I See Myself When I Serve Others, Service Learning to Develop Mechanics Skills in Teachers

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Introduction

- Service learning may provide opportunities to develop hard skills while working on a social and interpersonal competencies (Jones, Bouffard, & Weissbourd, 2013).

- The combination of service learning and concrete experience enhances student development through application (Bear & Hoerner, 1986).

- Application experiences may aid in the development of educators ready to teach agricultural mechanics (Burris, Robinson, & Terry, 2005).

- Service-learning contexts may lessen the discrepancy between efficacy and ability in agricultural mechanics (Blackburn, Robinson, & Field, 2015).

Framework

- Social Cognitive Theory was used to understand the four types of learning experiences essential to establishing self- efficacy as a product of a service learning activity and subsequent student reflections.

Mastery

Vicarious

Social Persuasion

Physiological & Emotional

Purpose of study

- To describe student self-efficacy following a service-learning experience with Habitat for Humanity.

- The service learning experience centered around skill development in a preservice agricultural mechanics course

Methods: Data collection

- Nineteen students in a pre-service agricultural mechanics course completed reflections following the experience.

- Students were prompted to think back on their experience and write about how the experience made them feel and why we might have them participate in that experience as a requirement of the class.

Methods: data analysis

- Two researchers individually analyzed reflections and coded excerpts according to Bandura's (1986) four learning experiences.

- The constant comparative method was used to compare incidents, form initial categories, and develop themes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

✓ **Mastery Experience 13**

△ **Vicarious Experience 29**

💬 **Social Persuasion 25**

☺ **Physiological & Emotional 72**

Themes

- Two major themes emerged within each experience type
  - Student as Student
    - Students experiencing various physiological and emotional states, confronting or succumbing to social persuasion, learning from their peers vicariously, and mastering classroom skills

  - Student as Teacher
    - describes a significant change of perspective where students begin to view themselves as teachers and describe how to best deal with students in various physiological and emotional states, understand the effects of social persuasion, take advantage of vicarious learning, and develop mastery experiences.

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Conclusions

- Students reflected on engaging in a service learning activity
  - in courses that have historically had a high propensity for apprehension, reflections were identified in each of Bandura's four types of experiences of learning

- Trends began to develop showing students progressing through themes in a particular order; and its reverse.

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Conclusions

- As students progressed, their perspectives changed as they went from viewing themselves in the role of student, beginning with expressions of fear or the unknown, followed by learning from vicarious success of peers, and mimicry until personal mastery was achieved.

- In reverse order, students with ever decreasing frequency, reflected through the lens of a teacher. Instead of working towards mastery themselves, student began to consider how they might guide their future students through a similar experience.

Physiological & Emotional   **Social Persuasion**   **Vicarious**   **Mastery**
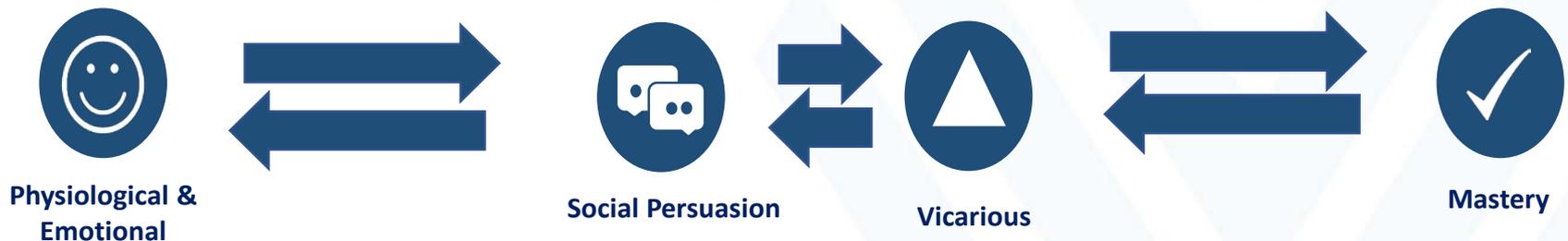
Implications and Recommendations

- The findings of this study provide insight into the changing perspectives of preservice teachers during a service learning activity.

- Additionally, understanding the sequence in which students begin to master skills may provide a structure to understand the importance of self-efficacy in developing preservice teachers.

- Future research should explore the connection between service learning and reflections that bring about those changes in self-efficacy.