THE QUALITY OF MICROTEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract

This study focuses and critically analyses the contribution of micro-teaching on teacher development of teaching skills through a micro-teaching programme. Microteaching frequently takes place as a group activity and entails planning and instructing a brief lesson or portion of a lesson to a group of other pre-teachers. This is followed by feedback from the teacher trainer and the peers. Since micro teaching across the globe have long discussed and acknowledged the advantages of this educational strategy, most pre-service Teacher Education programmes now incorporate it as a core component. The study was based on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis principles (IPA) with thematic analysis. Six pre-service teachers were interviewed. Three themes emerged from these interviews, namely, a micro teaching programme, a practical teaching component, and a mentor teacher. The findings showed that the absence of a microteaching programme affected pre-service teachers’ overall training. It is recommended that in future, technology should be explored that could facilitate a microteaching programme. This will enhance the quality of microteaching and enable the accommodation of pre-service teachers during a time of crisis, as experienced with the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, institutions should begin to exploit technology in future. In conclusion, teachers who went through the crisis must be identified and assisted to reach their full potential.

Keywords: Microteaching; Pre-Service teachers; micro-teaching, COVID-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to examine the quality of microteaching during the Covid-19 pandemic. “Microteaching is the practical teacher training technique which gives prospective teachers opportunities to practice teaching skills in an artificial environment before actual teaching settings” (Cebeci, 2016:61). Microteaching assists pre-service teachers to practice the skill of the content and teaching method in a controlled environment (Banerjee, Halder & Guha, 2015). The concept was conceived by Stanford Teacher Education, Stanford University, California in 1963 (Akanbi & Usman, 2014; Meutia, Elyza & Yusnila, 2018; Ismail, 2011). Over the years, many institutions have adopted microteaching as a means to train pre-services teachers to improve on weaknesses and build on their strengths, and also to bridge the gap between theories and practice (Onwuagboke, Osuala & Nzeako, 2017).

This study focuses and critically analyses the contribution of micro-teaching on teacher development of teaching skills through a micro-teaching programme, and how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the acquiring of the skills for teachers. Microteaching centre around planning and teaching a lesson to your colleagues for prompt feedback (Kourieos, 2016). The microteaching course offers numerous advantages to pre-service teachers. It offers them an opportunity to experiment with what they have learned in the theory of
teaching and practice it in a controlled environment and develop their confidence in teaching (Ismail, 2011; Sahardin, Heryansyah & Yuniarti, 2020). It has the advantage of allowing the pre-service teachers to practice specific teaching strategies in a supportive, non-threatening laboratory environment. It also enables them to receive immediate detailed feedback to reinforce their didactic skills (Onwuagboke, Osuala & Nzeako 2017). Pre-service teachers also benefit from microteaching by gaining a more practical experience in the microteaching class.

Microteaching is designed to afford an opportunity to preservice teachers to test their skills and also improve their practice teaching skills within inhouse training before they could visits the schools (Yusuf, 2006). The technique has improved the pre-service teachers content knowledge and methods of teaching (Banerjee et al., 2015). Microteaching is an important tool designed for prospective teachers to build their confidence, providing immediate feedback, and providing them with opportunities to experiment with a small segment of what they may plan to teach (Arsal, 2014).

Microteaching affords a pre-service teacher to improve the level of confidence and reinforces professional conduct in the profession. Furthermore, it also assists them with the skills such as commutation with students, improve the assessment strategies, integration of technology, and classroom management. In addition to that it also assists pre-service teachers to develop professional competencies in educational settings in which time is limited. These limitations direct pre-service teachers to choose their course subjects and teach in an organised schedule.

METHOD

The study was carried out using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis principles (IPA) (Browna, Webba, Robinsonb & Cotgreave, 2018). It is the duty of the qualitative (phenomenological) researcher to review and analyse how the research subject-matter affects the research participants’ life experiences. This method is suitable for small samples of up to ten respondents and enables the researcher to write up a single case or an exploration of themes shared between cases (Fade, 2004). IPA has two primary aims, namely, to look in detail at how someone makes sense of life experiences, and to give a detailed interpretation of the account to understand the experience (Tuffour, 2017).

