

Exploring the effectiveness and limitations of experiential learning in facilitating social skills training among children in group settings: A study on kindergarten and primary school students.

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INTRODUCTION

- Social skills training plays a crucial role in enhancing children's social interactions, emotional well-being, and overall development.
- Experiential learning emphasizes active engagement and hands-on experience for effective learning.
- Recognized as valuable for foster children's learning.
- Objectives: Compare effectiveness between kindergarten and primary school students, and explore limitations of experiential learning in group work.

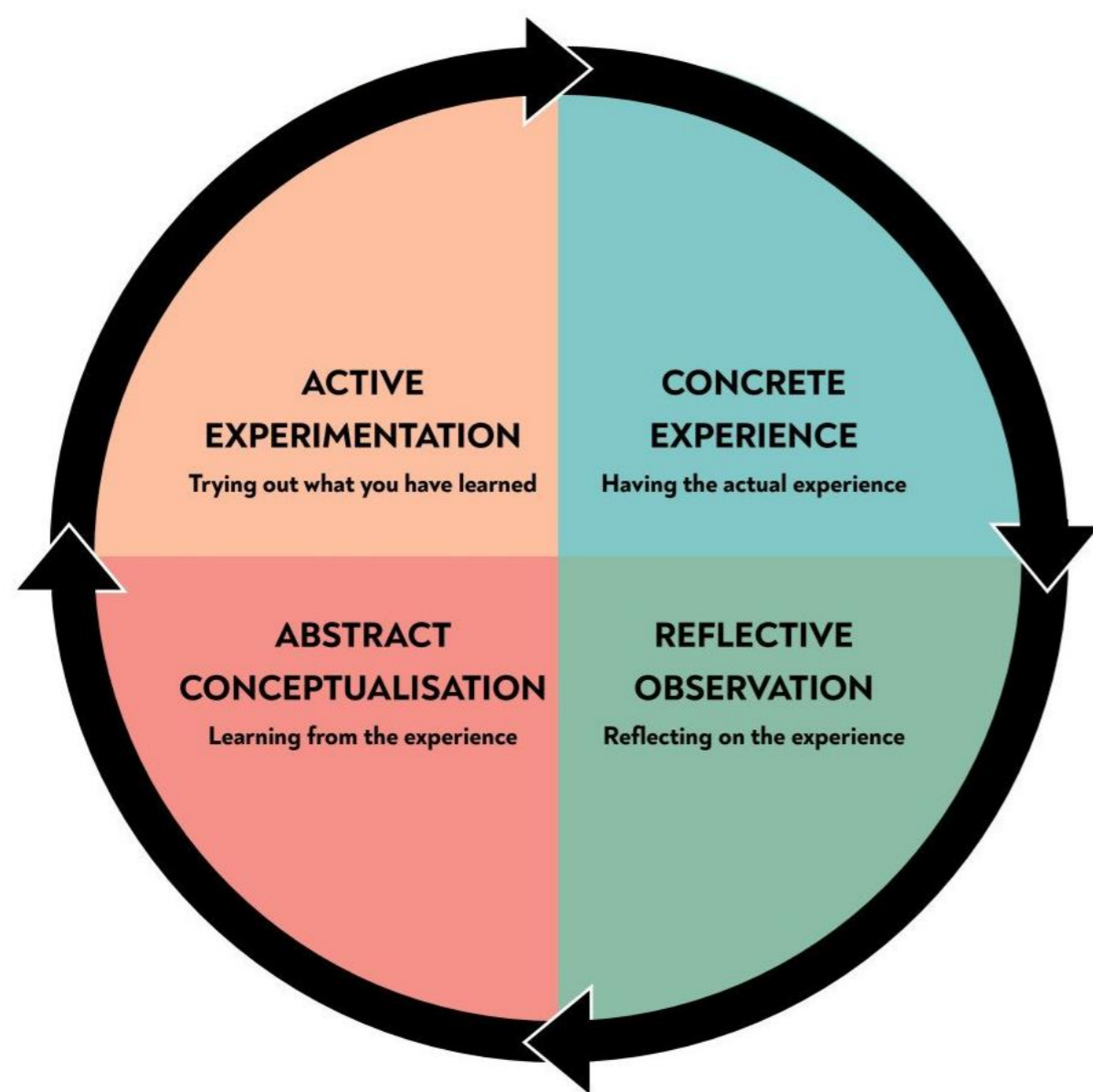


Figure 1. Kolb's experiential learning model. Adapted from: Kolb (1984)

METHODOLOGY

- After-only design evaluating two social skills training groups using experiential learning approach.
- Group 1: Six sessions with six kindergarten students (aged 4 to 5) from March 2023 to May 2023.
- Group 2: Six sessions with eight primary school students (aged 8 to 10) from October 2023 to November 2023.
- Experiential learning approach employed, with content and activities tailored to the different needs and abilities of each group.
- Analysis were made based on worker's observation and members' performance.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Performance outcomes of six members of Group 1

Aspects of social skills	Key performance indicator	Percentage of participants achieving
Verbal communication skills	Members can do self-introduction in complete sentence without worker's guidance.	66.6%
	Members can say "Thank you" in the related context.	100%
	Members can say "Please" in the related context.	100%
Cooperation	Members understand that cooperation can achieve better outcome when compared to working individually.	100%
	Members can work together to complete the task in the sessions.	100%
	Members can listen and follow instructions given for completing task in the sessions.	83.3%

FINDINGS (CONT.)

Table 2: Performance outcomes of eight members of Group 2

Aspects of social skills	Key performance indicator	Percentage of participants achieving
Cooperation	Members can work together to complete the tasks.	100%
	Members can listen and follow instructions given for completing tasks.	100%
Emotional intelligence	Members can identify the five basic emotions.	87.5%
	Members can express their emotions.	87.5%
Active listening	Members are attentive to listen.	87.5%
	Members can ask questions for clarification in two-way communication.	75%

- Simulation games and role-playing can provide concrete experience for both kindergarten and primary school members about social skills.
- Primary school participants have better performance in reflective practice.
- Debriefing after simulation game is important for facilitating social skills training.
- Considerations in facilitating debriefing: use more leading questions and simple languages with younger children in debriefing.

Limitations of Experiential Learning:

1. Adaptation of content and activities to meet varying needs and abilities of participants.
2. Challenges in debriefing sessions: members were distracted; .
3. Time constraints and resource requirements.

DISCUSSION

Limitations of study:

- Long term effectiveness of experiential learning in social skills training could not be evaluated due to the short duration of intervention.

Future Research:

- Conducting longitudinal studies to examine the long-term effects of experiential learning interventions on social skills development.

Conclusion:

- Experiential learning is effective in enhancing social skills development in children.
- Customization, flexibility, and creativity are necessary to maximize benefits of this approach in fostering children's learning and development.

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