

An Investigation of EFL School Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Engaging Learners: Implications for Continuous Professional Development Training

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Abstract

This study investigated Vietnamese EFL teachers' self-reported self-efficacy in engaging students after their involvement in a professional development training course. Using data from a delayed post-course evaluation questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, the study identified levels of teachers' self-efficacy related to students' engagement in learning English. The study examined specific aspects of self-efficacy, including classroom management, teaching methods, activity organization, external communication, and practical engagement strategies. Comparison among groups based on four demographic differences was also performed. It was found that post-training teachers' levels of self-efficacy, particularly in engaging students' learning, were encouragingly high. No statistically significant differences in self-efficacy were found among the groups, except between primary and secondary school teachers. Those findings suggested valuable implications for teacher trainers regarding the role of their training courses in the development of school teachers' self-efficacy in classroom engagement.

Keywords

Professional Development, Training Courses, Teachers' Self-Efficacy, Learners' Engagement

1. Introduction

English has been considered an important international language nowadays. In

Vietnam, in an effort to enhance the quality of learning and teaching English, the government carried out several projects; notably, the National Foreign Languages Project achieved encouraging outcomes. Under the framework of this national project, in-service school teachers of English were invited to get involved in upgrading training courses to improve both their language proficiency and teaching competence. Organizers and providers of these training courses were lecturers from key universities. All the related stakeholders in the training courses were well aware of the importance of these activities, since continuous teacher professional development is always essential for practitioners (McMorrow, 2007).

The training course in this study is one of the regular formal professional development activities for English school teachers during summer break annually. The course typically lasts for three months, during which teachers gather for intensive training every weekend. Trainers are experienced, senior lecturers who provide updated and innovative teaching methods through lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and micro-teaching facilitation. The training content covers a wide range of competencies, including teaching language skills, language aspects, project-based learning, assessment, and technology integration.

Upon the conclusion of a training program or course, it is argued that assessment and follow-up activities are necessary. This helps to inform relevant participants about the effectiveness and sustainability of a concrete course. According to Le and Yeo (2016), factors contributing to a program's success include training content, methods, trainers' competences, and trainees' support. Therefore, a holistic evaluation of a course should encompass these elements, along with other factors, throughout the course design and implementation process. This paper is part of our larger evaluation study series, which adopted Bramley's (1996) guidance (Figure 1).



Figure 1. A framework for course design, implementation, and evaluation (Adapted from Bramley, 1996).

In particular, this study focused on evaluating our institution's teacher training courses for in-service English teachers in the Mekong Delta, with two central objectives: (1) to identify the effectiveness in terms of improvement in teacher self-efficacy, and (2) to assess the effect of training on students' engagement. To these objectives, the study aimed to address the following research questions.

RQ 1. *What are the overall levels of Vietnamese EFL teachers' self-efficacy in engaging students?*

RQ 2. *What are the observed manifestations of students' engagement?*

RQ 3. *What is the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and students' engagement?*

RQ 4. *Are there differences in self-efficacy among demographic groups of EFL teachers?*

RQ 5. *Which elements of the PD training course are perceived to affect teachers' self-efficacy?*

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teacher self-efficacy is viewed through the lens of social cognitive theory by Bandura (1997). Accordingly, highly efficacious teachers are confident in their ability to carry out various classroom duties, such as managing the class, delivering materials, and building positive relationships with students. Teachers' self-efficacy is manifested through the way they influence students' learning, making them become more active and engaged. Self-efficacy, therefore, helps to decide what teachers choose to do, the efforts they invest to attain academic objectives, and their persistence to overcome challenges (Bandura, 1997).

