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**CORRELATING THE RESPONSES TO APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY QUESTIONS
AND THE SELF-EFFICACY LEVELS OF TEACHERS IN A PRIVATE
TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

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ABSTRACT

This study sought the possible links between Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as a manner of questioning and Teacher Self-Efficacy (TSE) as a behavioral quality by examining how the focus questions Affirmative Topics of Discussion (ATD), Personal Values (PV), Peak Moments of Experiences (PME), and Future Vision of Success (FVS) used in AI correlate with the TSE levels of the teachers in Access Computer and Technical Colleges - Manila (ACTC-M) as a means of providing empirical evidence to education leaders considering AI as an intervention to enhance TSE in their schools. Hence, the problem statement: How do the responses of the teachers to the AI focus questions correlate with their level of self-efficacy? The participants of this study were the entire teacher population of 106 teachers in ACTC-M during the School Year 2018-2019. Data was gathered through the use of two instruments: The Appreciative Inquiry – Teaching Effectiveness Influence Assessment Survey (AI-TE IAS) by Zarate, 2019 and the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES) by Schwarzer, Schmitz, and Daytner, 1999. The gathered data were subjected to statistical analysis which resulted to following correlational coefficients with TSE: ATD .20; PV .24; PME .30; FVS .24; AI .31. This study offers the discovery that a positive association exists between AI and TSE.

Keywords: Appreciative inquiry; teacher self-efficacy

Introduction

Education leaders consider research based interventions that may help improve TSE in their schools. An example is AI, an Organization Development (OD) intervention that seeks to develop better effectiveness and positive change in people and organizational performance through the systematic use of and intentional selection of exceptionally positive questions. With many success stories in literature that attribute AI to improved school performance, finding out quantitatively the link between AI as a manner of questioning and TSE as a behavioral quality can provide new knowledge to education leaders for better decision making.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to provide empirical evidence to education leaders as basis to consider the use of AI as an intervention to enhance TSE in their schools.

Objectives/Research Questions

The main objective of this study was to determine the quantitative link between AI and TSE by examining how the teachers in ACTC-M responded to the AI focus questions: ATD, PV, PME, and FVS and how these correlate with their TSE levels.

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The main research problem is:

How do the responses of 106 teachers to the AI questions correlate with their TSE levels?

The specific research questions are:

1. How do the 106 teachers respond to the following AI focus questions: ATD; PV; PME; FVS?
2. What is the current level of TSE of these teachers?
3. Is there any correlation between the teachers' responses to the AI focus questions and their current level of TSE?

The offered hypotheses are as follows:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between ATD and TSE;

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between PV and TSE;

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between PME and TSE;

Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between FVS and TSE;

Ho₅: There is no significant relationship between the AI and TSE.

The Theories

AI

AI is an OD process and approach to change management that grows out of the social constructionist thought and its applications to management and organizational transformation (Cooperrider & Whiney, 2008) and is a new approach to educational change (Buchanan, 2014). Cooperrider and Whitney (2008) proposed that AI is “a shift from the traditional deficit oriented approach to a more transformative way in introducing questions for improvement and effectiveness” (p. 10). AI is groundbreaking for schools as it combines the fields of positive psychology, positive organizational scholarship, and educational administration as an approach to positive change to achieve better school wellbeing (Waters & White, 2015). AI is most of all an approach to change that is about intentionally selecting how reality is framed (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003) and is a dialogic and cyclical process that engages change actors in defining the change which begins with a process of discovering and appreciating what is the positive core of the current experience and using this information to imagine possibilities, and then designing how to achieve and create the desired future (Hammond, 1998).

TSE

Henson (2001) identified TSE as a worthy variable in educational research. TSE is the teacher's personal belief in ability to plan instruction and accomplish instructional objectives (Omrod, 2006). It is the conviction the teacher has about his/her ability to teach pupils efficiently and effectively (Gavora, 2006). TSE is a construct developed from Bandura's social cognitive theory which specifically refers to the strong self-regulatory characteristic that enables teachers to use their potentials to enhance pupils' learning (Gavora, 2006).

