

MICROTEACHING IN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA

Mba Tamunodienye N.

Department of Curriculum And Instructional Technology,
Ignatius Ajuru University Of Education, Port Harcourt,
NIGERIA.

tamdi6666@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Microteaching and teaching practice are dual integral parts of teacher education programmes. in Universities in Nigeria. Microteaching is useful in improving the teaching skills, classroom management, confidence etc of teacher trainees. The study therefore, dwelt on the routine teacher trainees go through in the course of microteaching and recommended that micro-teaching should be maintained in undergraduate teacher training programmes, and should be made a pre-requisite to teaching practice. There should be a provision of immediate feedback for improvement of teaching through the use of video recorders and players in recording the performance of trainee – teachers during microteaching exercise. This is done during playback, which enables the trainee – teachers to observe their performance in the areas of weakness.

Keywords: Microteaching, Teaching Practice, Undergraduate, Trainee Teachers

INTRODUCTION

Microteaching cannot be over emphasized as an aspect of education that prepares an individual to take up teaching responsibilities. This is done by equipping them with theoretical and applied skills in the teaching profession, developing skills and qualities needed for their professional effectiveness. The purpose of teacher education is clearly stated in the National Policy on Education (2004) amongst other things which are: to inculcate in teachers' the commitment to the teaching profession. The essence is to help trainee teachers to acquire the needed skills in teaching all subjects of life endeavour. In the teacher education programme, the programme or practicum has been recommended by several educators, based on the fact that most educators believe that the introduction is as a result of the short comings of the traditional teacher education programmes.

Other researchers however believe that practicum promotes an integration of the fundamental knowledge of good teaching skills, not only for the beginners, but also for advanced teachers as well. Wilkinson (1996), adds that through micro-teaching student teachers will be more equipped with the necessary skills prior to beginning their student teaching programmes. Jerich (1989), supporting that view mentioned that micro-teaching is one of the many important approaches to introduce and improve teaching skills through class participation and observation.

Microteaching is a clinically based practice that promotes a setting, where analysis of teacher behaviour can be evaluated. For the fact that it allows the student teachers to practice specific technical teaching skills that will reach to an acceptable level of documented performance by utilizing audio or audio – visual recordings. As a result, the student teacher will be able to learn not only through a critical analysis of their performances, but also through peer feedback mechanism (Bell, 2008). Oliver (1993), also adds that micro-teaching

enables the student teachers to receive more training before starting their student teaching programme, and that this requires an active supervision by the experienced teachers.

Therefore, the merits of laboratory approach of microteaching which is purely practice oriented have been highlighted by many educators in terms of empowering student teachers who lack the privilege of field experience. So, in essence, micro-teaching is a quick, efficient, proven and fun way to help teachers get off to a strong start in the teaching profession.

The concept of microteaching is indispensable in the world of education, because education as an umbrella word focuses on the principle of teaching and learning. Teaching involves a lot of tasks and stages to bring about experience that will influence the behaviour of the learner that must be desirable and acceptable by all. It is based on this search that the adoption of microteaching methodology was invented or introduced in the curriculum of Stanford University (United States of America) in the late 1950's by Dwight Allen, Robert Bush, Kim Romney and other associates (Popovich, 2009). The researchers identified 14 teaching skills to be applied and learnt by student – teachers, while teaching in a conventional classroom, which was later reviewed with the additional new 4 skills (Mandah, 2014). The purpose is to provide teachers with the opportunity for the safe practice of an enlarged cluster of teaching skills, while learning how to develop simple, single concept lessons in any teaching subject. However, microteaching was defined by Wali, (2005), as “a teaching encounter scaled down in terms of class size, lesson contact and time, designed to equip the trainee teacher with the necessary skills in the art of teaching. Or a process that permits scaling of students in a laboratory with teaching equipment (video recorder, television, video camera, tripod stand, marker pen), etc.

Scaling down means that classroom population is reduced to (5 – 10) pupils in a small group, in a laboratory setting. This is to allow equal opportunities to practice that will enhance effective feedback in a training session as a foundation for microteaching protocol (Funmi, 2009).

CONFIGURATION OF MICROTEACHING PRACTICE

Over the years microteaching has taken many forms. Its early configurations were very formal and complex with real students of (four or five) being placed in a rotation of teaching stations in a microteaching clinic. This configuration allowed the teacher to teach in an initial five-ten minutes in a single element lesson (Vare, 2012).

This was critiqued by supervisors. The other part is an indication that the **student teacher** would have a brief time to revise the lesson to a different group. But in later years these sessions were video taped. Video taping microteaching lessons became the optimal practice because it allowed the teachers to view their performance (Sana, 2007).

THE NEW MICROTEACHING SIMPLIFIED

In the late 1980's and 1990's microteaching was reinvigorated with a completely new format developed in Southern Africa and later in China, because of in-adequate available technology in developing countries. Thereafter, microteaching format had to be made less technology dependent in order to be useful (Chen, 2010).

Early modifications were made in Maldivi. But microteaching had complete transformation in Namibia and China. This 21st century microteaching increased training effectiveness by using an even more, scaled down teaching stimulation environment. It was primarily shaped as a response to in-service teacher education needs in Namibia where the vast majority of teachers were uncertified and there were few resources with which to train them.