Teachers' self-efficacy is found to significantly enhance learners' engagement in several studies. Emiru and Gedifew (2024), for example, reported that teacher self-efficacy accounted for up to 20% variation in learners' engagement. This rate was impressive, indicating how teachers' teaching confidence could result in more students interacting, participating, and focusing on their learning. In online mode, Tyaningsih et al. (2021) also found that teachers' self-efficacy acted as an important predictor of learners' engagement. Collectively, research indicates that teachers with high efficacy possess qualities that facilitate active learning, for example, paying individualized attention, using differentiated teaching techniques, and adopting instructional approaches that are more student-centered and accommodate different learning styles.

2.2. Learner Engagement

Learner engagement is a complex but observable combination of manifestations. According to Barkley and Major (2020), learner engagement is "the mental state students are in while learning, representing the intersection of feeling and thinking" (p. 6). Engagement in educational contexts is dissected into three basic dimensions: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. Engaged learners are believed to possess an interest in the subject, excitement about learning it, and a sense of responsibility for their own learning. The concept of engagement was further proposed by Barkley and Major (2020) to function as a product of motivation—the forces driving learning behaviors and active learning—activities students get involved in to build up skills. It is revealed in concrete physical behaviors in the classroom. Table 1 summarizes the manifestations of learner engagement.

Foster (2023) made a practical compilation of activities that can be used to create an engaging environment in the classroom. This could be every teacher's rep-

ertoire to accommodate active learning, which the author argued goes beyond the basic skills such as reading, listening, and taking notes, to reach a higher level of cognition including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. **Table 2** includes samples of these learner engagement techniques.

Table 1. Three dimensions of learner engagement (Barkley & Major, 2020).

Cognitive	Behavioral	Affective
Spending time on projects requiring integration and synthesis of ideas	Asking questions or contributing verbally in class	Time invested in studying
Completing coursework requiring practical application of knowledge or skills	Paying attention/active listening	Effort to meet instructor's expectations
Demonstrating growth on the course learning outcomes	Taking notes in class	Being prepared (or not) for class
Student self-perception of learning or engagement	Engaging in group projects or collaborative work	Discussing course material outside of class
	Helping or tutoring others	Student attitudes toward course material

Table 2. Common active learning strategies (Foster, 2023).

Techniques/Strategies
• Interactive lecturing: Break up mini-lecture sections with 2 - 3 minute pauses during which students discuss and rework notes in pairs • Think-pair-share • Small group work, group projects, or group problem-solving • Short writing activities to be used by the student alone or paired with group discussion • Clickers • Interactive games or problem-solving • Demonstrations, simulations, or experiments • Music, video, images, or a demonstration can create a sense of excitement, curiosity, or set up a problem or puzzle to be solved

2.3. Related Studies

Teacher self-efficacy has attracted attention from researchers worldwide. Lap et al. (2022a) reported findings from an investigation into EFL teachers' self-efficacy and classroom management in the Mekong Delta of Vietnam. The study was designed as a descriptive mixed-methods study, using a questionnaire, focus group interviews, and classroom observations to collect data. Forty-six EFL teachers from three high schools responded to the questionnaire. Twelve of them participated in the semi-structured interviews, and six were observed in the classroom. Additionally, two group interviews were conducted with the participation of three vice-principals and three heads of English staff. The results indicated a significant interaction between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom management skills. Teachers who have a higher level of self-efficacy were found to manage their classes in a more confident and purposeful manner than those with a lower level of self-efficacy. Three main reasons were identified to distinguish teachers' skills in classroom management, including pre-service teacher education, previous at-

tending continuing professional development events, and teachers' learning autonomy. Case-based teaching, organizational learning, and lesson study were recommended in pre-service teacher education and in-service teacher professional development activities to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and their classroom management.

In another study in the same context, [Lap et al. \(2022b\)](#) investigated EFL teachers' perceptions of their self-efficacy in using instructional strategies. This descriptive research collected quantitative and qualitative data from a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Forty-six Vietnamese EFL teachers were invited to participate in the study. The results indicated that participants were, in general, confident in using instructional strategies in their English classes. Specifically, the participants were highly confident in their abilities to use multimedia, assessment techniques, and classroom English. The study also indicated that participants were not confident in evaluating the level of task difficulty, dealing with unmotivated students, and meeting students' particular needs for support.

