

Micro-teaching: Concept and Features

Introduction

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 pedagogic skill for teaching can be acquired only through more structured and cheaper faculty training techniques.

Concept

Micro-teaching is one of the most recent innovations in teacher education or training programmes which aims at modifying teacher's behavior according to specific objectives. It is a process of subjecting to recording reviewing responding refining and redoing. Micro teaching is a controlled practice that makes it possible to concentrate on teaching behavior in the student-teacher training programme. It can be applied at various pre-service and in-service stages in the professional development of teachers. It provides teachers with a practice setting for instruction in which the normal complexities of the classroom are reduced and in which the teacher receives a great deal of feedback on his performance.

Definitions

Many educators have given different definitions. Some of them are as below:

Bush (1968) defined micro teaching as 'a teacher education technique which allows teachers to apply clearly defined teaching skills to carefully prepared lessons in a planned series of five to ten minutes encounters with a small group of real students often with an opportunity to observe the results on video tape.

Allen (1976) micro teaching is a scaled down teaching encounter in class size and class time.

Singh, LC (1977) micro teaching is a scaled down teaching encounter where a teacher teaches a small unit to a group of five pupils for a small period of 5-20 minutes. Such a situation offers a helpful setting for an experienced or inexperienced teacher to acquire new teaching skills and to refine old ones.

Micro teaching is now a teaching training technique that is currently practiced worldwide, and provides teachers an opportunity to perk up their teaching skills by improving the various simple tasks called teaching skills. It in fact helps to promote real-time teaching experience. The core skills of micro teaching such as presentation and reinforcement skills help the novice teachers to learn the art of teaching at ease and to maximum extent.

The advantage of this technique is that it can be applied at both pre-service and in-service stages in the professional development of teachers. It provides the teacher with a practice setting for instruction in which the normal complexities of classroom are reduced and in which the teacher receives a great deal of feedback on his performance. To minimize the complexities of the normal teaching encounter, several dimensions are limits. The length of the lesson is reduced. The scope of the lesson is narrowed and the teacher teaches only a few students.

Basically in micro teaching, the trainee is engaged to a scaled down teaching situation. It is scaled down in terms of class size, (5-10 students) lesson of reduced time (5-10minutes), even in terms of teaching tasks. The teaching tasks may include the practicing and mastering of a specific teaching skill such as lecturing or teaching explanation, questioning or leading a discussion, mastering of specific teaching strategies, flexibility etc. Only one skill or task is taken up at a time. If possible micro-lesson is video-taped or tape recorded. The student teacher immediately views his lessons, evaluates it, amends his approach, reteaches the lesson to another group of pupils, reviews and evaluates.

Features of micro teaching

We can study the features of micro teaching as follows:

- New innovation

- Real teaching
- Scaled down teaching
- Individualized teaching device
- Providing feedback
- Device for preparation of teachers
- Selecting and mastering one skill at a time
- Using videotape and CCTV to make easy observations
- Analytic approach to training.

Micro teaching is a relatively new innovation in the field of teacher education. It is real teaching but focuses on developing teaching skills. It is scaled down teaching in terms of class size, duration size of lesson and a particular teaching skill at a time. It is highly individualized training device. It provides adequate feedback for trainee's performance. In fact it is a device for preparing effective teachers. It provides opportunity to select one skill and practice it through scaled down encounter and then take others in a similar way. It takes use of video-tape and closed circuit television and thus making observation very effective. We can say that microteaching is an analytic approach to training.

Characteristics of Micro teaching

A few characteristics of micro teaching are as under:

- It is a teacher training technique and not a method of classroom instruction.
- It is micro in the sense that it scales down the complexities of real teaching.
- Out of contents a single concept is taken up at a time.
- Only one skill is practised.
- Size of the class is reduced and thus the number of students is just 5 to 7.
- Duration of each micro lesson is 5 to 7 minutes.
- Feedback is provided immediately after the completion of the lesson.

- The use of video tape and closed circuit television makes the observation very objective.
- It is highly individualized training device.
- There is high degree of control in practising a skill when this technique is used.
- It is constructed for the benefit of the teacher and student's learning is incidental.

It provides a significant way to bring specific education problems into manageable focus

Components of micro teaching

- A teacher
- The pupils(usually5-7)
- A brief lesson
- The objectives of the specific micro teaching occasion
- Feedback by the supervisor or by using audio tape recordings video tape recordings or closed circuit television.

