



# Education Quarterly Reviews

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**Koutsoukos, M., Gaitanidi, M. A., Zirinoglou, P., & Mouratidis, A. (2026). Experiential Teaching Method in the Training of Future Teachers: A Case Study Using Three Teaching Scenarios. *Education Quarterly Reviews*, 9(2), 20-26.**

ISSN 2621-5799

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1993.09.02.714

The online version of this article can be found at:  
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

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Published by:  
The Asian Institute of Research


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# Experiential Teaching Method in the Training of Future Teachers: A Case Study Using Three Teaching Scenarios

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## Abstract

This case study presents three teaching scenarios using the experiential teaching method, which were created by future teacher-students in a one-year pedagogical training program. After learning the theoretical framework of experiential teaching, the future teachers, working in specialty-based groups, were tasked with designing a teaching scenario for a lesson of their choice. This was followed by a discussion in class, where participants shared their opinions on the advantages of experiential teaching and potential challenges in its implementation, which were later recorded in a questionnaire. The research reflects that the most significant advantages of experiential teaching include student engagement, the linking of theory and practice, the development of critical thinking, social and communication skills, and empathy development. Possible difficulties in implementing experiential teaching focus on inadequate teacher training, insufficient material and technical resources, limited instructional time, potential noise disruptions that may occur during implementation, and potential challenges with assessment.

**Keywords:** Experiential Teaching, Future Teachers Training, Teaching Scenarios

## 1. Introduction

It is a fact that teaching achieves more comprehensive learning outcomes when it incorporates students' prior life experiences and utilizes active and participatory teaching techniques (Bradberry & De Maio, 2019). In this context, the experiential teaching method emphasizes experience, emotion, activities, interaction, and reflection at the core of learning. Therefore, during experiential teaching, students engage all their senses and actively participate, both intellectually and emotionally, in the educational process (Voukelatou, 2019).

The experiential teaching method, as a pedagogical approach, has been advocated by many scholars in their work, including John Dewey, David Kolb, and William Kilpatrick, who laid the theoretical foundation for its development (Yardley, Teunissen & Dornan, 2012). Dewey, with his central philosophy of "learning by doing,"

stressed the importance of connecting teaching to real life, as learning emerges through experience and action (Reese, 2011). In doing so, students are not passive recipients of knowledge and information but active participants in the educational process, discovering new knowledge through experience, reflection, and self-reflection. Kolb also highlighted the essential role of experiential teaching and learning by developing a 4-stage circular model (Kolb & Kolb, 2017).

According to this view, learning is a process that begins with a specific experience a student undergoes, followed by reflective observation of that experience, then abstract conceptualization—where concepts, and conclusions are drawn, and finally, active experimentation, where the student attempts to apply these conclusions to new situations (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Kilpatrick followed a similar line of thought by developing the project method, a teaching approach that connects experiential teaching and learning with real life and students' interests, aiming at the design and implementation of a specific project through group work and teacher-student interaction.

To summarize the advantages of the experiential teaching method, they focus on learning through specific experiences, engaging students through participatory teaching techniques, linking theory, experience, and practice, reflecting through discussion and analysis of experiences to draw useful conclusions, and developing social and communication skills. These advantages, when utilized in the learning process, can lead to a more comprehensive fulfillment of instructional objectives, always depending on the specific design of the course in question.

On the other hand, in some cases, specific difficulties and limitations arise when implementing experiential learning. Some teachers may not be familiar with or may not have received specialized training in the design and implementation of experiential activities. Furthermore, in terms of classroom management, individual experiential learning activities may generate increased levels of noise and disorder and make classroom management more challenging. Furthermore, the implementation of experiential activities often requires appropriate equipment, logistical infrastructure, space, or visual aids that are not always available (Yao, 2023). At times, there may also be difficulties in assessing the outcomes of experiential teaching, as traditional assessment tests do not always reflect learning outcomes. Finally, the experiential method generally requires more time than traditional teaching, which may make it difficult for some teachers to cover the course curriculum.

Comprehensive training and professional development for teachers on experiential teaching and learning can help mitigate or even eliminate the difficulties mentioned above. By understanding the theoretical foundation of experiential teaching and engaging in experiential activities themselves during professional development, teachers gain personal experience with the method. This personal experience provides them with greater confidence in applying experiential teaching with their students later on (Girvan, Conneely & Bangney, 2016). Furthermore, through their training, teachers gain practical experience with active techniques such as working groups, role-playing, discussion, simulations, and case studies. Indeed, they learn how to integrate these techniques into specific lesson plans, which solidifies experiential teaching as a comprehensive and creative learning process rather than just a theoretical approach. Additionally, through the design and implementation of teaching scenarios, future teachers practice specific skills like effective use of class time, classroom management, and the selection, preparation, and use of teaching materials.

