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## **Micro-Teaching: A Technique for Effective Teaching**

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### **Abstract**

*Microteaching, a teacher training technique currently practiced worldwide, provides teachers an opportunity to perk up their teaching skills by improving the various simple tasks called teaching skills. With the proven success among the novice and seniors, microteaching helps to promote real-time teaching experiences. The core skills of microteaching such as presentation and reinforcement skills help the novice teachers to learn the art of teaching at ease and to the maximum extent. The impact of this technique has been widely seen in various forms of education such as health sciences, engineering sciences, and other areas. The emerging changes in educational sector and the academic ills in the country, the role of teachers envisage the need of this special training of teachers and monitoring of their skills for their continued efficient performance at any stage. The aim of this article is to emphasize the need for using microteaching techniques more frequently and efficiently with*

*minimum available facilities and the impact of microteaching on teachers' education. A systematic literature search of research articles and reviews was undertaken from various educational databases*

### **Introduction**

The history of microteaching goes back to the early and mid 1960's, when Dwight Allen and his colleagues (Bush, McDonald, Acheson and many more) from the Stanford University developed a training program aimed to improve verbal and nonverbal aspects of teacher's speech and general performance. (<http://www.bhmed-emanual.org/book/export/html/36>)

It is a known fact that the economic prosperity and good quality of any nation depends upon the development of human resources of that nation. The significant fact in the development of human capital refers to the competencies and the level on which these competencies are imparted. You also know that it largely depends on those who develop these competencies. Therefore, for this purpose we need highly competent teachers for imparting these competencies. It is essential that teachers imparting these competencies should have the capability to perform their task efficiently. For this, they need to acquire requisite competencies themselves. Here we will attempt to understand as to what competencies are essential for becoming better teacher and how these competencies can be imparted. President and Fellows of Harvard College (2002-2006). The complexity of a teaching situation can be overwhelming. To deal effectively with it, teachers must not only have a good knowledge of the subject in hand, but also some communication skills such as ability to observe, supervise, lead a discussion and pose questions. It is difficult to self assess one's own abilities and we benefit from colleagues' feed back to recognize our strength and identify areas for possible improvement.

The art of teaching does not merely involve a simple transfer of knowledge from one to other. Instead, it is a complex process that facilitates and influences the process of learning. Quality of a teacher is estimated on how much the students understand from his/her teaching. The classrooms cannot be used as a learning platform for acquiring primary teaching skills. The adragogic / pedagogic skill for teaching can be acquired only through more structured and cheaper training techniques by the introduction of microteaching.

**Key words:** Microteaching, education, teacher trainee, teaching skills, Feedback

### **Clarification of Basic Concepts**

#### **Micro-Teaching**

Microteaching is a teacher training technique for learning teaching skills. It employs real teaching situation for developing skills and helps to get deeper

knowledge regarding the art of teaching with the significant reduction in the teaching complexities with respect to number of students in a class, scope of content, and timeframe, etc. Most of the pre-service teacher education programs widely use microteaching, and it is a proven method to attain gross improvement in the instructional experiences. Effective student teaching should be the prime quality of a teacher. As an innovative method of equipping teachers to be effective, skills and practices of microteaching needs being implemented (Ambili, 2013).

Microteaching is an excellent way to build up skills and confidence, to experience a range of lecturing/tutoring styles and to learn and practice giving constructive feedback. Microteaching gives instructors an opportunity to safely put themselves “under the microscope” of a small group audience, but also to observe and comment on other people's performances.

**Teaching:** There is no specific and universally accepted definition of teaching. Some of the definitions are:

- Teaching is the stimulation, guidance, direction and encouragement of learning.
- Teaching is the communication between two or more persons, who influence each other by their ideas and learn something in the process of interaction.
- Teaching is to fill the minds of the learner by information and knowledge of facts for future use.
- Teaching is the process in which learner, teacher and other variables are organized in a systematic way to attain some pre-determined goals.
- Teaching is a social act of influencing person(s) by the teacher.
- Teaching is doing anything that impact knowledge.

Teaching means all mentioned above and many more. It is an act of interpersonal influence aimed at changing the way(s) in which other persons can or will behave. From these definitions, it is evident that teaching is a very complex activity. However it can be concluded that teaching activity is imparting knowledge or skill. **A teacher** is therefore a person whose job is to teach, especially in a school.