Research Paradigm

As shown in figure 1, the Research paradigm for this study followed the *Input-Process-Output* model. In the Input phase, The AI-TE IAS and the TSES were used to capture the thoughts and perceptions of the 106 teachers of ACTC-M. In the process phase, the data gathered from the completed surveys were analyzed using statistical tools and methods to describe and to infer about the collected responses. The output phase presents the conclusions drawn from the correlational results of the statistical analysis.

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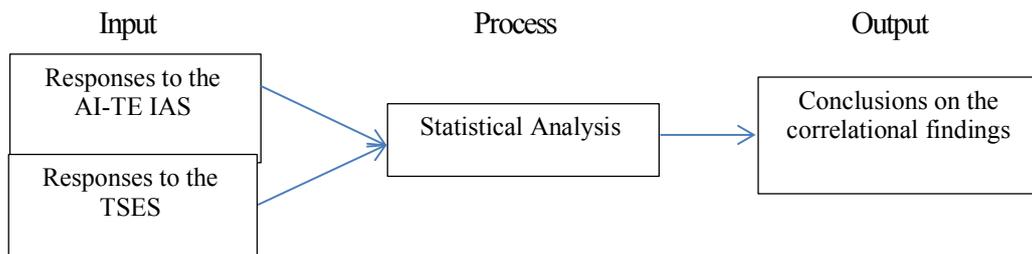


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

Literature Review

One area in which education leaders can place as a prospective means for their teachers to become more effective at what they do is to engage in teacher development programs by way of OD interventions. OD is a field of research, theory, and practice dedicated to expanding the knowledge and effectiveness of people to accomplish more successful organizational change and performance (Pathak, 2016).

As available research indicate that there is significant room for improvement in the area of providing better teacher training and development programs for improved teaching, improved self-awareness, improved self-efficacy, improved teacher collaboration and mutual respect, and increased student academic growth (Powers, Kaniuka, Phillips, & Cain, 2016), recent calls for education leaders to provide better teacher training and development programs are now widened to include other significant areas important to a teacher's development such as TSE.

TSE is the personal and self-perceived belief that a teacher is capable of accomplishing instructional goals and objectives (Omrod, 2006). TSE refers to the conviction that the teacher has about his/her ability to teach pupils efficiently and effectively (Gavora, 2010). TSE has been shown to influence student achievement (Powers et al., 2016) and is primarily engendered in schools (Hattie, 2012). Education leaders therefore have every opportunity to consider building TSE through the experiences provided to teachers (Protheroe, 2008).

In view of these insights, AI may be considered as an approach to develop teacher effectiveness as AI aims to achieve organizational effectiveness (Stetson, 2008). This proposition is not new as many schools in the United States have begun utilizing AI for various forms of organizational change to achieve organizational transformation (Stetson, 2008).

To see how AI can directly support achieving better teaching effectiveness, TSE can be used as an indicator because according to literature (Gibbs, 2002; Mojavezi & Tamiz, 2012; Klassen & Tze, 2014), effective teachers are highly efficacious. Considerable research has established the assumption that teachers' psychological characteristics including self-efficacy are associated with teaching effectiveness (Klassen & Tze, 2014). Students of efficacious teachers generally have outperformed students in other classes whose teachers are less self-efficacious (Moore & Esselman, 1992), efficacious teachers persist with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), teachers with high efficacy tend to experiment with methods of instruction, seek improved teaching methods, and experiment with instructional materials (Allinder, 1994), and efficacious teachers have higher professional commitment (Coldarici, 1992).

Because all of these are positive behaviors desirable to education leaders, schools stand to benefit from teachers who have high TSE as they exhibit greater enthusiasm for teaching, have greater commitment for teaching, and are more likely to remain in the teaching profession (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). These teachers are open to new

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ideas, more willing to adapt to innovations, are less likely to experience burn-out, and support pupils' autonomy to a greater extent (Brouwers & Tomic, 2003; Henson, 2001; Ross & Bruce, 2007).