In other contexts beyond Vietnam, [Mojavezi and Tamiz \(2012\)](#) studied teachers' self-efficacy and its impact on learners' motivation and achievement. Participants in the study included eighty senior secondary school teachers in four different cities in Iran, and one hundred and fifty senior secondary school students. For data collection, two instruments were employed: teacher self-efficacy and students' motivation questionnaires. Data were analyzed using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and ANOVA. The results of the study revealed that teacher self-efficacy had a positive influence on the students' motivation and achievement. The findings suggested pedagogical implications and recommendations for further research.

[Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy \(2001\)](#) examined teacher self-efficacy and its measurement. The authors argued that teacher efficacy was powerfully related to many meaningful educational outcomes such as teachers' persistence, enthusiasm, commitment, and instructional behavior, as well as student outcomes such as achievement, motivation, and self-efficacy beliefs. However, persistent measurement problems have plagued those who have sought to study teacher efficacy. By reviewing many of the major measures that had been used to capture the construct, noting problems that had arisen with each of them, the authors proposed a promising new measure of teacher efficacy along with validity and reliability data. New directions for research made possible by this instrument were also discussed in this study.

In short, it could be seen that teacher self-efficacy has been studied in different educational contexts. However, there is still a gap in the literature on teacher self-efficacy, particularly focusing on learners' engagement. This study, therefore, aimed to provide more insights into the relationship between teachers' self-confidence and learners' academic involvement. The study was situated in a post-training phase of our institution's PD program to obtain implications for evaluating and maintaining its effectiveness.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Participants

The study mainly followed a survey design, collecting information from a delayed post-course questionnaire and interviews with six representatives of teacher participants. The questionnaire responses helped to capture participants' perceptions of their self-efficacy three months after completing the training. The complementary interviews acted as a triangulating step to facilitate deeper comprehension and clarification of specific issues. The survey participants comprised 40 EFL teachers from a province in the Mekong Region who had finished a PD training focusing on teaching methodology. Participation in the interviews ($n = 6$) was purposively selected. The criteria were to ensure coverage of interviewees representing school teachers with various qualifications, teaching experience, and teaching levels. **Table 3** summarizes the study's participants.

Table 3. Information on participants ($n = 40$).

Variable	Category	Number
Experience	Senior (>10 yrs)	15
	Young (<10 yrs)	25
Gender	Male	12
	Female	28
Qualification	Master	5
	Bachelor	35
Teaching level	Secondary	21
	Primary	19

3.2. Instruments and Data Analysis

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three sections in English. Section one asked participants about fundamental demographics, including highest degree, teaching experience, teaching levels, and gender. In sections two and three, each item was formatted on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Section two consisted of 25 items grouped in 5 clusters measuring distinct aspects of teacher self-efficacy. Section three consisted of 14 items centered around teachers' assessment of their students' engagement. These 14 items were grouped into three clusters indicating various engagement observations: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. The items were developed based on the literature, especially drawn from Woodcock et al. (2025) and Barkley and Major (2020). Content validity and item clarity were assessed by two external, experienced researchers in our institution. The questionnaire's reliability was measured to be high (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.961$ for the whole questionnaire, and 0.930 and 0.952 for the self-efficacy and engagement sub-scales, respectively), ensuring its appropriateness for use in

the study.

Interview

A supplementary data-collection tool in this study was semi-structured interviews conducted with 6 selected teacher participants. The interview questions were open-ended, eliciting the interviewees to expand and elaborate on their answers in the questionnaire. The teacher participants were also invited to relate their self-efficacy and perception of students' engagement to the content of the training course they had attended. Each interview lasted around 20 minutes and was carried out in Vietnamese. The research team transcribed the interview answers verbatim. Only prominent and recurring ideas relevant to the study's objectives were translated into English for presentation in the results section.