In China it became part of a national effort to modernize teaching practice. Three important new concepts were incorporated:

1. **Self-Study Groups.** Teachers rotate between the roles of teacher and student, building on earlier versions of “peer microteaching”; study groups of four or five teachers having become a norm.

2. **The 2 + 2 Evaluation Protocol**

In earlier versions of microteaching elaborate observation protocols had been developed to evaluate performance for each new skill. In the new microteaching each new skill is introduced to student teachers in varied combinations of face-to-face training sessions, multimedia presentations and printed materials.

These training materials give cued behaviours to watch for and comment on in the accompanying microteaching lesson. After the lesson is taught, each of the teachers playing a student role provides peer evaluation of the teaching episode using the 2 + 2 protocol, two compliments and two suggestions. Compliments and suggestions are focused on the specific skills being emphasized, but may relate to other aspects of the lesson as well (Brown, 2015).

3. **Peer Supervision**

Originally, the microteaching protocol required the pretence of a trained supervisor during each lesson. However, with minimal training, the compliments and suggestions of peers can become powerful training forces. Student teachers’ feel empowered by the practice of being encouraged to evaluate the compliments and suggestions they receive from their peers (and supervisors when present) allowing them the discretion to accept or reject any or all suggestions. On the average, about two-thirds of the suggestions are considered worthwhile and suggestions from peers and trained supervisors are about equally valued (Ismail, 2011).

The new simplified format is widely used and makes it easier to incorporate the full recommended protocol in teaching and teaching each lesson for every student. The microteaching experience goes well beyond the formal narrow training agenda. But, in the present format students often have three or four complete microteaching cycles in a single course. More cycles tend not to be well received by students, as the training format seems to break down after about four cycles. Some in – service training programmes have received enthusiastic reception from students. For periodic microteaching sessions (one session each term or semester) over an extended period of time (Singh, 1987).

MANAGEMENT AND PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING MICROTEACHING

The managers of microteaching sessions are the teachers, lecturers, students, instructors and other supervisors who are invited to serve as facilitators. As many as six teachers from the same or similar courses can participate in a single microteaching session, while one person in the process or student takes his or her turn as a teacher, every other person plays the role of student.

It is the job of these pretend pupils or students to ask and answer questions realistically. It is also the job of pretend teachers or instructors and facilitators to involve their “class” actively in this way. Such class session runs for 5 – 10 minutes. When finished, the person conducting the class session has a moment to react to teaching styles. Then, everyone else joins to discuss what they observed, especially likes and dislikes. Finally, the group may mention just a few things that the practice teacher might try doing differently in the future.

The video taping is for the benefit of those taped in a group, which allows for re-observation and re-evaluation. It could be group discussion or personal. Generally, most microteaching lecturers ask the students to choose topics in advance and prepare a lesson plan, have some thought on how to present the lesson, manage the class session with the participation of others and the use of appropriate teaching method and instructional materials or aids. This process helps the students to gain practical experience and ideas by observing their fellow students (Elliot, 1982).

The achievements above are welcomed through adoption of a pre-conference session between the supervisors/master trainer and the trainee – teachers. During this period the trainee teacher is briefed on things he/she is expected to see and do in the microteaching laboratory. Secondly, group formation follows, whereby the master – trainer will divide the trainee – teachers into small groups of about 10 persons each. In each group, a leader is chosen to act as a co-ordinator between the master – trainer and the trainee teacher. Submission of written lesson plans that will last for 10 minutes for vetting by the master – trainer, based on the outlined steps or lesson formats (Benton-Kupper, 2001).

Choosing and preparation of instructional materials for the lesson is not left out. Presentation by every member of the group, calls for a brief post conference to share and discuss observations made by the master trainer, while questions are asked by the trainee teachers for proper clarification.

RELEVANCE OF MICROTEACHING TO TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Microteaching plays relevant roles in teacher education in the following ways:

- (a) Training and preparing trainee teachers for practical field experience in the form of Teaching Practice (TP). This is done to introduce the trainee teacher to the challenges of teaching, develop the skills required to make them competent teachers.
- (b) Provide immediate feedback for improvement of teaching through the use of video recorders and players in recording the performance of trainee – teachers during microteaching exercise. This is done during playback, which enables the trainee – teachers to observe their performance in the areas of weakness. It assists to develop self-appraisal that will lead to motivation.
- (c) Microteaching enhances learning through development of relevant teaching skills especially as the class is broken down into small sizes and groups, which gives room for closer interaction.
- (d) Microteaching enhances trainee teachers' self-confidence by removing the spirit of frustrations and difficulties. This will help to rekindle their decision of not to drop out from the entire system, because the process is more of practical field experience and simplistic practice (Kamboj, 2010).

CHALLENGES

- (i) Inadequate facilities especially in the area of electronics.
- (ii) Equipments.
- (iii) Spirit of maintenance culture to manage the existing facilities.
- (iv) Nonchallant attitude of the trainee – teachers to take microteaching session serious.

- (v) Conflicting academic programmes during the period of microteaching session. This conflict also affects the readiness and performance of the trainee teachers.
- (vi) Lack of service by the school authorities.

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