



EFL Students' Reflections on Mastery Experience in Critical Reading

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Abstract

Critical reading has become essential in EFL contexts, requiring students to engage in higher-order thinking beyond literal comprehension. However, limited attention has been given to how students reflect on and internalize mastery experiences in developing critical reading skills, particularly in Indonesian higher education contexts. This study aims to explore how EFL students reflect on their mastery experiences in critical reading and how these reflections contribute to the development of self-efficacy and reading skills. A qualitative case study was conducted involving ten final-semester students from an English Education program. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective journals and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that students' reflections are constructed through three interconnected dimensions: feelings of success, engagement with challenges, and confidence building. These dimensions form a dynamic and recursive process in which mastery experiences are interpreted as meaningful learning episodes. The study also shows that mastery experiences contribute to self-efficacy and critical reading development through a reinforcing cycle of success, persistence, and confidence, supported by reflection and instructional feedback. This study highlights that mastery experience is not merely a performance outcome but a reflective and cyclical process that fosters both cognitive and psychological development, offering important implications for enhancing critical reading instruction in EFL contexts.

Keywords: critical reading; mastery experience; self-efficacy; reflection; EFL students.

Introduction

Critical reading skills have become increasingly essential in the digital era, where information is not only abundant but also varies significantly in credibility and reliability. The rapid proliferation of digital content requires learners to navigate diverse sources of information, distinguish between reliable and misleading content, and construct informed interpretations. In such contexts, students are expected not merely to comprehend texts at a literal level but to engage in higher-order thinking processes, including evaluating arguments, identifying bias, and synthesizing information. Within language learning, critical reading therefore represents a complex cognitive activity that requires active engagement with texts and the ability to interrogate underlying assumptions (Marschall & Davis, 2012). Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated that critical reading contributes significantly to students' academic achievement and cognitive development (Bensley & Spero, 2014; Ali & Razali, 2019), underscoring its central role in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction.

Beyond its cognitive dimension, critical reading also plays a crucial role in preparing students to participate in academic and professional discourse. The ability to critically engage with texts enables learners to construct arguments, evaluate evidence, and develop independent perspectives. In higher education contexts, these skills are particularly important, as students are frequently required to interact with complex academic materials. Consequently, fostering critical reading is not only a pedagogical goal but also a fundamental requirement for developing learners' intellectual autonomy and lifelong learning capacity.

To address this need, numerous instructional approaches have been developed to enhance students' critical reading skills. Strategies such as explicit instruction, critical literacy practices, and evaluative reading tasks have been shown to improve students' ability to interpret and analyze texts (Fahim & Ahmadian, 2012; Shamida et al., 2021; Zulfa et al., 2022). Additionally, the use of authentic materials and problem-based learning has been reported to foster deeper engagement and promote critical thinking (Papadopoulos & Griva, 2017). These approaches emphasize active learning, encouraging students to question texts and construct meaning collaboratively.

However, despite these pedagogical advancements, persistent challenges remain, particularly in sustaining students' engagement and fostering consistent higher-order thinking (Wei & Li, 2024). Many students still struggle to move beyond surface-level comprehension, indicating that instructional interventions alone may not fully address the complexity of critical reading development. This suggests that effective learning is influenced not only by instructional design but also by internal learner-related factors that shape how students engage with reading tasks.

In this regard, the role of psychological factors becomes increasingly important, as students' beliefs, motivations, and perceptions of their own abilities significantly influence how they approach learning tasks. Among these factors, self-efficacy has been widely recognized as a key determinant of academic success, as learners who believe in their capabilities are more likely to persist in challenging tasks, apply effective strategies, and achieve better outcomes. Self-efficacy also plays a pivotal role in shaping students' engagement, persistence, and academic performance. According to Albert Bandura (1991), self-efficacy refers to individuals' beliefs in their capabilities to perform specific tasks and is shaped by four principal sources: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological states. Among these, mastery experience is widely regarded as the most influential, as successful task completion strengthens individuals'

confidence in their abilities. Prior research has further demonstrated that mastery experience significantly contributes to the development of academic self-efficacy across diverse learning contexts (Nordin et al., 2018; Phan, 2012).

In addition, self-efficacy has been closely linked to self-regulated learning processes, which further reinforce students' capacity to manage complex academic tasks (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Students with strong self-efficacy are more likely to set goals, monitor their progress, and employ effective learning strategies. Empirical evidence also indicates that students with higher self-efficacy tend to exhibit greater persistence, motivation, and academic achievement (Kleppang et al., 2023; Li & Alharbi, 2025), highlighting its critical role in shaping learning outcomes.

