The Influence of Pre-Service Camp Counseling Experience on the Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Teachers

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Abstract

A strong sense of self-efficacy is a characteristic that undoubtedly belongs to the very best teachers (Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Research has indicated that there is a broad range of positive educational outcomes related to teachers with strong self-efficacy beliefs.

Because teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs are at their most receptive while teachers are in their pre-service stage (Henson, 2001) and social cognitive theory indicates that an individual’s self-efficacy belief in one experience area is transferable to another area, this study investigates the transferability of self-efficacy beliefs from the informal pre-service experiences of camp counseling to self-efficacy beliefs in a number of teacher-specific responsibility areas. This qualitative case study focuses on the experiences of four Toronto teachers with camp counseling experience and their perceptions of how their self-efficacy beliefs transferred to their capacity for classroom management, student engagement and instructional practices. This research study shows that teachers who perceived themselves to have had ‘mastery experiences’ as a camp counselor felt strongly that these experiences improved their self-efficacy beliefs for teaching, specifically with classroom management and student engagement. The considerable implications of this study extend to a wide range of educational stakeholders: pre-service teachers or those with camp counseling experience and a potential future interest in teaching; principals, school boards and officials selecting teacher candidates for teacher education programs; and the facilitators of teacher education programs.

**Key Terms:** Teacher self-efficacy, pre-service, camp counseling, mastery experience, classroom management, student engagement, instructional practices
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of Contents</td>
<td>iv-v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to the Research Study | 1-3 |
1.1 Purpose of the Study | 4 |
1.2 Research Question | 4-5 |
1.3 Background of the Researcher | 5-7 |
1.4 Overview | 7-8 |

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Identification of Social Cognitive Theory as Theoretical Framework | 9 |
2.1 Understanding Self-Efficacy | 9-10 |
2.2 Teacher Self Efficacy | 10-11 |
2.3 Measuring Teacher Self-Efficacy | 11-12 |
2.4 Developing Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs | 13-14 |
2.5 Camp Counselor as Informal Pre-Service Experience | 14-16 |
2.6 Extension of Knowledge in the Field | 16-17 |

Chapter 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Nature of the Research | 18 |
3.1 Participants | 18 |
3.2 Procedure | 19 |
3.3 Limitations | 20 |
3.4 Ethical Review Procedure | 20-21 |

Chapter 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction to Findings | 22-23 |
4.1 Extensiveness of Camp Counseling Experience | 23-26 |
4.2 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Classroom Management | 26 |
4.2.1 Handling Disruptive Behavior | 26-28 |
4.2.2 Expectations & Classroom Rules | 28-29 |
4.2.3 Management Systems & Routine Establishment | 29-33 |
4.3 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Student Engagement | 33 |
4.3.1 Motivating Students | 33-34 |
4.3.2 Developing Student Self-Esteem | 34-35 |
4.3.3 Helping Students Value Learning | 36-37 |
CAMP COUNSELING & TEACHER SELF EFFICACY

4.3.4 Assisting Families 37-39
4.3.5 Student Creativity 39-40
4.1 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Instructional Practices 41
   4.4.1 Crafting Good Questions 41-42
   4.4.2 Using Alternative Assessment & Instructional Strategies 42-45
4.5 Conclusion 45-46

Chapter 5: IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction 47
5.1 Overview of Key Findings & Their Significance 47-48
   5.1.1 Extensiveness of Camp Counseling Experience 48
   5.1.2 Transferability of Classroom Management Efficacy Beliefs 49-50
   5.1.3 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Student Engagement 50-51
   5.1.3 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Instructional Practices 51-52
5.2 Implications 52
   5.2.1 Implications for Educational Community 52-54
   5.2.2 Implications for My Practice 54-55
5.3 Recommendations 55-56
5.4 Suggestions for Future Research 56-57
5.5 Conclusion 57

REFERENCES 58-66

APPENDICES
   Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview Participants 67-68
   Appendix B: Interview Questions 69
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to the Research Study

A teacher’s sense of self-efficacy is a startlingly simple idea with very considerable implications. A teacher’s efficacy belief can be defined as “judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or unmotivated” (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990, p.783). The results of this judgment are significant. Student outcomes that have been related to teachers’ strong sense of self-efficacy range from motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989) to achievement, (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992) to the self-efficacy beliefs of the students themselves (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988). Beyond this, teachers’ self-efficacy beliefs relate to their own behavioral choices in the classroom. Teachers with a considerable degree of self-efficacy plan and organize to a greater level (Allinder, 1994). These teachers also tend to be more open-minded in regards to experimenting with new teaching methods to suit the needs of their class (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988). These same teachers are less likely to be critical of students who make errors (Ashton & Webb, 1986) and are subsequently more willing to persistently work with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). On top of all these implications of teacher efficacy, there is also research that shows that teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to stay in the teaching profession (Burley, Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982), have a stronger commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Trentham, Silvern, & Brogdon, 1985) and demonstrate a sincerer passion for teaching (Allinder,
A strong sense of self-efficacy is undoubtedly a characteristic that belongs to the very best teachers (Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). Following from this acknowledgement of the positive benefits associated with a teacher’s strong sense of self-efficacy is the question of how these beliefs can best be facilitated. Attempts at enhancing the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers who are already established professionals have demonstrated only mixed results (Ross, 1994, 1998). Evidence indicates that the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers are at their most receptive stage while teachers are in the pre-service phase of their career (Henson, 2001). It is clear that investigating how strong self-efficacy beliefs can be fostered in a teacher’s pre-service years is a potentially fruitful route of inquiry.

Self-efficacy beliefs are transferable from one area to another as long as the individual understands the two to be similar enough that ability in one will carry over, at least to some extent, from one area to the other (Bandura, 1997). Prospective teachers often have the opportunity to teach in classrooms under the supervision of experienced teachers. While there are substantial differences between student teaching and “real” teaching, student teaching does increase teacher self-efficacy beliefs because teaching students believe that the two experiences are similar enough (Tuchman and Isaacs, 2011). One path of inquiry that this question of pre-teaching experience leads to is the nature of formal teacher education. Another avenue available to be investigated is the range of informal experiences prospective teachers may feel to be transferable in terms of their self-efficacy beliefs.
Research indicates that individuals who have experience as summer camp counselors believe that their experience in this job allowed them to develop many skills that are also associated with teaching such as: leadership, decision-making, planning and organizing, interpersonal interactions, and teamwork (Ferrari & Digby, 2007, Brandt & Arnold, 2006; DeGraff & Edginton, 1992; DeGraff & Glover, 2003; Dworken, 2004; Forsythe et al., 2004; Garst & Johnson, 2003, 2005; James, 2003; McNeely, 2004; Purcell, 1996; Toupence & Townsend, 2000; Weese, 2002). Past camp counselors believe that these skills were not only learned in the immediate summer camp context but also were transferable to other settings such as schools and other employment areas (Ferrari & Digby, 2007). Past camp counselors held great importance in the responsibility they had for leading and teaching activities to younger campers (Ferrari & Digby, 2007). These camp counselor alumni believed that this experience had direct and indirect impacts on their future choice of career. Some chose to pursue careers in teaching because they were convinced of the great significance of working with and for children (Ferrari & Digby, 2007). While many camp counselors choose to work at camp because of the importance they place in fostering growth and development in the camper, camp experiences often also culminate in ways that alter the counselor’s life (Powell, 2004). A common manifestation of this growth is in the self-efficacy beliefs of counselors (Powell, 2004).

The characteristics associated with teachers who have strong self-efficacy beliefs overlap significantly with the benefits of the camp counseling experience. Investigating potential influences of camp counseling as a pre-service experience on the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers is a logical and exciting next step in the research progression.
1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project is to investigate the potential influences of camp counseling as a pre-service experience on the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers. The results of the study will inform those individuals who fit the immediate criteria of having past camp counseling experience and intend on teaching in the future. For these individuals, any noted influences found in the research will allow for a greater depth of understanding of how to best utilize past experiences to benefit self-efficacy beliefs for teaching in the future.

Outside the context of those individuals who have actually been camp counselors; by looking into these potential influences, the aspects of the camp counseling experience that lead to strong self-efficacy beliefs of teachers might be incorporated as beneficial elements of teacher education. Understanding that self-efficacy beliefs are potentially transferable and that the camp counseling context may be near enough to allow for teacher self-efficacy could inform best practices in teacher education. Subsequently, those looking to choose teaching candidates for either teacher education programs or professional teaching positions may be enabled to look at camp counseling experience as a potential indicator of future teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Most importantly, what makes all of these possible results so exciting is that they allow for an increase in teachers with strong self-efficacy beliefs, beliefs that have the potential to benefit both teachers and students in the surfeit of ways listed in the Introduction.

1.2 Research Question

This study investigates possible answers to the following question:
What influence, if any, does pre-service camp counseling experience have on the self-efficacy beliefs of 4 Ontario school teachers?

The following sub-questions support the central research question:

1. What specific aspects, if any, of the camp counseling experience, have most influenced the self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers?

2. What specific aspects, if any, of the camp counseling experience are most limited in their influence on the self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers?

1.3 Background of the Researcher

As a graduate student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I have a clearly evident interest, both academically and professionally, in the characteristics that constitute an effective teacher. This interest in how to facilitate the best student learning and to positively influence the behavior of students is the underpinning motivation for my place in the Master of Teaching program and my future interest in a career in education. It is a simple transition from that interest and motivation to a serious fascination with the concept of teacher self-efficacy beliefs. If strong self-efficacy beliefs about teaching will enable me to become the best teacher I can possibly be, it is an area I want to exhaustively investigate.