Micro lessons

A microteaching session typically involves recording a short lesson in front of a small peer group in order to receive feedback on one's teaching style. This exercise gives participants the opportunity to practice teaching and receives feedback in a non-threatening and supportive environment. Microteaching also allows participants to gain a new perspective on their teaching through simulating the perspective of the student. Microteaching participants are able to literally see how they teach through

the eyes of “students”—in this case, their fellow peer participants—and through observing themselves teaching via recorded playback.

In a true microteaching session, participants only present for 5 minutes and are recorded. The video is then played back in front of all participants. One variant of microteaching is to record longer teaching presentations and prepare DVDs for the participants, to be viewed later during a confidential follow-up consultation.

Benefits

Visual feedback (through watching a recorded lesson) has been found to provide one of the most effective means of evaluating teaching strengths and identifying areas of improvement. Microteaching enables both intrinsic (self-assessment) and extrinsic (peer review) assessment of teaching behaviours. Several skills and behaviours have been identified as essential to the development of effective teaching. Through microteaching, one can seek to identify and improve these observable teaching skills and behaviours. Practice of any combination of said skills and behaviours in a microteaching session can lead to improved performance in the classroom. Some such skills and observable teaching behaviours include:

- oral presentation skills (voice modulation and articulation, enthusiasm, gestures, non-verbal cues, clarity of explanations and examples)
- organization skills (structure of lesson, strong opening and closing, good transitions between sections, clear learning objectives, effective use of time, good pacing)
- relating to the student (speaker engages audience, material is audience-appropriate, effective questioning, use of real-life examples)

- effective use of teaching aids (handouts, blackboard, presentation software, overhead transparencies, props, charts, etc.)

Aside from helping to identify teaching skills to be improved as well as teaching strengths, microteaching sessions can also provide an opportunity for the following:

- practicing part of a lecture or running an activity or explaining a procedure before you have to deliver a course or demonstrate a lab for the first time
- practicing a guest lecture you've been asked to deliver in someone else's course
- practicing a job talk before you visit a campus when applying for jobs
- practicing public speaking skills before you address students for the first time
- polishing your questioning techniques, or your opening and closing skills, if you're already an experienced instructor

Objectives of micro teaching

The objectives of micro teaching are as under:

- To give practice teaching to the teachers under training by lessening the complexities of classroom situations.
- To identify the drawbacks of the teachers and to give immediate feedback for modifying their behaviour.
- To develop experimental teacher education programmes and to encourage research identifying new teaching skills.
- To improve teaching through more control of instructional process and supervision.
- To enable the teacher trainees to gain confidence in teaching and mastering a number of teaching skills on a small group of pupils.

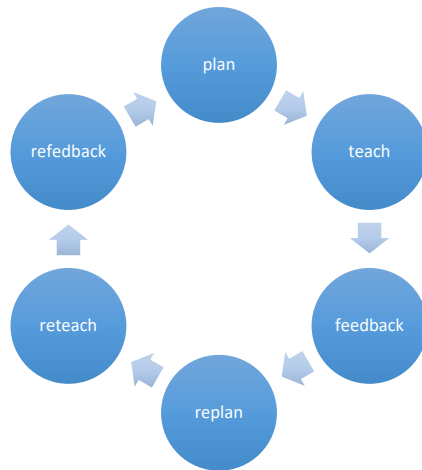
- To utilize the academic potential of teacher trainees for providing the much needed feedback.
- To gain maximum advantage with little time, money and material.

Procedure of micro teaching

Micro teaching includes the following procedures:

- **Defining a skill:** A particular skill is defined to trainees in terms of teaching behaviors to provide the knowledge and awareness of teaching skills.
- **Demonstrating the skill:** The specific skill is demonstrated by the experts or shown through videotape or film to the teacher trainee.
- **Planning the lesson:** the student teacher plans a short (micro) lesson with the help of his supervisor, in which he can practice a particular skill.
- **Teaching the lesson:** The pupil teacher teaches the lesson to a small group of pupils (5-10). The lesson is observed by supervisor or peers or videotaped or audiotaped or through CCTV.
- **Discussion:** The teaching is followed by discussion to provide the feedback to the trainee. The awareness of his own teaching performance provides the reinforcement to the pupil teacher.
- **Re-planning:** In the light of the discussion and suggestions the pupil teacher re-plans the lesson in order to practice the particular skill effectively.
- **Re-teaching:** The revised lesson is retaught to another small group of students of the same class for the same duration to practice the particular skill.
- **Re-discussion:** The re-teaching is again followed by discussion, suggestions and encouraging the teaching performance. Thus feedback is again provided to the trainee.
- **Repeating the cycle:** The 'teach-reteach' cycle is repeated till the desired level of skill is achieved.

