

MICROTEACHING: A STRATEGY FOR TRAINING QUALITY TEACHERS IN NIGERIAN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION

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Abstract

Microteaching is a teacher training strategy currently practiced in all teachers training institutions in Nigeria which provides teacher trainees an opportunity for the acquisition of teaching skills that will improve their teaching after their initial training. The core skills of microteaching such as presentation, reinforcement, and reinforcement skills help the teacher trainees to learn the art of teaching without using trial and error method. The purpose of this paper is to look at the prospects and challenges of microteaching. Various meanings and connotations given to microteaching were discussed, the role of teacher education and objectives of National Certificate of Education (NCE) were highlighted. It also took a look at the teaching of microteaching in Nigerian Colleges of Education, steps and requirements of microteaching. Core skills applicable in microteaching were also discussed. This paper presents various contemporary studies carried out by researchers and authors on the use of microteaching, the relevance and challenges of microteaching in training quality teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education were discussed. Conclusion and recommendations were offered for effective use of microteaching in Nigerian Colleges of Education.

Keywords: Microteaching, teacher trainee, teacher education, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE), teach-re-teach

Teaching is a profession that requires specialized knowledge and skills. For teacher trainee, to perform effectively in the classroom should possess certain competencies. For teacher

trainees to acquire these competencies, they should be given special training before starting the work (Sisman & Acat, 2003). Teachers who will guide the youth (a factor in shaping the future) should possess enough competencies to perform their professional roles.

Teachers transmit information, participated in program such as course books, unit periodicals, and information sheets. Schools are expected to be places where there is intensive interaction on life itself (Beydogan, 2002). Teachers are not viewed as knowledge transmitters and skill models anymore, but as facilitators in the process of learning and in creating conducive learning environment. Nowadays teacher training has shifted from theoretical teacher-centered approach to practice learner-centered approach. To provide an effective and self-regulating instruction in a rich learning environment, the teacher trainee should be trained in teaching approaches and strategies (Oddens, 2004).

The proliferation of the newest educational technologies has changed teachers' teaching approaches and strategies by causing desirable changes in the roles of teachers in helping learners to acquire skills needed in today's world (Sezgin, 2002). Teacher, as the main element of learning-teaching process, implements education programs, constantly interacts with learners, helping them acquire desirable behaviours and evaluate education and learners (Bircan, 2003). For teacher training institutions to produce competent and effective teachers, the National Policy on

Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013) stipulated the goals of teacher education as follows to:

- i. Produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of the education system;
- ii. Further encourage the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
- iii. Help teachers fit into the social life of the community and society at large and enhance their commitment to national goals;
- iv. Provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to changing situations; and
- v. Enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

In the Nigerian education system, the certification of teachers can be grouped into three (3) categories based on their training and acquisition of skills. They include the following:

- i. Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE);
- ii. Bachelor's Degree in Education;
- iii. Post Graduate Degree in Education.

The professional training of each of the teachers can take place in the following institutions; College of Education, Faculties of Education, Institutes of Education, National Teachers' Institute (NTI), Schools of Education in the Polytechnics, National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), Universities of Education and National Mathematical Centre (NMC) (FRN, 2013).

At all levels of educational system primary, secondary and tertiary, the teacher trainees should be exposed to teacher education curricular such as General Studies, Educational Foundations, Curriculum Studies and Studies related to the students' intended field of specialization of course, micro teaching theory and practice and microteaching practicum a

compulsory course for National Certificate in Education (NCE).

