

The Emergence of Efficacy:
Effects of an Orientation
Leader Training Program on
Participant Self-Efficacy

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of California Polytechnic State University's Spring Training Program for student Orientation Leaders on participants. Specifically, the present research explored the impact of the programming on participant levels of self-efficacy over the course of ten weeks. Data were collected from individuals who volunteered to partake in the research by responding to two questionnaires throughout the program. The results show that participants' reported higher perceptions of self-efficacy at the end of the program than they did at the beginning. Further, such increases are significantly influenced by the performance of, and relationships with, prominent leaders within the program. Implications for similar programs seeking to increase levels of participant self-efficacy are discussed.

Introduction

Self-efficacy plays an important role in the formation of attitudes about one's ability to perform actions when leading a group. Specifically, an individual's perceived efficacy may influence his or her ability to act in response to scenarios in which he or she has been previously trained. The present study looks at the perception of self-efficacy in individuals enrolled in a ten-week leadership training course at California Polytechnic State University, as well as how different levels of perceived self-efficacy are related to the leadership they observe within the program.

California Polytechnic State University's new student orientation organization, New Student & Transition Programs (NSTP), aims to aid students and their supporters during their transition to Cal Poly (New Student & Transition Programs, 2016). The organization has three flagship programs, including the Annual Open House, Student Life Orientation Days (SLO Days) and Week of Welcome (WOW). In concurrence with the goals of NSTP, these three programs provide resources, guidance, and opportunities to ensure that new students and supporters experience a successful transitioning process.

One of the prominent aspects of these programs is that they each rely largely on high numbers of dedicated student volunteers to take on leadership roles. Student Life Orientation Days, which takes place during the summer before enrollment, and Week of Welcome, which occurs during the first week after new student move-in, are each led by student Orientation Leaders (OLs). The learning outcomes of these two programs, as outlined on the organization's website, include establishing connections with other students, being knowledgeable about academic and co-curricular resources and opportunities, understanding and managing transitional hardships, and becoming aware of the diverse identities throughout the campus community (2016). In order to support new students in achieving these learning outcomes, NSTP relies on nearly 900 student leaders each year. However, merely volunteering to be an Orientation Leader is not enough; students must first apply for the leadership positions and complete a ten-week training program known as Spring Training. The Spring Training program consists of three hours of weekly meetings, one mandatory workshop, two or more mandatory one-on-one meetings with a group leader, and numerous opportunities to volunteer, socialize, and fundraise within NSTP. Throughout the ten-week course, Leaders in Training (LITs) are divided into groups led

by Facilitators, who observe and evaluate their leadership abilities and ultimately decide if they meet the standards of the program and will become SLO Days and/or WOW Leaders.

While it is clear that the training of the program is vital to being knowledgeable in the role of student Orientation Leader through the process of evaluation, it has not been confirmed that such training and knowledge leads to higher levels of perceived confidence or efficacy in regard to one's own abilities. This research looks to students' perceptions of self-efficacy and the way they change throughout the duration of Spring Training. Special attention is also given to the role that LITs' Facilitators play in the change in efficacy levels, as they are the primary source of interaction and model of leadership that the students encounter. By measuring self-efficacy and looking for correlations with leader influence and direct experience, I hope to establish that Spring Training does indeed increase levels of perceived self-efficacy, as well as make connections with the importance of having leaders of positive influence fulfill the role of Facilitator.

Literature Review

According to Bandura, "Perceived self-efficacy is concerned with judgments of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations" (1982, pg. 122). Throughout the ten weeks of Spring Training, LITs are exposed to various scenarios that they may encounter during SLO Days and Week of Welcome by means of situational trainings and case studies. Since such prospective scenarios often deal with action-based responses, it is crucial that LITs not only know how to respond, but also that they feel confident in their ability to respond. Bandura (1982) further explains that

Knowledge, transformational operations, and component skills are necessary but insufficient for accomplished performances. Indeed, people often do not behave optimally, even though they know full well what to do. This is because self-referent thought also mediates the relationship between knowledge and action. (pg. 122)

Thus, although a student Orientation Leader may be aware of what actions to take when responding to a situation they were prepared to encounter, his or her personal thought process and perception of capabilities may interfere with performance. However, through personal successes or performance accomplishments, efficacy levels may rise and increase the potential for responsive action in real situations. Bandura (1977) explains that through repeated performance accomplishments, such as appropriately responding to situational training scenarios or exhibiting facilitation skills, stronger efficacy expectations are developed. Such enhanced efficacy may lead to desirable behavior in areas outside of the original context, extending first to similar situations and later to unrelated incidents. This increase in perceptions of efficacy as a result of personal successes could help LITs not only in one area of training, but in many.