**Education** is a theoretical learning in an environment. Though training and education differ in nature and orientation, they are complementary. An employee, for example, who undergoes training, is presumed to have had some formal education. Furthermore, no training programme is complete without an element of education. In fact, the distinction between training and education is getting increasingly blurred nowadays. As more and more employees are called upon to exercise judgments and

to choose alternative solutions to the job problems, training programmes seek to broaden and develop the individual through education. Otsupius, (2012)

**Skills:** Training, as was stated earlier, is imparting skills to employees. A worker needs skills to operate machines and use other equipments with least damage or scrap. This is a basic skill without which the operator will not be able to function. There is also the need for motor skills.

### **Efficient Technique and Effective Teaching**

Micro-teaching is a teacher training technique which helps the teacher trainee to master the teaching skills. It requires the teacher trainee

1. to teach a single concept of content
2. using a specified teaching skill
3. for a short time
4. to a very small member of pupils

In this way the teacher trainee practices the teaching skill in terms of definable, observable, measurable and controllable form with repeated cycles till he attains mastery in the use of skill. It scales down the complexities of real teaching, as immediate feedback can be sought after each practice session. The modern-day multimedia equipment such as audio–video recording devices has a key role in the learning process.

Observing a fellow teacher and using a trial-and-error in own teaching sessions are very common and efficient ways of self-training. But, both of them have their own demerits. On the other hand, microteaching helps in eliminating errors and builds stronger teaching skills for the beginners and senior teachers. Microteaching increases the self-confidence, improves the in-class teaching performances, and develops the classroom management skills.

### **Objectives of Microteaching**

- To enable teacher trainees to learn and assimilate new teaching skills under controlled conditions.
  - To enable teacher trainees to master a number of teaching skills.
  - To enable teacher trainees to gain confidence in teaching.
  - Understand the concept of Micro-teaching.
  - Understand the principles underlying Micro-teaching
  - Analyze the complex process of teaching into essential Micro-teaching skills.
  - Understand the procedure of Micro-teaching for developing teaching skills.
- “Objectives of Microteaching” (n.d)

### Characteristics of Microteaching

The characteristics of microteaching include:

- i. Microteaching is a highly individualized training device
- ii. It is an experiment in the field of teacher education which has been incorporated in the practice teaching schedule
- iii. It is a teacher trainee teaching skill training technique
- iv. Microteaching is micro in the sense that it scale down the complexities of real teaching
- v. Reduced class size to the barest minimum
- vi. Reduced duration of lesson to 5 – 10 minutes
- vii. Limited content to a single concept
- viii. immediate feedback which helps in improving, fixing and motivating learning
- ix. The teacher training are provided immediate feedback in terms of peer group feedback, tape recorded
- x. Microteaching advocates the choice and practice of one skill at a time

### Steps of Microteaching

There are four distinct steps of microteaching as stated below:

**Step 1: Briefing** – If a teacher trainee has never taken part in a microteaching session, a supervisor or a senior teacher will explain its concept and purpose. The supervisor will give a set of objectives for the trainee to accomplish, like developing a particular skill such as asking questions or explaining. The senior teacher may also give a short demonstration of a skill or go through topics like the best practices in teaching. All this will allow the teacher trainee to make the necessary preparations needed for the microteaching session.

**Step 2: Preparation** – The teacher trainee will make a short lesson plan good for 5 – 10 minutes, depending on the length required by the supervisors. The lesson plan must be crafted to meet the objectives laid out by the supervisor or to improve a particular skill.

**Step 3: Teaching** – The teacher trainee will present the lesson plan to a small group of students or fellow trainees while being supervised by a team of senior teachers or educational experts. Occasionally, this supervisory team may also play the role of students – asking the teacher trainee questions and actively involving themselves in

the lesson. While the lesson is going on, the supervisory team will evaluate the trainee's performance; the team will usually use standardized evaluation forms to streamline the process. A video camera will also be running in the background to record the entire teaching session. Observation during the micro lesson is a learning experience.

**Step 4: Feedback** – The supervisory team will meet to discuss their evaluation of the teacher trainee and whether or not the objectives of the microteaching session have been met. While they are meeting, the trainee may be allowed to review the footage of his or her presentation. When the supervisory team's meeting has concluded, they will then meet with the trainee to give their feedback regarding the teacher trainee's performance. The group should highlight the trainee's best practices or best use of a certain skill along with areas that need to be improved. Concrete instances of the teacher trainee's good and bad practices should be mentioned; they can review the video together to re-watch certain segments that highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the trainee. The team will then give suggestions like how to improve teaching skills or ways to handle different classroom situations. The trainee should also take this time to ask any important questions or to clarify a number of points given by the supervisory team.

