



MICROTEACHING IN FACULTY OF EDUCATION: A STUDY OF STUDENT TEACHERS' VIEWS

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ABSTRACT

This article is a report of a survey on how the student teachers in Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University, view towards microteaching. The article starts with a short theoretical introduction of the microteaching programme as an integral part of practice teaching. The article also introduces the role of microteaching in TU Faculty of Education programs and the students' evaluation. The article presents the questionnaire used to find out the views of students towards microteaching. Some key findings are listed out and some recommendations on the basis of the findings especially to TU authority are suggested only to give more importance to the microteaching in the teacher preparation programs in Faculty of Education TU. The findings include that the student teachers or trainee teachers were positive towards microteaching and they thought that the program was really useful to bridge the gap between the theory and real practical life in language teaching.

Keywords: microteaching, student teachers, external observers, internal observers, pre service teacher training, in service teacher training

Introduction

Language teaching is different kind of activity in comparison to other subjects. And teaching foreign language in general is usually viewed as a stressful situation in which teachers face many problems in the classroom. Unsurprisingly, the start of the school year is extremely busy. Evans et al. (2010) write 'as a new teacher, teachers are subjected to a multitude of pressures and demands and each of these will seem to be imperative. Some teachers consider such situation to be an undeniably complex one'. It requires a great deal of specialized knowledge in the field of teaching and learning, high standards of professional knowledge and high standards of professional conduct as well. Brain (1998), in this regard, maintains that if someone aims to become a better teacher, there are four essential qualities that distinguish exceptional teachers: knowledge, communication skills, interest, and respect for students. These qualities, if taken seriously, can be used for preparing effective and reflective teachers particularly for creating excellent, memorable teachers of English as a second language. Moreover, with the explosion in language teaching nowadays, there has been an increased demand for language teachers and the consequent need to train these teachers. The concept of the master teacher, however, is difficult to sustain in our educational context of new methodologies, new technologies, and new syllabi. Although field-based teaching experiences as the basic connection for integrating theory and practice, and providing opportunities for would-be teachers to reflect on their teaching have been successful, these experiences have not always resulted in the attainment of these expectations. Yusuf (2006) states that teacher education is not only theoretically based but it is also practice oriented. Through theory and practice student teachers (pre-service or in service) are provided with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to acquire the basic components of teacher education. There are several approaches through which student teachers are provided with practical experience during the course of their training. Some of these include teaching practice, workshop, demonstration schools, microteaching, and so on.



Teaching practice is in fact the preparation of student teachers for teaching by practical training. It is the practical use of teaching methods, teaching strategies, teaching principles, teaching techniques and practical training and practice or exercise of different activities of daily school life. It is a cardinal and indispensable aspect in the preparation of teachers. It is the common professional element in the preparation of trainee teachers. In Nepal, all the academic and short term in service as well as pre service teacher trainings include practice teaching as a very important and vital part of the programs. In grade XI and XII in education specialization programme there is 50 marks practice teaching of one month and the B.Ed. programs of different universities of Nepal also have a six week practice teaching as a complete paper of 100 full marks. In the M.Ed. programme of T. U. as well, practice teaching is included as a four week practical exam of 50 full marks. The concept of teaching practice is made clearer by looking at some of the objectives of teaching practice as enumerated by Akbas quoted in Nwanekezi (2011), as follows:

1. To provide prospective teachers with the opportunity of establishing an appropriate teacher pupil relationship.
2. To provide an opportunity for evaluating the students potential as a teacher and suitability for the teaching profession.
3. To develop personal relationship with others administrators, teachers, parents and students.
4. To provide the future teacher with experience in school to overcome the problems of discipline and enable him/her develop method of control.
5. To provide an opportunity to put theories into practice and develop deeper understanding of educational principles and their implications for learning.
6. To enable the student teachers effectively plan and prepare lessons.
7. To develop skill in the use of fundamental procedures, techniques and methods of teaching
8. To develop desirable professional interest attitudes and ideas relative to teaching profession.
9. To enable student teachers acquire desirable characteristics/traits of a teacher and to display appropriate behavior.
10. To provide student teachers with opportunity to have teaching evaluation and to gain from constructive criticism
11. To provide an opportunity for self-evaluation and to discover ones strength and weaknesses.

Pultorak, quoted in Nwanekezi (2011) argues that preparing pre service teachers to teach effectively and to reflect on the sequence and consequences of their teaching actions is a prominent issue among teacher educators who must facilitate the integration of theory and practice through the proliferation of field-based experiences and the use of structured reflective thinking components such as journal writing and reflective interviews. It can be noted from the preceding that natural classrooms are not always the most accommodating settings for fostering novice teachers' reflection on their teaching actions. In order for reflectivity on teaching to succeed, it should be nurtured through microteaching in a supportive on-campus clinical setting. At this point, the concept of microteaching emerges for the purpose of preparing excellent would-be teachers as teaching is believed to be an experience to be learnt during the students' teaching period.