To initiate a study that builds on the idea on how AI can be possibly linked with TSE, AI's focus questions can be used as focal points of inquiry. According to Stratton-Berkessel (2010), the flow of AI involves *Affirmative Topics, Valuing, Peak Experiences, and Visioning* as themed questions. These questions form a structured and systematic means of inquiry that seeks to deliver positive change that begins with discovering the best of what is and concludes with on seeking action (Stratton-Berkessel, 2010). The examination of how these questions individually or collectively correlate with TSE can therefore provide evidence to show quantitative associations between AI and TSE.

Methodology

Research Design

This study was descriptive as it aimed to obtain information to describe a current status and to describe "what exists" with respect to variables (Leavy, 2017) which, according to Best and Khan (2003), also best describes the "what is" and is the most appropriate method to use given a set of predetermined questions.

Research Setting

The study was conducted in ACTC-M. At the time of the study, the campus had 1,000 students, 106 teachers, and 20 non-academic and support personnel. ACTC-M has employed the use of AI for at least 5 years and had used AI at different levels of rank, areas, and participation either distinctly visible or as integrated within the practices of individuals or groups in the ACTC-M school system.

Research Participants

The research participants were entire teacher population of 106 teachers comprising of all veteran, novice, part-time, and full-time teachers in ACTC-M.

Research Instrumentation

The research employed the use of the AI-TE IAS by Zarate, 2019 (see appendix A) and the TSES by Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner, 1999 (see appendix B) as instruments to collect the perceptions and views of the research participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

After securing permission to conduct research in ACTC-M, a one week administration of the survey questionnaires was conducted. Data analysis immediately followed where statistical tools were used. After data analysis, conclusions based on supporting insights from related literature were drawn.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

To analyze the data gathered, tallying, grouping, ranking, and tabulation was done to prepare for statistical analysis. The following statistical tools and techniques were then used to describe, infer about, and interpret the meaning of the data to arrive at a conclusion: percentage distribution, sum scoring, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, variance, and Pearson r using a .05 level of significance.

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Findings

Question 1

Table 1 presents the mean response ratings out of a maximum rating of 4.0 generated from each category of focus question and its corresponding interpretation.

The mean response rating of 3.45 for ATD shows that ATD was rated favorably and is interpreted as having high influence.

Table 1
Responses to the AI-TE IAS

Focus Questions	Mean	Interpretation
ATD	3.45	Has High Influence
PV	3.50	Has High Influence
PME	3.32	Has High Influence
FVS	3.48	Has High Influence
Grand Mean	3.44	Has High Influence

The mean response rating of 3.50 for PV shows that PV was rated favorably and is interpreted as having high influence. The mean response rating of 3.32 for PME shows that PME was rated favorably and is interpreted as having high influence. The mean response rating of 3.48 for FVS shows that FVS was rated favorably and is interpreted as having high influence. Lastly, the computed grand mean rating of all four categories received 3.44 This means that as a collective, all the types of focus questions in AI were found to be rated favorably and is interpreted as having high influence.

Question 2

The TSES has a 40.0 maximum sum score. Based on the responses of the 106 teachers, a grand mean sum score value of 35.2 surfaced. This was interpreted as possessing high self-efficacy beliefs and shows that teachers in ACTC-M have high TSE.

Question 3

Table 2 presents the correlational findings and its interpretations, p values and its interpretations, and corresponding decisions in view of the five hypotheses. Inferential statistical analysis using Pearson r with a .05 level of significance was used.

Table 2
Relationships Formed between the responses to the AI-TE IAS and the TSES results

Focus Questions	r value	Interpretation	p value	Interpretation	Decision
ATD	0.20	Low positive correlation	0.0398	Significant	Reject Ho ₁
PV	0.24	Low positive correlation	0.0132	Significant	Reject Ho ₂
PME	0.30	Moderate positive correlation	0.0018	Significant	Reject Ho ₃
FVS	0.24	Low positive correlation	0.0132	Significant	Reject Ho ₄
(As a collective)	0.31	Moderate positive correlation	0.0012	Significant	Reject Ho ₅

