

# **The Effect of Experiential Life and Death Education Curriculum Designed for Senior High School Students with Mild to Moderate Intellectual Disabilities on Their Death Knowledge, Attitudes toward Death, and Beliefs about Meaning of Life**

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## **Abstract**

Being born and eventually dying are universal life experiences. However, if people with intellectual disabilities are unable to understand death, their negative feelings of depression will be produced and affect their mental health. The purpose of this study was to develop two types of life and death education curriculum model as "lecture and discussion based curriculum" and "experiential activities add-on curriculum" and compare the immediate and eight-week retained effect of the two curriculum models on death knowledge, attitudes toward death, and beliefs about the meaning of life. To compare the effectiveness of these two curriculum models, a pretest-posttest nonequivalent group quasi-experimental design was applied. In the first experimental group, 15 students participated in the lecture and discussion-based curriculum, which consisted of 30 units covering four topics: the Joy of Life (Birth), the Journey of Life (Aging and Illness), the End of Life (Death), and Reflections on Life. In contrast, the second experimental group included 24 students who participated in the same 30-unit curriculum supplemented with four experiential activities. Assessments of death knowledge, attitudes toward death, and beliefs about the meaning of life were conducted at three time points: one week before the course began (pretest), one week after the course ended (posttest), and eight weeks after the course concluded (retention test). The data were analyzed using one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to control for baseline differences between groups.

**Keywords:** experiential learning; intellectual disability; life and death education