### **Feedback**

Feedback in microteaching is critical for teacher-trainee improvement. It is the information that a student receives concerning his attempts to imitate certain patterns of teaching. The built-in feedback mechanism in micro-teaching acquaints the trainee with the success of his performance and enables him to evaluate and to improve his teaching behaviour. Electronic media gadget that can be used to facilitate effective feedback is a vital aspect of micro-teaching (Teg, 2007), (Wikipedia).

### **After the Session**

After the microteaching session, the teacher trainee must review the feedback and suggestions given by the supervisory team so that changes can be made to the trainee's teaching style. The whole microteaching process can then be repeated to determine any if there is any significant improvement in the teacher trainee's performance and to find out if there are any problems that still need to be addressed.

**Receiving Feedback:** When you are receiving feedback, try:

- Not to respond to each point, rather listen quietly, hearing what other's experiences were during their review, asking only for clarification. The only time to interfere with what is being said is if you need to state that you are overloaded with too much feedback.

- Be open to what you are hearing. Being told that you need to improve yourself is not always easy, but as have been pointed out, it is an important part of the learning process. Although, you might feel hurt in response to criticism, try not to let those feelings dissuade you from using the feedback to your best advantage.
- Take notes, if possible. If you can, take notes as you are hearing the other people's comment. Then you will have a record to refer to, and you might discover that the comments that seemed to be the harshest were actually the most useful.
- Ask for specific examples if you need to. If the critique you are receiving is vague or unfocused, ask the person to give you specific example of the point he/she is trying to make
- Judge the feedback by the person, who is giving it. You do not have to agree with every comment. Ask other people if they agree with the person's critique.

**Qualities of Effective Feedback:**

- It is descriptive, specific, and focuses on changeable actions;
- It identifies what was done well and what might be improved

**Phases of Microteaching**

There are three phases of the Microteaching procedure they are:

1. **Knowledge Acquisition Phase (Pre-Active Phase):** It includes the activities such as the teacher trainee
  - being provided with knowledge about teaching skills.
  - being able to observe the demonstration of teaching skill and
  - being able to analyze and discuss the demonstration of the teaching skill.

In this phase the teacher trainee learns about the skill and its components through discussion, illustrations and demonstration of the skill given by the expert. He learns about the purpose of the skill and the condition under which it proves useful in the teaching-learning process. He/she analyzes of the skill into components leading to various types of behaviours which are to be practised. The teacher trainee tries to gain a lot about the skill from the demonstration given by the expert. He discusses and clarifies each and every aspect of the skill.

2. **Skill Acquisition Phase (Inter-active Phase):** It includes the activities such as the teacher trainee:

- Planning and preparation of micro lesson for a skill.
- Practicing the skill.
- Evaluation of the practiced skill (Feedback).
- Re-plan, Re-teach and re-feedback till the desired level of skill is achieved.

On the basis of the demonstration presented by the expert, the teacher trainee plans a micro-lesson, lesson for practising the demonstrated skill. He practices the teaching skill through the Micro-teaching cycle and continues his efforts till he attains mastery level. The feed-back component of micro-teaching contributes significantly towards the mastery level acquisition of the skill. On the basis of the performance of teacher trainee in teaching, the feedback is provided for the purpose of change in behaviour of the teacher trainee in the desired direction.

3. Transfer Phase (Post –Active Phase) involves:

- Giving opportunity to use the mastered skill in normal class room teaching.
- Integrate the different skill practiced

After attaining mastery level and command over each of the skills, the teacher trainee integrates all these skills and transfer to actual classroom teaching is done during this transfer phase.

### **What Is the Relevance of Microteaching in the Teaching Field?**

The Microteaching Technique was established in the early 1960s as a means for instructors to improve teachers' effectiveness. The technique involves the recording of small teaching events for later review and critique. As a tool for teacher preparation, microteaching trains teaching behaviours and skills in small group settings aided by video-recordings.

A microteaching session is a chance to adopt new teaching and learning strategies and, through assuming the student role, to get an insight into students' needs and expectations. It is a good time to learn from others and enrich one's own repertoire of teaching methods.

A microteaching session is much more comfortable than real classroom situations, because it eliminates pressure resulting from the length of the lecture, the scope and content of the matter to be conveyed, and the need to face large numbers of students, some of whom may be inattentive or even hostile. Another relevance of



microteaching is that it provides skilled supervisors who can give support, lead the session in a proper direction and share some insights from the pedagogic and andragogic view. Microteaching considers the trainee's capacities by allowing him to select the content of the lesson from the area of his greatest competence (Meier, Summer 1968 as cited in Cooper & Allen, 1970).

