



Microteaching as a Method in Developing Teaching Skills: Pre-Service English Teachers' Experience around Secondary Schools in Selangor

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ABSTRACT

The goal of the teacher training strategy known as microteaching is to develop and enhance the pre-service teachers' classroom management abilities and self-assurance. This area of inquiry investigated people's opinions on the effectiveness of microteaching in developing teachers' craft. 30 aspiring English teachers from six different Malaysian colleges who were exposed to microteaching sessions during their undergraduate studies served as the study's



responders. In order to collect the research data, semi-structured questionnaires about the microteaching techniques they utilized, the challenges they had getting ready for the sessions, and their opinions about microteaching were used. According to the research, pre-service English instructors felt that microteaching had helped them gain confidence when teaching. The pre-service English teachers also had a variety of experiences during their microteaching sessions, and the vast majority of respondents had favorable opinions on microteaching as a useful teaching strategy. The microteaching sessions also help the aspiring English instructors overcome any difficulties in running their classrooms.

Keywords: Microteaching; pre-service English teachers; teaching skills

INTRODUCTION

The practice of microteaching prepares aspiring teachers for actual classroom instruction (Brent & Thomson, 1996). It aids pre-service teachers in developing their pedagogical abilities, creating engaging lesson plans, and enhancing their classroom management confidence. Additionally, microteaching provides qualified oversight, constructive criticism, and most significantly, it enables repeated practice for both teachers and their students. According to Makafane (2020), pre-service teachers frequently encounter difficulties during their teaching practicum, such as needing to quickly fill in for another teacher's class and being unable to create a quality lesson plan in the allotted time. Their lack of quick reactions has undermined their self-assurance and affected the entire teaching session.

Görge (2003) found that pre-service teachers' perspectives changed before and after their microteaching in a study involving 24 pre-service students. They are more prepared for their teaching practicum and have a more upbeat approach. In a study of 60 students, He and Yan (2011) investigated how microteaching has a significant impact on students' career development. Additionally, it was discovered in a study by Küçüköğlü et al. (2012) that pre-service instructors who had undergone microteaching encountered fewer difficulties when they taught students in a real classroom setting.

The implementation of preparation strategies and activities that let student instructors engage in teaching and learning experiences, self-reflection, and reflective study of teaching is recommended by researchers for the teacher education system (Fernandez, 2010). The use of microteaching is considered to be a practical technique to adhere to the aforementioned advice. Additionally, implementing microteaching approaches would significantly improve their managerial abilities in the educational setting.

Nevertheless, despite the benefits of microteaching, pre-service teachers frequently expressed their nervousness and lack of confidence in their ability to instruct, even during a microteaching session with their peers. They also mentioned that they often lack a backup plan in case of any unforeseen events in the classrooms, such as the lecture being stopped by some unruly pupils, which makes it difficult for them to manage their time while carrying out their courses. It is also important to note that the pre-service teachers recommended that the

university's microteaching sessions be expanded and that a real-life simulation be carried out, such as having to practice with actual school pupils and not their own classmates.

Thus, the purpose of the current study is to investigate how pre-service English teachers feel about using microteaching to hone their teaching abilities. Additionally, the pre-service English teachers' struggles were also investigated alongside their approaches in handling with the issues.

Stages of Microteaching

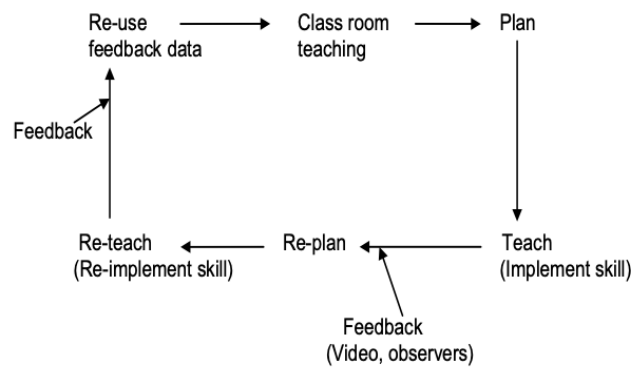


Figure 1: Microteaching Cycle (Reddy, 2019)

The elements shown in Figure 1 are also referred to as the Stanford technique, which was initially developed by Dr. Dwight Allen in the 1960s and includes the processes of "plan, teach, observe, re-plan, re-teach, and re-observe" (Allen & Eve, 1968). Since then, it has been widely used and refined by academics all around the world in order to keep up with the development of the educational profession. These procedures are thought to be crucial for undergraduate students to put into practice during their microteaching session since they will have a big impact on their ability to teach later on when they enroll in the program as pre-service teachers. They must be able to advance their comprehension of conducting a lesson, increase their teaching abilities, and raise their evaluation abilities.

