



The role of Experience in Teachers' Self-efficacy, Critical Thinking, and Reflective Teaching Practices

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Abstract

Understanding teachers' perceptions and beliefs is important because teachers, heavily involved in various teaching and learning processes, are practitioners of educational principles and theories [1]. Various factors play a part in shaping different characteristics of teachers. In this respect the present study attempted at determining the role of teacher experience in Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, critical thinking and reflective teaching. To this aim, data were collected from 150 EFL teachers with less than 1 to over 10 years of teaching experience who were divided into two groups of novice and experienced teachers. The participants were asked to fill out three questionnaires: the SE questionnaire by [2], the questionnaire of Critical thinking by [3], and the questionnaire of Reflective teaching by [4]. The results of individual samples t-test revealed a significant different between novice and experienced teachers regarding these three important teacher variables. The findings of this study provide evidence for the complex interplay among teacher characteristics. It can be argued that developing one of these constructs may result in the development of other key factors in teachers' characteristics leading to better teacher performance and hence, student achievement. The results also point to the role of experience in developing positive teacher characteristics, that is, by gaining more experience, teachers' sense of efficacy, critical thing ability, and reflection on their practice increases.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Critical Thinking, Reflective teaching, Novice teachers, Experienced teachers

1. Introduction

In the last two decades, teacher education has been marked as the beginning of an orientation and groundbreaking shift in the sense that the simplistic view toward teachers as passive knowledge consumers was replaced by an alternative approach considering them as “active, thinking decision makers ” [5]. In the English language teaching (ELT) context, this new perspective was further reinforced with the rise of the post method paradigm which heavily relies on quality teachers who can “theorize from their practice and practice what they theorize” [6], (p. 173).

[7] argue that self-efficacy improves performance and makes motivation. Also, self-efficacy helps in the improvement of critical thinking skills. Self-efficacy, as a motivational feature, mainly influences critical thinking, and low motivation is an obstacle to development of critical thinking. As self-efficacy beliefs are described as the main