## 2. Method

For this article's purpose, a case study of future teachers who as students, attended the Annual Pedagogical Training Program of the Higher School of Pedagogical and Technological Education (ASPETE) in Thessaloniki was utilized. This program is designed for higher education graduates seeking to acquire teaching proficiency and includes courses in Pedagogy and Didactics.

More specifically, as part of the course "Teaching of Specialized Subjects," students were first introduced to the theoretical background and fundamental principles of the experiential teaching method. Then, during a two-hour workshop, the students were divided into working groups by subject area and, with the instructors' guidance, were asked to collaborate to design a 40-minute teaching scenario for a thematic lesson unit within their subject area. Three of the generated lesson plans are summarized in this article. Subsequently, each group presented its teaching

scenario to the department's plenary session, followed by a constructive discussion in which, among other things, the advantages of experiential teaching as well as potential difficulties in its implementation were noted.

### *2.1 Teaching Scenarios*

#### 1st Teaching Scenario

Course: Food Technology

Unit: Plant-Based Milks

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to: a) name the various plant-based milks (e.g., almond milk, oat milk, rice milk, etc.), b) identify the specific characteristics of each plant-based milk, c) distinguish the differences and similarities among plant-based milk beverages, d) assess the nutritional value of plant-based milk beverages

Lesson Plan: During the initial phase of the lesson, the teacher starts by showing the students a short 2.5-minute video about plant-based milks and the increasing demand for them in today's food market. This video stimulates the students' interest and encourages critical thinking. Students are then asked if they have ever tried a plant-based milk beverage, such as almond milk or oat milk, and to share any relevant personal experiences they may have had. Following this, students are divided into two groups and provided with three different plant-based milk drinks (almond, oat, and rice) along with disposable cups. Each student tastes all three beverages as part of experiential learning. In their groups, a discussion takes place where the teacher asks relevant questions to help students identify the specific characteristics of each beverage, such as taste, texture, and sweetness, based on their tasting experience.

To further build on the students' previous tasting experience, they are provided with a worksheet to record the distinctive characteristics of each beverage on a table. A PowerPoint slide is also shown to summarize these characteristics. The working groups are then provided with a fourth sample of plant-based milk (coconut milk) to taste and reflect on, comparing its characteristics with those of the three previously mentioned beverages. Students are asked to record any differences and similarities they notice on the worksheet. By engaging in this hands-on activity, students are able to deepen their understanding of plant-based milks and develop their ability to compare and contrast different beverages based on taste, texture, and sweetness. Next, students are asked to complete an assessment sheet that includes true-false, multiple-choice, and short-answer questions. Once completed, the sheets are collected by the instructor. Once this is done, the correct answers will be presented to the students, who will then be asked to evaluate their own performance (self-assessment), express their opinions, and reflect on the lesson and their learning process (reflection). To conclude, students will be required to summarize the key points of the lesson. Furthermore, an information sheet on plant-based milks will be distributed, along with a homework assignment sheet to enhance student engagement in this topic.

#### 2nd Teaching Scenario

Course: Special Dietary

Unit: Dietary supplements

Learning objectives: Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to a) define dietary supplements, b) give specific examples of dietary supplements, c) identify the population groups that need dietary supplements, and d) recommend the appropriate dietary supplement for each case.

Lesson Plan: During the first phase of the lesson, the teacher shows the students a short 2-minute, 34-second video and two images related to dietary supplements. This serves to stimulate the students' interest and activate their critical thinking. Next, students are asked whether they themselves or people in their immediate circle have taken a dietary supplement in the past or recently, recalling a relevant experience and sharing it with the entire class.

Based on everything that was shown and discussed, the teacher asks the students to define dietary supplements and then hands out several packages of dietary supplements. The teacher divides the students into two groups, and

each group is given a worksheet with case studies of clients/patients. Drawing on their experiences and evaluating the dietary supplement packages in their hands, students are asked to select and record which one is the best choice based on the specific characteristics of each case. Answers are shared with the class using the role-playing technique: some students play the role of the patient/customer, and others play the role of the healthcare professional/pharmacy assistant who will recommend the appropriate dietary supplement. In this way, the learning process becomes more vivid, experiential, and enjoyable for the students.