Thus we find that in micro-teaching the pupil-teacher tries to complete the 5R's i.e., Recording, Reviewing, Responding, Refining and Redoing. It can be diagrammatically represented as

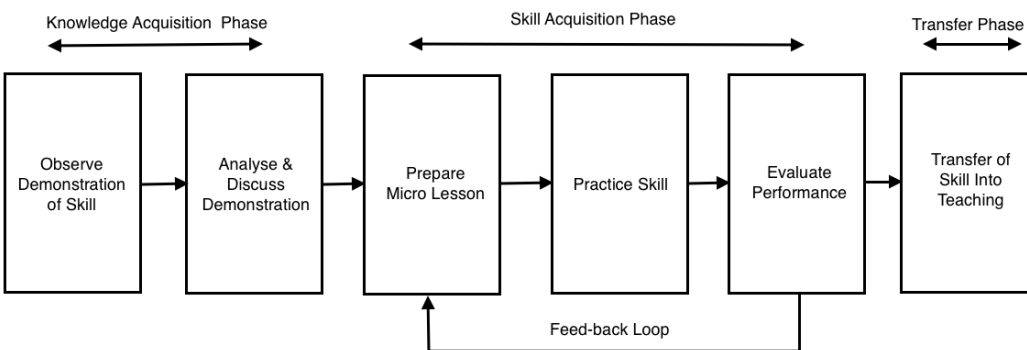


Phases of micro-teaching

According to Clift (1976) micro-teaching has three phases:

- Knowledge acquisition phase
- Skill acquisition phase
- Transfer phase.

Clift (1976) has diagrammatically presented the three phases as follows:



- **Knowledge acquisition phase:** at this phase, the skill is analyzed and thoroughly discussed with the supervisor. Every opportunity is given to the students to get clarification of the purpose and uses of the skill in the classroom. The demonstration of the skill is given to the trainees.

- **Skill acquisition phase:** In this phase, the trainee prepares a micro lesson and implements the lesson plan for the skill. He practices the skill and carries out the micro teaching cycle. This phase incorporates the following three sessions: plan session, teach session and feedback session
- **Transfer phase:** Here the student teacher learns to organise and integrates the different skills, and then transfer them into a real teaching situation. The transfer stage is actually the synthetic stage of microteaching process where skills are united to constitute a complex teaching behavior.

Applications of micro teaching

*Micro teaching is used for mastery of teaching skills. Teacher trainees become aware of the specific teaching acts and techniques, and structuring and pacing their teaching acts.

*Teacher trainees develop insight into the inter-relationship of children within the classroom.

*In teacher training institutions, trainees have to study and practice this technique for improving their teacher behaviour. Micro teaching helps to diagnose weakness in teaching skills through feedback sessions and also to provide remedial help. Feedback may be provided through video-recordings, observational comments of the supervisor and ratings of students taught by the trainee.

Merits and Demerits of Micro teaching

We can discuss the merits and demerits of microteaching as follows:

Merits

- The complexity of teaching are reduced as the class size, content and duration of class are reduced.
- The teacher trainee can get feedback through audio/video tapes or peer group/rating.
- Trainee can re-practice the skill till he is satisfied with his mastery of the teaching skill.
- It is an important effective training for improving teaching behavior.

- This technique helps teacher trainees to master teaching skills before they become real teachers.

Demerits

- It may keep the teacher trainees away from the real classroom problems.
- Since the emphasis is on one teaching skill at a time it lacks the overall composite teaching behavior because teaching is just not one skill.
- It is a time consuming technique since one trainee practices a skill in about 35 minutes.
- Since the main focus is on teach and reteach less importance is given to integrating teaching skills.

Precautions in Micro Teaching Approach

The following precautions should be kept in mind while undergoing micro teaching:

- Clarity of objectives is compulsory in micro teaching.
- Micro lesson plan should be prepared for one skill only at a time.
- Delivering model lessons in micro teaching is necessary.
- There should be not only criticism but also substantial suggestions accompanying this approach in order to improve the teaching skill of the pupil teachers.

Conclusion

Microteaching is thus a teacher training procedure, which reduces the teaching situation to simpler and more controlled encounters achieved by limiting the practice teaching to a specific skill and reducing teaching time and class size. The most important quality of the participants of micro teaching sessions is the ability to give and receive constructive feedback with an open mind and achieves appropriate teaching-learning goals. It also increases self-confidence of the teacher in a friendly atmosphere. It helps to bring about desired changes in pupil teachers. The behaviours are measurable and trainable. So we can conclude that micro-teaching can be used for mastery of teaching skills and to improve the teacher behaviour.