While performance accomplishments are a valuable source of increasing efficacy, they are not always applicable in the environment of Cal Poly's Spring Training meetings. In contrast to the former model, individuals often rely on vicarious experience to gauge their abilities to act in prospective situations. According to social learning theory, "new patterns of behavior can be acquired through direct experience or by observing the behavior of others" (Bandura, 1971, pg. 3). Bandura contends that nearly all learning achieved via direct experience can also occur on a vicarious basis by observing the behavior of others. (1971, pg. 2). Thus, modeling and observation become influential aspects of the learning process. During Spring Training, LITs are

exposed to numerous models of appropriate behavior, including video examples, the Code of Ethics, and individuals in leadership positions. Perhaps the most influential leaders to which the potential Orientation Leaders are exposed are the individuals who make up NSTP's Orientation Board and Team. Of this group of student leaders, there are 45 group leaders who take on the role of Facilitator. Each LIT is assigned to one of the 45 Facilitator groups and has the opportunity to interact with and learn from his or her Facilitator. Due to the nature of the small groups and the expectation that Facilitators will take the time to develop interpersonal relationships with each of their LITs, they are essentially role models to the group of prospective leaders. The Leaders in Training are likely to look up to their Facilitators and see their actions and attitudes as appropriate, ethical guides during the learning process. As Yang, Ding, and Lo (2015) explain, "An ethical leader's guiding behaviors are supposed to improve the ability of followers to finish their required tasks, thereby enhancing their perceptions of self-efficacy" (pg. 7). Thus, if the Facilitators can provide experiential models and exemplar behaviors from which their LITs may learn, the LITs are likely to experience increased levels of efficacy as they vicariously experience situations that prepare them to deal with new students.

Another role of the Facilitators in the Spring Training program is to provide feedback to the LITs in their groups. Evaluating the potential OLs and giving them feedback is a crucial part of the program because it encourages Facilitators to look for dedication and leadership skills—qualities that are essential when leading new students. Social learning theory also holds that giving performance feedback, alongside goal-setting, will activate self-evaluative mechanisms within the learner (Bandura & Cervone, 1983). According to a study by Bandura and Cervone (1983) that tested performance outcomes in various controlled settings, "Subjects who had the

benefit of both goals and feedback more than doubled their performance over and above those subjects receiving either the goal alone, feedback alone, or neither factor” (pg. 1021). Feedback and discussion of program goals are not only important in the evaluation process of the Facilitator; they also play a role in the amount of effort that LITs will put in during training. The same study also found that higher perceptions of self-efficacy led to greater efforts in attaining goals, which other research supports as well (Bandura, 1977; Bandura, 1982; Bandura & Cervone, 1983). Thus, the combination of Facilitator feedback and increased self-efficacy will lead to more effort, and in turn to better performance outcomes. As Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) explain, “The role of leader communication in various forms, such as feedback, goal setting, and training, is recognized as a crucial source of self-efficacy enhancement” (pg. 361).

Aside from giving specific feedback, Facilitators also have the opportunity to provide verbal and written encouragement to Leaders in Training. According to motivating language theory (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2012) the type of language used by individuals in leadership roles can greatly affect the performance and efficacy levels of their subordinates. In their study, Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) found that “there is compelling evidence that leader language has a nurturing influence on self-efficacy and performance” (pg. 371); worker self-efficacy was reported to be 34% higher when leaders used high levels of motivating language when compared to leaders who did not. Due to the relationship between motivating language of leaders and self-efficacy of subordinates, it is crucial that Facilitators express encouragement and constructive feedback in both verbal and written form if they wish to help LITs develop higher levels of perceived efficacy and boost performance in the future.

