



Poor school achievers, adult learning and self-efficacy

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21st April, 2005

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(work in progress)



LINKS between adult learning and self-efficacy for adults with poor school achievement

Association between participation in adult learning and transformed self-efficacy – evidence strongest for women with poor school achievement

Some women with poor school achievement, at particular stages in their lives, become engaged in a spiral of progression in self-efficacy and taking on new challenges, in which AL plays an important role

This group is at risk of depression and other forms of social exclusion, from which increased self-efficacy affords protection and a way forward



- Background and introduction
- Methods and data
- Findings
- Conclusions



Background and introduction

Self-efficacy “is not a measure of the skills a person possesses but concerns the beliefs that they have about what they can do under different sets of conditions with whatever skills they possess”
(Bandura, 1997: 37)



Background and introduction



Background and introduction

Research questions

- Is participation in adult learning associated with transformed or sustained efficacy?
- Are associations found for men and women with poor and good school achievement?
- What are the causal pathways that underlie any associations found?



Methods and data

Mixed methods:

- Quantitative analyses estimate associations between adult learning and transformed and sustained self-efficacy
- Qualitative evidence provides insights into the complex processes that underlie these associations



Methods and data: quantitative analysis

- National Child Development Study
- Logit regression analyses of adult learning on transformed or sustained self-efficacy
- Controls for family and social risks, childhood attainment and health, age 33 ses, qualifications, labour market and family status, gender
- For whole cohort, adults with poor school attainment, adults with good school attainment, men, women



Methods and data: quantitative analyses

Measures

- Poor school attainment
 - no 'O' equivalents at 16
- Participation in adult learning
 - at age 42 reports having taken at least one course since age 33
- Self-efficacy at age 33 and 42
 - construct binary indicator of high self-efficacy
 - transformed – only for those with low self-efficacy at age 33 and indicates self-efficacy at age 42
 - sustained - only for those with high self-efficacy at age 33 and indicates self-efficacy at age 42



Methods and data: qualitative project

- Designed to investigate links between lifelong learning, health and well being but valuable lessons about adult learning and self-efficacy
- Sample: 15 interviews with women from the NCDS who had poor school attainment (no O levels or their equivalent at 16)
- Data collection: biographical in-depth interviews about lifelong learning, health and well being
- Analysis: reflections, analytic and inductive analysis, NCDS records used to test validity, and for complementarity and contextualisation



Findings: Odds ratios for sustained or transformed self-efficacy contingent on participation in adult learning

	Sustained self-efficacy	Transformed self-efficacy
No controls	1.35 (0)	1.33 (0)
Full controls	1.08 (0.313)	1.34 (0.001)



Findings: Odds ratios of sustained and transformed self-efficacy contingent on participation in adult learning (full controls)

	Sustained self-efficacy		Transformed self-efficacy	
	women	men	women	men
Whole cohort	1.08 (.509)	1.08 (.464)	1.38 (.021)	1.31 (.042)
With Os	0.98 (.897)	1.06 (.679)	1.26 (.29)	1.40 (.116)
Without Os	1.25 (.218)	1.15 (.399)	1.76 (.009)	1.26 (.231)



Findings: processes underlying association between adult learning and transformed self-efficacy

- Perceived achievement on the course increases self-efficacy
- Greater perceived occupational success increases self-efficacy
- Resistance to AL is reduced as self-efficacy increases
- Learning on the job increases self-efficacy and training provided by such employers
- Incidental connection



Findings: heterogeneity - adult learning doesn't increase everybody's self-efficacy at all stages of the life course

- Fulfilled in caring roles with a little informal learning but no wish to change
- Fearful of taking on new challenges because of background, especially failure at school
- Limited in taking on new challenges because of current life circumstances (time and emotional)



Conclusions

- Association between participation in adult learning and transformed self-efficacy for this cohort – evidence strongest for women with poor school achievement. This group is at risk of depression and other forms of social exclusion, from which increased self-efficacy affords protection and a way forward
- Some women with poor school achievement, at particular stages in their lives, become engaged in a spiral of progression in self-efficacy and taking on new challenges, in which AL plays an important role
- Occupation also plays an important role for this group – it is sometimes more effective in increasing self-efficacy because of AL



Conclusions

- Most respondents were engaged in informal learning but some were fearful of taking on new things, including courses – they would need more support and guidance into learning and provision that doesn't remind them of school
- AL may not be appropriate at some stages of life