Microteaching

The term microteaching was coined by Dwight Allen and his associates in the early 1960s. It is a very common in Nepalese education system as it is a part of most of the practice teaching activities in the final



evaluation of the degrees in education as well as different short term teacher training programs. Nowadays, in many teacher education programs, microteaching is used to expand the scope of student teachers while mastering various teaching skills and teaching experiences. It implies a condensed and simplified teaching situation and provides teacher candidates with the opportunities to systematically study and practice specific teaching behaviors in a simulated environment. The microteaching model commonly consists of four basic phases: the trainee studies a specific teaching skill, the trainee attempts to apply the skill in a five to ten-minute lesson taught to three to seven pupils, he receives information feedback for a supervisor about the quality of his performance, written evaluations from the pupils to whom the lesson was taught, audio or video recording of the lesson, or a combination of the sources and the last phase is when the trainee uses information from the feedback phase to re-plan and re-teach the lesson, trying to improve the quality of his performance to a new group of pupils.

Likewise Wallace (1991) defines microteaching as a training context in which a teaching situation has been reduced in scope and/or simplified in some systematic way. Accordingly, there are three main ways in which the actual teaching may be scaled down: the task is simplified, the length of the lesson may be shortened and the size of the class may be reduced. Microteaching, in this regard is usually conceived of as occurring in three or four distinct stages: the 'briefing', the 'teach', the 'critique' and 'the re-teach'. At the "briefing" stage, the trainees are given oral and/or written instructions on the skill they need to practice and the way it is to be done. Using taped or filmed modeling or transcript models (printed transcripts) in addition to samples of what teaching might look like are familiar. At the "teach" stage the trainees teach micro-lessons for about 5-10 minutes which help them put into practice what they have planned using real students or fellow trainees. The tutor at this stage should make a note of points to be used for reflective discussion. At the 'critique' stage, the lesson 'if it is taped' is played back, discussed, analyzed and evaluated. Here, the tutor should do his/her best to make the "critique" a positive experience not a real criticism which might be a negative and frustrating experience. So it might be better to call it 'analysis' or discussion or may be it can be used to give the required feedback which aimed at increasing a performer's awareness of strengths and weaknesses. At the final stage the 're-teach', the trainee practices the same skill again in the light of discussion or the critique until he/she 'reaches criterion' or mastered the skill. It is worth mentioning here that all the trainees must attempt all the skills and that the re-teach can take place immediately while the critique is still fresh or one week later. Moreover, pairs of trainees can be used for re-teach whereas one does the teach, the other does the re-teach (Wallace, 1991). Not only this, Yusuf (2006) as quoted in Dweikat (2010), defines microteaching as the practical training technique which gives the students and the teachers the opportunity to master the skills inherent in teaching in a laboratory environment before actual class experience. Microteaching, therefore, is a scaled down teaching in terms of the number of students. It is an effective tool to fine tune teaching skills. Microteaching, accordingly, provides student teachers with opportunities to practice teaching skills, so that they can obtain feedback in a non-judgmental environment. Through microteaching specific features of teaching are taught, demonstrated, and then students practice and they are provided feedback on their performance. This process continues until mastery is demonstrated. The re-teaching ensures that reasonable level of proficiency is attained.

Thus the microteaching is really a great tool to develop confidence in the trainee teachers and novice teachers. It should be given proper emphasis in all the teacher training programs may these be short term trainings or long term academic programs of universities and HSEB. Unfortunately it is not seriously done in the colleges. The teachers as well as trainee teachers are not seen serious in the microteaching programs of B.Ed. and M.Ed. level which are of normally two weeks. The programme is in fact neglected by the university policy as well. The teachers are paid Rs. 400/- for the two weeks microteaching guidance and observation of 20



to 25 students which really decreases the interest of teachers. On the other hand students also are not much interested to the microteaching as the marks given in the microteaching is not much meaningful and decisive in the teaching practice programs.

Statement of the Problem

Microteaching, which is simply a training context in which a teacher's actual teaching situation is reduced in scope or simplified in systematic way, has been used to train the would-be-teachers as well as the in-service teachers. The views of the trainee teachers towards the microteaching haven't been investigated to examine the impact of such technique on them. Therefore, this study aimed at investigating the views and attitudes of English language trainee teachers towards the on-campus microteaching before the actual teaching practice period. Furthermore, the study aimed at investigating the effect of academic level on these values and attitudes.