In the domain of reading, mastery experience plays a critical role in shaping students' confidence and competence. Successful engagement with reading tasks enables learners to develop positive beliefs about their capabilities and encourages persistence when encountering more complex texts (Usher & Pajares, 2009). Moreover, self-efficacy has been shown to influence students' engagement and performance in language learning contexts (Wang et al., 2013). Repeated experiences of success further contribute to the development of self-regulation and intrinsic motivation (Klassen & Chiu, 2010; Zuffianò et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, existing studies have largely focused on the outcomes of self-efficacy, particularly its relationship with performance and achievement. Limited attention has been given to the underlying processes through which students interpret and internalize their mastery experiences. This gap suggests that understanding how learners make sense of their successful experiences is essential for gaining deeper insight into the development of self-efficacy.

In this regard, reflection emerges as a critical mechanism that mediates the impact of mastery experience. Reflective practices enable students to evaluate their learning processes, recognize progress, and consolidate their confidence (Çakıroğlu, 2014; Fitri et al., 2019). Through reflection, learners actively construct meaning from their experiences, transforming isolated learning events into coherent knowledge structures. More broadly, reflection has been recognized as a fundamental component of both qualitative inquiry and meaningful learning processes (Merriam, 2009). It allows learners to critically examine their actions, identify strengths and weaknesses, and develop a deeper understanding of their learning trajectories. As such, reflection not only supports cognitive development but also enhances learners' self-awareness and metacognitive regulation.

Despite the growing body of research on self-efficacy, limited attention has been directed toward understanding how mastery experiences are reflected upon and internalized by EFL students in the context of critical reading. Existing studies tend to emphasize measurable outcomes rather than the reflective processes through which learners construct their self-beliefs. This gap is particularly evident in Indonesian higher education, where research integrating self-efficacy, mastery experience, and reflective practices in critical reading remains scarce.

Addressing this gap, the present study offers a novel contribution by examining the interplay between mastery experience, reflection, and critical reading within an EFL context. Specifically, this study moves beyond outcome-based perspectives by focusing

on students' reflective processes as a means of understanding how self-efficacy is developed and sustained.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore how English language education students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk reflect on their mastery experiences in critical reading and how these reflections contribute to the development of their self-efficacy and critical reading skills.

Research Methods

Respondents

This study involved ten final-semester students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Luwuk who had completed the Advanced Reading course. The small sample size was intentionally selected to allow in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, which is consistent with the principles of qualitative case study research emphasizing depth rather than generalizability. The participants were selected using purposive sampling based on two main criteria: (1) demonstrated active engagement in critical reading activities, and (2) willingness to reflect on their learning experiences.

The selection of final-semester students was intended to ensure that participants had sufficient academic exposure and experience in engaging with complex reading tasks. Additionally, all participants had achieved highly satisfactory performance in the Advanced Reading course, indicating that they had experienced meaningful success in critical reading, which is relevant to the focus on mastery experience and self-efficacy development.

Instruments

This study employed two qualitative instruments: semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The semi-structured interviews were adapted from the self-efficacy framework developed by Dale H. Schunk and further operationalized in studies by Usher and Pajares (2009). The interview protocol consisted of three open-ended questions focusing on: (1) students' successful experiences in critical reading, (2) challenges encountered and strategies used, and (3) the influence of these experiences on their confidence. This format allowed flexibility in exploring participants' personal experiences while maintaining consistency across interviews (Gill et al., 2008).

Each participant was interviewed in three sessions, with each session lasting approximately 20 minutes. All interviews were conducted face-to-face and audio-recorded with participants' consent. In addition, reflective journals were used as a complementary data source. The journals were originally written as part of course assignments during the Advanced Reading class. Each participant documented their learning experiences across three stages: beginning, middle, and end of the semester. The journals contained reflections on reading comprehension development, strategies, emotional responses, and perceived achievements. Reflective writing is considered effective in capturing students' internal learning processes and critical thinking development (Moon, 2013). The use of both interviews and journals enabled data triangulation to enhance the credibility of the findings.