It nearly goes without saying that my original experiences with understanding examples of effective teachers came when I was a student. As a student from the elementary grades through high school, the characteristics I observed as being consistent in the teachers I felt most effective included but were not limited to the following: an inherent and genuine sense of trust between teacher and student, a deep sense of persistent engagement in the students and the classroom, demonstration of sincere
compassion for all students and an interest in developing complete, well-rounded human beings. It was these teachers who had the most profound and lasting impact on my relationship with learning and on my conception of self. As a student, in addition to noticing these characteristics of effective teachers, I noticed that these facets overlapped with the traits of other positive role models I had encountered during my experiences at summer camp.

I was very fortunate to spend the non-school months of my childhood and teenage life at overnight summer camps. These extensive experiences during my formative years had a very significant effect on my development. While summer camp has many benefits and positive aspects – for example, exposure to the natural environment, the activities offered, and the opportunity to develop new skills – it is quite clear that the essential part of the summer camp experience is the strength of the interpersonal relationships it offers. This is a double-sided consideration: first; the strength of community built between fellow campers is a degree of friendship that I have found to be unparalleled. Secondly, the importance of the relationship between the camper and the camper counselor is one of great significance. It is this relationship, that between counselor and camper, that I found to overlap so importantly with the relationship between effective teachers and student. The immersive environment of the overnight summer camp experience where children spend between two weeks and two months away from their parents is one in which the counselors are incredibly relevant to the success of the camper’s experience. In my experience as a camper and in the seven years I have spent as a camp counselor myself it is undoubtedly clear that a successful counselor – one who exhibits many of the same characteristics that I saw in my best teachers (trust, engagement, compassion, genuine
interest in developing the whole person) - can facilitate a very positive impact on the life of a camper.

In my position as a graduate Master of Teaching student and future teacher, my interest in what to make of these correlations between effective summer camp counselors and effective teachers formed the basis of this research’s focus. I found myself eager to investigate and, if possible, characterize the relationship between these two positions. The initial question of understanding the similarities between these two positions evolved into a potentially more fruitful one of: how might a history of camp counseling influence the characteristics of a teacher?

From a personal point of view, this research focus applies directly to my own professional past and my planned professional future. My broader interest in the teaching profession is enhanced by my eagerness to know more about this potential through-line from counseling to teaching. I deeply relate to the research focus I have chosen and am committed to investigating the topic as comprehensively as possible. It is extremely exciting that this research may allow for a greater understanding of teacher self-efficacy and the subsequent benefits to students that that entails.

1.4 Overview

Chapter 1 includes the introduction to the research topic of teacher self-efficacy and the potential influence of camp counseling experience. It also introduces the purpose of the study, the research questions, as well as how I came to be interested and involved in the research topic. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature that exists on the self-efficacy, teacher-self efficacy and informal pre-service experiences influencing teacher self-efficacy. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and procedure used in this study including
information about the sample participants and data collection instruments. Chapter 4 identifies the participants in the study and describes the data as it addresses the research question. Chapter 5 includes limitations of the study, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of appendices follow at the end.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Identification of Social Cognitive Theory as Theoretical Framework

The basis of this research study revolves around the concept of self-efficacy, as it specifically applies to teachers (with pre-service experience as camp counselors). The theoretical framework for the notion of self-efficacy comes from social cognitive theory as introduced by Albert Bandura (Bandura, 1977).

Social cognitive theory suggests that humans are capable of agency - or the capacity to intentionally act in the world. In social cognitive theory Bandura suggests that human agency, the deliberate pursuit of action, operates in a process titled ‘triadic reciprocal causation’ (Bandura, 1977). Triadic reciprocal causation is a “multi-directional model suggesting that our agency results in future behavior as a function of three interrelated forces: environmental influences, our behavior, and internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective, and biological processes” (Henson, 2001, p.4). This process duly suggests that humans are not simply products of their environment or simply products of their natural biology. Rather they are mutually impacted by the internal, the external, and current and past behavior.

2.1 Understanding Self-Efficacy

Essential to Bandura’s social cognitive theory is his presentation of the idea of self-efficacy. According to Bandura, self-efficacy is, “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995, p.2). Self-efficacy beliefs are therefore characterized as major influencers on both behavior and behavioral change. Bandura developed the idea that belief in one’s own abilities considerably affects one’s actions, motivations and
eventually, successes and failures (Henson, 2001). The impact of how self-efficacy impacts motivation is important to note. Bandura observes, “people regulate their level and distribution of effort in accordance with the effects they expect their actions to have. As a result, their behavior is better predicted from their beliefs than from the actual consequences of their actions” (Bandura, 1986, p.129). The social cognitive theory suggests that, “because human agency is mediated by our efficaciousness, self-efficacy beliefs influence our choices, our effort, our persistence when facing adversity, and our emotions” (Henson, 2001, p.5). Bandura states that how one’s self-efficacy beliefs are developed and changed is based on four main factors (1977,1997). These four sources are:

(1) mastery experiences, in which one personally experiences success in the desired action; (2) vicarious experiences, in which the individual observes the successes of others; (3) verbal persuasion and social influence of others, frequently conveyed in the form of evaluative feedback; and (4) one’s internal interpretation of one’s physiological and affective states including emotions and mood. (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.414)

In many situations, more than one of these sources may be at work in providing information that influences efficacy beliefs (Tuchman and Isaacs, 2011).

2.2 Teacher Self-Efficacy

Of course, this study will focus particularly on how self-efficacy applies to the teaching profession. By applying this theory to the act of teaching, the straightforward but significant case is posited that a teacher’s belief in his teaching and in his students’ learning makes a difference in his teaching and in his students’ learning (Bandura, 1997). Consistent with the general definition of self-efficacy, teacher self-efficacy is defined as a teacher’s “judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning, even among those students who may be difficult or
unmotivated” (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2000, p.783). Again, while this may appear to be a simple formulation, “researchers have found few consistent relationships between characteristics of teachers and the behavior or learning of students. Teachers’ sense of efficacy … is an exception to this general rule” (Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990, p.81). Therefore, the idea that teachers’ beliefs in their own abilities are determinant of student achievement and behavior is significantly compelling. Statistical research has overwhelmingly indicated that teacher efficacy is predictive of student achievement. As Henson points out, teacher efficacy accurately projected student success on a variety of standard bearing indicators: the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Moore & Esselman, 1992), the Canadian Achievement Tests (Anderson, Greene & Loewen, 1988), and the Ontario Assessment Instrument Pool (Ross, 1992). Student achievement was indicated in schools that were both rural and urban and student populations that were both majority black and majority white (Henson, 2001). Teacher efficacy is also positively correlated with student’s own self-efficacy (Anderson et al.) and motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989).

2.3 Measuring Teacher Self-Efficacy

For much of the past 30 years, the approximate lifetime of teacher efficacy research, the standard empirical teacher efficacy measure has been the Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES) (Gibson and Dembo, 1984). After its multi-trait, multi-method construct validity study introduction, it became the predominate instrument for measuring teacher efficacy and was labeled “the standard instrument in the field” (Ross, 1994). However, as teacher efficacy research grew, criticism of the TES over its validity and its reliability became pronounced (Brouwers & Tomic, 2003; Deemer & Minke, 1999; Denzine,
Cooney, & McKenzie, 2005; Henson, 2001; Henson, Kogan, & Vacha-Haase, 2001). The TES is composed of two distinct subscales, the first being a reflection of a teacher’s personal sense of responsibility for student learning, known as PTE. The second factor in the TES “reflects a teacher’s more generalized beliefs about the relationship between teaching and learning and is known as general teaching efficacy or (GTE)” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011). In response to the criticism of the TES and particularly of the GTE subscale, Tshannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy developed the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). Central to Bandura’s theory of self-efficacy is the notion that the relative predictive efficiency of efficacy beliefs is greater when the beliefs are focused in a particular area of behavior (Bandura 1977,1997). Subsequently, researchers suggested that a new teacher efficacy scale, “more specifically related to actual teaching duties would be more accurate and would provide for a more contextualized and more meaningful measure of teacher efficacy” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.419). It is with this sense of specificity in mind that the TSES was developed. The TSES is made up of a 24-item long form and a 12-item abbreviated survey that accurately reflects the specific responsibilities of a teacher. The TSES is consequently split into three subsections; efficacy for Student Engagement (SE), efficacy for Instructional Practices (IP) and efficacy for Classroom Management (CM). The TSES contains questions that ask the teachers to rate their capacity to influence outcomes, asking, “How much can you do?” on a 9-point scale, from 0: Nothing to 9: A Great Deal. The subjective qualitative nature of the TSES assessment is aligned with Bandura’s notion of self-efficacy, as “it is the individual’s interpretation of his experiences that is theorized to influence efficacy beliefs rather an objective assessment of success or failure” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.420).
2.4 Developing Teacher Self-Efficacy Beliefs

What follows the acknowledgement that teacher efficacy is a significant element in successful teaching and learning is the natural interest in how to develop, enhance and predict teacher self-efficacy beliefs. Efforts to increase teacher self-efficacy through in-service professional development and other comparable interventions have been met with only mixed results. These results and the lack of a clear pattern in the data which make them up make it challenging to reach a conclusion on the effectiveness of such approaches in increasing teacher self-efficacy (Ross, 1994, 1998). The subsequent step in understanding the development of teacher self-efficacy then focuses on formative pre-service experiences that impact a teacher’s self-efficacy beliefs. On this point, Henson notes, (citing Housego, 1990; Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990) that “there is considerable evidence that efficacy is most malleable in the pre-service years” (Henson, 2001).