Research Questions

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the view of the student teachers towards microteaching?
2. Are there any differences between learners' views and attitudes towards microteaching due to their academic level?

Purpose of the Study

With the change in time and the changes in the lifestyles of the people there has been the impact in education as well. The lack of moral values among the youngsters is really problematic especially in education sector. As a result of the new technologies and techniques and new trends that have invaded the field of teaching English throughout the world, it seems that the time has come for teacher educators everywhere to develop new and particular insights in to the in-service and pre service teachers' reflections on teaching actions in the unique context of the microteaching. The present study, therefore, aimed to investigate the attitudes of ELT trainee teachers towards the microteaching at Tribhuvan University in the B.Ed., M.Ed. and One Year B.Ed. programs. Furthermore, the study aimed at investigating the effect of study levels on these attitudes.

Significance of the Study

This study was guided by two reasons: First it seems significant to investigate the attitudes of ELT learners towards microteaching that can be used as a tool for creating practical training techniques which give the learners and the teachers the opportunity to master the skills inherent in teaching in a laboratory environment before actual class experience and a tool for empowering trainee teachers to remake and self-correct their teaching actions. Though microteaching has several advantages in teacher education programs of the universities in general and at TU in particular, the study of attitudes may affect the methodology used for teaching English. Second, there has not been a study that investigated attitudes of trainee teachers towards microteaching which means that there is still a necessity to explore the ways to make the microteaching more effective and systematic. Attitude, in this regard, was defined by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) as a learned predisposition to respond in a consistent manner to a given object or situation. The findings of this study is hoped to be useful for the decision-makers at TU as well as the MOE Nepal, who can benefit from the results to improve the quality of the training programs which are currently used to train the in-service and pre-service teachers. Moreover, the results of this study can help bridging the gap that might exist between theory and practice in terms of teaching methodologies and it can add some useful information to the growing body of

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literature in this area. The findings of this study might be of great benefits for people who are interested in teacher training programs, syllabus design, teaching methods and material producers.

METHODOLOGY**Design of the Study**

This study is a descriptive survey which simply attempts to collect data from the trainee teachers of different levels of Faculty of Education, Tribhuvan University in order to determine the current attitude of them towards microteaching.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Butwal Multiple Campus of Tribhuvan University with the sample of 3 year B.Ed. One year B.Ed. and M.Ed. level students who were in the microteaching phase of their teaching practice.

Population of Study

The target population comprised of all the students in the Faculty of Education who were on teaching practice in English language teaching, all the trainee teachers of three years B.Ed., one year B.Ed. and M.Ed. majoring English language teaching.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling procedure was used to choose 15 students from each of the three levels who were just going for teaching practice were used for data collection. The total sample used for the study was 45 students.

Tools for Data Collection

The main instrument for data collection was developed by the researcher. The instrument was a set of a questionnaire composed of 15 questions for the trainee teachers which were as below. The questions were closed type with negative or positive marking.

- 1- Microteaching is very important to bridge up the gap between theory and practice.
- 2- It promotes my ability to conduct a variety of techniques.
- 3- It gives me a good chance to reflect on my teaching performance.
- 4- It helps me evaluate others' teaching techniques by watching their teaching.
- 5- It helps me learn how to write a good lesson plan and teach according to it.
- 6- It provides me with a good chance to select appropriate teaching materials.
- 7- It promotes my ability to provide clear instructions and models.
- 8- It is a real like teaching environment.
- 9- It helps me speak English to a reasonable degree of fluency.
- 10- It improves my way of pronunciation while teaching.
- 11- It develops my ability to stimulate classroom interaction.
- 12- It helps me build my own self-confidence.
- 13- It can be a threatening and demoralizing experience.



14- It provides me with an opportunity to give appropriate feedback.

15- It doesn't have anything to do with the marks of practice teaching.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher visited the students during their practice teaching, told them about the purpose of the study and distributed the questionnaire in the presence of the lecturers who supervised them during their microteaching. The questionnaires were retrieved on the spot.

The Data Obtained

After collecting the raw data from the students, all the necessary information was systematically tabulated. Simple statistical tools were used to analyze the data or the responses from the trainee teachers. The findings and the conclusions as well as the recommendations on the basis of the findings have been presented in the following different ways.