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The r value of ATD and TSE is .20 and is interpreted as having a low positive correlation. When tested for significance, the p value is .0398 and is considered significant to reject H_{01} . The r value of PV and TSE is .24 and is interpreted as having a low positive correlation. When tested for significance, the p value is .0132 and is considered significant to reject H_{02} . The r value of PME and TSE is .30 and is interpreted as having a moderate positive correlation. When tested for significance, the p value is .0018 and is considered significant to reject H_{03} . The r value of FVS and TSE is .24 and is interpreted as having a low positive correlation. When tested for significance, the p value is .0132 and is considered significant to reject H_{04} . Lastly, the r value to determine the relationship between all the AI focus questions taken as a collective and TSE resulted to .31 and is interpreted as having a moderate positive correlation. When tested for significance, the p value is .0012 and is considered significant to reject H_{05} .

Discussion

1. *Psychological empowerment* could explain how ATD could be well received by the teachers. Conger and Kanungo (1998) defined *Psychological empowerment* as a relational and motivational process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification and the removal of powerless conditions by way of *Choice* or the degree to which an individual perceives they have choice in initiating and regulating actions, *Meaningfulness* or the perceived value or importance of the task or goal, *Competence* or self-efficacy, and *Impact* or the degree to which behavior accomplishes the purpose of the task. ATD could therefore be well received by the teachers as ATD appeared to touch on what teachers choose to discuss about and had meaning to them.

Reviewing related literature on how PV may have strong effects to one's personal behavior, Begley (2001) pointed out the primacy of "understanding the influence of personal values on the actions of individuals and the influence of values on organizational and social practices" (p. 353) in values based school leadership. One value for example, is *Authenticity*. For Palmer (1998), when instructional leaders persevere to call teachers "back to the heart of teaching and learning, to the work they share, and to the shared passion behind that work" (p. 161), the school setting breeds teachers who are proactively choosing to be more responsible, more available to attend to student needs, and are more encouraging to cultivate authenticity in their students in the pursuit of authentic learning. These insights could explain why the teachers responded favorably to PV as PV appeared to facilitate a positive means of opening dialogue that allowed teachers to reflect upon and to realize their authentic selves in teaching.

According to Weiner's (2000) *Attribution theory*, recalling past achievements and highlighting the reasons behind these achievements drive one to believe in future accomplishments. He emphasized that "behavior depends on thoughts and feelings" (p. 5). Cook and Artino (2016) explained that when an event has been positive, positive emotions surface, which in turn causes one to give attributions to perceived causes in terms of *locus, stability, and control*. *Stability* influences perceived expectancy of success which in turn drives future behaviors. These insights suggest that PME, which invites for a recollection of past successes or high moments, may be well received by the teachers as PME appeared to evoke positive emotions and feelings which inspired the teachers to believe in achieving future successes in teaching.

According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2008), the anticipatory principle observed in AI suggest that images people hold for the future drive their actions in the present to get to that future as "images inspire action" (p. 13) they claim "the more positive and hopeful the image of the future, the more positive the present day action" (p. 13). Therefore the

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favorable manner of response given by the teachers to FVS may be attributed to the questions evoking anticipation and positive imagery.

Literature reveals that asking the right questions can most certainly impact overall outlook and behavior. According to Cooperrider and Whitney (2008), positive questions lead to positive change. They posited that the more positive an inquiry, the more positive are the results. The positive principle of AI creates social momentum through the asking of positive questions (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2008). Therefore, the favorable manner of reception given by the teachers to all the AI focus questions could be the result of how the questions were generally crafted: Positively.