Glossary

- I. **Teaching:** Teaching is an interactive process which is carried out for the attainment of some specific purposes and objectives.
- II. **Learning:** Learning is modification of behaviour, adjustments, acquisition of habits, knowledge and the ability to benefit by past experiences.
- III. **Teaching skill:** A teaching skill is defined as a set of teacher behaviours which is especially effective in bringing about desired changes in pupil-teachers.
- IV. **Integration of teaching skill:** Integration of teaching skill may be defined as a process of selection, organisation and utilisation of different teaching skills to form an effective pattern for realising the specified instructional objectives in a given teaching learning situation
- V. **Plan session:** In this session, the trainee prepares a micro lesson and implements the lesson plan for the skill.
- VI. **Teach session:** This session commences after the plan session and the trainee teaches a brief lesson for 5 to 10 minutes to 4-5 students. It is observed by supervisor.
- VII. **Feedback session:** In this session, the supervisor and fellow trainees critically discuss the performance of the trainee to improve the performance in the next teaching session.

Frequently Asked Questions(FAQs)

i) What is micro teaching and what is it good for?

Ans: Micro teaching is "teaching-simulation", meant to boost your confidence before you teach for real for the first time. In brief, you get to "teach" for 10 minutes in front of some graduate student colleagues and a teaching consultant. Afterwards, you discuss how it went - all with the sole purposes of giving you confidence when you meet your real students.

ii) What is micro teaching?

Ans: Micro teaching is organised practice teaching. The goal is to give instructors confidence, support, and feedback by letting them try out among friends and colleagues a short slice of what they plan to do with their students. Ideally, micro teaching sessions take place before the first day of class, and are videotaped for review individually with an experienced teaching consultant. Micro teaching is a quick, efficient, proven, and fun way to help teachers get off to a strong start.

iii) What are the preparations required in micro teaching?

Ans: Most course heads provide micro teachers with scenarios to prepare in advance. If not, think of a few minutes of material that you especially would like to make sure your students understand by the end of your next class. As always, you should not only plan out how to treat the subject matter, but also give some thought to how you are going to present yourself, manage the class, and involve the students. There are, of course many different ways of teaching a given lesson well. That is why participants find that, along with what they learn from their own experience practice teaching, they can also pick up many helpful ideas by observing fellow micro teachers.

iv) What are micro teaching sessions?

Ans: Micro teaching sessions are practice teaching sessions where instructors present short lessons to a small group of peers and receive detailed feedback on their performance. As a teaching development technique, micro teaching was first introduced at Stanford University in 1963. The micro teaching sessions are designed to provide student-teachers with opportunities to practice different teaching methods and receive constructive feedback in a supportive, low-risk environment.

v) How do micro teaching sessions work?

Ans: Each micro teaching session has 4-5 participants and one facilitator and is approximately 3 hours in length. Participants take turns teaching 15-minute interactive lessons. Each mini-lesson is timed so it is essential that you adhere to the 15-minute timeline. The mini-lesson is followed by a short (1 minute) reflection by the mini-lesson instructor on how the lesson went and 15 minutes of verbal feedback from peers as well as the facilitator.

Feedback is an important part of micro teaching. It focuses on what was done well and suggestions for improvement. Each participant is expected to give and receive constructive feedback.

vi) What are the topics of the mini-lesson?

Ans: The main focus of micro teaching sessions is on your approaches to teaching, not the content. Each 15-minutes lesson has a different thematic focus to give you opportunities to practice various teaching methods. Training is also given in the mastery of only one skill at a time. One should master the components of the task of teaching before he attempts to perform effectively the complicated task of teaching at macro-level.

References

Malvinder, A & Bhushan, Anand. 2012: *Educational Technology: Theory and Practice teaching Learning process*. Bawa Publications, Patiala.

Sachdeva, M.S. 2006: *Essentials of Educational Technology and Management*, 21st Century Publications, Patiala.

Kochar, S.K. 1985: *Methods and Techniques of Teaching*, Sterling Publishers Private Limited, New Delhi.

Vandana, M.2010: *A Textbook of Educational Technology*, Sanjay Prakashan Publishers, New Delhi.

Sachedeva, M.S. 2013: *A New Approach to Teaching Learning, Process and Evaluation*, Tandon Publications, Ludhiana.

Links

https://www.ied.edu.hk/apfslt/v13_issue1/uzun/page2.htm

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microteaching>

<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/microteaching.html>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3724377/>