The types of situations for which Spring Training aims to prepare OLs include a broad range of potential issues. Such situations may be related to diversity and identity discrimination, sexual assault, substance abuse, and mental health. In many of these cases, LITs are trained in ways to 1) provide resources to new students, and 2) offer emotional support. According to a study by Rosetto, Lannutti, and Smith (2014), self-efficacy directly affects the willingness of an individual to provide emotional support to others. In the study that tested this claim, the results showed that people were more willing to provide emotional support to others if they themselves had high self-percepts of efficacy and experienced less emotional challenge in the situation; however, provider's perceived self-efficacy held up even in times of emotional challenge. According to the study, "It appears that the current sample's self-efficacy was strong enough to resist the effects negative emotions may have on the confidence associated with providing support" (Rosetto, Lannutti, & Smith, 2014, pg. 53). Further, the authors suggest that building a provider's sense of efficacy and confidence, in addition to improving emotion management skills, will lead to a psychological and behavioral willingness to support others. Since providing emotional support to new students is an important part of Orientation Programs such as SLO Days and WOW, ensuring that OLs experience an increase in self-efficacy during training is in the best interest of NSTP.

The current literature makes it evident that self-efficacy has the potential to strongly affect the growth and development of Leaders in Training. Further, the Spring Training program presents an opportune environment in which LITs can increase their self-percepts of efficacy through direct experience, exemplary models, and feedback and encouragement from their Facilitators. In an attempt to explore the relationship among such factors, the present research

used two questionnaires to gather data from participants. Responses to the initial questionnaire (Time 1) were compared with responses from the follow-up questionnaire (Time 2) in an effort to measure changes in reported levels of self-efficacy. To test the data, five specific hypotheses have been constructed:

H1: Leaders in Training (LITs) will report increased levels of self-efficacy in all areas in the follow-up questionnaire (from Time 1 to Time 2).

H2: Returners (LITs who have completed Spring Training in the past) will report higher levels of self-efficacy than first time LITs in Time 1.

H3: Levels of confidence regarding one's perceived ability to perform specific tasks will correlate with levels of confidence in one's perceived ability to be an Orientation Leader overall.

H4: LITs who receive feedback and encouragement from their Facilitators in Time 1 will report higher levels of self-efficacy in Time 2.

H5: Affinity for one's Facilitator in Time 2 will correlate with levels of overall confidence in Time 2.

Methods

Subjects ($N = 301$) were invited to participate in this research via email by the Facilitators of their respective Facilitator groups for Spring Training. The email invitation included a link to an initial questionnaire developed with Google Forms, which provided background about the research and an Institutional Review Board-approved informed consent agreement. Participants who received the email invitation then had the option to provide consent and volunteer to participate, or to opt out and exit the questionnaire. Data were collected from both the initial questionnaire and the follow-up questionnaire throughout the ten-week Spring Training program, and responses were sorted and analyzed upon completion of collection.

Sample

Participants included Cal Poly students enrolled in the University's New Student and Transition Program's (NSTP) 2016 Spring Training session. These students were all volunteer applicants of the training session and were distributed among 45 Facilitator groups. 301 responses were gathered from the population of Leaders in Training after distribution of the initial questionnaire (Time 1). Duplicate responses were removed, making the sample size 293 for Time 1 ($N = 293$). 3 individuals did not consent to the research, therefore their responses were not recorded for questions beyond the informed consent portion of the questionnaire. Of this sample, 37.5% were male ($N = 110$), 61.1% were female ($N = 179$), and 0.3% identified as "other" ($N = 1$). When asked about their standing in school, 67.2 % of participants indicated they were first year students ($N = 197$), 20.5% indicated they were second year students ($N = 60$), 10.9% indicated they were third year students ($N = 32$), and 0.3% indicated they were fourth year students or above ($N = 1$). Further, 89.8% of participants indicated they had not completed Spring Training or been a Cal Poly Orientation Leader in the past. A total of 27 individuals from the sample had completed another session of Spring Training prior to 2016; those individuals will be referred to as "Returners" for the remainder of this report.