Teaching Practice (TP) is one of the prerequisite for obtaining a certificate as qualified teacher by the end of the NCE programs and this will enable the graduates to teach effectively in primary schools and junior secondary school (JSS) class. Therefore, by the end of NCE programmes, the teacher should be able to:

- i. Discuss intelligently the main ideas that have effected and still affect the development and practice of education generally, and in Nigeria in particular;
- ii. Examine the main psychological, health and socio-economic factors that may help or hinder a child's educational performance;
- iii. Professionally combine use of conventional and ICT or other innovational instructional/learning strategies in generations and imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills at Basic Education level;
- iv. Develop, select and effectively use appropriate curriculum processes, teaching strategies, instructional materials and methods of maximum learner achievement;
- v. Broaden their intellectual perspective through the General Studies Education Programme for basic education;
- vi. Demonstrate desirable attributes in moral and character development;
- vii. Discuss intelligently major issues affecting teacher education and the teaching professional in Nigeria;
- viii. Identify major problems of education in Nigeria, and their corresponding solution;
- ix. Demonstrate proficiency in measuring and evaluating learning outcomes, as well as in carrying out appropriate research on educational problems in

Nigeria particularly at Basic Education level (FRN, 2012).

If all these objectives are achieved, Nigeria will boast of having competent and quality NCE teachers that will carry out effective teaching at basic education levels.

Microteaching in Nigerian Colleges of Education

Microteaching is a teacher training technique for learning teaching skills. It is a method that had been used since 1960's in teacher education. Microteaching is a compulsory course at the teacher training institutions and Colleges of Education in particular. At the College of Education level microteaching is divided into two distinctive courses, EDU213-Microteaching Theory and EDU223-Microteaching Practicum. EDU213 should be registered for at the first semester and EDU223 is for the second semester of NCE year 2. The two courses must be registered and passed by all teacher trainees before embarking on EDU311-Teaching Practice (FRN, 2012).

Microteaching employ real teaching situation for developing skills thereby helping the trainees to get deeper knowledge regarding the art of teaching. The Microteaching technique involves the steps of plan, teach, observe, re-plan and re-observe and has evolved as the core component in 91% of on-campus clinical teaching development programmes with the significant reduction in the teaching complexities with respect to number of students, scope of content, and time frame and so on (Chen, Zeng & Yang, 2010). Most of the pre-service teacher education programmes widely use microteaching and it is an effective method to attain gross improvement in the instructional experiences (Ambili, 2012). Microteaching as an innovative method of training quality teachers to be effective, skillful in act of teaching.

Microteaching can be practiced within very small lesson or a single concept and less number of students. It scales down the complexities of real teaching, as immediate feedback can be sought after each practice session (Bell & Mladenovic, 2008). The use of the newest multimedia gadgets such as audio-video recording devices has a key role in the learning process (Bell, 2007; Fakomogbon, Bada, Omola & Adebayo, 2012).

Microteaching helps in eliminating errors and builds stronger teaching skills for the beginners and senior teachers and it increases the self-confidence, improves the in-class teaching performances and develops the classroom management skills (Deniz, 2011).

Steps and Requirement for Microteaching

The three (3) phases of microteaching are knowledge acquisition, skill acquisition and transfer. The knowledge acquisition phase is the preparatory, pre-active phase in which the teacher trainee gets trained on the skills and components of teaching through lectures, discussion, illustration, and demonstration of the skill by the expert teacher. In the skill acquisition phase, the teacher plans a micro-lesson for practicing the demonstrated skills. The colleagues and peers can act as constructive evaluators which also enable them to modify their own teaching-learning practices (Benton-Kupper, 2001). The teacher can reinforce behaviours and skills that are necessary and distinguish those that are not needed. Also, they can integrate and transfer this learned skills from simulated teaching situation to real classroom teaching. After understanding the concepts and components of each core teaching skills, the teacher trainee should prepare a micro-lesson for each core teaching skills, and implement one skill in each microteaching session in a sequential manner. The setting can be done in the Centre for Educational Technology (CET) where facilities

are available for microteaching exercises on a weekly or monthly basis. Adequate and appropriate constructive feedback for each skill can encourage re-teaching and re-implementing of the skill.

