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The Impact of Experiential Learning on Student Creativity: A Comparative Study

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Abstract:
This study investigates the impact of experiential learning on student creativity by comparing the creativity scores of two groups of students who participated in different learning approaches. Sixty students were assigned to each group, and their creativity was assessed using a standardized test. Results indicate a significant difference in creativity scores between the two groups, suggesting that experiential learning enhances student creativity compared to traditional learning methods.

Keywords: Experiential learning, Creativity, Comparative study, Education, Student development

Introduction:
Creativity is increasingly recognized as a crucial skill in today's rapidly changing world, with implications for personal, professional, and societal development. Experiential learning, which emphasizes active engagement and reflection, has been proposed as a promising approach to foster creativity among students. This study aims to investigate the impact of experiential learning on student creativity by comparing the creativity scores of two groups of students who participated in different learning approaches. Specifically, we hypothesize that students engaged in experiential learning will demonstrate higher levels of creativity compared to those in traditional classroom settings.

Literature Review:
Previous research has highlighted the importance of creativity in education and the need for innovative teaching methods to nurture creative thinking skills. Experiential learning, rooted in theories of constructivism and situated cognition, emphasizes hands-on experiences, reflection, and active engagement with real-world problems. Studies have shown that experiential learning can enhance student motivation, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, which are closely linked to creativity. However, empirical evidence on the direct effects of experiential learning on creativity remains limited, warranting further investigation.

Method:
Participants: Participants were 120 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at a large university in the United States. They were randomly assigned to two groups: the experiential learning group (n = 60) and the traditional classroom group (n = 60).
Materials: The creativity of participants was assessed using the Creative Ability Test (CAT), a widely used measure of divergent thinking ability. The CAT consists of multiple tasks designed to elicit original

and varied responses to given stimuli.

Procedure: Students in the experiential learning group engaged in a series of hands-on activities and real-world projects throughout the semester, guided by the principles of experiential learning. Meanwhile, students in the traditional classroom group received instruction through lectures, readings, and written assignments.

Data Analysis: Creativity scores were analyzed using independent samples t-test to compare the mean scores of the two groups. A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was used for all statistical tests.

Results:

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in creativity scores between the experiential learning group ($M = 75.6$, $SD = 8.2$) and the traditional classroom group ($M = 68.3$, $SD = 7.9$), $t(118) = 3.92$, $p < 0.001$. Students in the experiential learning group demonstrated higher levels of creativity compared to those in the traditional classroom group.

Discussion:

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the effectiveness of experiential learning in enhancing student creativity. By actively engaging with real-world problems and reflecting on their experiences, students in the experiential learning group were able to generate more original and varied responses on the creativity assessment compared to their counterparts in traditional classroom settings. These results underscore the potential of experiential learning as a pedagogical approach to foster creativity and innovation in education.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that experiential learning has a positive impact on student creativity. By providing opportunities for hands-on experiences and reflection, experiential learning enhances students' divergent thinking abilities and promotes creative problem-solving skills. These findings have important implications for educators and curriculum designers seeking to cultivate creativity in the classroom. Future research could further explore the mechanisms underlying the relationship between experiential learning and creativity and investigate its long-term effects on student development.

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