2. Teachers having high TSE view precarious situations as opportunities (Shambaugh, 2008), choose to persist with struggling students (Gibson & Dembo, 1984), and tend to experiment with methods of instruction, seek improved teaching methods, and utilize a variety of instructional materials (Allinder, 1994). The favorable ratings given by the teachers to questions 10 ($\bar{x} = 3.68$), 4 ($\bar{x} = 3.65$), and 7 ($\bar{x} = 3.63$) of the TSES reflect positive agreement with Shambaugh's thoughts. Further, the responses made to questions 1 ($\bar{x} = 3.35$) and 3 ($\bar{x} = 3.54$) illustrate support to the thoughts of Gibson and Dembo. Lastly, the manner of response made by the teachers to questions 9 ($\bar{x} = 3.6$) and 10 ($\bar{x} = 3.38$) show strong concurrence with Allinder's descriptions. Therefore it can be described that teachers in ACTC-M have high TSE based on the manner of their response to the situational questions contained in the TSES which presented high levels of agreement to the statements that describe manifestations of high TSE behaviors.

3. There is a low positive correlation between ATD and TSE. This posits that ATD and TSE do have positive associations. According to Stetson (2008), choosing the positive as a focus of inquiry leads to a revelation of what people want to study in order to create excellence specific to the topic that leads to the transference of learning to new situations. For Sullivan (2004), the search to uncover the positive is also known as the *Appreciative Interview* and is a means to share stories that lead to the shaping of new attitudes and behaviors. For Cooperrider and Whitney (2008), the seeds of change are implicit in the *Affirmative topic choice* as these represent what people really want to discover or learn more about since human systems typically grow in the directions about which they inquire. These insights suggest that ATD not only has the capacity to engage people into conversation about a desired state but also as far reaching as to being able to shape attitudes and behaviors which may result to one seeking greater action.

There is a low positive correlation between PV and TSE. This posits that PV and TSE do have positive associations. This finding is in agreement with Cockell (2012), who stated that "AI can enhance the engagement of authentic selves of teachers" (p. 198) as "the teaching and learning process involves teachers bringing the "who" they are, their authentic selves, to their classes" (p. 198). The idea that a teacher's set of personal values is associated with how a teacher performs are supported by Palmer (1998) who declared that "good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10) and Cockell (2012) who said that "good teaching comes from who we are as teachers, our identity, integrity, and authenticity" (p. 198). These insights suggest that PV and TSE may already be inextricably linked as Palmer (1998) further asserted that "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness... the connections made by good teachers are held not in their methods but in their hearts" (p. 11).

There is a moderate positive correlation between PME and TSE. This posits that PME and TSE do have positive associations. According to Morris, Usher, and Chen (2016), identifying past achievements are influential sources of self-efficacy. This is likewise echoed by Hoy (2000) who identified previous mastery experiences as a prime determinant for teachers to have a greater sense of efficacy. Further, Bandura (1997)

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asserted that people who view their successful past efforts are more likely to approach similar tasks with confidence. Confidence in teaching according to Jerald (2007) is a mark of a teacher with a strong sense of efficacy. Literature therefore suggest that PME can be considered as an enabler for teachers to recollect moments of past successes which in turn inspires them to be more confident and self-efficacious in the future.

There is a low positive correlation between FVS and TSE. This posits that FVS and TSE do have positive associations. According to of Bandura (1997), people who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell of personal deficiencies. Further, Bandura (2008) gave emphasis on the power of turning visions into realities by coining the term *Pathologizing Optimism* which posits that optimism can provide for the appropriate self-efficacy to achieve otherwise unreachable goals that turn visions into realities. His arguments appear supportive to the idea that the FVS can relate to higher TSE as FVS appears to engender optimism in future accomplishments.

There is a moderate positive correlation between AI and TSE. This posits that AI and TSE do have positive associations. According to Yballe and O'Connors (2000), inquiring on peak performances and successful experiences allows one to create positive images that energize and generate positive action. In addition, Cockell (2012) pointed out that "When we reflect upon the most powerful experiences we have had in teaching" (p. 201), "To reflect on what it means to teach" (p. 201), "through examining what, as a teacher, you believe about the learners in your classroom and examining how that belief affects the success of your learners" (p. 202), a climate that fosters success for entire groups of learners as well as individual achievement is created (p. 201). These insights which place AI as having the capacity to create strong positive imagery that energizes individuals to take positive action on and the ability to create a climate that fosters successes for entire groups of learners and individual achievement can be considered as enablers for teachers engendering positive views in teaching which, can therefore be associated with teachers having higher self-efficacy beliefs.