The quantitative data gained via the questionnaire responses were analyzed using the software JASP. The results were presented through descriptive statistics: means and standard deviations. Additional tests were employed for comparison analysis and correlational association. We followed the content analysis method described by Krippendorff (2018) to process and present qualitative interview data. For ethical reasons, the information on the participants' identification was not revealed, and the real names of the interviewees were replaced with initials, for example, Teacher ABC, Teacher NVA, etc.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Teachers' Self-Efficacy in Engaging Students

The fundamental results of the questionnaire responses provide the self-perceived levels of teachers' self-efficacy. **Table 4** presents the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation of all questionnaire items and also provides the clusters' averages corresponding to five areas of self-efficacy: managing, instructing, organizing, communicating, and applying strategies.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics.

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Classroom Management</i>				
01 Because I am good with classroom management strategies, I believe my students spend less time on off-task behaviors	1.000	5.000	3.800	0.823
02 I believe that I am capable of teaching self-regulatory strategies	2.000	5.000	3.675	0.764
03 I believe I can remain calm when facing disruptive behaviors	1.000	5.000	4.000	0.906
04 I believe that I can deal with minor misbehavior in my classroom effectively	2.000	5.000	4.075	0.797
05 I can establish a classroom management system with each group of students	2.000	5.000	3.750	0.899
<i>Average</i>			3.860	
<i>Content Knowledge and Instruction</i>				
06 I am good at analyzing student work because I know the content that I teach well	2.000	5.000	4.200	0.758
07 I believe that I know the facts, concepts, theories, and principles of what I teach to make my teaching effective	3.000	5.000	4.200	0.687

Continued

08 I believe I have the skills to create the right assessments for my students	3.000	5.000	4.225	0.577
09 I believe that I am good at choosing appropriate questions to ask in instruction	3.000	5.000	4.100	0.709
10 I am good at making choices about content-based activities for instruction	2.000	5.000	4.000	0.751
11 I am comfortable that I know what I am expected to teach to my students	3.000	5.000	4.350	0.533
<i>Average</i>			4.179	
<i>Organization</i>				
12 I feel that I can meet all deadlines to a high level in my role	3.000	5.000	4.175	0.636
13 I feel that I can plan my time wisely before each lesson	2.000	5.000	4.050	0.639
14 I believe that I can carefully plan each lesson so that they are effective	2.000	5.000	4.225	0.768
<i>Average</i>			4.150	
<i>External Communication</i>				
15 I believe I can express myself freely on important school matters	2.000	5.000	3.925	0.859
16 When I communicate with families, I can demonstrate cultural sensitivity	2.000	5.000	3.900	0.778
17 I believe I can support parents to help teach their children	3.000	5.000	4.000	0.641
18 I believe that I can involve community members in my class to enrich students' learning	2.000	5.000	3.600	0.778
<i>Average</i>			3.856	
<i>Practical Strategies</i>				
19 I am confident in giving interactive lectures	3.000	5.000	4.075	0.694
20 I am confident in applying 'Think-pair-share'	3.000	5.000	3.975	0.698
21 I am confident in implementing small group work, group projects, and group problem-solving	2.000	5.000	4.050	0.714
22 I am confident in applying short writing activities to be used by the student alone or paired with group discussion	2.000	5.000	3.950	0.876
23 I am confident in using interactive games and problem-solving activities	2.000	5.000	4.000	0.716
24 I am confident in performing demonstrations, simulations, and experiments	3.000	5.000	3.775	0.698
25 I am confident in applying music, video, images, or a demonstration to create a sense of excitement, curiosity, or set up a problem or puzzle to be solved	2.000	5.000	4.125	0.723
<i>Average</i>			3.992	

Cluster 1 (Classroom Management) obtains a fairly high average score of 3.860. This means that the teachers are generally confident and know how to keep their class ordered and disciplined. The high mean scores in this respect are demonstrated in items 03 ($M = 4.000$) and 04 ($M = 4.075$), related to teachers' ability to manage disruptive or misbehaving learners.

