

MONTESORI PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEIVED EFFICACY AND  
EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING AND MODELING EMOTION REGULATION: AN  
EXPLORATORY METHOD STUDY

Xuanchi Mai

Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Regent University

April 2025

MONTESSORI PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEIVED EFFICACY AND  
EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING AND MODELING EMOTION REGULATION: AN  
EXPLORATORY METHOD STUDY

Xuanchi Mai

This dissertation has been approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of  
Education by:

Deborah J. Fuge, Ed.D., Dissertation Chair  
Adjunct Professor, School of Education

Karen J. Drosinos, Ed.D., Committee Member  
Adjunct Professor, School of Education

Mitzi Fehl-Seward, Ph.D., Committee Member  
Assistant Professor, School of Education

Kurt Kreassig, Ed.D.  
Dean, School of Education

April 2025

## **Abstract**

This exploratory qualitative study examined the importance of the role of Montessori preschool teachers' (MPTs') perceived efficacy and their methods of teaching and modeling emotion regulation to young learners aged 3 to 6. Rooted in Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory and Gross's (1998) emotion regulation theory, this research aimed to understand how MPTs perceive their role in teaching emotions and the specific ways they model regulation skills. The study employed an in-depth exploratory design to examine MPTs' perceptions of their role in teaching emotions and to determine their methods of regulating emotions during interactions with multi-age preschoolers. The research methodology included 24 open-ended interview survey questionnaires for qualitative data collection. These questionnaires gave insights into two research questions that addressed the teaching perceived efficacy and experience in teaching and modeling emotion regulations to young learners. Analyzing the collected data revealed four significant themes woven into the interpretation of the findings: (a) reflective practice, (b) supportive learning environment, (c) interactive practice, and (d) emotional guide. The results revealed that reflective practice through observations and experiences gave teachers the confidence to understand and respond to students' emotional needs. The study's results contributed to comprehending self-efficacy and regulating emotions within Montessori early childhood education. The findings imply that reflecting on observations is key to effectively teaching and modeling regulation to Montessori multi-age preschoolers.