PARTICIPANTS

Six participants were interviewed in the study. All the participants used the same interview schedule. The participants were made aware that their participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw at any time. Participants were also assigned pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

DATA COLLECTION

The purpose, aim, and objectives of the study was clearly explained to the participants. Before the interview, each the interview question was explained, and it was emphasised that participants should only answer the questions they were comfortable with. Follow-up and probing questions were not the same for each interview, as the researcher wanted to solicit more information on the effect of Covid-19 on their careers. Participants were informed of the varied levels of time commitment (30 minutes per interview) and were told that each interview will be audio recorded and transcribed. To provide simple access to transcriptions, notes, and analyses, the completion of interviews, the creation of transcripts, and analyses of the data were all recorded in a research journal that also served as a record of the research process. The information was kept in password-protected files on an external hard drive and was kept on a computer that required a password for access.

DATA ANALYSIS

After the data has been collected from semi-structured interview with pre-service teachers’ experiences. The process of data analysis began immediately afterwards. The study used steps proposed by Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009), the firstly step is familiarising yourself with data by reading in detail every transcript, including listening to recording. Secondly identifying common themes. Thirdly identifying link between the themes. Fifthly moving to the next case to repeat the process. Finally checking the patterns. The three themes that emerged were microteaching, practical teaching, and mentor teacher which are discussed as follows:

THEME 1: MICRO TEACHING

During the Covid-19 pandemic, microteaching did not take place, due to the lock-down. This was a missed opportunity for prospective teachers to practice their trade. This had negative effect on their training. They responded as follows:
“With the advent of COVID-19 life was turned upside down were rushed to complete to save an academic year. During the lock-down we did not have microteaching lessons, because of that were denied an opportunity to learn from our peers. We were not exposed to practical side of teaching starting with colleagues before you can go out and practice it. The university could not afford to lose the subsidy with students were not going to complete for two years. They improvise at our expense”. Pre-service teacher #3

“Because I did not go through the process of microteaching where I was not properly evaluated, I always feel not comfortable to teach the learners. For the two years we lost on contact tuition has shown in our preparation for a job to be a teacher ahead. Now we are not fully prepared we learn along the way with a job to do. My confidence is at its lowest compared to my colleagues who graduate earlier”. Pre-service teacher #2

“I suffered as results of lockdown because were not exposed to prepare a proper lesson plan. To date I found difficult to articulate a lesson plan as prescribe by the department needs. The head of departments are not assisting in this regard, they left us to fend ourselves”. Pre-service teacher #5

Microteaching assist in delopring essential skills to pre-service teachers such as pedagogical skills. The skills mostly visible are class management, determining appropriate teaching goals, and teacher questioning Karlström and Hamza (2019). Furthermore, microteaching increases pre-service teachers’ to link teaching theory with teaching practice and to constructive feedback (Karlström & Hamza, 2019).

THEME 2: PRACTICAL TEACHING

Practical teaching is an important part of microteaching. But unfortunately the pre-service teachers could not attend during the years 2020 and 2021. This has negatively affected their training programme. They confirmed their loss and has this to say:

“The schools were closed during lock down, we lost out on practical teaching, which I think with the help of mentor you grow as a professional. I could not practice bridge the theory to practice”. Pre-service teacher #1

“There are a numbers of skills I missed to master in class, such as presentation, communication and assertiveness that are develop in the process of becoming a teacher. I could acquire the skill on time in real world because of the lockdown. I think the university was desperate to graduate many students because of subsidy and create more space of first years, they overlooked an importance of producing quality graduate”. Pre-service teacher #4

The component of practical teaching, if not carried out accordingly, has negative consequences on the overall development of a pre-service teacher. They could have developed skills that enabled them to teach effectively. They now have to learn while on duty, which is difficult.

THEME 3: LACK OF MENTOR TEACHER

The role of a mentor in a development of preservice teacher is very important. Failure to expose pre- teachers to mentors affects them in this way:

“The absence of the mentor teacher due to lock down means I could not be assed and be provided with a feedback”. Pre-service teacher #6

“I did not have an opportunity to be mentored and that also reflect negatively on my career as a teacher, because I must start afresh without any glue. I think the presence of a mentor teacher could have helped me a lot”. Pre-service teacher #3

Mentoring is the use of a supportive and more reciprocal relationship between mentors and mentees, where professional and personal growth occurs through reflective processes that include developmental and contextual factors (Ambrosetti, Knight & Dekkers, 2014). The mentor teacher is required to assess and assign a grade on the pre-service teacher’s performance during the professional placement.

CONCLUSION

Microteaching plays a very prominent role in the development of pre-service teachers, and if not implemented appropriately, has negative consequences. This group of teachers will be easily recognised for the lack basic teaching skills. The use of technology such as videos must be explored in full when training pre-service teachers.
REFERENCE LIST


