

Student-Teachers` Perceptions and Attitudes Towards Microteaching Exercise in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines student-teachers perception and attitudes towards microteaching exercise in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was employed to conduct this study. A total of eighty one (81) student-teachers were sampled using stratified random sampling technique. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection; twelve-itemed questionnaire was designed and administered to the selected participants. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and percentile. The finding revealed that student teachers` perceptions of microteaching exercise were positive and their attitudes towards it were also found to be positive. The result also revealed that microteaching forced student-teachers to think of their grades while preparing lesson plan and while presenting as well. It is therefore recommended that student-teachers to be motivated to take the exercise not only as fun but sessions of practicing the pedagogical theories.

Keywords: *Student-teacher, Perceptions, Attitudes and Microteaching.*

Background to the Study

The aim of teacher education is to produce student-teachers with latent pedagogical skills and professionalism in teaching career. To achieve this aim, theories and skills learnt should be operated in practical setting. Students in teacher education institutions are prepared for the task of teaching. Thus, it is earnestly needed to put students on practice to see how best they have learnt the teaching strategies and skills. That brought the tradition of teaching practice and microteaching teaching exercises in schools specialized in training prospective teachers.

Ofoefuna (2002) in Ajileye (2013), defined microteaching as a component skill approach to teachers' preparation and training. Without adequate acquisition of teaching skills, learning process cannot be effective. According to McKnight (2003) in Egunjobi (2011), microteaching is a laboratory training procedure geared towards simplification of the complexities of teaching learning process. He explained further that, it is also a teaching in miniature, that is, a teaching scaled down in terms of class size, time, task or content and teaching skills. From another perspective, Brown (1975) defined microteaching as "contrived but nevertheless real teaching". It is a scaled down sample of actual teaching which mostly lasts for ten to thirty minutes and involves four to ten students (Ohuche and Izuah, 2002). They opined further that, microteaching session resemble a lesson but is much complex and shorter than a typical classroom lesson. In fact, a microteaching session simulates a regular classroom instructional period in every way except that both the time and the number of students are infinitesimal.

Tidwell (2013) in Ajileye (2013) viewed microteaching as a session of practice teaching that is videotaped for the teacher to watch. Microteaching is suitable for potential, new and existing teachers to review their teaching techniques and receive feedback from fellow teachers and administrators. The feedback received is used for making corrections to their teaching style accordingly.

Egunjobi (2011) also opined that the genesis of microteaching could be traced to the evolution of the video technology in Germany. Meanwhile, little did the inventors of the tape recorder, think of the instructional implication and its utilisation in the pedagogical training of teachers until the globally documented efforts of Keith Acheson a doctoral student and Drs. N.B. Robert and W.A. Dwight of the Stanford University in 1961. However, the unflinching support bestowed on Allen and his team by the Ford Foundation boosted the morale of the team thus the team worked copiously on microteaching which was initially christened "demonstration teaching". A couple of years later, microteaching was recognised and even acclaimed as an effective and efficient training technique in the training of teachers most especially for pre-service preparation. For instance, in the American Teachers' Institutions in the 1970s, microteaching had been given acceptability and keen implementation.

In the 1970s in Nigeria, microteaching was incorporated into the Nigerian college programmes of Alvan Ikoku College of Education Owerri, with the assistance of the UNESCO grants given to the college (Egunjobi, 2011). Subsequently NUC has also contributed to the development of teacher education programmes and that of microteaching

enhancement by recommending microteaching as compulsory course in teacher training institutes and faculties.

Nowadays, in many teacher education programs, microteaching is used to expand the scope of student teachers while mastering various teaching skills and teaching experiences; alternatively, it orients them to gain teaching experiences for natural classroom environments (Amobi, 2005).

Brown (1998) reports how certain aspects of micro-teaching has helped Sri Lanka to address the issue of serious shortages of English teachers where unqualified teachers were put in intensive short term programs and were sent to schools to teach while attending weekend classes.

According to Achuonye (2007) in Ajiyele (2013), microteaching exposes the student teachers' strengths and weaknesses. This motivates them to improve in a low risk supportive environment. Kayode, Ajayi, Ibrahim and Adeyemi (2005) noted that microteaching provides 'low risk' for the student teacher and his learners. Instead of teaching children that are less matured wrong concepts, he teaches his colleagues who may have more knowledge of the subject matter than him.

Moreover, Afolabi (2010) in Ajiyele (2013) observed that any mistakes committed by the student teacher could cause permanent damage to the life of the learners in a macro-lesson during teaching practice. It is better for a student teacher to first experiment with his colleagues, friends and peers where mistakes can be harmless and non- destructive. Allen and Ryan (1969) and Adeyanju (2004) argued that teaching experiment should not be allowed on children who are supposed to be taught skillfully in school and not be practiced on.