Procedures

The study was conducted in three main stages: participant selection, data collection, and data preparation. In the first stage, participants were selected purposively based on the predetermined criteria. After obtaining consent, the researcher scheduled interview sessions with each participant. In the second stage, data were collected through

interviews and document analysis. The interviews were conducted over one week, with three sessions per participant. The guiding questions focused on exploring students' mastery experiences, challenges in critical reading, and their perceived development of confidence. Simultaneously, students' reflective journals were collected and organized. These journals had been previously submitted as part of course requirements and were accessed with participants' permission. In the final stage, all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim, and journal entries were compiled and anonymized. The data were then organized systematically to facilitate the analysis process.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected due to its flexibility in identifying patterns of meaning within qualitative data. The analysis followed six phases. First, the researcher familiarized with the data by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts and reflective journals. Second, initial codes were generated by identifying relevant data segments related to mastery experience, self-efficacy, and critical reading development. Third, the codes were organized into potential themes. Fourth, the themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and consistency. Fifth, the themes were clearly defined and named to represent the core meanings of the data. Finally, the results were presented in a narrative form, supported by representative excerpts from participants to illustrate how mastery experiences contributed to the development of self-efficacy in critical reading. This systematic analytical process enabled an in-depth understanding of how students interpret and internalize their successful learning experiences.

Results and Discussion

The Results section should be written in the 11-point, single-spaced Book Antiqua typeface. The results should be presented in a way that is pertinent to and in line with the prior focus, objectives, or research questions. The results should be described in a narrative-analytical style in no more than five to ten lines, avoiding overly theoretical interpretation.

Students' Reflection on Mastery Experience

The findings indicate that students' reflections on mastery experiences are constructed through three interrelated dimensions: feelings of success, engagement with challenges, and confidence building. These dimensions reflect a dynamic meaning-making process through which learners interpret and internalize their learning experiences. This process aligns with the conceptual framework outlined in the introduction, where mastery experience, when mediated through reflection, becomes a central mechanism in the development of self-efficacy and critical reading. Importantly, this finding extends prior work on self-efficacy by emphasizing not only the occurrence of mastery experience but also the reflective processes through which such experiences are cognitively processed (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Feelings of Success as a Foundation of Reflection

Feelings of success emerged as a foundational element in students' reflective processes. Consistent with Bandura's (1991) assertion that mastery experience is the most influential source of self-efficacy, success was not merely perceived as task

completion, but as the achievement of deeper comprehension, analytical insight, and recognition of competence. As one participant explained:

"I could understand and explain a difficult editorial text... I found the writer's hidden message... finishing it made me feel really happy" (S1)

This account illustrates how success is experienced as a cognitive breakthrough, transforming prior difficulty into a sense of capability. From a self-efficacy perspective, such experiences provide direct evidence of competence, thereby strengthening learners' beliefs in their abilities (Usher & Pajares, 2009).

Similarly, evaluative success reinforced students' confidence through external validation:

"I found some wrong ideas in the article and gave strong reasons... my lecturer said my work was good, and I felt proud" (S2)

These findings suggest that success functions as a reflective meaning-making process through which learners internalize their achievements as credible evidence of competence. While previous studies often emphasize performance outcomes (Nordin et al., 2018; Phan, 2012), the present findings demonstrate that it is the reflective interpretation of success that transforms experience into sustained self-efficacy.

Beyond individual instances of achievement, the data further indicate that repeated experiences of success contribute to the stabilization of learners' confidence over time. This observation resonates with the notion that self-efficacy is built cumulatively through repeated mastery experiences rather than isolated successes (Bandura, 1991). In this study, reflection appears to function as a mechanism that consolidates these experiences into a coherent sense of capability.

In addition, the findings reveal that the quality of success plays a crucial role in shaping reflective processes. Success associated with higher-order comprehension such as identifying implicit meanings or critically evaluating arguments generates deeper reflective engagement compared to surface-level achievements. This finding extends prior research by suggesting that cognitively demanding mastery experiences may have a stronger impact on self-efficacy development, particularly when learners actively reflect on them.

From a comparative perspective, this interpretation goes beyond traditional views of mastery experience, which primarily emphasize performance attainment. The present findings indicate that mastery experience becomes more impactful when mediated by reflection, supporting arguments that self-efficacy development involves both experiential and cognitive processing dimensions (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

Challenge and Persistence as Catalysts for Growth

Students' reflections also reveal that challenges play a crucial role in shaping mastery experiences. In line with the view that learning involves active cognitive engagement, difficulties in understanding complex texts, identifying bias, and constructing arguments were interpreted not as barriers, but as opportunities for growth.