Logically the next question asked regards the manner in which efficacy can be developed and enhanced in this pre-service time frame. It has been proven that a teacher’s education history considerably affects their sense of self-efficacy. Research indicates that elementary school teachers with graduate school educations were more likely to have strong belief in the efficacy of their teaching (Hoover-Dempsey, Bassler, & Brissie, 1987). Similarly, subject content expertise significantly affects the efficacy of someone teaching that specific subject (Chacon, 2005; Muijs & Reynolds, 2002). Viewing formal pre-service teacher training programs through the lens of social cognitive theory, teaching students have the opportunity to utilize modeling and vicarious experiences to develop their skills. Programs also tend to use verbal and social persuasion and evaluative feedback (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011). Many teacher-training programs also involve the
chance for student teaching or what may be described as a supervised mastery experience. Research has overwhelmingly indicated that these formal training practices enable future teachers to have strong self-efficacy beliefs (Pigge & Marso, 1993; Woolfolk Hoy & Burke Spero, 2005).

In social cognitive theory, Bandura proposes that efficacy beliefs are transferable from one area to another if the individual understands the two to be alike enough that mastery in one will carry, to at least some degree, to the other (Bandura, 1997). It is with this transferability as subject that Tuchman and Isaacs suggest, “it is likely that the reason student-teaching increases teacher self-efficacy, despite some substantial differences between student teaching and ‘real’ teaching, is that they are similar enough in the minds of pre-service teachers” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.416). There do exist challenges to the suggestion that pre-service experiences in informal education settings help develop teaching efficacy beliefs. Notable of these is Weinstein who states that these experiences contribute to the ‘unrealistic optimism’ of student teachers, because formal and informal settings are not comparable. However, as previously noted, according to social cognitive theory, informal and formal settings do not need to be absolutely identical for self-efficacy beliefs to apply in both realms. As Tuchman and Isaacs state, “they only need to be perceived by the individual as similar enough that existing efficacy beliefs are relevant as a starting point from which to build a sense of efficacy for the new activity” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.417).

2.5 Camp Counselor as Informal Pre-Service Experience

Regarding academic research into the effect of informal pre-service teaching experience on teachers’ sense of self-efficacy, the field is very limited. In fact, there has
been only one significant study – conducted in 2011 by Elie Tuchman and Jenny Isaacs of Yeshiva University. This study examines the associations between informal and formal pre-service experiences and teacher self-efficacy. The study’s participants were three hundred-fifteen Jewish day school teachers from around the United States who taught both general and Judaic studies. Their formal and informal (specifically as youth advisors, camp counselors and childcare supervisors) pre-service experiences were investigated along with the TSES measures of teacher self-efficacy. Tuchman and Isaacs conclude that of the three informal experiences included in the study, being a camp counselor has the broadest range of positive effects on teacher efficacy beliefs. Along with childcare supervisors and youth advisors, perceived past achievement as a camp counselor had an association with the efficacy for student engagement (SE). Camp counseling experience also had a noted positive alignment with efficacy for instructional practices (IP). Responding to these findings, Tuchman and Isaacs suggest the following rationale:

These findings suggest that the experience of being a camp counselor may have commonalities with teaching. In fulfilling their duties, camp counselors engage students in a way that they feel to be meaningful, and which, apparently they feel is comparable to the way teachers engage their students. Success as a camp counselor, therefore builds efficacy beliefs for engagement that appears to carry over into the classroom and become efficacy for student engagement. Somewhat surprisingly, there may also be activities that the counselors perceive to be instructional in nature, in which success might breed efficacy for instructional practices. (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p. 427)

In addition to the interest found in the positive association between camp counseling experience and student engagement and instructional practice, the study notes that perhaps counter to expectations, camp counselor experience did not align with efficacy for classroom management. This being, “despite the fact that the duties of a camp
CAMP COUNSELING & TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY

A counselor typically include a certain amount of discipline and behavior management … it may be that the behavioral expectations of children and the ways in which those expectations are communicated and enforced in schools differ from camps” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427). The study suggests that the best preparation for a future teacher would, “involve formal training, to enhance teacher efficacy for instructional practices, coupled with hands-on experience with children, whether through high-quality student-teaching, through informal experiences as youth advisors, camp counselors, or childcare supervisors, or through some combination of these experiences, to enhance efficacy for student engagement.” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.428)

With regards to the limits of the Tuchman and Isaacs study, the focus was designed to be representative of American Jewish day school teachers. That noted, the authors also make clear that, “there is no reason to believe that there should be a different pattern of associations in a different population; there is nothing uniquely Jewish nor uniquely American about the factors examined in this study, and there is no reason to believe that the findings are unique to this population.” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.429) Subsequently, the researchers note that there is room for investigation into whether the findings and associations can be concretely determined as accurate for teachers in different locations or population groups.

2.6 Extension of Knowledge in the Field

Through consideration of the simple yet compelling benefits of teacher self-efficacy for student learning and achievement along with the positive relationships between camp counseling as a pre-service experience with teacher efficacy, it is clear that the window for future investigation is wide and indicates the possibility of insights of
considerable import.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Nature of the Research

This research study *The Influence of Pre-Service Camp Counseling Experience on the Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Teachers* is based on a collection of data from two sets of sources. I consulted literature in the field and conducted interviews with participants meeting my selection criteria. I conducted participant interviews using a digital recorder, after which I transcribed the interviews and coded the records for themes that are relevant to the investigation put forth by my Research Questions.

3.1 Participants

As the goal of this study was to investigate the potential influences of camp counseling as a pre-service experience on the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers, it was necessary that the participants in my qualitative research study meet the following criteria:

1) They must be teachers or former teachers.

2) They must have experience as a summer camp counselor.

3) They must be willing to be involved in the interview process and share their experiences.

I found my participants through word of mouth - by asking colleagues in the Master of Teacher program and contacts I made in my time in the education employment sphere. I also asked colleagues I have relationships with from my experience working in the summer camp industry.
3.2 Procedure

My initial experience with gathering data for this research project came from a review of the academic literature on the topic. Throughout this research proposal, data gathering and data finding – I continued to review the literature for developments in fields which directly and indirectly related to my investigation. The predominant method for gathering data in this research project came through my interviewing of participants (for Interview Questions, See Appendix B). The goal of the interview process was to gain an understanding of the potential influences that camp counseling as a pre-service experience had on the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers. The interview questions are structured around an existent measuring tool for teacher self-efficacy beliefs. This metric – the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale – developed at Ohio State University by Megan Tschannen-Moran and Anita Woolfolk Hoy – is divided into three scales – Efficacy in Student Engagement, Efficacy in Instructional Practices and Efficacy in Classroom Management. By using these three subscales as the framework for my interview I was more able to specifically track how the particular aspects of camp counseling experiences specifically influenced a variety of essential teaching subcategories. The interviews were semi-structured; meaning that there was a set of questions which I, as the researcher, asked the participants but there was also space in the process for follow-up questions and newer routes of inquiry. The information gathered in these interviews was coded based on the themes introduced and investigated in the Literature Review and was further discussed in the Findings and Discussion section.
3.3 Limitations

The sample size for my research study – four interview participants – is an admittedly limited one. However, with the intention of investigating ways in which the specific camp counseling experience of these participants influenced their self-efficacy beliefs as teachers – the sample size is not particularly relevant to the success of the study. As a qualitative study where the goal is not to investigate trends that can be extrapolated and applied to larger populations, the limited number of participants involved in the interview process still allows for a deep and meaningful engagement with their stories, experiences, and perspectives (Creswell, 2013). One exciting aspect of choosing this topic for investigation was that there is not a great amount of academic research that specifically touches upon the particular notion of pre-service camp counseling as an influencer on teacher self-efficacy beliefs. This paucity of applicable research meant that the Literature Review is both limited in its number of sources and exhaustive. Monitoring for new academic research on the topic was a necessary element of the research procedure.

3.4 Ethical Review Procedure

The research participants who volunteered to be a part of the interview process were each given a letter of consent (see Appendix A). In order for the participants to completely comprehend the terms and scope of the research study, this letter was read, understood and signed. A signed copy of the letter of consent was kept by each research participant and another copy was kept by me for the records of the study. Each interview took place at a time and place at the convenience of the research participant. Efforts were
made on my behalf to ensure the comfort of the participants and their understanding of their role in the research process.

At the beginning of each interview, the research topic was reviewed with the participant so as to operate with complete transparency. Interview participants were informed that they had the option to abstain from answering any question if they so choose and that they could review or revise any of their answers during the interview process. If, at any point during the interview, the participants had decided they would have liked to remove any element of their answer from the data recorded, it would have been done.

