

Microteaching: A Brief Insight

Poornima R.*, Sujatha G.P.**, Ashok L.***

Abstract

Micro-teaching is a teacher training and faculty development technique whereby the teacher reviews a recording of a teaching session, in order to get constructive feedback from peers and/or students about what has worked and what improvements can be made to their teaching techniques. Micro-teaching is a platform for beginner teachers to improve teaching competencies.

Keywords: Microteaching; Small Group Teaching; Teaching and Learning Methods; Teaching Methodology.

Introduction

The art of teaching is a complex process, which is not limited to transferring of knowledge from one to another. It requires good verbal and non-verbal skills and communication. It includes various techniques in order to transfer knowledge effectively. Not everyone can be a master in it. With the vast growth in the educational sectors, effective teaching skills are in a great demand. Therefore, the concept of micro teaching came into action. It is a new innovative program for teachers, which enhances their classroom attitude and behavior.

Concept

Micro lessons provide great opportunities for mentors to present samples of what/how you teach and to get some feedback from colleagues about how it was received.

It's a chance to try teaching strategies that the teacher may not use regularly. It's a good, safe time to experiment with something new and get feedback on technique. Microteaching is a "scaled-down teaching

encounter designed to develop new skills and refine old ones [1]."

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. Training of medical teachers in specific teaching skills is a major challenge in medical education programs. It involves a simulated teaching session or microlesson of five to ten minutes in which students practice and teach a microclass [2]. Micro-teaching was invented in the mid-1960s at Stanford University by Dr. Dwight W. Allen, and has subsequently been used to develop educators in all forms of education.

Definition [3]

"A system of controlled practice that makes it possible to concentrate on specified teaching behavior and to practice teaching under controlled conditions"

D.W Allen & A. W Eve (1968)

The Three Main Objectives of Microteaching [4]:

- To enable and assimilate new teaching skills under controlled conditions
- To master a number of teaching skills
- To gain confidence in teaching

Since its inception in 1963, micro-teaching has become an established teacher-training procedure in many universities and schools. This training procedure is geared towards simplification of the

Author's Affiliation: *Reader **Professor ***Professor and Head, Department of Oral Medicine and Radiology, Bapuji Dental College and Hospital, Davangere; Karnataka 577004, India.

Reprints Requests: Poornima R., Reader, Department of Oral Medicine and Radiology, Bapuji Dental College and Hospital Davangere, Karnataka 577004, India.
E-mail: drpoornima_omr@yahoo.co.in

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complexities of the regular teaching-learning process. Class size, time, task, and content are scaled down to provide optimal training environments. The supervisor demonstrates the skill to be practiced. This may be live demonstration, or a video presentation of the skill. Then, the group members select a topic and prepare a lesson of five to ten minutes. The teacher trainee then has the opportunity to practice and evaluate his use of the skills. Practice takes the form of a ten-minute micro-teaching session in which five to ten pupils are involved [5].

Phases of Microteaching [6,7]

Knowledge Acquisition (Pre-Active Phase)

This is the first phase of micro teaching. It includes collection of data. In this phase, the trainee teacher gathers knowledge about the required skills by reading different literature and study materials (eg., listening to audios, watching videos) Further, this phase includes the understanding of required skill in a rational manner as as to be applied for classroom teaching.

Skill Acquisition (Interactive Phase)

This is the working phase of micro teaching program. Under this phase the trainee teacher is asked to prepare lessons and practice, skills based on the model presented at the start. Here two factors are of major importance of micro teaching i.e. the feedback and the setting. Setting includes the length of the lesson, the duration of the class, the skill to be obtained, supervisor and the students.

Transferring Phase (Post-Active Phase)

This is the last and major phase of micro-teaching. Here the trainee comes out in a real situation, which is not controlled. Here the teachers as well as the students get the platform to learn and grow. This takes place in a real classroom, unlike the previous stages of micro teaching.

Steps of Micro-Teaching [7,8,9]

The Micro-teaching programme involves the following steps:

Step I: Particular skill to be practiced is explained to the teacher trainees in terms of the purpose and components of the skill with suitable examples.

Step II: The teacher trainer gives the demonstration of the skill in Micro-teaching in simulated conditions

to the teacher trainees.

Step III: The teacher trainee plans a short lesson plan on the basis of the demonstrated skill for his/her practice.

Step IV: The teacher trainee teaches the lesson to a small group of pupils. His lesson is supervised by the supervisor and peers.

Step V: On the basis of the observation of a lesson, the supervisor gives feedback to the teacher trainee. The supervisor reinforces the instances of effective use of the skill and draws attention of the teacher trainee to the points where he could not do well.

Step VI: In the light of the feed-back given by the supervisor, the teacher trainee re-plans the lesson plan in order to use the skill in more effective manner in the second trial.