Planning and preparing for the microteaching session is the first phase in the framework. Future pre-service teachers should design and organize lessons based on the students' proficiency and needs. Once the lesson plan is finished, they ought to be able to teach and use the instructional techniques included in it. The microteaching session should terminate in the allotted time with the goals met, engaged students, and active involvement. The next step would be to consider the lesson's feedback and utilize the information to further replan and reteach the revised version of the lesson. This is necessary since a lesson plan may appear well-organized and appealing on paper but fall short when used in a practical setting. This cycle should be used both during their university's microteaching sessions and as a regular practice during their pre-service teacher practicum. Even while they are still undergraduate students, carrying out this cycle often might improve their performance as teachers.

METHODOLOGY

The pre-service English instructors' opinions of microteaching as a technique for honing teaching abilities were gathered using a convenience sampling method. At six different universities in Malaysia, including Universiti Selangor (UNISEL), City University, UNITAR International University, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Management and Science University (MSU), and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), a total of 30 pre-service English teachers from the TESL program participated. The undergraduates who took part in the study were third-year students who were 22 to 23 years old and working as pre-service teachers in secondary schools in the Selangor region.

A survey with ten questions was given out to participants to learn how they felt about microteaching as a way to improve their teaching abilities. The participants had the opportunity to discuss their challenges when microteaching as well as their solutions. The poll was created based on the opinions of former pre-service teachers who had completed the teaching practicum and microteaching sessions throughout the previous years. If there were any circumstances in which the undergraduates felt uncomfortable or lost interest in participating in the study, their permission was requested and they were given the choice to withdraw from the data collection process. One week was allotted for the participants to finish the online survey because it was thought that this would be enough time for pre-service instructors to complete it.

The frequency with which respondents responded on a Likert scale when asked about their thoughts on microteaching as a strategy for honing their teaching abilities as future instructors was used to examine the data gathered. To make it easier to evaluate the results, the number of responses was transformed into percentages.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The replies from the future English teachers are displayed in Table 1 below. The pre-service teachers were asked questions 1 through 5 about challenges they faced before or during their microteaching sessions, and questions 6 through 10 were meant to elicit their perspectives on the role microteaching plays in the development of their teaching abilities.

Table 1
 Pre-service English teachers' responses

Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Do you face difficulties in teaching before you start your microteaching?	2 (6.7%)	2 (6.7%)	7 (23.3%)	11 (36.7%)	8 (26.7%)
2. Do you perceive microteaching to have an impact on your teaching competence?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (33.3%)	10 (33.3%)	10 (33.3%)



3. Do you feel pressured when when you are doing your microteaching?	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	7 (23.3%)	10 (33.3%)	12 (40%)
4. Do you feel anxious during your microteaching and having difficulties to resume your teaching as planned?	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	10 (33.3%)
5. Do you have any other issues during your microteaching that have interrupted your performance? (e.g time management, lack of confidence, unexpected events etc)	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	7 (23.3%)	8 (26.7%)	14 (46.7%)
6. Do you think microteaching could improve the professional development of the pre-service teachers?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (23.3%)	7 (23.3%)	16 (53.3%)
7. Is there any difference between your first and last microteaching session before you enter the schools as pre-service teachers?	0 (0%)	4 (13.3%)	12 (40%)	5 (16.7%)	9 (30%)
8. Is microteaching a student-centered approach that helps the future pre-service teachers to have positive engagement with the students in the classroom?	0 (0%)	2 (6.7%)	7 (23.3%)	9 (30%)	12 (40%)
9. Do you feel that microteaching helps pre-service teachers to build their confidence in teaching?	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)	19 (63.3%)
10. Do you think microteaching is a necessary experience for all future teachers that should be conducted for a longer period of time?	0 (0%)	1 (3.3%)	3 (10%)	7 (23.3%)	19 (63.3%)

According to the table, it can be seen that for Question 1, a total of 63.4% of participants agreed they experienced challenges before conducting their first microteaching session, followed by 23.3% of them who felt neutral about the situation and a final 13.4% of the pre-service teachers who disagreed. In response to Question 2, which asked respondents if they believed microteaching had an influence on their ability to teach, 66.6% of the general population



acknowledged the impact of microteaching on their ability to teach. The remaining participants—33.3%—were neutral and did not perceive a significant difference in how microteaching affected their abilities.

A total of 73.3% of the pre-service English teachers responded yes to Question 3's inquiry about whether they felt under pressure while conducting their microteaching. Additionally, they admitted to the researchers that they were anxious to perform in front of their professors and classmates since they might get unfavorable comments or criticism from the audience. As a result, this motivated them to put more effort into creating a lesson plan that included engaging and relevant activities. A minor portion of 3.3% of the pre-service teachers disagreed, believing that the microteaching did not pressure them in any way because they were fully prepared and ready for the session, while 23.3% of the pre-service teachers said that they did not feel pressurized because they picked neutral for the statement.