All interview procedures were aligned with the details set out in the letter of consent signed by the participants. All efforts were made to ensure the anonymity of the participants and any details in the data gathered which threatened this anonymity was adjusted using pseudonyms. Each interview transcript was reviewed by my research supervisor so as to ensure that each participant was entirely safe from unintentional harm, either personal or professional, caused by their involvement in the research study. Participants were also apprised of the role of my research supervisor.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction to Findings

This chapter will outline findings from the data collected during interviews with the four research participants who have been assigned pseudonyms: Ryan, Sam, Kevin and Max. Brief biographies with pertinent information regarding these participants are provided in Section 4.1 Extensiveness of Camp Counseling Experience. These qualitative interviews were conducted with teachers who currently teach at four different independent schools in the Toronto area. In accordance with the criteria set out in the Chapter 3: Methodology, these teachers also had pre-service experience as camp counselors. Each interview was between 30 and 60 minutes long. The questions from these semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix B. The questions targeted understanding how a history of camp counseling may or may not influence the efficacy beliefs of the teachers in a number of teacher-specific responsibility areas. Four central themes emerged during the interviews and the findings have been focused into these themes to present the data in the most cogent manner possible. Within the four major themes, there are multiple subthemes that allow for a more concentrated investigation into the data. The thematic and sub-thematic groupings are:

4.1 Extensiveness of Camp Counseling Experience

4.2 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Classroom Management

   4.2.1 Handling Disruptive Behavior

   4.2.2 Expectations and Classroom Rules

   4.2.3 Management Systems and Routine Establishment

4.3 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Student Engagement
4.3.1 Motivating Students

4.3.2 Student Self-Esteem

4.3.3 Helping Students Value Learning

4.3.4 Assisting Families

4.3.5 Student Creativity

4.4 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Instructional Practices

4.4.1 Crafting Good Questions

4.4.2 Using Alternative Assessment & Instructional Strategies

4.1 Extensiveness of Camp Counseling Experience

As was noted early in this study, self-efficacy is “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995, p.2) and these beliefs significantly affect one’s actions, motivations and eventually, successes and failures (Henson, 2001) According to Bandura’s social cognitive theory one’s self-efficacy beliefs are developed and changed based on four main factors. Primary among these factors is a “mastery experience, in which the individual personally experiences success in a desired action” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.414). Mastery experiences are the most influential because they illustrate proof of one’s abilities through legitimately enacting the skills (Bandura, 1997). Social cognitive theory also maintains that efficacy beliefs can be transferable from one area to another if the individual understands the two areas to be alike enough that mastery in one will carry, to at least some degree, to the other (Bandura, 1997). It is this transferability of mastery experiences that is being researched in this study. Also essential to consider is the factor that, “when considering efficacy beliefs, it is the individual’s perception of an experience
that is far more important than whether or not the experience takes place” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.428). Therefore, to understand the potential ways that mastery experiences which occurred during camp counseling transferred to efficacy beliefs in teaching it is necessary to acknowledge each participant’s perception of their camp counseling experience. If there was no perceived mastery experience in the camp environment, there could obviously be no transfer of mastery from camp to the classroom.

Of the four teachers, the shortest tenure as a camp counselor was two summers and the longest was fourteen summers. As will be indicated in the findings below, a direct relationship became clear: the longer the participant spent as a camp counselor, the more they felt their efficacy beliefs in teacher-specific responsibilities were influenced by mastery experiences at camp. Ryan, whose career as a camp counselor spanned two summers while an undergraduate, spent only one year as a ‘residential’ counselor at camp where he oversaw a cabin of campers and lived in close quarters with them. His other summer was spent strictly as an activity staff member. Of all four research participants, Ryan had, as will be indicated in the findings sections below, the most limited perceived transferability in mastery experiences from his counseling career to his teaching career.

Max, who spent eight years on staff at a summer camp, had a much broader range of positions in the organization. Spending four years as a residential counselor for campers aged six to eight and then a subsequent two summers as the director of that same age section. Following those summers, Max spent two years leading the camp’s Leader-In-Training Program on their canoe trips. Simply based on the variety of positions and length of camp career, Max had a much more comprehensive counseling experience than
did Ryan. Across all teacher-responsibility areas investigated, Max was much more able than Ryan to align his efficacy beliefs as a teacher with the mastery experiences he had as a camp counselor.

Sam, the third participant, had camp counseling experience spanning eleven years wherein she spent two summers as a residential counselor, two summers as an assistant section director of the youngest campers and seven years working in the camp’s canoe trip program. Within those seven years in the trip program, Sam also helped to lead the Leader in Training program and training staff members. Sam’s perspective on the transferability of her counseling mastery experiences to the classroom was even more pronounced than Max’s.

Kevin’s career in the camp counseling sphere was the most extensive of the participants and his view on the transferability of efficacy beliefs from camp to school was the most strongly held and widespread of any participant. Kevin spent fourteen years on staff at his camp, starting with four summers as a residential and program counselor. Following that, he spent two summers as the section head for the thirteen-year old age group and then another three years as the director of the Leader in Training Program. His final five years were as the camp’s assistant director overseeing staff, activities and campers. Kevin’s perspective on the transferability of efficacy beliefs from being a camp counselor to a teacher is summated: “What I learned at camp is why I wanted to be a teacher. It could not be more complimentary.”

Upon considering the direct relationship between the length of the participant’s camp counseling career and their conviction that their mastery experiences transferred to their teaching career the implication seems to be: those who remain camp counselors
longer feel more strongly about that experience and are more willing to apply its benefits – in this case, self-efficacy beliefs – later on and elsewhere in their careers. Sam summarizes this rationale for remaining at camp and the transferability of its mastery experiences with the statement, “Bottom line: I loved going to camp. I obviously continued doing it as long as I possibly thought I could. And I definitely use a lot of things I learned at camp in my teaching.”

4.2 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Classroom Management

In their study, “The Influence of Formal and Informal Formative Pre-Service Experiences on Teacher Self-Efficacy” Tuchman and Isaacs concluded that for the teachers who participated in their research, camp counselor experience did not relate to efficacy for classroom management (2011). This was counter to their expectations and in spite of the fact that camp counselors are often tasked with managing the behaviour of campers. As a potential explanation, the researchers offered, “it may be that the behavioural expectations of children and the ways in which those expectations are communicated and enforced in schools differ from camps” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427). As is outlined in the following sub-themes 4.2.1 through 4.2.3, my findings based on the case studies of the four teachers were generally contrary to those found by Tuchman and Isaacs, although there were some convergences.

4.2.1 Handling Disruptive Behavior

All four participants felt strongly that camp counseling experience positively influenced their abilities as educators to control disruptive behaviour in the classroom. For both Kevin and Max, the mastery experience was in understanding that the more significant the bond between camper and counselor, the easier any managing of
disruptive behaviour would be. Max’s experience as a camp counselor taught him to respond not only to misbehaviours but to acknowledge the individual’s motivations for those actions. As he commented, “Camp taught me that anger can be a blanket for fear, or that misbehaviour is always a blanket for something.” Max felt this understanding of human motivations transfers to dealing with disruptive behavior in the classroom because, “if you can use positive motivators then I think you can pretty well control the behaviour”. Kevin believed that, due to the immersive nature of sleepover summer camp, there can develop a relationship between the camper and the counselor that is built around sincere respect and care. He found that campers who believe that their counselors trust and respect them are less likely to misbehave and that if they do misbehave, are more likely to respond positively to any reaction by the counselor. The importance of cultivating mutually respectful and caring relationships between students and teachers is what Kevin perceived to be the mastery experience that transferred from camp counseling to controlling disruptive behaviour in the classroom. This perception matches research indicating that “the teacher–student relationships that are present and made within a classroom can have huge effects on the overall academic achievement and behavior management within a classroom” (Vijayan, 2016, p. 209)

For Ryan, he felt that the counseling experience applicable to teaching was the ability to clearly convey the seriousness of any certain situation. In a summer camp environment, where the atmosphere is centred on fun and entertainment, the ability to clearly express boundaries and handle misbehaviour was an essential skill. Ryan perceived this experience to be transferable to the classroom because he felt that it is
important to the welfare of a class that the teacher have the ability to make clear when the environment is a joking one and and when it is more serious.

Sam’s perception of the transferability of her experiences handling disruptive behaviour was focused mostly on the fact that camp offers a place to practice – in her case, for eleven years – the same management tricks a teacher learns in a teacher education program. As Sam noted, “The countdowns, the ‘clap once if you can hear me’ – all those tricks are really useful and I think you learn them much better in an outdoor setting”. The perspectives of all four teachers on the transferability of experience from camp to managing misbehaviour was indicative of their general views on classroom management, as will be noted in the following sub-sections.

4.2.2 Expectations & Classroom Rules

All four participants perceived their camp counseling experience as influential on their belief that they could successfully convey clear expectations about student behaviour and have students follow classroom rules. For Sam, she felt that camp experience helped her learn to communicate (both in general and specifically expectations and classroom rules) much more effectively. Clearly expressing behavioural expectations to campers in a safe and productive way enabled Sam to see the importance of cultivating a culture of mutual respect. She felt this influenced the way in which she went about successfully communicating her expectations in the classroom. Similarly, Ryan believed that the communal living environment of summer camp helped him learn to teach campers the importance of respecting one’s peers, community and environment. Facilitating his campers’ belief in the importance of respect helped Ryan believe that he
could enforce those same behavioral expectations in his classroom, where they are equally important as in a camp setting.

Both Kevin and Max saw the act of generating mutually agreed upon behavioural expectations with their campers as the transferable mastery experience that influenced their ability as teachers to have students follow rules. For Kevin and Max, the types of conversations that revolved around campers’ questions of, “Why do we need to go to bed at this time?” or “Why do we need to clean the cabin?” enabled them to practice developing communally discussed rationales for behavioural rules. Once campers understood that bed times were set so that they would have energy for all the next day’s activities or that cabins needed to be cleaned so that wildlife wouldn’t enter their living quarters, they responded to counselor expectations much more effectively. Having campers understand the foundational “why” for each rule helped both Kevin and Max in their practice as teachers. When working towards establishing classroom rules both utilize, in Max’s terminology, “a let’s get there together approach”. Levin and Nolan note that this type of collaborative (between students and teachers) classroom management style enables the development of a community of learners and allows for students to have the chance to feel responsible for their own behaviour and learning (Levin & Nolan, 2010). For Kevin in particular, his experience with behaviour management at camp led to his self-efficacy belief towards being a faculty leader at his school for creating a revolutionized progressive discipline system.

4.2.3 Management Systems & Routine Establishment

When discussing efficacy beliefs in the establishment of classroom routines and management systems, the participants were not as unanimous in their feelings that there
was a transferable mastery experience from camp counseling. Three of the four participants saw a transferable influence in terms of establishing routines. Ryan credited the counseling experience for helping him to understand the importance of a structured schedule. When working at camp it was immensely clear to him that, “everything runs more smoothly when there is more structure”. As a teacher this influenced his belief that the more structured his lessons, the more specific an outcome he could expect from his students. Max seconded the influence of understanding the importance of structure. His time as a camp counselor where he had to look after children for, “24 hours a day, 18 if you count sleep” underlined the difficulty of managing behaviour without a well structured routine. Using the immersive counseling experience as an influencer, Max felt that his ability to structure a 40 or 80-minute lesson was positively affected. Sam’s experience at a summer camp where she had no impact on the formation of routines that were, “[so old] they were basically engrained into the buildings” caused her to believe that there was no influence on her ability to establish a classroom routine.