Step VII: The revised lesson is taught to another comparable group of pupils.

Step VIII: The supervisor observes the re-teach lesson and gives re-feed back to the teacher trainee with convincing arguments and reasons.

Step IX: The 'teach - re-teach' cycle may be repeated several times till adequate mastery level is achieved.

Duration of the micro teaching cycle



Fig. 1: Microteaching cycle

Teach - 5 minutes

Feedback - 6 minutes

Re plan- 12 minutes

Re teach - 6 minutes

Re feedback - 6 minutes

Total - 35minutes

Advantages of Micro Teaching [7,9,10]

Elasticity of Practice

Micro-teaching helps in developing various skills in trainees as well as the current teaching staff. It helps in improving the handling skills of the teachers. It gives better opportunity due to small group teaching and it broadens the knowledge of various techniques of teaching.

Confidence Booster

Micro teaching is a personality enhancer by boosting the confidence of the budding teachers. Due to several micro teaching activities and practices, it effectively increases the confidence level of the teachers. Moreover, this experience of teaching enables them for better classroom management.

Budget Oriented

Unlike other various teaching programs like symposiums, conferences and seminars that are very costly, micro teaching program is a small budget teaching program. Teachers can practice within the real class or at any other place.

More Learning and Less Damage

Micro teaching program is conducted with not more than 3-4 students at a time. This makes it possible to acquire a better teaching experience. In addition, it lessens the chances of mistakes.

Improves Attitude

A positive attitude contributes to better results. Thus, one of the objectives of this program is to guide the trainees to attain a positive attitude towards any criticism. As a result, negative feed backs also motivate the trainees to strive for betterment.

Promotes Systematic Lesson Planning

Lesson planning is one of the skills that a teacher needs to master. Micro teaching program, within a given content, helps the trainee to prepare systematic lesson plans.

Instant Feedback

Micro teaching enables the teachers to gain instant feedbacks from the supervisors. An instant feedback gives more potential for rectifying mistakes.

Mastering Skills

This program helps in mastering types of micro teaching skills and strategies like lecturing, questioning, probing and initiating discussions. Further, it helps in inculcating a unique teaching style.

Disadvantages of Micro Teaching [7,9,10]

Hampers the Creativity

Creativity is the core of any job. It flows along with the task. However, in process of micro teaching, due to limited period, it becomes difficult to bring out that creativity.

Training Staff

Better teaching promotes better learning experience. Similarly, for better teaching one needs to undergo better training as well. Micro teaching course benefits teachers in gaining that experience, but it requires well-trained educators to train the teachers. Without a proper educating staff, it is impossible to implement micro teaching course.

Lesser Student Lesser Interest

Teaching is an art. However, not everyone is capable of teaching. Any job needs passion and interest. They play a key role in driving the person to strive for improvement. In micro teaching program, there are a small group of students therefore lesser students fail to motivate the teacher to improve. Instead there are chances of teachers losing their interest altogether.

Wastes a Lot of Time

Micro teaching is teacher oriented activity. Here in, the focus is on improving efficiency in teaching techniques. Each session lasts around 5-10 minutes minimum. During this period, the aim is to develop teaching skills and thus student learning is ignored. It certainly wastes the time of student, as it does not benefit him. Further, for practicing several times, various students are called at different period. This may also hamper their overall academic performance.

Training Period Timing

Micro teaching program is undoubtedly a benefiting course to the teaching staff. It is a promising method for the holistic development of the teachers

in the teaching field. However, there is one minor drawback of this program. The training period is not enough to develop all the required skills properly. In addition, one trainee needs approximately 35 minutes to practice once. Not more than ten trainees can practice once within five hours. It is certainly a time consuming program.

Not Realistic and Practical

Micro teaching is a very advanced form of learning however; it does have its own limitation. When it comes to teaching a diverse level of students at once, it becomes a hassle. This program manages to keep the teachers away from the real classroom problems. As a result, trainees struggle in maintaining classroom behaviour.

One at a Time

Apart from the skills, micro teaching involves only one trainee at a time. For a single session of training, it requires approximate 35 minutes. Thus, single trainee can practice only once in 35 minutes. It is not only time consuming but also an irritating process for the supervisors if there are more trainees in a batch.

Conclusion

Micro teaching is indeed an advanced level of teaching program that enables the teachers to gain confidence before stepping into the profession of a teacher. Efficient and effective teaching is one of the major factors parents look at before enrolling their children into a school. Thus, implementing a micro teaching programs for new teachers as well as in service teachers are an ideal way to set foot with the

developing world of educational research. Pros and cons are a part of every innovation and thus keeping in mind those aspects one should opt for the suitable program. Micro teaching is a widely accepted technique adopted by various educational institutions.

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