In terms of Content Knowledge and Instruction, the result shows an encouraging mean average (cluster mean = 4.179). Four of six items in this cluster received mean scores equal to or above 4.200. The teacher respondents appear to be less

confident with challenging techniques, including the content-based approach (item 10, $M = 4.000$) and questioning strategies (item 09, $M = 4.100$). However, the overall high values across items in the cluster suggest that the teacher participants have mastery of content knowledge and plan their instruction effectively.

In other aspects of teachers' self-efficacy, namely Organization and External Communication (see clusters 3 and 4, **Table 2**), the mean scores indicate positive tendencies. Although school teachers often have a heavy workload, they reported effective time management for planning, teaching, and meeting deadlines, with the means for items 12, 13, and 14 being $M = 4.175$, 4.050 , and 4.225 , respectively. As for External Communication, all items 15 - 18 have a mean score equal to or below 4.000 , and the cluster average is merely 3.856 . This reflects the possibility that, in reality, communicating with students' parents could be challenging, and involving other bodies from the community in academic work seems to be rare in these teachers' contexts.

Finally, when it comes to self-efficacy in applying practical strategies, responses from the teachers are optimistic. For instance, the teacher participants report their confidence in using collaborative work (item 21, $M = 4.050$) and higher-order thinking activities (item 23, $M = 4.000$). Furthermore, the teachers demonstrate their awareness and implementation of integrating multimodal media and gamification in their teaching to get students more involved (item 25, $M = 4.125$).

In summary, with respect to teachers' self-perceived self-efficacy, the quantitative results highlight positive levels of confidence in areas where they have more control and autonomy, specifically time management, mastery of content knowledge, and practical engagement strategies. On the other hand, areas heavily influenced by external factors, such as communicating with the community and managing misbehaving students, show lower levels of self-efficacy. **Figure 2** illustrates the differences among the five aspects of teachers' self-efficacy.

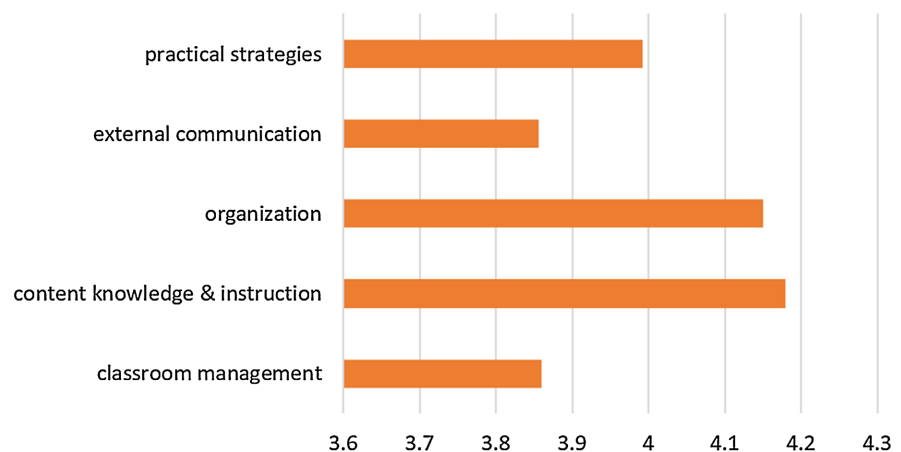


Figure 2. Comparison of the five aspects of teachers' self-efficacy.

4.2. Manifestation of Learners' Engagement

This section presents the results of the second component of the questionnaire,

focusing on the participant teachers' reporting of their students' engagement. **Table 5** displays descriptive statistics across three engagement manifestations: cognitive, behavioral, and affective.

Table 5. Observed learner engagement.

