

Reconceptualising the Assessment Practices Within Early Childhood Field Placements: Using Collaborative Reflective Conversations to Mentor Student Teachers on Practicum

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Abstract

The practicum components in early childhood field-based programmes form a core part of achieving praxis, or the balance between theory and practice, which is interwoven with values, beliefs and experiences that form a teacher identity. The practicum assessment involves achieving competency against a set of discipline-based criteria during a period of observation by an external, registered teacher. This paper reports on responses to the national Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, under which the requirements of the traditional practicum could not be met and an alternative version of the assessment had to be developed. The methodology for this project was constructivist grounded theory coupled with a socio-constructivist ethos. The method of data collection was an anonymous survey of students, lecturers and centre-based teachers. The findings indicate an unexpected growth in student empowerment in discussing their own practice.

Keywords: Early childhood education, practicum assessment, collaborative reflective conversation

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