A mix of strongly agree and agree responses from 70% of the English pre-service teachers indicated that they agreed with the statement in Question 4, which asked if their anxiety during microteaching prevented them from continuing their class. Because of their anxiety, individuals frequently freeze and forget the lesson they had planned earlier. Following this, 26.7% of them gave a neutral response, and 3.3% disputed that they were unable to resume the lesson due to nervousness because they felt they had adequately prepared before the microteaching. As was mentioned in the previous section, 73.4% of the sample as a whole agreed that the pre-service English teachers were indeed dealing with the issues raised in question 5 regarding time management, lack of confidence, disruptions during the lesson, and other issues during their microteaching. Finally, a tiny number of 3.3% disagreed with the assertion since they thought they did not encounter any of these issues throughout their microteaching. Another 23.3% of the participants were unsure of whether they grappled with these difficulties.

A majority of the pre-service English teachers who responded to Question 6 agreed with the statement that microteaching will improve their professional growth, with a proportion of 76.6% from the total participants. The remaining 23.3% were undecided as to whether microteaching improved their professional growth in terms of their teaching abilities. When asked if they could tell a difference between their first and last microteaching session in question 7, over half of the participants—46.6% of the population—agreed. Comparing their performance to their first attempt, they believed it had really improved. 13.3% of the respondents disagreed, believing that their performance did not improve in any way even after numerous sessions of microteaching, while another 40% of pre-service teachers were unsure about whether they could notice any difference. A total of 70% of the pre-service English teachers agreed with this statement, 23.3% were undecided, and 6.7% disagreed. Question 8 then asked the pre-service English teachers if they believed that microteaching was a student-centered approach that helped the future pre-service teachers have positive engagement with the students in the classroom. Further analysis by the researcher indicated that pre-service instructors still held this opinion until the lesson plan was created with an emphasis on the students' capacity for active and independent learning.

Next, a sizable majority of 86.6% of all pre-service teachers concurred that microteaching aids in the development of their teaching confidence. They went on to explain how the numerous



microteaching sessions had worked as preparation for them before they entered the school for their practicum in teaching. The exercises they underwent helped them feel more confident in teaching in front of a group of people and less worried before and during the lesson. A tiny minority, 3.3% of pre-service teachers, felt that they saw no changes in their level of confidence, while 10% of participants were unsure of whether their confidence had increased. The final question asked pre-service English teachers whether they believe that microteaching is a practice that should be carried out for a longer period of time for all future teachers. The results showed that 86.6% of the participants strongly agreed with the statement, 10% were undecided, and 3.3% disagreed, believing that future teachers will be able to perform well even without any microteaching practices.

The majority of the pre-service English teachers agreed that microteaching was a good way to hone their teaching abilities before beginning their teaching practicum, based on the survey results that were collected. Even though they mentioned a few challenges they faced before and during their microteaching session, these issues were the most important ones they should address when beginning their teaching careers because preparing future teachers for teaching in a real-life setting requires them to anticipate similar issues occurring in the classroom. The pre-service teachers must be ready to handle these situations well and deal with any interruptions or unforeseen incidents that might arise in the classroom because all teachers will undoubtedly run across them at least once during their careers as educators.

The majority of the pre-service teachers also mentioned that they were conscious of how their teaching abilities had improved throughout their microteaching sessions and helped them in a real-world classroom setting during their practicum. The microteaching sessions they had participated in, they added, had allowed them share their educational expertise and stimulating ideas with their peers, which had improved their teaching abilities.

Furthermore, as a result of them conquering the difficulties encountered throughout their microteaching sessions, their confidence level had increased dramatically. One of the things that helped them build their teaching abilities during their microteaching sessions was the collaboration, participation, and criticism. The pre-service teachers made it clear that microteaching is one of the best and most significant experiences for teacher education program students to have both before they enter a real school setting during their practicum and ultimately once they enter the teaching profession.

CONCLUSION

One could draw the conclusion that the future English teachers thought microteaching was a crucial method for honing their teaching abilities and strongly recommended that it be kept a part of the teacher education curriculum because it helped them become more effective teachers in the classroom. The use of technology in the activities would greatly increase the effectiveness of the microteaching sessions. In addition, the sessions have been helpful in improving the undergraduates' attitudes about the teaching profession. The pre-service teachers' self-esteem and level of confidence have greatly improved as a result of microteaching, especially during the teaching and learning session.



SUGGESTIONS

It is advised that the number of microteaching sessions be increased for undergraduates, especially for those who are about to begin their teaching practicum, as some of the pre-service English teachers commented that they were anxious and unable to manage their time efficiently during the sessions. Although the numerous practices may overwhelm aspiring teachers, the regular repetition of their teaching technique will gradually increase their motivation and confidence in their ability to instruct. Additionally, they would have the ability to test out various pedagogies in accordance with the demands and proficiencies of the pupils. After multiple and ongoing practices for a period of time, teaching anxiety and time management problems usually become better.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Authors' Contributions

Conceptualization, NMY and MT; literature review, TH and MT; methodology, NMY and MT; validation, NMY; formal analysis, MT and TH; investigation, NMY; resources, MT; writing—original draft preparation, NMY and TH; writing—review and editing, NMY; visualization, NMY; supervision, NMY; project administration, NMY. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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