



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 behaviour 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 behaviour 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, re-teaches 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.

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.

Objectives of micro teaching

The objectives of micro teaching are as under:

1. To give practice teaching to the teachers under training by lessening the complexities of classroom situations.
2. To identify the drawbacks of the teachers and to give immediate feedback for modifying their behaviour.
3. To develop experimental teacher education programmes and to encourage research identifying new teaching skills.
4. To improve teaching through more control of instructional process and supervision.

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 have 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 are already an experienced instructor

Objectives of micro teaching

The objectives of micro teaching are as under:

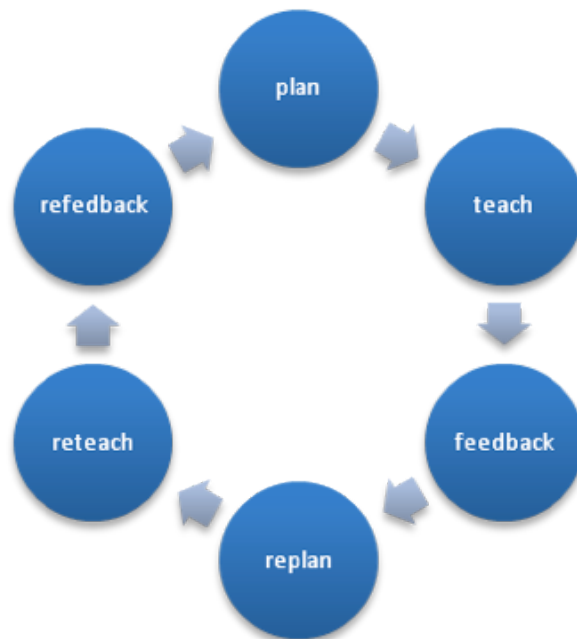
- To give practice teaching to the teachers under training by lessening the complexities of classroom situations.
- To identify the drawbacks of the teachers and to give immediate feedback for modifying their behaviour.
- To develop experimental teacher education programmes and to encourage research 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 behaviours 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 re-taught 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

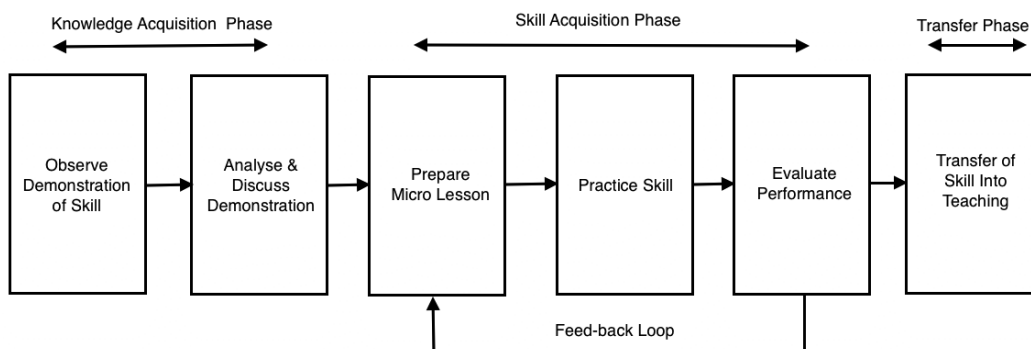


Phases of micro-teaching

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 organize 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 behaviour.

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 behaviour.
- 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 behaviour 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 teachers' behaviour.