Item	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<i>Cognitive</i>				
26 My students spend time on projects and activities requiring integration and synthesis of ideas	3.000	5.000	3.800	0.723
27 My students complete coursework requiring practical application of knowledge or skills	2.000	5.000	3.900	0.744
28 My students demonstrate growth on the course learning outcomes	3.000	5.000	4.100	0.632
29 My students demonstrate self-perception of learning and engagement	2.000	5.000	3.900	0.709
<i>Average</i>			3.925	
<i>Behavioral</i>				
30 My students ask questions and contribute verbally in class	3.000	5.000	4.075	0.694
31 My students pay attention and actively listen	2.000	5.000	4.000	0.784
32 My students take notes in class	3.000	5.000	4.300	0.723
33 My students engage in group projects and collaborative work	2.000	5.000	3.975	0.862
34 My students help and tutor others	2.000	5.000	3.925	0.764
<i>Average</i>			4.055	
<i>Affective</i>				
35 My students invest time in studying	2.000	5.000	4.050	0.783
36 My students make efforts to meet the instructor's expectations	1.000	5.000	4.025	0.768
37 My students are prepared for class	2.000	5.000	3.675	0.859
38 My students discuss course material outside of class	2.000	5.000	3.325	0.859
39 My students have positive attitudes toward course material	2.000	5.000	4.025	0.733
<i>Average</i>			3.820	

Regarding the cognitive aspects, the teachers observed high engagement among their students, indicated by all items' means being higher than 3.800. Item 28 ("*My students demonstrate growth on the course learning outcomes*") has the highest mean ($M = 4.100$). The average mean of all items in this engagement category is 3.925. This is an indication of students' active learning to achieve the content and knowledge required in their English lessons.

In the second dimension of learner engagement, students' active learning is revealed in the encouraging mean scores of the items. The students exhibit visible physical behaviors, such as asking questions and contributing verbally (item 30, $M = 4.075$). They also listen attentively (item 31, $M = 4.000$) and take careful notes (item 32, $M = 4.300$). The students show excitement in doing collaborative group work and sharing mutual assistance (items 33 and 34, $M = 3.975$ and $M = 3.925$, respectively).

As for the affective dimension, the indication of learner attitude and motivation is also optimistic. The students have positive attitudes toward their subject's objectives and content (items 36 and 39, both $M = 4.025$). They invest sufficient time, become well prepared for classes, and even seek opportunities to practice beyond the constraints of the classroom. These are reflected in fairly high mean scores of 4.050, 3.675, and 3.325 for items 35, 37, and 38, respectively.

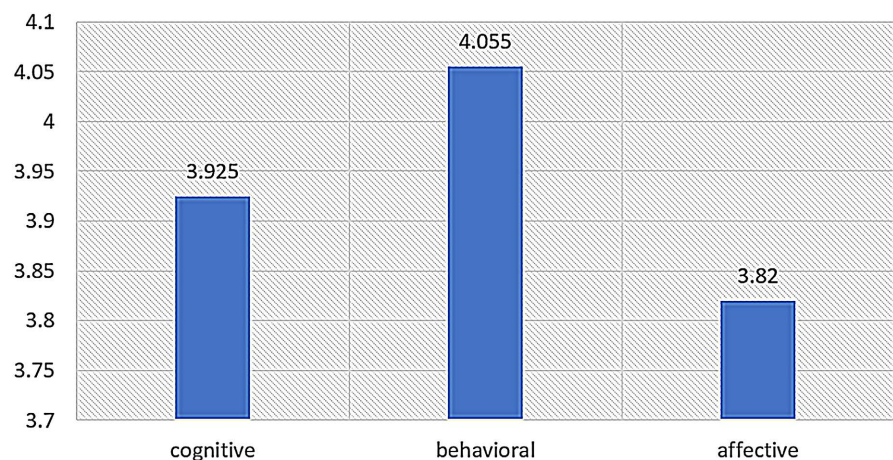


Figure 3. Visual comparison of 3 manifestations of learner engagement.