Building on the students' experiences, the next step is to synthesize and categorize the content of the lesson unit. More specifically, students are asked through a guided discussion to identify population groups that may need dietary supplements, to recognize the factors that influence the potential onset of toxicity, and to name common adverse interactions. The instructor will supplement the lesson by showing relevant slides. Then, the concepts from the unit are tested and applied to new situations. Students are asked to work in pairs to complete a worksheet presenting two new client/patient cases for whom the appropriate dietary supplement must be selected. The answers to the worksheet are presented through role-playing, as before.

Next, students are provided with an individual assessment sheet containing true/false questions, multiple-choice questions, and fill-in-the-blank sentences. For two minutes, each student works on the questions independently, and then the sheets are collected by the teacher, followed by a presentation of the correct answers to the entire class with active student participation, to provide feedback and reflection on the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the students summarize the lesson, as they are asked to highlight the lesson's key points, building a conceptual map.

### 3rd Teaching Scenario

Course: Principles of Economic Theory

Unit: Inflation

Learning objectives: Upon completion of the lesson, students will be able to a) define the concept of inflation, b) list the causes of inflation, c) distinguish between the different types of inflation, and d) describe the effects of inflation on household purchasing power and, more broadly, on a country's economy.

Lesson plan: Initially, the teacher uses the brainstorming technique and asks students to list concepts related to the term "inflation". This helps students engage their creative and critical thinking skills as the teacher records the concepts on the board. By synthesizing these concepts through discussion, an attempt is made to clarify the term "inflation". Next, the teacher shows the students a short 1-minute, 48-second video clip from a current affairs news broadcast discussing rising food prices. Students are then asked to recall a recent experience they had while shopping at the supermarket and noticing price increases on certain products. This further stimulates the students' interest and encourages critical thinking.

Following this, the students are divided into two groups and given an article from a financial newspaper that compares the prices of basic consumer goods from five years ago and two years ago to their current prices using tables. The students discuss among themselves to identify both the causes and types of inflation. Once the groups have completed their work, the teacher shows relevant slides to support the students' findings.

Following that activity, there is a role-playing game in which the teacher divides the students into two groups: "buyers" and "sellers." "Buyers" are handed play money, while "sellers" receive cards depicting specific products with their corresponding prices. First, the students playing the role of buyers determine which products they can purchase with the money they have. Then, the teacher gives the students playing the role of sellers new cards featuring the same products but with higher selling prices. The student-buyers point out the price increase and realize that they can no longer buy the same quantities of products with the same amount of money.

Then, the teacher distributes more money to the student-buyers, who can now generate "effective demand" and purchase some products. However, the increased demand leads the student-sellers to raise the prices of the products, causing inflation to occur again. This serves as a starting point for discussion and reflection. Students

are then given an individual assessment sheet containing five short-answer questions and three multiple-choice questions, which must be answered within two minutes. Once the students have answered the questions, the correct answers are presented to the entire class, and any questions regarding the answers are addressed. To summarize the lesson, the students, with the teacher's encouragement, highlight the key points of the lesson, thereby providing feedback and concluding with a final reflection on the concept of inflation.

### 3. Results

After designing teaching scenarios, the groups of future teachers engaged in a class-wide discussion to receive feedback on their process. It was noted that working in groups encouraged participants to actively explore the concept of experiential teaching, bridging the gap between theory and practice. Additionally, this collaborative approach helped develop social and communication skills, fostering a spirit of cooperation among students and creating a positive learning environment.

Next, the future teachers were given a short questionnaire to record their views on the advantages and challenges of implementing experiential teaching. To begin with, regarding the participants' profiles in this case study, of the 39 future teachers, 23 were women (59%) and 16 were men (41%). Regarding their age distribution, of the 39, 16 were between 21 and 30 years old (41.1%), 14 were between 31 and 40 years old (35.9%), 7 were between 41 and 50 years old (17.9%), and only 2 were 50 years old or older (5.1%). Furthermore, 18 of the participants (46.1%) reported holding a master's degree, while 21 of them did not have a master's degree at the time of the survey (Table 1).