Procedure

Subjects ($N=301$) were invited to participate in this research via email. 45 Spring Training Facilitators were encouraged to send an email invitation to participate in the study by providing consent and completing the initial questionnaire during weeks 2-4 of the program. Responses gathered during this period were accepted; no responses were accepted after week 4. The URL link directed participants to an IRB consent form, upon which individuals indicated if

they wanted to voluntarily participate. Subjects were informed that participation was strictly voluntary and that the aims of the research were to identify and analyze sentiments and attitudes present in current Leaders in Training. Those who chose to participate were directed to the second section of the questionnaire, while those who opted not to participate prompted the completion message of the Google Form.

The initial questionnaire consisted of 25 questions—four introduction/demographic questions, 20 Likert-type Scale questions, and one short response in which participants could choose to provide an email address to receive the follow-up questionnaire. All questions were optional; participants had the opportunity to omit any of the 25 questions. The second section of the questionnaire included four multiple choice questions about demographics and past leadership experience. The third section consisted of 20 statements pertaining to one's perceived leadership capabilities and influences accompanied by a Likert-type scale measure. At the end of the third section, participants had the option to provide an email address that would enable a follow-up survey to be sent to them at a later time. (See Appendix A for initial questionnaire instrument). Those who provided an email address ($N = 266$) were sent a follow-up questionnaire during week 7 of Spring Training.

Individuals who opted to provide an email address in the initial questionnaire received an email with information about the second questionnaire and a link to a similar Google Form. The follow-up questionnaire was formatted in a similar way—however, it only included two sections because demographic information was already provided. The first section included a short response item in which participants were asked to indicate the email at which they received the invitation. This was an important aspect of the follow-up survey because it allowed individual

responses from Time 1 to be linked with responses from Time 2. Participants were also asked to indicate if they were still participating in Spring Training, as the number of LITs is not static throughout the duration of the program. Finally, participants were presented with the same 20 statements to which they had previously responded. Once again, they were asked to indicate their response to each statement with a Likert-type scale measure. Responses to the follow-up survey were accepted during weeks 7-9 of Spring Training. (See Appendix B for follow-up questionnaire).

Measures

As indicated above, participants responded to items on each questionnaire and ranked them with a Likert-type scale. The scale was labeled 1-5; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree. The items were divided into three main categories: efficacy items, overall confidence, and Facilitator-related items. It is important to note that the role of these items (e.g., independent variable or dependent variable) was subject to change throughout the research depending on the hypothesis being tested.

Efficacy items included thirteen statements, each of which started with the phrase “I feel that I can...” These items were directed at specific tasks and scenarios discussed during the Spring Training program, such as dealing with sexual assault, diversity and inclusion, and mental health. The combination of such items in the initial questionnaire created a variable labeled Efficacy Time 1, and the combination of the same items in the follow-up questionnaire composed Efficacy Time 2. Overall confidence was measured by a single variable, which appeared as the last item on each questionnaire (“I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader”).

Facilitator-related items included six statements that prompted participants to indicate their level of agreement, again using the Likert-type scale. These items included the following statements: “My Facilitator offers constructive feedback and advice to me”; “My Facilitator is always available as a resource”; “My Facilitator motivates me to succeed as an Orientation Leader”; “My Facilitator uses positive verbal and written encouragement”; “My Facilitator makes me excited to be an Orientation Leader”; “My Facilitator helps me understand the material and topics presented during Spring Training.” As with the efficacy items, these items were used to create combined variables for both questionnaires (Time 1 and Time 2). As a result, Facilitator Time 1 refers to the six-item variable in the initial questionnaire, and Facilitator Time 2 refers to the six-item variable in the follow-up questionnaire. In addition to these items, another combined item variable was created to specifically measure Facilitators’ use of both feedback and encouraging language. This variable was referred to as Encouragement/Feedback and included two individual items from the questionnaires (“My Facilitator offers constructive feedback and advice to me” and “My Facilitator uses positive verbal and written encouragement”).

