.058	.747	.456	.052
Vicarious experience	.237	.164	.126	1.444	.151	.101
Affective state	-.026	.101	-.254	-.254	.800	-.018

It may be inferred from Table 5 that the four sources of efficacy made varied contributions to the prediction of preservice early childhood educators' ability to manage classrooms. Enactive mastery experience was the only factor that made the greatest significant contribution ( $\beta = .385$ ;  $t = 4.890$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) to predicting preservice early childhood educators' belief in their ability to manage classrooms. It therefore explains 12% of the variance in the efficacy on classroom management as depicted by the part correlation coefficients of .342. The rest of the factors did not make any significant contributions.

With respect to classroom management, enactive mastery experience was the only factor that made the greatest significant contribution to predicting preservice early childhood educators' belief in their ability to manage classrooms. Classroom management is considered as one of the fuzzy and challenging areas for educational researchers and teachers. This is even more crucial when dealing with early learners. It is referred to as teacher's ability to keep order in the classroom, engage learners in learning, and elicit their cooperation, while balancing the menial tasks of the classroom (Wong & Wong, 2009). It would therefore require much skill and experience to manage early learners. Prospective teachers' confidence to manage early learners would have been boosted by the experiences they have had from various teaching sessions. Yilmaz and Çava (2008) suggest that the most important influence on teaching efficacy beliefs is the teaching practice experience. Leonard, Barnes-Johnson, Dantley, Kimber (2011) thus recommend that mastery

Table 6. *Relative Contribution of Sources of Efficacy to Preservice ECEs Ability to Involve Parents*

Predictors	B	Standard error	Beta ( $\beta$ )	t	Sig. p value	Correlation part
(Constant)	3.461	4.482		.772	.441	
Enactive mastery experience	.689	.159	.339	4.332	.000	.324
Verbal persuasion	.271	.114	.183	2.376	.019	.185
Vicarious experience	.200	.171	.102	1.171	.243	.082
Affective state	-.044	.105	-.032	-.418	.176	-.029

experiences should be acquired and developed through field experiences.

Table 6 shows that the four sources of efficacy made wide ranging contributions to the prediction of preservice early childhood educators' ability to involve parents in the education of their wards. Enactive mastery experience made the greatest significant contribution ( $\beta = .339$ ;  $t = 4.332$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) to predicting preservice early childhood educators' belief in their ability to involve parents. It therefore explains 10% of the variance in the efficacy on parental involvement while verbal persuasion ( $\beta = .183$ ;  $t = 2.376$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) also contributes 3% to the explanation of variance in the preservice teachers efficacy to involve parents as indicated by the part correlation coefficients of .324 and .185 respectively. The rest did not make any significant contributions.

Early childhood educators' mastery experience predicted significantly the belief in their ability to involve parents. This endorses Abroampa's (2017) finding that early childhood educators who are experienced seem to have a high self-efficacy in parental involvement. Fry (2009) intimates that involving parents in classroom activities may also increase teacher self-efficacy. Also, this study revealed that verbal persuasion predicted significantly the belief in preservice teachers' ability to involve parents. Verbal persuasions may come in the form of suggestions from supervisors and mentors in the various.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The study showed that prospective early childhood educators in Ghana have much self efficacy. Their self efficacy beliefs is significantly predicted and explained by the sources

of efficacy and enactive mastery experiences in particular. When the effect of the various sources of self efficacy on the preservice teachers' self efficacy were explored separately, it came to light that enactive mastery experiences, vicarious experiences and verbal comments and feedbacks contributed significantly to teachers' beliefs in their ability to engage learners, use instructional strategies, manage classrooms and involve parents in their children's education.

This and other studies of teacher self-efficacy have shown that one possible way to promote a more realistic sense of efficacy in preservice teachers is to provide them with mastery experience in the form of well planned field placement experiences and observation of teaching (Charalambous, Philippou, & Kyriakides, 2008; Knoblauch & Hoy, 2008; Redmon, 2007). It is therefore important that teacher preparation programmes such as what prospective early childhood educators are taken through, provide well planned and comprehensive pre, during and post internship programmes that would afford student teachers ample opportunities to practice and observe teaching and discuss after teaching sessions to enable them develop their self- efficacy in order to improve their performance. Though, teacher education universities and colleges in Ghana have such arrangements in place, experience has shown that, internship and post internship seminars are still deficient. In some cases, cooperating teachers or mentors leave the classrooms for practicing teachers. Some student teachers are also placed in private schools where they have to understudy mentors who are non-professional teachers. This thus makes it difficult for them to observe and discuss their teaching with experienced teachers so as to ameliorate their deficiencies. For preservice early childhood teachers, this is even more critical since statistics show that most teachers teaching early learners are non- professionals (Abroampa, 2017).

With this in mind, frequent supervision from link lecturers and tutors are crucial. Frequent visits by supervisors to share in the evaluation of the student teachers' progress and provide assistance and advice in problem situations is highly recommended. The regular discussions of student teacher experiences and providing them and mentors with written feedback concerning progress, challenges and recommendations will significantly boost prospective early childhood teachers' confidence, self efficacy and subsequent performance. These discussions can be held as post teaching conferences between supervisors, mentors and practicing teachers, for them to have immediate feedback since

teachers' efficacy beliefs are best enhanced through the effective combination of efficacy information from the four sources because each source of efficacy information alone may contribute in some way to the enhancement of teachers' efficacy beliefs (Labone, 2004).

Besides, post internship seminars must be a significant aspect of any teacher education programme. The author is aware that not all universities and colleges training teachers in Ghana have it. The institutions that have it should take a hard look at the model again since it is meant to provide student teachers with the opportunity to reflect carefully about their teaching experiences during the internship and about teaching early learners in general. Observations and comments from lecturers will help them refine, define their identity and boost their confidence as teachers ready for the field.

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