Table 1: Participating future teachers' profile

Sex	Men: 16 (41%)	Women: 23 (59%)	Total: 39
Age (years)	21-30 16 (41.1%)	31-40 14 (35.9%)	41-50 7 (17.9%)
		>50 2 (5.1%)	Total: 39
Postgraduate Studies	Yes: 18 (46.1%)	No: 21 (53.8%)	Total: 39

Next, taking into account the relevant literature (Raja & Najmonnisa, 2018; Breunig, 2017; Hawtrey, 2007) as well as the discussion that followed the design and presentation of the teaching scenarios, the participants in the case study were asked to rate the importance of each advantage of experiential teaching on a five-point Likert scale (5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = moderately important, 2 = somewhat important, 1 = not at all important). As shown by their responses (Table 2), the five most important advantages according to the future teachers are: active student participation (4.98), the linking of theory and practice (4.91), the development of critical thinking (4.87), the development of social and communication skills (4.76), and the development of empathy (4.64).

Table 2: Significance of the advantages of experiential teaching

Advantage	Degree of significance
Active student participation	4.98
Linking theory and practice	4.91
Development of critical thinking	4.87
Development of social and communication skills	4.76
Empathy development	4.64

Finally, participants were asked to rank the challenges they believed were likely to arise during the implementation of experiential teaching. The discussion in the department's plenary session identified five potential difficulties, which participants were asked to evaluate on a five-point Likert scale (5 = very significant, 4 = significant, 3 = moderately significant, 2 = somewhat significant, 1 = not at all significant). As shown in Table 3, the most significant challenges according to the respondents are the teachers' own insufficient training in the specific

characteristics of experiential teaching (4.12), inadequate resources and technical infrastructure (3.97), insufficient teaching time (3.56), the increased noise disruption that may occur during the implementation of experiential teaching (3.45), and the potential difficulty in assessment (3.43).

Table 3: Potential difficulties in implementing the experiential teaching method

Possible difficulty	Degree of importance
Insufficient teachers' training	4.12
Inadequate resources- infrastructure	3.97
Insufficient teaching time	3.56
Increased noise disruption	3.45
Difficulty in assessment	3.43

#### 4. Discussion

One of the greatest challenges facing teachers in today's schools is ensuring their students' active participation in the learning process. In this context, the application of the experiential teaching method through the use of active teaching techniques can contribute to the fuller activation of students' potential (Maji, Saha & Kaibarta, 2026). It is a fact that when students are not merely passive recipients of knowledge but actively participate in the learning process, they connect knowledge to realistic conditions and real-life situations through experiences (Bradberry & De Maio, 2019). In this way, learning becomes more effective as students realize that theoretical knowledge can be applied to real life. Furthermore, experiential learning facilitates the development of critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills related to everyday life (Baker & Robinson, 2016).

The experiential teaching method is not only an active pedagogical approach but also a process of professional development for future teachers, as they crystallize their pedagogical attitudes, perceptions, and skills through experience, action, and reflection. As noted by the future teachers who participated in the study, a key factor in the effective implementation of the experiential teaching method is their own professional development. The more teachers practice using experiential teaching, the more familiar they will be with its subsequent effective implementation and utilization. Thus, the development of lesson plans for specific teaching units within their fields helps future teachers understand in practice the context for applying experiential teaching and develop pedagogical skills, such as teaching flexibility, adaptability, and the ability to provide guidance. Furthermore, through the design and practical implementation of these scenarios, they can reflect on teaching methodology and improve their teaching style.

This case study discusses an issue highly relevant to contemporary pedagogy, thereby enriching the relevant literature. The teaching scenarios developed by the participants were original and specifically designed for the particular context, which reinforces the case study's originality. Regarding the generalizability of the research findings, while there are limitations stemming from the use of a purposive sample, the careful selection of the sample makes the results applicable to a broader population. Regarding suggestions for further research, it would be interesting to conduct similar studies examining other samples, possibly from different institutions of education and training for future teachers, by developing teaching scenarios in different subject areas.

**Author Contributions:** All authors contributed to this research

**Funding:** This research received no external funding

**Conflicts of Interest:** The researchers declare no conflict of interest in this study

**Informed Consent Statement/Ethics approval:** Not applicable

**Acknowledgments:** The authors would like to thank the future teachers who participated in this research for their kind cooperation. In addition, the authors are grateful to the editor and the reviewers of this Journal for their valuable feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript.

**Declaration of Generative AI and AI-assisted Technologies:** This study has not used any generative AI tools or technologies in the preparation of this manuscript.

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