Multiple data sets were used in analyzing the data due the nature of the responses. Three specific sets of data were compiled throughout this research: Time 1 in full, which included all eligible responses to the initial questionnaire ($N = 290$); Time 2 in full, which included all eligible responses to the follow-up questionnaire ($N = 132$); and finally, a data set that linked the responses of participants who provided an email address in both questionnaires ($N = 112$). In an effort to provide a comprehensive view of the data collected, the following tables show descriptive statistics from all three data sets.

In an attempt to confirm the reliability of the scales, several reliability tests were executed. For the averages of combined efficacy measures, reliability was high during both times for all 13 items (Cronbach's $\alpha = .91$ for Time 1; Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$ for Time 2). Similarly, the six Facilitator-related items had reliable scale measures (averaging at Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$ for Time 1; Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$ for Time 2). Finally, for the linked data set, efficacy measures in Time 1 and efficacy measures in Time 2 had high average reliability scores (Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$ and Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$, respectively). The Facilitator-related measures from the set of linked responses had similarly high reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .85$ for Facilitator items in Time 1; Cronbach's $\alpha = .88$ for Facilitator items in Time 2).

Validity

The measures used are justified as valid because each item is based on an element taken directly from Spring Training material. Each statement in the questionnaire relating to efficacy refers to a specific topic or skill addressed during the program meetings or presentations. Further, each item used to explore the influence of Facilitator-related measures was composed with NSTP's expectation of Facilitators in mind. The scales (Likert-type) are deemed valid because the range of answers is broad enough to encompass a multitude of views (see description in *Measures* section above) and such scales have been used in similar research. In Rosetto, Lannutti, and Smith's study on self-efficacy and emotional support (2014) the researchers used a 7-point Likert-type scale to measure numerous items, each with high reported reliability. Other research, including Bandura and Cervone's study of self-evaluative mechanisms and self-efficacy, have turned to questionnaires composed of response items measured by varying scales as well (1983).

Results

Hypothesis 1 predicted that LITs would report increased levels of self-efficacy in all areas of the follow-up questionnaire, meaning that there would be increases in efficacy-related responses from Time 1 to Time 2. To test this hypothesis, 13 efficacy-related items from each questionnaire were combined to create new variables: Efficacy Time 1 and Efficacy Time 2. The responses of participants who provided email addresses in both questionnaires ($N = 112$) were analyzed with a T-Test of the paired statistics. Results show that the mean for efficacy items at Time 1 ($M = 4.32$) was significantly higher than the mean for efficacy items at Time 2 ($M = 4.67$), $t(111) = -10.37$, $p < .001$. Thus, H1 is supported.

Paired Samples Test					
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence ...
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower
Pair 1	EfficacyTime1 - EfficacyTime2	-.35124	.35853	.03388	-.41837

Paired Samples Test					
		Paired ...			
		95% Confidence Interval of the ...			
		Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	EfficacyTime1 - EfficacyTime2	-.28411	-10.368	111	.000

In an effort to explore Hypothesis 2, further analysis was needed. Hypothesis 2 predicted that Returners (LITs who have completed Spring Training in the past) would consistently report higher levels of self-efficacy than first time LITs during Time 1. To test this hypothesis, a T-test comparing the independent/grouping variable (“Have you completed Spring Training in the past?”) and the dependent variable/outcome (Efficacy Time 1) was executed. The data set used in

this test included all eligible responses from Time 1 ($N = 290$). Results show that the mean of Efficacy Time 1 for first time LITs was 4.30, while the mean for Returners was 4.55. In support of H2, this difference was statistically significant, $t(288) = -2.35, p < .05$.

Independent Samples Test					
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	t	df
EfficacyTime1	Equal variances assumed	1.040	.309	-2.354	288
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.567	32.974

Independent Samples Test					
		t-test for Equality of Means			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	
EfficacyTime1	Equal variances assumed	.019	-.25340	.10766	
	Equal variances not assumed	.015	-.25340	.09870	

Hypothesis 3 predicted that reported levels of confidence in one’s ability to be an Orientation Leader overall would correlate with perceived ability to complete specific tasks. To test H3, the total acceptable responses from Time 2 ($N = 132$) were analyzed with a correlation test. Again, all items designed to measure self-efficacy were combined to create a single variable, and measured against overall confidence in one’s perceived ability (“I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader”). In support of H3, correlation shows that the results were significant at the .01 level; $r = .67, p < .001$.