Referring to classroom management systems, only two of the four participants saw a mastery experience that was transferable from camp counseling. Kevin found that the critical element to a successful classroom management system was making sure the students understood that the teacher’s sense of care towards them was made manifest in the management system. He perceived that for a system to be successful it must be just as clear, consistent and equitable as the teacher themselves. Kevin felt that this intertwining of care for the management system and for the students themselves came from his experience as a counselor. This converges with research that indicates that it is essential for classroom management systems and teacher-student relationships to be consistent for
Campers understanding that their counselor believed in the system of rules because they were acting in the campers’ best interests led to the systems that were most loyally abided by. Similarly, Max found that caring as deeply as possible for your students is the best way to individualize a management system to fit their needs. Students knowing that their teacher cares about them as individuals allows for the students to commit to any management system implemented by the teacher. Max took his belief in this approach from lessons learned at camp where he realized that, “You can best set campers up for success the more you understand them as people.” The importance of establishing caring classroom management systems was made clear to both Kevin and Max through their camp counseling experience.

On the topic of classroom management systems, the perceptions of both Ryan and Sam diverged from those of Kevin and Max and converged with the findings of Tuchman and Isaacs (2011) that the enforcement of a strict classroom behavioural system was too specific to schools to be transferable from camp. Sam explained her belief that because the settings of camp and the classroom are distinct, the behavioral expectations and attention spans for campers and students are different:

If I was running an activity at camp, I would be able to say, “ok here is your activity: go.” And they’ve got half an hour and they go and they are still interested. Whereas half an hour in a classroom at school – the kids were gone after ten minutes. They were bored. So I think it was the interesting skill in comparison there but I think you almost get a skewed vision at camp of how kids focus. You get a really skewed vision.

This viewpoint aligns with Weinstein’s contention that pre-service experiences in informal settings such as camp counseling are not applicable to the efficacy beliefs of teachers because the settings are not comparable enough. Weinstein goes further to
suggest that this incompatibility results in ‘unrealistic optimism’ felt by student-teachers who have not yet handled the full responsibilities of being a teacher (Weinstein, 1988).

In divergence from Tuchman and Isaacs’ (2011) findings that camp counseling experience did not relate to efficacy for classroom management, the four participants found that in a majority of classroom management responsibility areas, their mastery experiences at camp were indeed transferable to the classroom. This belief in transferability diverges from Weinstein’s contention that informal pre-service experiences would result in ‘unrealistic optimism’ (Weinstein, 1988). Even Ryan, whose perception of his camp experience was the least strongly related to his teaching efficacy beliefs, found that in dealing with disruptive behaviour, establishing rules, setting expectations and instituting routines he had transferred his mastery experiences from camp to the classroom. Tuchman and Isaacs (2011) explained their finding that efficacy for classroom management was not transferred from camp counseling by suggesting that the behavioural expectations of campers and students and the ways in which those expectations are expressed are too different to be comparable. My study had only some minor evidence in support of that notion. Tuchman and Isaacs also note that at camp, “counselors engage students in a way that they feel to be meaningful, and which, apparently, they feel is comparable to the way teachers engage their students” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427). In numerous instances, it is this same meaningful engagement that seemed to impact the classroom management efficacy beliefs and teaching practices of all four participants. My research indicates that for the four teachers researched, the transferability of mastery experiences from camp counseling to teaching practice was
more widespread and comprehensive in the Classroom Management category than in either Student Engagement or Instructional Practices.

4.3 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Student Engagement

Tuchman and Isaacs’ (2011) study found that perceived success as a camp counselor was associated with efficacy for teacher responsibilities in the area of student engagement. Their study indicates, “Success as a camp counsellor, therefore, builds efficacy beliefs for engagement that appear to carry over into the classroom and become efficacy for student engagement.” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427) As was noted in the above research on Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Classroom Management, the perceived transferability of mastery experiences varied in opinion from Ryan, with his two years of camp counseling experience to Kevin, with his fourteen camp summers and strongly held positive viewpoint on the transferability of efficacy beliefs from camp to the classroom. It is in the area of student engagement that this range of differing perspectives begins to be particularly noticeable. Kevin’s perception of the transferability of his mastery experiences consistently aligns with Tuchman and Isaacs’ conclusion while Ryan’s almost invariably diverges; the opinions of Max and Sam tend towards a positive influence, but do vary a certain amount.

4.3.1 Motivating Students

When considering their ability to motivate students who show low interest in school work, three of the four teachers indicated that their efficacy beliefs were not at all influenced by their camp counseling experience. Ryan, Sam and Max, each one a middle or high school math or science teacher, all opined that when working with minimally interested students, their ability to motivate them came from reasons specific to their
particular subject area and had no relationship with their counseling experience. Exemplifying this, Ryan indicated that as an activity staff at summer camp, where he worked as a mountain biking instructor, there was no responsibility to motivate uninterested campers to come to the activity. He viewed it as his entire duty to facilitate the best possible experience for those campers who did choose to sign up and those were campers that were unvaryingly interested in mountain biking. Alternatively, for Kevin, his belief in his ability to motivate limitedly interested students was derived from his success motivating similarly disengaged campers as a counselor. For campers, Kevin felt that camp offered the opportunity to find their own interests and once found, pursue them until they became passions. The experience of being a counselor who enabled this opportunity for campers led directly to his belief that he could motivate students to try different things and find an element of the academic subject that interested them.

4.3.2 Developing Student Self-Esteem

On the topic of developing their students’ self-esteem, two of the participants believed that their counseling experience had no influence on their efficacy belief while the other two teachers felt strongly that it did. As a math teacher, Ryan believed that his ability to develop the self-esteem of his students derived from his ability to develop tasks that had “low floors and high ceilings”. These mathematical tasks that are both easily accessible and extendable are the type of effective subject-specific practice that Ryan believed had nothing to do with his camp career. Sam felt that her ability to work with students to develop their self-esteem improved over the course of her teaching career and was not influenced by any pre-service experience, either formal or informal. Kevin’s perspective on his effectiveness for enhancing the self-esteem beliefs of students was
very similar to his view on his ability to handle disruptive behaviour. This centred on the idea that a relationship between camper and counselor that is scaffolded by trust, openness and care is one where a camper’s self esteem can grow. This belief is overwhelmingly supported by research that demonstrates that a positive teacher-student relationship is favorably related to the development of pupils’ self-esteem (Harter, 1996; Reddy et al., 2003; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994). On the importance of these relationships and how they apply to his efficacy beliefs in the classroom, Kevin stated:

> The more you can do to build relationships with those kids, the more they know they can go to you when they need help. You can help build up their self-esteem and their confidence through those mentorship moments…. The confidence that I got from mentoring those campers at camp - that prepared me for what I do now [teaching].

Max held a very strong perspective on the necessity of his ability to develop students’ self-esteem in his middle school science class:

> That, I think, is the most important role of being a teacher. Teaching middle school science here, I tell the students and the parents, the point of the course is not to learn a lot of science and calculate a lot of things or to memorize a lot of facts, it is to enjoy science and have a good experience.

Similarly strong was his opinion that this belief was influenced by his camp counseling experience. Max felt that summer camp is designed to be an encouraging place for all children, that “no matter who you are, camp can make you feel good about yourself; you can have a positive experience”. He believed that the facilitation of this all-encompassing positivity influenced the effectiveness of his ability to develop every student’s self-esteem.
4.3.3 Helping Students Value Learning

When considering their ability to help students value learning Kevin, Max and Sam were staunch in their belief that camp counseling positively influenced their efficacy. Both Kevin and Sam felt that the most important way to aid students in the realization that learning is valuable is to make the learning as applicable to their real life as possible. This is consistent with research that indicates teachers who are able to foster appreciation for learning have successfully connected the content to students’ interests and home backgrounds (Brophy, 2008). Kevin believed that in the caring and supportive environment of summer camp the duty of being a counselor enables you to learn how to empathize with the sensibilities and interests of the campers. This capacity for empathy transferred entirely to the classroom, allowing him to more comprehensively understand students and to strive towards making the learning as applicable to their real lives as possible. Sam’s influence from camp counseling to the high school classroom was more specific to the identity of her school community. Her school runs yearly camping trips for its students and this opportunity to converge her past camping experience with the learning experiences of her students allows her to format the subject content in a way that best reaches the lives of her students. Max’s belief about his counseling experience’s influence on his ability to help students value learning was based in an understanding of learning in a broad sense. He feels that students respond well to a teacher who indicates their genuine interest in learning, with fascinating ideas and with an appetite for challenging themselves. This belief in the importance of the teacher being an active learner aligns with Brophy’s research indicating that students value learning more if their teacher models interest and enthusiasm for the subject (Brophy, 2008). He felt that this
effective attitude was adopted directly from the camp setting. At camp, the environment is developed around the idea of stepping outside one’s comfort zone. As Max stated:

Because that is really where learning happens, when you are on the edge of: where you can just barely do this. Whether you are learning how to windsurf or carry a canoe or something, it is still the same thing – you are learning a new skill.

Imparting that passion for skill development and personal growth is where Max perceived the transferability of efficacy beliefs from camp to classroom.