### **Relevance of Microteaching to Teachers**

The rationale for microteaching as a teacher-training technique has been set forth by several authors:

1. Micro teaching reduces the complexities of normal classroom teaching, thus allowing the teacher to concentrate on the acquisition of a teaching skill.
2. Knowledge and information about performance aids the learner (in this case the teacher) in his acquisition of a teaching skill. The immediate feedback from video tape recorders, supervisors, students, and colleagues provide a critique of the lesson which will help the teacher constructively modify his behaviour (Meier, Summer 1968).
3. Microteaching provides a setting in which the trainee can teach students of varying backgrounds, intellectual abilities, and age groups before facing a class during his student or intern teaching (Allen and Clark, 1967) study (as cited in Cooper & Allen, 1970).
4. Microteaching allows for the repetitive practice necessary to over learn skills which will be used during regular teaching.
5. It makes teachers more aware of their own teaching styles and helps them understand how to improve them. "Relevance of Micro Teaching" (n.d)

### **Relevance of Microteaching to Students**

1. Microteaching provides a low threat situation in which to practice teaching skills, a situation which should be more conducive to learning than the high anxiety level exhibited by many beginning teachers when practicing in actual class-rooms
2. Since active participation by the trainee is preferred, and meaningful materials and tasks are desirable for optimal learning to occur, the microteaching setting allows the student to perfect certain skills that he will subsequently be expected to perform in the regular classroom

"Practice makes perfect," this old saying has always proven true no matter what profession you engage in, and the same can also be said for teachers. Microteaching allows teachers to improve their craft by allowing them to practice it in a nurturing environment. At the same time, strengths and weaknesses in their

teaching style can be discovered, allowing them to make adjustments and to improve their performance. So how exactly is microteaching done? Fortunately, the process isn't very complex. At its core, microteaching is composed of four basic steps: briefing, preparation, teaching, and feedback as stated earlier. (Meier, Summer 1968; Allen and Ryan, 1969; Kallenbach, 1966; Bush, 1966; Fortune, 1967)

### Teaching Skills and their Specifications

S/No.	Skill	Components
1.	Probing Questions	Prompting, seeking further information, redirection, focusing, increasing critical awareness.
2.	Explaining	Clarity, continuity, relevance to content using beginning and concluding statements, covering essential points.
3.	Illustrating with Examples	Simple, relevant and interesting examples appropriate media, use of inducts, deductive approach.
4.	Stimulus variation	Body movements, gestures, change in speech pattern, change in interaction style, pausing, focusing, oral-visual switching.
5.	Reinforcement	Use of praise words and statements, accepting and using peoples' idea, repeating and rephrasing, use of pleasant and approving gestures and expressions, writing students' answer on the board.
6.	Classroom Management	Call students by names, Make norms of classroom behaviour, attending behaviour reinforced, clarity of direction, check non-attending behaviour, keep students in Eye Span, check inappropriate behaviour immediately.
7.	Use of whiteboard	Legible, neat and adequate with reference to content covered.

### Impact of Microteaching

Microteaching has a pivotal role in all teachers' education training programs and contributes to a great extent to the better understanding of teaching process and its complexities. A case study is the report from participants who attended a course on Train the Trainers' at ASCON in 2013; a course which microteaching was one of the

content confirmed that as training officer and a facilitator combining the elements of performance management lesson and microteaching technique had successfully demonstrated growth in teachers' knowledge on teaching Management Studies Department (MSD) Performance Management end of Course Evaluation 2014). The "teach, critique, re-teach" model in teaching education programme identified microteaching as a technique for personality development and confidence-building of professional trainers. Heyroth as cited in Ambili (2013) described microteaching as a "scaled-down teaching encounter designed to develop new skills and refine old ones." In spite of experiencing anxiety, microteaching has evolved as the proven technique in teachers' education.

Apart from increasing the teaching performances of education students, the microteaching had proven to be effective in the retention of the learned behaviours, even months after course completion. Faculty staff of ASCON had reportedly high confidence levels after an intensive workshop/ course based on microteaching technique. A microteaching activity incorporated within a professional development seminar series was proved to be an effective method to enhance and develop communication. Microteaching helps not only in developing skills of the novice teachers but also assists in comparing the effectiveness of variation of one microteaching with another. Microteaching has the ability to enhance the skills of problem solving, critical thinking, questioning, and reflective thinking. It improves learning by realistic applications. The other key benefits of this technique included the following: Transformation of difficult topics into learnable units, integration of the lecture with applications on topics, and usage of proper questions and pauses. The role of teacher education can thus be effectively satisfied by practicing microteaching techniques.

