

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

### TEACHER EFFICACY AND STATE-MANDATED PROGRAMS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

By

Shirley J. Shaw

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JANE E. RABB, Ph.D. CHAIRPERSON

Teacher efficacy is the teacher's belief in his/her capability to organize and execute courses of action required to accomplish a specific teaching task in a particular context. State-mandated programs specific to this study are Differentiated Instruction and Early Literacy. The literature suggests a relationship between high teacher efficacy and student achievement.

The major purpose of this study was to:

1. explore the relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement;
2. explore teacher efficacy in light of state-mandated programs and practices;  
and
3. gather insight about teachers' views of efficacy.

A questionnaire addressing teacher efficacy and state-mandated practices was administered to 3rd-grade teachers in 5 districts in Missouri. The results were correlated

with the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) scores from 2000–2004 to determine if relationships existed among teacher efficacy, state-mandated programs and practices, and student achievement. To analyze the relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement, a qualitative analysis was applied to teachers' comments.

The results showed that the null hypothesis, there is no relationship between teacher efficacy and student achievement in light of state-mandated programs and practices, could not be conclusively accepted or rejected. However, significances were found. Performance-indicator scores have a significant negative correlation with MAP index scores and MAP levels. This indicates that respondents from districts with higher MAP scores checked fewer performance indicators. As well, the innovative total has a significant positive correlation with state-mandated practices, and the importance of innovation scores showed a significant difference, with the high-efficacy group placing greater importance on innovation. Qualitative analysis offered insight into the significance of teacher influence and the effects of environment. The results indicated that while teachers have influence on factors within their control, environment also has an impact.

The theoretic perspective of this research stemmed from the belief that teachers naturally innovate programs and practices to benefit students. Intentional teachers design purposeful lessons; introduce techniques to arouse student curiosity; use differentiation for multiple abilities; and are efficacious, open to feedback, and reflective. When administration makes thoughtful, knowledgeable, and intentional decisions, teachers and students become more motivated to demonstrate efficacy in the classroom and on state tests.