Table no 1. Responses of the participants

Item No	No of Positive Responses from B.Ed.	No of Positive Responses from B.Ed.(1 Yr)	No of Positive Responses from M.Ed.	No of Negative Responses from B.Ed.	No of Negative Responses from B.Ed.(1Yr)	No of Negative Responses from M.Ed.	Remarks
1	15	15	13	0	0	2	
2	14	15	12	1	0	3	
3	12	11	9	3	4	6	
4	12	12	11	3	3	4	
5	13	11	10	2	4	5	
6	10	9	10	5	6	5	
7	13	8	8	2	7	7	
8	6	8	4	9	7	11	
9	8	9	9	7	6	6	
10	2	5	7	13	10	8	
11	8	8	10	7	7	5	
12	11	9	10	4	6	5	
13	15	15	13	0	0	2	
14	8	4	2	7	11	13	
15	9	8	11	6	7	2	



Research Findings

After the systematic analysis of the data obtained the researcher came up with the following findings and with the interpretation of the findings following recommendations have been suggested.

1. Most of the trainee teachers were found to believe that microteaching is really vital to bridge the gap between theory and practice. 43 out of 45 trainee teachers were found to believe this only two trainee teachers of master level responded that it can't bridge up the gap.
- 1- 2- A total of 41 trainee teachers believe that microteaching provides them with specialized knowledge for teaching and learning.
- 2- About 30 percent of the students believe that microteaching cannot give them proper chance to reflect on their own teaching performance. The no of students was found to be increasing with the level of their study.
3. A total of 35 trainee teachers were in the view that microteaching helps them to learn to evaluate their friends' teaching techniques just by watching them teach during the microteaching.
4. Most of the students (64%) believe that microteaching helps them select appropriate teaching materials and more than 75 % of the respondents believe that this programme helps them to prepare a good lesson plan and teach according to it.
5. Only 40 % of the respondents believe that the microteaching is a real like practice in proper environment where as 64% of them believe that it promotes their ability to provide clear instruction and models.
6. Only 31% of the respondents believe that microteaching can be helpful to develop their English pronunciation and 58 % of the respondents think that it can help them develop reasonable fluency and about the same no of respondents believe that microteaching helps them develop their ability to manage classroom interaction.
7. Almost all except two master degree students believe that microteaching can be a threatening and demoralizing practice. In the same way more than 66% of the students think that it develops their self-confidence.
8. Only 31% students believe that microteaching can provide them the way to give appropriate feedback whereas more than 57% of the respondents believe that the scores of microteaching cannot affect the scores of the practice teaching.

Recommendations

Microteaching is an indispensable part of practice teaching. So the attitudes of the trainee teachers towards microteaching should be positive only which will encourage them to become more serious about it. On the basis of the findings above, following recommendations have been presented:

The students should be actively participating for their better teaching career during the period of microteaching.

The teachers, as the internal supervisors also should try to make them practice as much as possible during the microteaching so that the trainee teachers will start feeling that it really helps bridge up the gap between the theory and practices.

The supervisor teachers should create sufficient chances for the students to reflect in their own practices as well as help them to evaluate their fellow trainee teachers so that they can practice evaluating the teaching of others.



The supervisor teachers should try to create such a friendly environment during the microteaching that students will not feel any kind of hesitation or fear of teaching according to the lesson plan or speaking fluently to improve their pronunciation.

The supervisor teachers should provide the trainee teachers with sufficient skills of managing the real classes with varieties of teaching tips in different situations.

As most of the student teachers believe that the scores of microteaching have no meaning for the final evaluation of their teaching practice, the university system of examination should make the scores of microteaching mandatory with the final evaluation sheet of microteaching.

The monetary value also plays vital role to make any programme effective and serious. At present the remuneration for the internal observer in the different levels of TU is less than Rs. 500/- for a 15 day microteaching programme in which there are at least 10 trainee teachers whose classes should be observed during this period. In such situation how can we expect effective and serious care in the program.

Conclusion

Microteaching is a vital part of any kind of teacher training programs may it be the in service teacher training or pre service teacher training programs. However the attempts towards making the microteaching more serious and important have not been found effective. There has been fairly less attention given to microteaching in the practice teaching programs of TU which may be due to the large and unmanageable number of students in its B.Ed. and M.Ed. programs. This study was conducted to find out the attitudes of student teachers towards microteaching. The views and attitudes of students towards the microteaching were found to be positive and the students were found to believe that the microteaching is really helpful to develop confidence in the novice teachers. Making some activity important or not much important depends on the policy of the authority. The TU authority should emphasize the microteaching by giving serious attention towards it and making the external observers get the marks of the microteaching more seriously so that the internal observers become more responsible to judge the microteaching more seriously and attentively. No programme will be successful and effective unless the implementation level is convinced and satisfied to implement the program i.e. the TU policy makers should respect the necessary level of hard work to accomplish the microteaching successfully and effectively.

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