Figure 3 visually summarizes the mean averages for the three dimensions. Physical behaviors show the highest level of engagement, followed by cognitive and affective indicators.

Table 6. Pearson's correlation results.

Variable		Teacher Self-Efficacy	Student Engagement
Teacher Self-Efficacy	Pearson's r	--	
	p -value	--	
Student Engagement	Pearson's r	0.774	--
	p -value	<0.001	--

In addition, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and learners' engagement (**Table 6**). A strong, statistically significant positive correlation was found between these two variables, $r(38) = 0.774$, $p < 0.001$. This could be interpreted as the more self-

efficacious the teachers are, the more engaged their students are likely to become.

4.3. Comparison of Various Demographical Groups

A series of independent-samples t-tests was conducted to examine the potential differences among the participant teachers in terms of self-efficacy. **Table 7** presents detailed results of these analyses.

Table 7. Results of independent-samples t-tests.

	Group	No	Mean	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
Senior vs Young	Senior	15	4.006	0.535	0.258	38	0.798	0.084
	Young	25	3.966	0.449				
Male vs Female	Male	12	4.006	0.415	0.214	38	0.831	0.074
	Female	28	3.970	0.508				
Master vs Bachelor	Master	5	3.836	0.406	-0.724	38	0.473	-0.346
	Bachelor	35	4.002	0.488				
Secondary vs Primary	Secondary	21	4.119	0.567	1.999	38	0.053 ^a	0.633
	Primary	19	3.828	0.319				

^aBrown-Forsythe test is significant ($p < 0.05$), suggesting a violation of the equal variance assumption.

First, regarding teaching experience, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the self-efficacy of teachers with more than 10 years of experience and more novice teachers. There was no significant difference in scores between the senior group ($M = 4.006$, $SD = 0.535$) and the novice group ($M = 3.966$, $SD = 0.449$), $t(38) = 0.258$, $p = 0.798$, $d = 0.084$. These results suggest that the level of seniority does not necessarily impact teachers' self-efficacy.

Likewise, the independent-samples t-test for teacher gender comparison yielded similar results. There was no significant difference found in scores between male teachers ($M = 4.006$, $SD = 0.415$) and female teachers ($M = 3.970$, $SD = 0.508$), $t(38) = 0.214$, $p = 0.831$, $d = 0.074$. The results indicate that gender does not meaningfully impact teachers' self-efficacy.

In the same way, there was no significant difference found between teachers holding a master's degree and those having bachelor's degrees. The results of the independent-samples t-test showed the following scores for master's teachers ($M = 3.836$, $SD = 0.406$) and bachelor's teachers ($M = 4.002$, $SD = 0.488$), $t(38) = -0.724$, $p = 0.473$, $d = -0.346$. It can be concluded that higher academic degrees do not significantly result in higher self-efficacy.

The final independent samples t-test was conducted to compare self-efficacy scores between teachers who teach at secondary schools and those who work at primary schools. Secondary school teachers ($M = 4.119$, $SD = 0.567$) scored higher than primary school teachers ($M = 3.828$, $SD = 0.319$). However, other values were $t(38) = 1.999$, $p = 0.053$, $d = 0.633$, and the Brown-Forsythe test was significant ($p < 0.05$),

but suggested a violation of the equal variance assumption; we further ran a Welch's t-test. The following results were reported: $t(38) = 2.052$, $p = 0.048$, and $g = 0.629$. These indicate that the workplace has a positive effect on teachers' self-efficacy.

4.4. Impacts of Training Course on Teachers' Self-Efficacy

This section presents the qualitative results obtained in the interviews with the teachers. Mainly, the retrospective reflections on the role of the training course are selected for reporting. The teachers expressed their appreciation for the two key benefits that resulted from participating in the professional development training course: the practicality of engagement teaching strategies and the trainers' enthusiasm and demonstration of the techniques.