"I didn't know about logical fallacies... I watched videos, read materials, and practiced finding mistakes in ideas" (S6)

Another participant emphasized persistence through iterative effort:

"Making counterarguments was difficult... I tried many times and revised my work" (S10)

These accounts indicate that mastery experience is not limited to successful outcomes but includes the process of overcoming obstacles. This finding supports and extends Bandura's (1991) perspective that successful effortful engagement, rather than effortless success, contributes more meaningfully to self-efficacy development.

This also aligns with research linking self-efficacy to self-regulated learning processes, where persistence, strategic effort, and adaptive behavior play central roles (Usher & Pajares, 2008). In this study, reflection enables learners to reinterpret challenges as constructive experiences, reinforcing their sense of agency and resilience.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that challenges function as a context for activating metacognitive strategies. Students adjusted their approaches by seeking additional resources, re-reading texts, and evaluating their understanding, which is consistent with previous findings on strategic learning in reading (Ali & Razali, 2019). This indicates that mastery experience contributes not only to belief formation but also to the development of adaptive learning strategies.

In addition, reflections on persistence reveal a strong affective component in students' learning processes. Sustained effort appears to be supported by the belief that improvement is achievable, which reinforces self-efficacy beliefs over time (Kleppang et al., 2023). This suggests that the interaction between challenge, persistence, and reflective evaluation plays a critical role in fostering more stable and growth-oriented self-efficacy.

Confidence Building as a Cumulative Outcome

Confidence building emerged as a cumulative outcome of success and persistence, mediated by reflective processes. Students reported increased confidence in comprehending academic texts, expressing ideas, and participating in discussions.

"Now I feel I can read academic texts and share my ideas in class" (S1)

"I believe I can do hard reading tasks if I try hard" (S5)

These reflections indicate that confidence is not an immediate result of isolated success but is gradually constructed through repeated engagement and reflective interpretation. This finding reinforces prior research suggesting that self-efficacy develops progressively through accumulated experiences (Bandura, 1991; Usher & Pajares, 2009).

Overall, these findings suggest that students' reflections form a dynamic and recursive process in which success, challenge, and confidence continuously interact. This process represents a concrete manifestation of how mastery experience operates within a reflective learning framework to support critical reading development.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that confidence develops through the integration of cognitive and affective experiences over time. This aligns with studies highlighting the interplay between performance, motivation, and self-belief in shaping academic outcomes (Zuffianò et al., 2013).

In addition, the cumulative nature of confidence highlights reflection as a stabilizing mechanism in self-efficacy development. Through reflection, learners consolidate past successes and reinterpret challenges, enabling more consistent engagement with complex tasks. This supports the argument that reflection plays a central role in sustaining, not just initiating, self-efficacy.

Contribution of Mastery Experience to Self-Efficacy and Critical Reading

The findings indicate that mastery experiences contribute to students' self-efficacy and critical reading skills through a reinforcing cycle of success, persistence, and confidence, mediated by reflective processes and supported by instructional contexts. This confirms and extends the theoretical proposition outlined in the introduction that mastery experience, when internalized through reflection, becomes a key driver of both psychological and cognitive development. In line with Albert Bandura (1991), mastery experience serves as the primary source of self-efficacy; however, the present findings further suggest that its effectiveness depends on learners' ability to interpret and internalize these experiences through reflection, as also emphasized by Usher and Pajares (2008).

Mastery Experience as a Source of Self-Efficacy

Mastery experiences strengthen self-efficacy by providing direct evidence of students' capabilities. Successful engagement in critical reading tasks enables learners to develop stronger beliefs in their ability to perform similar tasks. This finding supports the foundational theory that mastery experience is the most influential source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1991; Usher & Pajares, 2009).

In addition to serving as evidence of capability, mastery experiences also shape how learners approach subsequent tasks. Students who have previously succeeded in challenging reading activities tend to demonstrate greater willingness to engage with similar or more complex texts. This pattern aligns with previous findings that mastery experience contributes to sustained motivation and academic confidence across learning contexts (Nordin et al., 2018; Phan, 2012).

However, the present study advances this perspective by demonstrating that the impact of mastery experience is not automatic but is mediated by reflection. Students who actively reflected on their experiences were better able to internalize their success, recognize their progress, and construct stable self-beliefs. This finding is consistent with Usher and Pajares (2008), who argue that self-efficacy is shaped not only by experience itself but also by how individuals cognitively process that experience.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that without reflective processing, mastery experiences may remain superficial and less influential in shaping long-term self-efficacy. Reflection allows learners to reinterpret their experiences, connect past achievements with current challenges, and extract meaningful insights from their performance. This supports Merriam's (2009) view that reflection transforms experience into meaningful learning, thereby reinforcing its role as a mediating mechanism in self-efficacy development.