4.3.4 Assisting Families

When considering whether or not camp counseling experience aided in the self-efficacy beliefs of assisting families help their children do well in school, there was a significant disparity between the perspectives of the participants. This difference can perhaps be applied to the camp counseling positions held by the participants and their respective opportunities (or lack thereof) to undergo a related mastery experience. As someone who did not have an overly long camp career, and who felt they had no interaction with the parents of campers, Ryan felt there was zero influence from his camp experience on his ability to help families aid their children with school work. For Sam, despite her long camping career, she was never in a position where there was any significant interaction with the parents of campers. It was for this reason that she felt that camp offered no mastery experience on this front. For Max and Kevin however, there was a sincere belief that their earlier camp experiences dealing with parents and families had enabled a strong efficacy belief to assist families with their child’s academics. Max had experience as a counselor and as a section director wherein he ensured that any approach to handling significant camper problems such as homesickness or bullying was being relayed to and supported by the family. He felt that this served as terrifically
effective practice for his work as a teacher at an independent school where there is the expectation that teachers will be approached extremely regularly by parents to explain anything from the context of a particular grade or the dynamic of a classroom. Kevin’s perspective on his experience interacting with the families of campers was that even though it may have only been a matter of minutes at the beginning of the session, it was immensely important in the moment and in its influence on his future professionalism as a teacher:

I think that camp taught me from a young age, ever since I was a counselor, the proper way to communicate with parents. Making sure they know that you are confident and competent individual who is going to take care of their child. As they are handing off their most precious thing in the world to you, a stranger at a camp…. When it comes to family I just think, eye contact, hand shake, your first impression and then the lasting impression you leave with the child and their family when they leave camp. Taught me that at a very young age and that is exactly how I handle myself here.

The perceptions of Max and Kevin align with research on the element trust in parent-teacher relationships. Both teachers and parents look for an increase in communication. Adams and Christenson (2000) indicate that the most effective way for teachers to increase trust with families and therefore to assist families help their children do well in school is to be an effective communicator in both formal and informal opportunities (Adams & Christenson, 2000).

It is perhaps in this sub-theme focusing on the assisting of families more than any other aspect of this research study that it is clear: when considering the development and transferability of one’s efficacy beliefs it is not whether or not an experience occurred that matters but rather the individual’s perception of that experience. Kevin perceived, without any doubt, that his camp experience with parents aided him in his belief that he
could effectively work with the demanding parents of his independent school students to help them academically.

4.3.5 Student Creativity

When referring to the influence of camp on their capacity to foster student creativity in the classroom, only one of the four teachers found that their camp counseling was not a transferable experience. In this context creativity is understood as “eminently suited to the multiple needs of life in the 21st century, which calls for enhanced skills of adaptation, flexibility, initiative, and the ability to use knowledge in different ways than has been hitherto realized” (Burnard and White, 2008, p. 668). Similar to his perspectives on motivating uninterested students and developing student self-esteem Ryan, a high school math teacher, believed that his ability to foster creativity derived entirely from his subject-specific expertise and his teaching experience of celebrating unique solutions. Max felt that within the daily schedule of summer camp there is a lot of opportunity for creative endeavor on the part of both the staff and the campers. These unstructured “free” periods where counselors were counted upon to facilitate creative entertainment for and with campers enabled Max to feel confident in his capacity as a teacher to convey the notion that science can be the realm of creative problem solving. Sam’s belief in her ability as a physics teacher to nurture student creativity was similarly borne out of her camp counseling experience. Her approach to leading campers on canoe trips was that the children had a significant opportunity to learn, explore and try new things. No idea or action – as long as it was safe – was ruled out. Her mantra as a teacher developed from that sensibility:
Can we try this? Yeah, sure, let's try it. Actually that does happen in our physics class a lot. Can we actually do this experiment? Sure, let's try it. So I think that is something I have learned from camp. The ability to say, ‘yes, sure’.

This approach converges with literature indicating that students appreciate and are motivated by teaching that “makes abstract content more concrete and personal” (Brophy, 2008, p. 141). Kevin’s conception of his ability to foster student creativity circles back to the essential capacity for camp to be a place where children can be understood as individuals. The safety of the camp environment, where each camper is enabled to feel comfortable being themselves, allows for a richly supportive community to be developed. Whether it be a small cabin group or an entire age group of children, the more supportive an environment that can be created, the more able the campers will be to learn from one another. Campers feeling comfortable enough to be creative in their own way and being able to feed off one another’s strengths – it was this environment that Kevin perceived as being applicable to the creative community of learners he would aim to build in his classroom.

Across the whole range of responsibilities relating to efficacy for Student Engagement, three of the four participants demonstrated beliefs that converged with Tuchman and Isaacs’ (2011) findings. They perceived their success as camp counselors as being influential on their capacity for engaging students in a meaningful way. Ryan, who’s beliefs were consistently divergent from the other three teachers and from Tuchman and Isaacs’ findings, did not have a camp experience that he perceived to have any significant impact on his teaching practice as it related to Student Engagement.
4.4 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Instructional Practices

In their study, Tuchman and Isaacs (2011) concluded that perceived success as a camp counselor was associated not only with efficacy for student engagement, but also, “somewhat surprisingly, there may also be activities that the counselors perceive to be instructional in nature, in which success might breed efficacy for instructional practices” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p. 427). Findings in my study ranged from a direct convergence with this conclusion to a significant deviation. As was the case when investigating student engagement beliefs, those teachers with more extensive camp counseling experience were much more likely to perceive that their camp history influenced their efficacy towards instructional practices.

4.4.1 Crafting Good Questions

Three of the four teachers perceived that camp counseling experience influenced their efficacy beliefs towards creating good questions for students. Similar to her viewpoint on the impact of counseling on her ability to help students value learning (4.3.3) where she stressed the importance of applying the learning to the students’ real lives, Sam felt that her capacity to create dynamic questions was based on her relating the questions to the real lives of the students. Following the students going on a canoe trip, Sam felt that comfort with canoe tripping allowed her to create questions for her physics class that touched on friction and forces at play in the camping trip environment. This again recalls Brophy’s (2008) research that indicates students respond positively and appreciatively to content being connected to their interests and home backgrounds, to abstract content being made more concrete and to teachers who model interest and enthusiasm (Brophy, 2008).
For both Kevin and Max, they felt that the ability to craft effective questions for students comes from understanding them as individuals – an understanding they feel essential to all instructional practices. When the task for a counselor is to get a camper up on water-skis, it is critical to understand what next steps are applicable to that particular camper. Understanding their motivations, fears, confusions and previous experiences all influence the questions that would be asked. As Max notes,

That is the key to learning I think, at camp or at school or anywhere. Presenting people with a challenge. As a camp counselor you get to know your kids so well. As a teacher too. By the end of the year, you know your kids in some ways better than they know themselves. Being able to set a challenge for them that is attainable but not obvious.

This ability to set individualized challenges for students in the classroom by asking personalized questions is where Max perceived the counseling influence on his teaching practice. The perceptions of Kevin and Max that knowledge of the individual student and differentiated teaching are essential is aligned with Carol Ann Tomlinson’s (2003) research. Knowing campers (or students) well enables teachers to understand and appreciate students’ unique needs and be able to appropriately modify elements such as curriculum, instructional strategies and the learning environment (Tomlinson, 2003). In a continuation of his perspective regarding the transferability of efficacy for student engagement, Ryan believed that any efficacy he has for crafting good questions came not from camp counseling but from his subject specific education experience.

4.4.2 Using Alternative Assessment & Instructional Strategies

When referring to their capacity for using alternative assessment and instructional strategies, the four participants demonstrated wide variety in their beliefs whether or not camp counseling had influence on their efficacy beliefs. Ryan felt that his ability to use a
variety of assessment strategies was not at all influenced by his camp experience and that
his efficacy had developed through his professional teaching and his engagement with the
expectations of his particular school. Sam, the high school physics teacher, did not
perceive herself as being effective at using a number of assessment strategies and
therefore could obviously not credit her camp counseling experience with being a
transferable mastery experience. Kevin felt that having a capacity for utilizing alternative
assessment strategies in the classroom was influenced by his experience evaluating staff
as an assistant director at camp:

I think camp taught me how to recognize individual strengths and be able to
separate individuals so that we could work on what they need to improve on and
next steps. I think camp taught me at a young age how to recognize everyone’s
strengths and everyone’s individual next steps.

Kevin perceived the importance of not taking a uniform view of students and their
assessment needs as being influenced by his camp experience. For Max, his belief in his
ability to use a variety of assessment strategies strongly related back to the challenges of
being a camp counselor:

To be a good counselor I had to step outside of my comfort zone and what I was
naturally good at. Which is kind of the process that you go through as a teacher.
To try and develop quality assessments you have to try variety of different things.
I had to challenge myself to be better at different things.

Max’s perceived willingness to be personally flexible as a counselor is what influenced
his belief in his practice as a teacher to implement varied assessment strategies. Max’s
approach is reflected in the research of Hall et al. (2003) who note that teachers who can
successfully differentiate for their students are, “flexible in their approach to teaching and
adjust the curriculum and presentation of information to learners, rather than expecting
students to modify themselves for the curriculum” (Hall et al., 2003, p.2). A similar belief
in personal adaptability is what influenced Sam in her efficacy views on using alternative instructional strategies. She felt that her extensive experience planning activities for campers in the outdoors influenced her instructional flexibility in the classroom. Sam commented:

Camp is good for that because: you have a plan and then it rains. You’ve got your plan and you need to change it. You can’t worry about it. I think I have been able to take that flexibility and be okay with it in the classroom. And say “Okay, that is fine. This didn’t work, that’s cool. Let’s talk about why it didn’t work and then do something different.” I am happy to be flexible.