Correlations			
		I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader.	Efficacy
I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader.	Pearson Correlation	1	.673**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	132	132
Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.673**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	132	132

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypotheses 4 and 5 focused on the relationship between LITs' reported levels of self-efficacy and the role of the Facilitator. H4 predicted that LITs who reported receiving encouragement and feedback from their Facilitators during Time 1 would in turn report higher levels of self-efficacy in Time 2. The data set of linked email responses ($N = 112$) was used in the analysis of this hypothesis. When considering only the two items specifically regarding feedback and encouragement ("My Facilitator offers constructive feedback and advice to me"; "My Facilitator uses positive verbal and written encouragement"; correlation of $r = .42, p < .001$ between items) the correlation of that combined variable (Encouragement/Feedback Time 1) with Efficacy Time 2 is significant at the .05 level ($r = .24, p = .013$). Thus, H4 is supported by the significant relationship between the feedback and encouragement offered by Facilitators and reported perceptions of self-efficacy.

		EfficacyTime2	Encouragemen tFeedback1
EfficacyTime2	Pearson Correlation	1	.235 [*]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013
	N	112	112
EncouragementFeedback 1	Pearson Correlation	.235 [*]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	
	N	112	112

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In an attempt to further explore the relationship between Facilitator roles and self-efficacy, another correlation test was employed that looked at general affinity for one's Facilitator. In this test, the combined variable for all six Facilitator-related responses, labeled Facilitator Time 1, was measured against Efficacy Time 2 in an attempt to identify the relationship between the two

variables. It was found that there was an even more significant correlation ($r = .32, p = .001$) than with just efficacy and the combined item of encouragement and feedback alone.

The final hypothesis, H5, predicted that affinity for one's Facilitator in Time 2 would correlate with overall confidence about one's perceived leadership capabilities in Time 2. To test this hypothesis, a correlation test was carried out between the combined item variable that included all six Facilitator-affect items from Time 2 and overall confidence in one's leadership ability at Time 2. The data used for this test included all eligible responses from Time 2 ($N = 132$). Results of the statistical analysis show that there is a significant correlation between how LITs view their Facilitators and how confident they feel about their own abilities to be Orientation Leaders ($r = .37, p < .001$).

		Facilitator	I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader.
Facilitator	Pearson Correlation	1	.366**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	132	132
I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader.	Pearson Correlation	.366**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	132	132

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

This study sought to explore the relationship between Spring Training programming for potential Orientation Leaders and levels of perceived self-efficacy. In addition to measuring self-reported levels of efficacy, the current research emphasized the influence of group Facilitators on the LITs and their perceived leadership abilities. The results suggest that the ten-week training

course does in fact increase self-efficacy levels, and in turn prepares LITs to deal with potential issues during Orientation Programs, specifically SLO Days and WOW. Levels of reported self-efficacy were overall higher during the weeks 7-9 of the program than they were during weeks 2-4, as was predicted in the research hypotheses. Further, Facilitators play a major role in raising levels of efficacy among potential OLs. Receiving constructive feedback and positive encouragement, along with having high affinity for one's Facilitator, are key elements that affect the change in efficacy levels.

Theoretical Implications

According to existing literature, social learning theory and motivating language theory have been linked with self-efficacy levels and performance outcomes (Bandura, 1971; Bandura, 1977; Mayfield & Mayfield, 2014). In applying social learning theory (Bandura, 1971) to this study, it may be observed that many of the aspects of the theory hold true in various areas of the research. Interpretations of the results in light of social learning theory support that LITs do indeed learn via vicarious experience and observation of exemplar models because reported levels of efficacy rose over time, and the training relies heavily on these methods of instruction. Returning LITs who have presumably had more direct experiences from being Orientation Leaders already came into the program with higher levels of reported self-efficacy, as was predicted. However, LITs who did not come in with such high levels of self-efficacy due to repeated successes or direct experience still reported higher perceptions of efficacy after participating in Spring Training, presumably as a result of observing model behavior and preferred paths of action, as is predicted by social learning theory. Further, theory states that the increase in reported self-efficacy during the final weeks of the program may impact decisions to

act during real situations. Since self-efficacy and self-referent thought have the potential to interfere with concrete actions (Bandura, 1982), in theory the results of this research support that a greater level of action will be taken by potential Orientation Leaders after the completion of Spring training, not only because they know what to do, but because overall they feel more capable of executing such actions.