Core Skills Applicable in Microteaching

The core skills involved in microteaching are based on the fact that teaching can be analysed and estimated using various simple teaching skills, which are a set of behaviour that facilitates learning. Some of the important teaching skills are:

Lesson Planning: This is the preparation of a micro lesson that should be organized in a logical sequence. The content of lesson should be concise, appropriate, relevant, and should cover the specified duration.

Presentation and Explanation: This involves the skills required to explain with clarity and proper understanding of the concepts. The components include teacher enthusiasm, creating readiness, effective explanation, planned repetition, and summary of explanation.

Illustrating with examples: The teacher trainee should be able to explain the concept by giving simple, relevant and interesting examples to increase learners' understanding.

Reinforcement: This skill is used to increase the participation of the learners in the teaching process. The use of verbal, non-verbal and concrete reinforcement is important.

Stimulus Variation: Maintaining and sustaining the attention of the learner is important for a good teacher. The components of the skill are gesture, change in speech pattern, and change in interaction style.

Probing Questions: It is important for the teacher to ask questions from the learners to ascertain how far they are coping or following in the lesson. Also teacher should allow learners to ask questions, responses of the teacher and how to ask questions in the classroom.

Classroom Management: Providing proper instructions, restricting inappropriate behaviour and calling the learners by name are essentials of this skill.

Using Instructional Materials: This is very important in microteaching exercise. Adequate spacing, distinct size, proper spacing between words and lines, and use of relevant words or phrases are the key components in producing instructional materials (Higgins & Nicholl, 2003).

Contemporary Studies on the use of Microteaching in Training Quality Teachers.

Microteaching has a pivotal role in all teacher education training programmes and contributes to a great extent to the better understanding of teaching process and its complexities. The endorsement of microteaching as a strategy for learning art of teaching attracted a number of educators and researchers to investigate its impact on prospective teachers' experiences and how they perceive it as a practical tool.

In a similar study carried out, Benton-Kupper (2001) looked at prospective teachers' perceptions about the application of a microteaching component in a methodology course. After completing the microteaching sessions, teacher trainees in three sections of a great secondary school methods course reflected on their practical-experiences and provided qualitative and quantitative feedback on the use of microteaching the findings showed that microteaching is very imperative

for prospective teachers to learn about the craft of teaching. Trainee teachers indicated that they found microteaching experiences helpful in enabling them to recognize and identify strengths and weaknesses in their mini lessons. The study provided in the microteaching component is an effective training strategy in teachers' preparation programmes.

Ogeyik (2009) also investigated the attitudes of 57 ELT teacher trainees at Trakya University in Turkey regarding the benefits and disadvantages of microteaching. A five scale questionnaire was used to collect students' opinions about microteaching applications. The overall findings demonstrated the students' positive attitude towards microteaching applications in their study program. He found microteaching to be beneficial for both their academic study and professional experience. The researcher concluded that the use of microteaching in a teacher training programme can promote effective strategies and reflective practices among trainee teachers.

Amobi (2005) examined the reflective output of 31 secondary education pre-service teachers during a second microteaching session. The study focused on the recurrent themes of reflective of self- and peer-evaluations. The study featured mini lessons taught to colleagues, a video tape used to record lessons and a ready-made form used for writing feedback and oral reports on the experience. All trainees were expected to submit between one to two pages of self-reflection focusing on what they initially intended to do, what they did and how they would do it differently. During the discussion sessions, trainees were invited to confront their peers' feedback and comments on their mini lesson. It was concluded by the researcher that micro teaching is a favourable strategy and bring about meaningful experiences.

In another study of peer coaching, Britton and Anderson (2010) investigated the influence of peer coaching on classroom teaching practices

of pre-service student teachers. The study was concluded in a high school in a South-Eastern region of the United States with about 1900 students from different groups in grades 9-12. Four student teachers agreed to participate in the study after they had learned peer coaching. Participants observed each other's classes, collected data and carried out conferences with one another. Findings include that participants had positive views about peer coaching as they saw it as simple process to teach and easy to learn. Participants also found peer coaching useful because it provided them with opportunities to observe and communicate with their colleagues. It was also found that peer coaching assisted in altering and developing teaching practices and that peers enjoyed this stress free experience of listening to their colleagues' comments as compared to observations by university or classroom supervisors.