The practical benefits of the course content could be viewed in terms of the opportunities in which the school teachers were introduced to, trained in, and practiced hands-on activities to promote learners' motivation and involvement in language learning. These included using songs, games, and quizzes in various stages of a lesson. A teacher reflected, *"I learned how to incorporate games at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of a lesson. Those can be very helpful during vocabulary and sentence-writing activities. Students relax and enjoy themselves. These engaging lessons make the material easier to grasp. Students retain information better through songs and games"* (NTG, primary school teacher). Similarly, another teacher shared how she benefited from the training, stating that *"Games and songs make students feel eager and excited for English lessons; they remember the material better and become more confident, sociable, and active"* (NTCT, primary school teacher).

At a higher level of education—secondary schools—the participant teachers reported that through training, they were equipped with an understanding and the capability of integrating motivational techniques into their instruction for more engagement and learning effectiveness. For instance, a teacher valued the application of project work, saying that *"Project-based learning involves students in creative experiences. They can develop a great number of skills such as drawing, interviewing, and presenting. Students are proactive and collaborative in doing their projects"* (TNH, secondary school teacher). Sharing a similar opinion, HTN, a secondary school teacher, added that, *"I am flexible in selecting games that support the lesson content and know how to deliver them effectively. Students learn to compose their own songs and rhymes in simple English. They enjoy learning and use English with greater confidence; I observe some students previously struggling and now making remarkable improvement."*

Furthermore, the teacher participants also attributed their confidence in using the engagement pedagogical techniques to the course trainers' enthusiastic and effective modelling. Mr. CMBP, for example, confessed that *"The methods are easy to implement in primary schools. The trainers' teaching methods are excellent, making it easy for me to grasp the lesson content"*. In concurrence with that viewpoint, Teacher LTST complimented, *"I learned a lot of useful experiences*

from the trainer lecturers. They provided subtle guidance and gave enthusiastic feedback in the mini practicum. I really appreciated and admired the trainers”.

5. Implications and Conclusion

The findings suggested important and meaningful implications regarding the training course effectiveness in enhancing school teachers’ self-efficacy and areas of course content that need improvement. The fairly strong positive correlation between teachers’ efficacy and learners’ engagement, in all cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects, confirmed the results found in previous research (Santos & Ahmad, 2026; Emiru & Gedifew, 2024; Tyaningsih et al., 2021). This highlighted the role of teachers’ self-efficacy in promoting involvement in class, hence improving learning quality. To support active learning, the teachers in the study were flexible in employing various techniques, integrating collaborative work and motivational strategies, and giving individualized attention.

From the study’s results, further implications were drawn for teacher professional training courses. On the one hand, it was suggested to maintain and strengthen the positive sides, including the application of engaging activities and instructional strategies. On the other hand, schoolteachers need more support and training in external communication. More content on duties and management activities on the part of a form teacher was recommended. Furthermore, the significant difference in terms of self-efficacy, specifically, secondary school teachers outweighed primary school teachers, would suggest better tailored training content to target the two groups more appropriately.

With empirical results providing evaluative insights into our PD course’s aspect of enhancing teachers’ self-efficacy in engaging students, the current study revealed certain limitations. The sample size was small, and data were uniquely based on teacher trainees’ perspectives. This could result in unavoidable bias. Voices from other stakeholders, including school leaders and students, should also be included in follow-up studies. The fact that only one delayed post-course survey was conducted showed another weakness. If conditions allow, future evaluation research should integrate a pre-course evaluation on teachers’ self-efficacy so that comparison is possible, change could be tracked, and the vigor of findings can be strengthened.

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Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Ngo and Trinh; methodology, Le and Dong; validation, Ngo, Pham, and Trinh; formal analysis, Dong; investigation, Ngo; writing—original draft preparation, Ngo and Le; writing—review and editing, Pham and Dong; visualization, Le; supervision, Trinh; project administration, Ngo. All authors have

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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