In addition, results show that LITs reported higher levels of self-efficacy when the training is supplemented with performance feedback, which in turn may activate self-evaluative behaviors and goal-setting. Bandura and Cervone (1983) explain that such feedback and intrinsic goal-setting can lead to better performance in future scenarios, so knowing that the theory holds true in raising self-efficacy is promising for performance outcomes at later times. As Mayfield and Mayfield (2012) explain in their study based on motivating language theory, feedback and motivating verbal and written encouragement from leaders are key to increasing self-efficacy. Results of this research show a significant relationship between use of feedback and encouragement from Facilitators and the level of reported efficacy of LITs. This positive, significant correlation can be interpreted as support of motivating language theory, and may be used to improve Facilitator-subordinate communication in the future training sessions.

Practical Implications

As mentioned above, low efficacy levels can potentially act as a barrier between knowledge of the appropriate actions to take in a given situation and the actual execution of such actions. Knowing some of the key variables that may lead to increases in self-efficacy levels has the potential to improve the quality of training and in turn produce better outcomes. If such factors—such as Facilitator feedback, appropriate exemplar models for vicarious learning, and

motivating language—are closely monitored by those overseeing the program, Orientation Leaders with higher levels of self-efficacy, and thus greater potential to take action in critical situations, will emerge from the program.

The results of this study have highlighted the role of group Facilitators and the influence they have on LITs with whom they interact. Affinity for Facilitators and their use of feedback and encouragement have the potential to directly impact the self-efficacy of potential OLs, making the communication between Facilitators and LITs crucial to the success of Spring Training. The implications of such results are clear: qualified Facilitators aid in the cultivation of qualified Orientation Leaders. It is not enough to have a Facilitator who knows the program and has experience being an Orientation Leader. Facilitators must be capable of providing feedback, using encouraging and motivating language, communicating concepts with LITs, and building relationships with those going through training. Thus, the role of the Facilitator has a critical influence on the levels of self-efficacy, and in turn the overall success, of potential Orientation Leaders.

Finally, as explained in the literature, willingness to provide emotional support is directly affected by perceptions of one's own abilities (Rosetto, Lannutti, & Smith, 2014). Since the results of this research show that average levels of self-efficacy increased throughout Spring Training, it is likely that those who experienced such increases will be more able and willing to provide emotional support to new students during Orientation Programs. Being able to provide support to new students and their supporters is one of the key takeaways from Spring Training and one of the goals of New Student & Transition Programs, so the reported increases in efficacy levels can potentially translate to more effective emotional support provided by Orientation

Leaders. If Orientation Leaders feel more confident in their abilities, they will be more willing to provide support to those in need, thus aiding in the overall transition process for new students and their supporters.

Limitations

One limitation of this research was the size of the sample. While the data collected during Time 1 represented roughly one-third of the population of interest (Leaders in Training) the final data set used for comparisons between Time 1 and Time 2 was significantly smaller. Another aspect of the study that may limit its implications is the replicability of the study in other contexts. While the format of this research worked well for the ten-week Spring Training program at California Polytechnic State University, it may not generate the same useful data and results for training programs at other institutions. While it appears to be a reliable representation of the given population in this context, the study design may need to be adjusted if implemented at other universities or organizations.

A final factor that acts as a limitation in this research is the skewness of the data distribution regarding Facilitator-related items. According to the statistical analyses of these items, in both Time 1 and Time 2 the degree to which responses differed from that of a normal distribution was relatively high (skewness levels ranged from -4.03 to -1.54). While it is possible that LITs truly ranked their Facilitators highly across the board, it is also possible that their responses were influenced by thinking their Facilitators could somehow gain access to their responses. Due to the unknown nature of the resulting skewness, the unusually high rankings must be interpreted with caution.