In a continuation of his rationale for the other instructional practices discussed, Kevin believed that the most influential way his use of various instructional strategies was influenced by camp experience came from the opportunity to understand campers as individually as possible. His point was that at camp, “You recognize each camper’s potential and get to know them on an individual basis. I think alternative strategies come in your ability to connect with the camper and how much you can make them believe in themselves.” This focus converges with research that states, that positive teacher-student relationships have a positive impact on pupils’ outcomes, such as academic motivation and performance (Goodenow, 1993; Muller, 2001). As was consistent with his beliefs referring to other instructional practices, Ryan felt that his capacity for utilizing alternative instructive strategies derived from his previous subject specific knowledge and from his teaching experience and not from anything to do with camp counseling.

Tuchman and Isaacs found that a history of perceived success in camp counseling was associated with efficacy in instructional activities and my findings support that same conclusion. Similar to my findings on the influence of camp counseling experience on the efficacy beliefs of teachers for classroom management it seems to be that it is the level of
engagement with campers that drives the efficacy for crafting good questions, using a variety of assessment strategies and alternative instruction strategies.

4.5 Conclusion

This research study which investigated what influence, if any, pre-service camp counseling experience had on the efficacy beliefs of four teachers was significantly convincing in its findings. The occurrence of mastery experiences in the camp counselling environment were believed to be consistently transferable to teacher responsibility areas by three of the four participants. Necessary for such a transfer to exist was an initial camp counseling mastery experience. For Ryan, the teacher whose camp career was notably less comprehensive than the other participants, the opportunity for such experiences was more limited. Even with that exception, all four participants expressed their belief that in the majority of responsibility areas regarding classroom management – dealing with disruptive behaviour, establishing rules, conveying expectations and using management systems - their efficacy beliefs were positively influenced by their experience as summer camp counselors. Less universal but still significantly positive were the teachers’ perceptions that summer camp mastery experiences transferred to their efficacy beliefs in areas regarding student engagement such as motivating low interest students, promoting student self-esteem, helping students to value learning, assisting families with their child’s academics and fostering student creativity. Their opinions on efficacy for instructional practice was similar to the investigation of efficacy beliefs for student engagement in that three of the four teachers perceived an influence from their camp experience. Despite differences between the settings of camp and the classroom, the participants of this study felt strongly enough
about their experience as a counselor to feel their mastery experiences were transferable from one domain to the other. This can be seen as a reminder of the fact that when dealing with self-efficacy theory it is the individual’s opinion of the experience that matters most, not simply whether or not the experience occurred (Bandura, 1997).
CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study was designed to investigate the research question: what influence, if any, does pre-service camp counseling experience have on the self-efficacy beliefs of 4 Ontario school teachers? Two sub-questions supported this central research question; the first was: what specific aspects, if any, of the camp counseling experience, have most influenced the self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers? The second sub-question was: what specific aspects, if any, of the camp counseling experience are most limited in their influence on the self-efficacy beliefs of the teachers?

Through consultation of existing literature on the topic and semi-structured interviews with four research participants, several key findings emerged from this qualitative case study. These findings were organized into thematic groupings and outlined in Chapter 4. This final chapter will discuss the implications of these findings for the broader educational community and personal implications for my practice as a teacher. It will also express recommendations directed towards a number of educational stakeholders. Finally, this chapter will make suggestions on what directions future relevant research might take.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings & Their Significance

Essential to this research study is an understanding of Albert Bandura’s social cognitive theory and its definition of self-efficacy. Bandura defines self-efficacy as, “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995, p.2). According to Bandura, there are four factors that can influence one’s self-efficacy belief with the foremost of these being
a, “mastery experience, in which the individual personally experiences a desired action.” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.414). Mastery experiences are the most influential because they illustrate proof of one’s abilities through legitimately enacting the skills (Bandura, 1997). Social cognitive theory also explains that efficacy beliefs can be transferred from one area of experience to another if the central individual understands the two areas to be alike enough that mastery in one will carry, to at least some degree, to the other (Bandura, 1997). It is necessary to recognize that when considering mastery experiences and their influence on self-efficacy, “it is the individual’s perception of an experience that is far more important than whether or not the experience took place” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.428). My research study investigated whether or not, and to what extent, mastery experiences in teacher-specific responsibility areas that occurred while camp counseling transferred to efficacy beliefs in teaching. To examine this, it was necessary to explore each research participant’s perception of their camp counseling experience; there could be no transfer of mastery experience from camp counseling to teaching if there was no initially perceived mastery experience.

5.1.1 Extensiveness of Camp Counseling Experience

It became clear that between the four participants, there was a direct relationship between the length of their camp counseling career and their perception of whether or not this experience included mastery experiences that transferred to their self-efficacy in the classroom. Those who remained camp counselors longer felt stronger about these employment experiences and were more willing to apply their resulting self-efficacy beliefs later on and elsewhere in their careers.
5.1.2. Transferability of Classroom Management Efficacy Beliefs

For the four teachers interviewed, in the majority of Classroom Management responsibility areas – handling disruptive behavior, setting expectations and class rules, utilizing management systems and establishing routines – their mastery experiences as camp counselors were indeed transferable to the classroom. This finding diverges from the conclusion reached by Tuchman and Isaacs in their study, “The Influence of Formal and Informal Formative Pre-Service Experiences on Teacher Self-Efficacy” (Tuchman & Isaacs 2011). Tuchman and Isaacs found that efficacy for classroom management was not transferable from camp counseling, perhaps because the behavioral expectations for campers and the manner in which these expectations are delivered is too different to be comparable. Tuchman and Isaacs also note that at camp, “counselors engage students in a way that they feel to be meaningful, and which, apparently, they feel is comparable to the way teachers engage their students” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427). All four of my research participants perceived this same depth of meaningful engagement with campers as constituting a mastery experience which transferred to their efficacy beliefs for classroom management. This meaningful engagement with students came through their belief in cultivating mutually caring and respectful teacher-student relationships, which correlates with academic achievement and positive behavior (Vijayan, 2016).

Engagement also came through mutually created (both student and teacher) classroom rules and behavioral expectations, a collaborative approach to management that enables a community of learners to develop and for students to take ownership of their actions and learning (Levin & Nolan, 2010). Engagement came importantly through a commitment to knowing students as individuals, equitably and consistently treating them with care and
instituting management systems that mirrored those qualities. There was the most consistent evidence (compared with efficacy beliefs for Student Engagement or Instructional Strategies) that camp counseling mastery experiences transferred to efficacy for Classroom Management.

5.1.3 Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Student Engagement

Across the wide range of responsibilities relating to efficacy for Student Engagement three of the four participants demonstrated perceptions that their successes as camp counselors were influential on their capacity for engaging students in a meaningful way. The one participant, Ryan, who did not perceive his camp experience to have any significant impact on his efficacy for Student Engagement, had the experience as a counselor that was by far the most limited. For the other three participants with an extensive counseling history they perceived that this constituted a mastery experience and influenced their efficacy beliefs for improving student motivation, affecting student self-esteem, helping students to value learning, assisting families help their child do well in school and fostering student creativity. Interview participants underlined that when a relationship between a camper and a counselor is built on trust, openness and care, the camper’s self-esteem has the opportunity to grow. This position is overwhelmingly supported by research that indicates student self-esteem is favorably related to a positive student-teacher relationship (Harter, 1996; Reddy et al., 2003; Roeser & Eccles, 1998; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994). My findings also indicated that developing an ability to impart passion for skill development and personal growth as a counselor (whether it be demonstrating how to windsurf or carry a canoe) related to the teacher’s perceived ability to model enthusiasm and interest in their subject – an important factor for students
valuing their learning (Brophy, 2008). Leading canoe trips with the expressed mindset of enabling campers to (safely) explore their surroundings influenced teachers’ perceived ability to be more adventurous in the classroom and to make learning less abstract and more exciting – an integral part of fostering creativity in the classroom (Brophy, 2008). These findings aligned with Tuchman and Isaacs’ conclusion that, “success as a camp counselor builds efficacy beliefs for engagement that appear to carry over into the classroom and become efficacy for Student Engagement” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427).

5.1.3. Transferability of Efficacy Beliefs for Instructional Practices

Tuchman and Isaacs found that a history of perceived success in camp counseling had a relationship not only with efficacy beliefs for Student Engagement, but also, “somewhat surprisingly, there may also be activities that the counselors perceive to be instructional in nature, in which success might breed efficacy for Instructional Practices” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.427). My findings support this conclusion to the same extent they support the notion that efficacy for Student Engagement can be transferred from the camp environment. Compared with Ryan, the participant with the most limited mastery experiences in the camp environment, those three participants with more extensive camp counseling experience were much more likely to perceive their camp experience as being influential on their efficacy for Instructional Practices such as crafting good questions, using a variety of assessment strategies and alternative instruction strategies than was Ryan. Teachers perceived that their past engagement of getting to know campers as individuals influenced their ability to differentiate and craft good questions for their students. Understanding the effectiveness of knowing the unique
needs of each child and having the ability to appropriately modify teaching to meet those needs is aligned with differentiation research on classroom teachers (Tomlinson, 2003). The teachers also felt that the necessary flexibility of being a camp counselor (i.e. modifying program when it rains) allowed them to practice adaptively engaging students in a way that aligns with how effective teachers differentiate for students (Hall et al., 2003). Similar to my findings on efficacy for Classroom Management, it seems to be that it is the level of engagement with campers that drives the perceived transferability of efficacy for Instructional Practices.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Implications for Educational Community

As was noted in Chapter 1 of this study, the implications of a teacher with strong self-efficacy beliefs are, for the wider educational community, considerable. Student outcomes that have been related to teachers’ strong sense of self-efficacy range from motivation (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989) to achievement, (Armor et al., 1976; Ashton & Webb, 1986; Moore & Esselman, 1992; Ross, 1992) to the self-efficacy beliefs of the students themselves (Anderson, Greene, & Loewen, 1988). Teachers with a considerable degree of self-efficacy plan and organize to a greater level (Allinder, 1994) and also tend to be more open-minded in regards to experimenting with new teaching methods to suit the needs of their class (Berman, McLaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977; Guskey, 1988; Stein & Wang, 1988). These same teachers are less likely to be critical of students who make errors (Ashton & Webb, 1986) and are subsequently more willing to persistently work with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984). Teachers with a high sense of efficacy are more likely to stay in the teaching profession (Burley,
Hall, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1991; Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982), have a stronger commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Evans & Tribble, 1986; Trentham, Silvern, & Brogdon, 1985) and demonstrate a more sincere passion for teaching (Allinder, 1994; Guskey, 1984; Hall, Burley, Villeme, & Brockmeier, 1992). It was with these remarkable and widespread implications in mind that I decided to investigate how teacher self-efficacy beliefs might best be facilitated.

