

Metacognition in Action: Reflection as a Catalyst for Experiential Teacher Education

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the effects of experiential learning in early childhood teacher education on reflective thinking practices and metacognition. The participants ($N = 290$, 93.4% females) were novice teachers enrolled in undergraduate early childhood teacher education programs, ranging in age from 16 and 40. The Experiential Learning Scale, Reflective Practice Questionnaire, and Metacognitive Awareness Inventory were used to assess engagement of experiential learning, reflective thinking practice, and metacognition. The results indicated that implementing an experiential learning approach through reflective thinking practice could promote metacognition. This finding implies that encouraging reflective thinking practice may promote novice teachers' metacognition. This study shed light on the outcomes of combining specific features of experiential learning, reflective thinking practices, and metacognition, and have a direct impact on enhancing the quality of teaching education and subsequently benefits early childhood learners, as well as future research on teacher practices. Additionally, reflective thinking practice can contribute to lifelong learning by acquiring skills and incorporating professional practices, career development, transformative learning, and personal capabilities. The most important contribution is that experiential learning can enhance reflection and metacognition, subsequently promoting teacher cognitive development through experiential teacher education.

Keywords: early childhood education, experiential learning, metacognitive awareness, reflective thinking practice, teachers