Limitations

This study differentiates itself from other AI or TSE studies as a study that particularly sought to determine in quantifiable terms, the possible association/s between AI as a manner of questioning and TSE as a behavioral quality. This study attempted to discover these relationships by specifically examining how the responses to the focus questions ATD, PV, PME, and FVS correlate with the TSE levels of teachers in ACTC-M. This study exclusively relied on the A-TE IAS and the TSES instruments to capture the perceptions and thoughts of the teacher participants. Lastly, this study is quantitative in nature and aimed to do hypothesis testing therefore descriptive and inferential statistics were the primary means used to analyze the gathered responses.

Recommendations

Look into determining causality between AI and TSE. The employment of other study designs alongside the widening of study samples can help explore the causal relationship between AI and TSE.

Continue to monitor the changes in views and perceptions and its resulting correlations with TSE. The periodic administration of the instruments used in this study twice over one school year repeated at least in the next three to five years can help map out the significant changes in terms of AI perceptions and TSE levels when analyzed and compared over a period of time.

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Compile the results to build a longitudinal study. The continuous documentation of the preceding recommendation can result to the building of a longitudinal study of AI and TSE in ACTC-M.

Encourage other educational leaders from other schools to look into AI as a means to enhance TSE. This can be done by collaborating with other educational institutions to conduct parallel studies with ACTC-M as a research undertaking which can help provide further insights in relation to the initial discoveries offered in this study.

Conclusions

The results of the AI-TE IAS show the capacity of the AI manner of questioning to be well received and to be regarded as highly influential to the shaping of personal thoughts and beliefs of teachers in the context of becoming more effective in teaching. The results of the TSES reveal that teachers in ACTC-M have high TSE. The correlational findings uncovered positive relationships formed between AI and TSE either as a single focus question or as a complete set of focus questions. More importantly, AI in its collective form of questioning yielded the highest positive correlation with TSE in comparison with a single unit of questioning. Therefore, AI's greatest positive association with high TSE exists in the complete delivery of all AI questions.

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Appendix A Appreciative Inquiry - Teaching Effectiveness Influence Assessment Survey by Zarate, 2019

Please rate the following statements as you perceive in terms of *influence* to your personal belief in becoming an effective teacher.

Please provide your responses using the scale provided below.

(1) Has no influence (2) Has low influence (3) Has moderate influence (4) Has high influence

A. ATD

1. Asked to share what I see are the life-giving forces I find in my daily practice. ___
2. Asked to open thoughts on what matters of teaching I find great opportunity for growth. ___
3. Asked to give profound examples of best practices I see from my colleagues. ___
4. Asked to identify collective strengths there are about the teaching in my school. ___
5. Asked to initiate positive discussions of improvement in my personal teaching capacity. ___

B. PV

1. Asked to reflect on what personal values I hold most important as I practice teaching. ___
2. Asked to introspect about how valuable my practice on teaching has been to me. ___
3. Asked to contemplate on what I believe is connected to my practice of teaching. ___
4. Asked to self-examine what I find to be continuing at the heart of teaching. ___

C. PME

1. Asked to recall a time when I felt most alive in the classroom as I taught. ___
2. Asked to retrospect at my past achievements in my profession as a teacher. ___
3. Asked to remember high moments of experiences in my younger years in teaching. ___
4. Asked to celebrate students that I have helped to succeed. ___
5. Asked to look back at a specific time where I could say I was at my best in teaching. ___

D. FVS

1. Asked to imagine a scenario where my weakest students have improved greatly in class. ___
2. Asked to project myself in the future demonstrating effective teaching at its finest. ___
3. Asked to attribute how I may have possibly received an award for teaching excellence. ___
4. Asked to visualize myself as an exemplary model for young teachers. ___
5. Asked to envision collectively what my accomplishments in teaching will be. ___

CORRELATING THE RESPONSES TO APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appendix B

Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale by Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner, 1999

Available at:

http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/~health/teacher_se.htm