

'beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency. If people believe they have no power to produce results, they will not attempt to make things happen'
Bandura, A., 1997

'academic motivation can be discussed in terms of one type of personal expectancy: self-efficacy - which can predict academic performance as well as other diverse outcomes such as social skills, pain tolerance, athletic performance, career choice ...'
Schunk, D., 1991

'a new wave of psychologists are calling for attention to students' self-beliefs related to their academic pursuits, beliefs about their perceptions of their own competence'
Pajares, F., 2000

'academic agency is a sense of academic purpose, this being a product of self-efficacy and academic confidence which is then the major influence on academic accomplishment'
Zimmerman, B.J., 1995

Social Cognitive Theory

- The ideas about self-efficacy and self-confidence are rooted in Social Cognitive Theory developed through decades of research and writing by Bandura (eg: 1977) and others aligned with the same perspective on human interactions with each other and their environment, which attempts to explain the processes that drive and regulate behaviour.
- Within this over-arching theory, the position of self-efficacy as a social psychological construct that relates self-belief to individual actions is a central and fundamental element.
- Bandura's seminal work on self-efficacy (1997) has underpinned a substantial body of research in the areas of behavioural psychology and social learning theory, especially in relation to the roles that self-efficacy plays in shaping our thoughts and actions in learning environments. Self-efficacy is all about judgements we make about our personal capabilities and that these are the core factors of human agency.

- In more recent writing, Bandura has taken an agentic perspective to develop social cognitive theory (Bandura, 2001) in which 'agency' is the embodiment of the essential characteristics of individuals' sense of purpose. This is viewed in terms of time-related factors embodying intentionality and forethought - essential bases for planning, time-management and personal organization, elements of self-regulation which temper behaviour or are drivers of motivation in response to self-reactive influences such as guiding or corrective personal standards, and introspective reflection about one's capabilities and the quality of their application in the self-examination of one's own functioning. Bandura advocates efficacy beliefs as the foundation of human agency (ibid, p10).
- Over the last two decades or so, three other eminent researchers have adopted and expanded Bandura's theories, particularly in the context of learning with Dale Schunk, Frank Pajares and Barry Zimmerman all having published papers both collaboratively with each other and with Bandura.
- Collectively, their work is widely respected as a cornerstone of understanding the interrelationships between human behaviour and learning.