Future Research

One suggestion for future research, specifically within NSTP's Spring Training program, is to continue the study of the influence of Facilitators. A new design with more emphasis on Facilitators and the specific roles they take on (e.g., one-on-one meetings, email communication, interpersonal relationship building) could generate data and results with important implications for future Spring Training sessions. A close, thorough evaluation of Facilitators and the fulfillment of their duties (or lack thereof) may lead to a necessarily more competitive application process and more careful selection of Facilitators.

Aside from the training program and methods used by New Student & Transition Programs at California Polytechnic State University, it would be interesting to investigate similar Orientation Programs at other institutions. Exploring how other universities and organizations train individuals to lead orientation programs for new students and employees could generate useful data. Using similar scales to measure efficacy levels of participants and comparing the methods of training could potentially lead to new information on how to best increase self-efficacy levels in potential leaders.

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Appendix A: Initial Questionnaire Instrument

Introduction Questions:

1. What year are you in school?
 - a. First year
 - b. Second year
 - c. Third year
 - d. Fourth year
 - e. Fifth year
 - f. Graduate Student

2. What gender do you identify with?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
 - d. Decline to state

3. Have you completed Spring Training in the past?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Have you been a Soar Leader or WOW Leader in the past?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

The following states will be measured with a Likert Scale labeled 1-5.

Please respond to the following statements. The statements are measured on a scale of 1-5; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree.

5. I feel that I can effectively lead a group of new students.

6. I feel that I can make new students from diverse backgrounds feel welcome at Cal Poly.

7. I feel that I can help new students adjust to the Cal Poly community.

8. I feel that I can teach new students about the Mustang Way.

9. I feel that I can help new students achieve academic success.

10. I feel that I can direct new students to the correct resources on campus.

11. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about drug and alcohol use with new students.
12. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about mental health with new students.
13. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about sexual assault with new students.
14. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about diversity and inclusion with new students.
15. I feel that I can help new students process difficult topics.
16. I feel that I can share personal stories with new students whom I have just met.
17. I feel that I can help new students who react negatively to awareness presentations.
18. My Facilitator offers constructive feedback and advice to me.
19. My Facilitator is always available as a resource.
20. My Facilitator motivates me to succeed as an Orientation Leader.
21. My Facilitator uses positive verbal and written encouragement.
22. My Facilitator makes me excited to be an Orientation Leader.
23. My Facilitator helps me understand the material and topics presented during Spring Training.
24. I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader.
25. **Please provide your email address.** Doing so will enable you to receive an invitation number that will you will enter when you respond to a second survey in roughly 8 weeks.

(Enter email address here)

Appendix B: Follow-Up Questionnaire Instrument

Introduction Questions:

1. Please enter the email address at which you received this invitation.
(Enter email address here)
2. Are you still participating in Spring Training?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Other

The following states will be measured with a Likert Scale labeled 1-5.

Please respond to the following statements. The statements are measured on a scale of 1-5; 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat agree, 5 = strongly agree.

3. I feel that I can effectively lead a group of new students.
4. I feel that I can make new students from diverse backgrounds feel welcome at Cal Poly.
5. I feel that I can help new students adjust to the Cal Poly community.
6. I feel that I can teach new students about the Mustang Way.
7. I feel that I can help new students achieve academic success.
8. I feel that I can direct new students to the correct resources on campus.
9. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about drug and alcohol use with new students.
10. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about mental health with new students.
11. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about sexual assault with new students.
12. I feel that I can facilitate a discussion about diversity and inclusion with new students.
13. I feel that I can help new students process difficult topics.
14. I feel that I can share personal stories with new students whom I have just met.
15. I feel that I can help new students who react negatively to awareness presentations.

16. My Facilitator offers constructive feedback and advice to me.
17. My Facilitator is always available as a resource.
18. My Facilitator motivates me to succeed as an Orientation Leader.
19. My Facilitator uses positive verbal and written encouragement.
20. My Facilitator makes me excited to be an Orientation Leader.
21. My Facilitator helps me understand the material and topics presented during Spring Training.
22. I feel confident in my ability to be an Orientation Leader.