The utilization of expanded microteaching activities in teaching practical course has significantly reduced the levels of anxiety. Proper practice is deemed essential for teacher training programmes, as it serves trainees to gain their first teaching experience and helps to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, although no emphasis could be made on contents, skill dependency and administrative/logistic problems when the class size is large. This can be minimized by implementing the activities at the departmental level in several sequences.

Extensive training programmes are possible when the teachers are well equipped with core skills. These programs can then be effectively utilized for learning of new skills and strengthening and elaboration of existing skills. Hence, a better understanding of the complexities of the teaching process by the faculty is more important. Observation from the foremost Management Development Institute (MDI) in West Africa ASCON indicates that micro-teaching is one of the most powerful techniques for improving teaching / ability to facilitate and provides a basis for self-

reflection and professional growth. It is a laboratory approach to teaching development designed to help individuals develop and refine their teaching skills and to practice constructive criticism. Participants review basic ideas about teaching, check current practices, observe and learn new ideas from colleagues, try out new strategies, and share feedback with colleagues in a constructive atmosphere. Participants design and deliver a 10-minute teaching segment followed by a feedback period for the exchange of ideas and issues related to the presentation. The teaching segment is also video-taped for each presenter as a basis for self-reflection and ongoing development of their teaching style. It makes teachers more aware of their own teaching styles and helps them understand how to improve them.

It is of great concern that microteaching technique is under-estimated and under-utilized for various reasons. Practicing the economical, simpler methods of microteaching would help develop better teachers for the country.

#### **Merits of Microteaching**

- It helps to develop and master important teaching skills.
- It helps to accomplish specific teacher competencies.
- It caters the need of individual differences in the teacher training.
- It is more effective in modifying teacher behaviour.
- It is an individualized training technique.
- It employs real teaching situation for developing skills.
- It reduces the complexity of teaching process as it is a scaled down teaching.
- It helps to get deeper knowledge regarding the art of teaching.

#### **Limitations of Microteaching**

Limitations of microteaching include the following:

- Time remains the major hurdle for microteaching sessions in a teacher education training programmes. These results in neither all the skills are practiced nor are all trainees given an opportunity for re-planning and re-teaching activities.
- The training becomes ineffective unless the teacher acquires the quality of effective student teaching.
- It is skill oriented; Content not emphasized.
- A large number of trainees cannot be given the opportunity for re-teaching and re-planning.

- It is very time consuming technique.
- It requires special classroom setting.
- It covers only a few specific skills.
- It deviates from normal classroom teaching.
- It may raise administrative problem while arranging micro lessons

#### **Summary: Things to Remember**

- Teaching is a complicated process but it can be analysed into simple teaching tasks called teaching skills.
- Teaching skill is the set of behaviours/acts of the teacher which facilitates students' learning.
- Teaching is observable, definable, measurable, demonstrable and can be developed through training.
- Micro-teaching is a teacher training technique which plays a significant role in developing teaching skills.
- The procedure of micro-teaching involves the following steps: Briefing, Preparation, Teaching and Feedback. These steps are repeated till the teacher trainee attains mastery in the use of the skill.
- For practising teaching skill the setting of micro-teaching involves:
  - (i) a single skill for practice
  - (ii) one concept of content for teaching
  - (iii) a class of 5 to 10 students comprising; friends, colleagues and supervisor
  - (iv) Presentation time of 5 to 10 minutes
- Systematic use of feedback plays a significant role in the acquisition of the skill up to mastery level.
- After the acquisition of all the core skills it is possible to integrate them for effective teaching in actual classroom-situations.

#### **Conclusion**

Microteaching works as a focused instrument which helps to practice essential teaching skills safely and effectively at any stage. This paper describes microteaching as an Efficient Learning Technique for Effective Teaching. Learning is a change in behaviour, which is brought about by activity, training, or experiencing at any age.

When the learner is more experienced, learning becomes more effective. The most important quality of the participants of microteaching sessions is the ability to give and receive constructive feedback with an open mind and achieves appropriate teaching goals. In addition, it increases self-confidence of teacher in an atmosphere of friendliness and equanimity.

Breaking down the complex teaching act into simple, easily trainable skills offers much promise for the development of specific teaching skills; however, it is not a cure-all for the problems of teacher education. Although, some people argue that microteaching is both a risky and costly procedure. It is risky in that trainees or in-service teachers may be exposed to criticism by their colleagues and/or supervisors. There are also costs involved both in the resources that may be used and the amount of time the microteaching absorbs. However, microteaching should be considered a positive experience because it aids in the gradual development of professional expertise and minimizes the risk of failure in the classroom (Essan Hanna Wahba, 1999).

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