Fernandez (2010) also investigated how and what teacher trainees learn about teaching from Microteaching Lesson Study (MLS). The researcher carried out a case study of MLS with 18 student teachers in a course of Mathematics teaching methods. Different research instruments were used to collect extensive data. These multiple data sources helped in triangulating the findings. During the different phases of the study, video tape and audio tape were used to record the MLS lessons and the group discussion respectively. During the MLS experiences, students were able to explore, analyze plan and revise their lessons; also they participated as learners in other students' lessons. After being exposed to the MLS prospective teachers were able to explore patterns and develop effective strategies valuable for teaching Mathematics. The MLS was found to be an effective teaching approach because it offers prospective teachers valuable opportunities to practice and learn teaching during their initial course work.

Relevance of Microteaching in training Quality teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education

Microteaching is a technique/strategy that is used in teacher education where a teacher trainee teaches a small portion of a lesson to a small group of his classmates and teaching competencies are carried out under strict supervision. The following are its relevance in training quality teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education:

- i. In microteaching, teacher trainees find opportunities to develop skills in drawing learners' attention, asking questions, using and managing time effectively and bringing the lesson to an end (Hyggeins&Nicholl, 2003).
- ii. The teach, critique, re-teach model in teacher education program identified microteaching as a technique for personality development and confidence building in teaching (Kamboj, Kamboj, George &Jha, 2010).
- iii. Microteaching has the ability to enhance the skills of problem solving, critical thinking, questioning, and reflective thinking. It improved learning by realistic application (Can, 2009).
- iv. Microteaching reduces levels of anxiety.
- v. It enables the teacher trainees to gain their first teaching experience and helps to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes (Hansford & Crosby, 2000).
- vi. Microteaching helps develop skills to prepare lesson plans, choose teaching objectives, and speak in front of a group and to ask questions and use evaluation techniques (Akalin, 2003).
- vii. It consists of pre-observation, observation note taking, analysis strategy, viewing the tapes and self-evaluation of teacher

trainee stage (Lang, Sood, Anderson &Kittenmann, 2005).

viii. It is an effective strategy in developing and sharing certain teaching skills and getting rid of the mistakes (Banktekin, 2004).

Despite the above relevance of microteaching in teacher education, its challenges have a long way to do with the trainee of quality teachers in Nigeria. The challenges are emphasis on contents, skill dependency, and administrative problems when the class is large. It is very expensive in terms of gadgets involved.

Conclusion

Microteaching as a strategy helps the teacher trainee to practice essential teaching skills safety, and effectively at any age. This paper looks at microteaching as an efficient strategy for effective training of quality teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education. The main focus of this paper is microteaching, prospects and challenges in the training of quality teachers. It also discussed various contemporary studies carried out by researchers and authors on the use of microteaching in training quality teachers in Nigerian Colleges of Education. it was recommended that microteaching component should continue to be integrated with courses on teaching methods of students' subject combinations.

Recommendations

This paper discussed various ways of using microteaching for the training of quality teacher trainees in Nigerian Colleges of Education. Hence, recommendations may be highlighted with the framework of discussion:

- i. Microteaching should be integrated to all subject combinations of the teacher trainees.

- ii. More microteaching sessions should be organized and aligned with different teaching strategy.
- iii. Well-equipped and adequate microteaching laboratory should be built to solve the problem students' population.
- iv. The National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should assist the Colleges by providing adequate funds for equipping the microteaching laboratory.
- v. Workshops, seminars and symposium should be organized for lecturers of all Colleges of Education to acquire current strategy of using microteaching.
- vi. More time should be allotted to microteaching practicum to enable the teacher trainees teach-re-teach.

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