My investigation into what influence, if any, pre-service camp counseling had on the self-efficacy beliefs of 4 Ontario school teachers hinged on these teachers’ perceptions of their camp counseling experience. If the experience as a camp counselor was extensive to the point where they felt a mastery experience had occurred, it was likely – for my four participants – that they saw this mastery experience as transferable to their practice in teacher-specific responsibility areas. This was especially true for teacher responsibilities related to classroom management, but also to student engagement and instructional practices. The underpinning camp counseling experience that transferred from camp to the classroom was the ethic of tremendous engagement and care that they felt they had committed to while working as a counselor. This perception of significant commitment and transferability aligns with the existent research. This research notes counseling alumni who believed the skills they learned at camp were transferable to other settings (like school or other employment areas) and also the great importance they placed in the responsibility they had for leading and teaching activities to campers (Ferarri & Digby, 2007). It can be concluded that the widespread positive implications of teacher self-efficacy listed above – specifically those to do with classroom management – of teachers with high efficacy beliefs can be considerably impacted by teachers with
camp counseling experience they consider masterful. In sub-section 5.3
Recommendations, there are listed the specific implications and recommendations for
three groups of educational stakeholders: pre-service teachers; principals, school boards
and admissions officers for teacher education programs; and teacher education program
facilitators.

5.2.2 Implications for My Practice

As addressed in the introduction to this research study, the issue of pre-service
camp counseling experience is one that I am positioned very close to. I have a seven-year
history of camp counseling and a large portion of my decision to enter the teaching
profession came as a result of this practice. The findings of this study which suggest pre-
service camp counseling, if perceived by the individual in question to have been a
masterful experience, is transferable to the classroom and positively impactful on the
self-efficacy beliefs of teachers – are ones I am very excited by. There is a confirmatory
aspect to the findings as my beliefs were mirrored by those suggested in the Ferarri &
Digby research (2007) cited above: I placed a great deal of importance in the
responsibility I held as a counselor and I felt that the skills I developed could and would
be transferable to the profession of teaching. Having conducted this research, I will be
able to navigate my own feelings of self-efficacy in the classroom with an added layer of
knowledge informing me of the potential implications of my beliefs. The most enduring
belief I carried with me from my camp counseling experience was the intrinsic
importance of the counselor-camper relationship and how its strength was facilitated by a
structure of trust, care and respect. Previous to this study, I had felt this quality aligned
with the most successful teacher-student relationships and I am excited that my findings
have confirmed this belief. I look forward to the endeavor of building strong, equitable, 
compassionate and engaged relationships with my students; as I can now believe, even 
more than I did previously, that this is an exceptionally important part of teaching and of 
my own experience as a past camp counselor.

5.3 Recommendations

Due to the widespread and significant implications of teachers with a strong sense 
of self-efficacy, there are some considerable recommendations that can be made. As 
mentioned in the previous sub-section regarding the implications into my own practice as 
a teacher, this research will aide pre-service teachers both with and without a history of 
camp counseling. It is recommended to these individuals that they review their camp 
counseling history for specific mastery experiences that may be transferable to teacher 
responsibility areas in classroom management, student engagement and instructional 
practices. Understanding that their perceptions of their experiences in a wide range of 
counselor-specific responsibility areas are influential on their self-efficacy beliefs in 
teacher-specific responsibility areas is an important acknowledgement. For those pre-
service teachers still employed as camp counselors, they are encouraged to review 
aspects of their counseling position that might be transferable to the teaching sphere and 
to build up efficacy beliefs at that activity. For those people who are considering teaching 
as a career path but are not yet enrolled in a teacher education program and are looking 
for a preliminary employment opportunity that will allow them to experience 
responsibility areas that would eventually influence their efficacy beliefs in teacher-
specific responsibility areas, it is recommended that they work as a camp counselor and 
follow the same steps laid out above.
A second recommendation is scaffolded by the fact that my research findings support Woocher’s (2004) suggestion that those who participate in pre-service informal activities such as camp counseling are promising candidates for the profession of teaching. For principals, schools, school boards or those selecting candidates for teacher education programs, the research findings of this study underline that teachers-to-be with camp counseling mastery experiences are likely to become teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs, along with all the positive implications that that carries.

A third recommendation is directed at teacher education programs. As the pre-service phase is most influential for the development of strong teacher self-efficacy beliefs and as this research underlines the influence of informal experiences on this development, it is recommended that some type of camp counseling type experience be incorporated into the program. As Tuchman and Isaacs suggest, the “best preparation would involve formal training … coupled with hands-on experience with children, whether through high-quality student teaching, through informal experiences such as…. camp counselors or through combination of these experiences” (Tuchman & Isaacs, 2011, p.428). It is recommended to those facilitators of teacher education programs that they incorporate this type of “combination” into their program. Developing an aspect of the teacher education program that can facilitate the experience of significant student engagement and care which the camp counselors perceived to be a transferable mastery experience would be a substantial influencer on teacher candidate efficacy beliefs.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

As was noted in the Methodology chapter of this study, this research is limited in its size. Having only four participants and being centralized in the Greater Toronto Area
puts a definite restriction on the reach of this study. Alternatively, as a series of qualitative case studies – no matter how a powerful or convincing they are – it is not prudent to extrapolate the findings to any larger population. For that reason, it is suggested that research investigating the influence of camp counseling experience on the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers outside of the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario or indeed Canada be undertaken so that a deep and meaningful engagement with those teacher’s stories, experiences and perspectives can be shared (Creswell, 2013). By chance, my interview participants all happened to teach at independent schools. As this was not an intended factor in my research I would like for future research to more directly incorporate the type of school that teachers work in. Also potentially fruitful would be a study that focused more specifically on a specific grade level or subject.

5.5 Conclusion

Teacher self-efficacy is a powerful notion – one that is both simple in its construct and considerable in its implications. By investigating what influence, if any, pre-service camp counseling experience has on the self-efficacy beliefs of four Ontario school teachers, I was able to determine that pre-service camp counseling, if perceived by the teacher in question to have been a masterful experience, is transferable to the classroom and positively impactful on the self-efficacy beliefs of that teacher. From student outcomes such as motivation, achievement and student self-efficacy to teacher organization, adaptation, persistence and a long list of more – the positive ramifications of teachers with strong senses of self-efficacy are remarkable. Understanding teacher self-efficacy and how to facilitate it is essential for educational stakeholders from teachers to principals to teacher educators and school board administrators.
REFERENCES


Appendix A: Letter of Consent for Interview Participants

Date: ___________________

Dear Participant,

I am a graduate student at OISE, University of Toronto, and am currently enrolled as a Master of Teaching candidate. I am studying the influence of pre-service camp counseling experience on the self-efficacy beliefs of teachers. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

I am writing a report on this study as a requirement of the Master of Teaching Program. The purpose of this requirement is to allow us to become familiar with a variety of ways to do research. My data collection consists of an hour-long interview that will be tape-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient to you. I can conduct the interview at your office or workplace, in a public place, or anywhere else that you might prefer.

The contents of this interview will be used for my assignment, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a conference or publication. I will not use your name or anything else that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information remains confidential. The only people who will have access to my assignment work will be my research supervisor. You are free to change your mind at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may decline to answer any specific questions. I will destroy the tape recording after the paper has been presented and/or published which may take up to five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to you for assisting in the project, and I will share with you a copy of my notes to ensure accuracy.

Please sign the attached form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. Thank you very much for your help.

Yours sincerely,

Researcher name: Patrick Alton
Phone number, email: xxx

Research Supervisor’s Name: Peter Joong

Phone #: xxx

Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time without penalty. I have read the letter provided to me by Patrick Alton and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described.

Signature: ________________________________

Name (printed): ____________________________

Date: ____________________
Appendix B: Interview Questions

Section I:
1). What is your name?

2). Can you please offer a brief history of your experience as a teacher?

3). Can you please offer a brief history of your experience as a camp counselor and in the summer camp industry?

Section II:
1. A) How much can you do to control disruptive behavior in the classroom?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

2. A) How much can you do to motivate students who show low interest in schoolwork?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

3. A) To what extent can you make your expectations about student behavior clear?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

4. A) How much can you do to get students to believe they can do well in schoolwork?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

5. A) How well can you respond to difficult questions from your students?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

6. A) How much can you do to help your students value learning?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

7. A) To what extent can you craft good questions for your students?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

8. A) How much can you do to get children to follow classroom rules?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

9. A) How well can you establish a classroom management system with each group of students?  
   B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

10. How much can you use a variety of assessment strategies?  
    B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

11. A) How much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school?  
    B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?
12. How well can you implement alternative strategies in your classroom?
B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

Auxiliary Questions (if time allows):

13. A) How well can you establish routines to keep activities running smoothly?
B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

14. A) How much can you do to foster student creativity?
B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?

15. A) How well can you provide appropriate challenges for very capable students
B) How, if at all, has your camp counseling experience influenced this?