Through this lens, mastery experience is reconceptualized not merely as an outcome of task completion but as a structured learning resource that gains its significance through reflective interpretation. This perspective extends prior research by positioning reflection as a critical process that determines whether mastery experience leads to sustained self-efficacy or remains a transient achievement.

Mastery Experience and Strategic Development in Critical Reading

Mastery experiences also contribute to the development of critical reading skills by fostering deeper engagement and strategic learning behaviours. As indicated in the introduction, critical reading requires higher-order thinking processes, and the findings

show that mastery experience supports the development of such competencies, consistent with previous research on critical literacy and analytical reading (Bensley & Spero, 2014; Ali & Razali, 2019).

“At first, I had a hard time finding bias... I compared different texts and asked my friends for help” (S8)

This example illustrates that students not only gained confidence but also developed strategic competence, including comparison, collaboration, and evaluative thinking. These strategies reflect active engagement with texts, which is essential for critical reading development and aligns with findings that effective readers employ both cognitive and metacognitive strategies to construct meaning (Ali & Razali, 2019).

Beyond the development of individual strategies, mastery experiences also appear to encourage flexibility in strategy use. Students adapt their approaches depending on the complexity and demands of the text, demonstrating a higher level of strategic awareness. This adaptive behavior reflects characteristics of self-regulated learning, where learners actively monitor and adjust their strategies to achieve better outcomes (Usher & Pajares, 2008). Importantly, the findings suggest that it is not merely instructional strategies that drive learning, but how students interpret and internalize their experiences. This reinforces the argument that psychological factors particularly self-efficacy shaped through mastery experience play a crucial role in sustaining engagement and promoting deeper learning (Kleppang et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the integration of strategic behaviour and reflective interpretation suggests that mastery experience functions as a foundation for self-regulated learning in reading. As students become more aware of the strategies that lead to successful comprehension, they are better able to monitor and evaluate their own performance. This supports the view that self-efficacy and self-regulation are closely interconnected processes that jointly influence academic development (Usher & Pajares, 2008).

The Role of Instructional Support and Reflection

The findings further highlight the role of instructional support and reflective practices in strengthening mastery experiences. Feedback, structured tasks, and reflective journaling create a learning environment that facilitates both cognitive and psychological development. This aligns with previous studies showing that instructional design plays a crucial role in promoting critical thinking and learner engagement (Papadopoulos & Griva, 2017; Wei & Li, 2024).

“My score got better, and I could answer hard questions. Now I feel ready for the next challenge” (S10)

This indicates that mastery experiences are not formed in isolation but are shaped by supportive learning conditions. Instructional support provides opportunities for success, while reflection enables students to interpret these experiences meaningfully. In addition, instructional support appears to function as a scaffolding mechanism that gradually guides students toward independent learning. Structured tasks and timely feedback help learners navigate complex reading activities while maintaining a manageable level of challenge. This supports the notion that effective scaffolding enhances both competence and confidence, thereby reinforcing its development.

In contrast to studies that focus primarily on external instructional interventions, the present findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of such interventions depends on how learners internalize their experiences. This underscores the importance of integrating reflection into instructional design to maximize the impact of mastery experiences, consistent with Merriam's (2009) emphasis on reflection as a core component of meaningful learning.

Furthermore, reflective practices enable students to connect instructional input with their personal learning processes. Through reflection, learners evaluate the effectiveness of the support they receive, identify strategies that work best for them, and develop a deeper awareness of their learning trajectories. This suggests that the combination of instructional support and reflection creates a more holistic learning environment, where external guidance and internal processing work synergistically.

To further synthesize the findings, this study proposes a conceptual model illustrating the dynamic relationship between mastery experience, reflection, self-efficacy, and critical reading development. As presented in Figure 1, mastery experience comprising both successful task completion and engagement with challenges serves as the initial foundation of the learning process. However, its impact is not direct; rather, it is mediated through reflection, which enables students to interpret and internalize their experiences.

Through reflective processes, mastery experience is reconstructed into three interrelated dimensions: feelings of success, challenge and persistence, and confidence building. These dimensions function as mechanisms through which learners assign meaning to their experiences, transforming isolated learning events into structured cognitive and psychological growth.

This reflective meaning-making process subsequently contributes to the development of self-efficacy, as students begin to perceive themselves as capable of handling complex reading tasks. Increased self-efficacy, in turn, enhances students' engagement in critical reading activities, encouraging the use of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, evaluation, and interpretation. Importantly, the model highlights the cyclical nature of this process. As students engage more deeply in critical reading, they generate new mastery experiences, which are again reflected upon and internalized. This recursive cycle reinforces both cognitive development and psychological growth, consistent with Bandura's (1991) notion of reciprocal interaction between behavior, cognition, and environment.

Accordingly, this model extends existing theories of self-efficacy by positioning reflection as a central mediating mechanism that transforms mastery experience into a continuous developmental cycle. It also provides a conceptual basis for understanding how critical reading skills are developed not only through instruction but through learners' internal meaning-making processes.

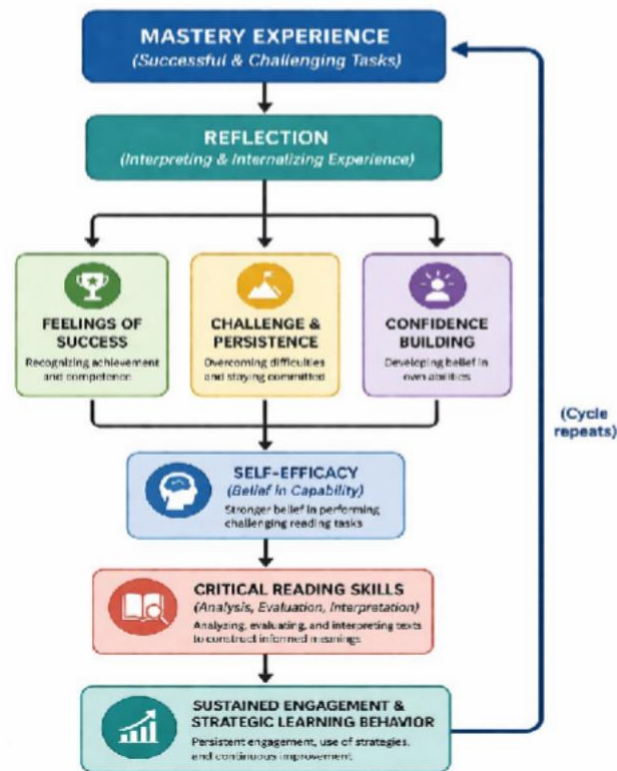


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Mastery Experience, Reflection, and the Development of Self-Efficacy in Critical Reading.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine how EFL students reflect on their mastery experiences in developing critical reading skills and how these experiences contribute to the formation of self-efficacy. The findings indicate that mastery experiences are not discrete events but are constructed through a dynamic and recursive process involving success, engagement with challenges, and the gradual development of confidence. These elements form a reinforcing cycle that supports both cognitive and psychological dimensions of learning.

The study advances the current understanding of self-efficacy by extending the concept of mastery experience beyond mere task completion to include reflective processes. While prior research has predominantly emphasized performance outcomes, the present findings demonstrate that reflection plays a crucial role in enabling learners to interpret and internalize their experiences. In this sense, mastery experience becomes pedagogically meaningful when it is supported by structured opportunities for reflection, allowing students to translate episodic success into sustained self-belief and academic engagement.

From a pedagogical perspective, the findings suggest that critical reading instruction should move beyond a sole focus on skill acquisition to incorporate reflective practices and supportive learning environments. The integration of reflective journaling,

constructive feedback, and scaffolded tasks can facilitate students' awareness of their progress, enhance resilience in facing challenges, and strengthen their confidence. Such approaches not only promote critical reading competence but also foster learners' motivation and long-term engagement with complex academic texts.

Despite these contributions, the study is limited by its small and context-specific sample. Future research may expand this work by involving larger and more diverse populations, employing longitudinal designs to capture developmental trajectories, or integrating mixed-method approaches to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and critical reading more comprehensively. Further investigation is also needed to explore how instructional interventions can systematically enhance mastery experiences and reflective learning across different EFL contexts. Overall, this study underscores the importance of positioning mastery experience and reflection as central components in the development of critical reading and self-efficacy, thereby offering a meaningful contribution to the field of English language education.

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Statement of Interest

All authors declare that they have no financial or non-financial conflicts of interest relevant to this research.

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