However, There are many empirical studies and researches conducted on microteaching and student-teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards microteaching. According to Bento-Kupper (2001) investigated the student teachers' perceptions about microteaching components' application in a methodology course. Student teachers in three sections of a general secondary methods course reflected on their practical experience after completing the microteaching sessions. Microteaching was considered very beneficial for student teachers in learning about the teaching craft. Microteaching enabled them to recognize and identify strengths and weakness in their mini lessons. It was concluded that microteaching component is an effective training tool in teacher education program.

Al-methan (2003) in Ajiyele (2013), investigated the merits of microteaching as perceived by student teachers at Kuwait University. A microteaching inventory was constructed utilizing the perceptions of 75 science student majors. The inventory was tested with another group of 67 teacher trainees. The analysis of the findings revealed that student teachers generally agreed that microteaching has positive merits in planning skills, personality and teaching competences.

Fernandez and Robinson (2007) in Ajiyele (2013) investigated attitudes and effects of microteaching on. A total of 74 student teachers at Florida State University formed the sampled population. The respondents indicated that microteaching afforded them the opportunity to apply in practice the pedagogical theories learnt in the class. Microteaching gave them the opportunity to plan lessons and try different teaching skills they were exposed to in their study. The student teachers learnt how to appreciate other peoples' views and opinions.

Ogeyik (2009) studied the attitudes of student teachers regarding the benefits and merits of microteaching using 57 student teachers at Trakya University, Turkey. The method employed was survey and the instrument employed was questionnaire. The findings revealed that student teachers have positive attitudes toward microteaching applications in their teacher education program. It was concluded that microteaching could promote effective teaching strategies among student teachers.

Omole and Ajileye (2010) studied the student teachers' perception on microteaching as a training technique and their assessment of human and non-human resources that were available for microteaching practicum in FCT College of Education Zuba Abuja. The study was a descriptive type with survey method. Questionnaires were used to elicit response from 320 student teachers that were randomly sampled in the College. The analysis was done using frequent count and simple percentage. The findings of the study revealed that student teachers had positive attitude to microteaching as having the capability of building their competences. It was also discovered that there were some hardware that needed repair or replacement. Also there was need for increase in the number of human resources for more effectiveness of the exercise in the College.

Purpose of the study

The objectives of this study are to determine:

- a. Student-teachers' attitudes towards microteaching exercise in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri.
- b. Student-teachers' perception of microteaching exercise in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri.

Methodology

A. Participants

This is a descriptive survey research designed to investigate student-teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards microteaching exercise in the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. A total number of 81 students were sampled out of total population of 804 students in the Department using stratified random sampling technique.

B. Survey Instrument

Questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. Twelve-itemed questionnaire was developed and administered to part III students of the Department of Education, University of Maiduguri. The data collected were analyzed using statistic package SPSS. Mean, standard deviation and percentile were employed in analyzing the data.

Results

The table 1 below indicates the demographic information of the participants. 39 out of 81 of the respondents were female comprising the 48.1% of the participants. While 42 out of 81 participants were male constituting 51.9% of total population.

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	39	46.4	48.1	48.1
	male	42	50.0	51.9	100.0
	Total	81	96.4	100.0	
Missing	System	3	3.6		
Total		84	100.0		

Table2: Perceptions and Attitudes of Student-Teachers Towards Microteaching

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	Being in microteaching class is an interesting experience for me	81	1.95	.879
2.	I see microteaching class as an important sessions to practice the learnt theories	81	1.54	.672
3.	microteaching helped me learn how to predict classroom problems	81	1.60	.683
4.	microteaching gave an opportunity to improve my lesson plan	81	1.85	.882
5.	microteaching offered me practical experience to classroom teachings	81	1.80	.858
6.	microteaching is very difficult task and time consuming as well	81	2.95	.934
7.	I feel bored during microteaching presentation	81	3.21	.876
8.	I feel anxious about the grade while presenting	81	1.54	.690
9.	I feel embarrassed while teaching my colleagues	81	3.27	.775
10.	I prefer being supervised by my lecturers	81	1.95	.893
11.	Microteaching forced me to think of grading criteria while preparing lesson plan	81	1.64	.730
12.	I myself design the instructional materials	81	1.81	.823
Valid N (listwise)		81		

The mean score of the table indicate that student teachers perception of microteaching exercise were positive. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 dealt with the perception of the student-teachers to microteaching exercise. Items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 tested the attitudes of student teachers towards microteaching exercise. However, the result of the attitudes was positive. The mean score of the items 8 was 1.54 indicates that student-teachers were anxious about the grade and the grading criteria while presenting microteaching lesson. And the mean score of the item 11 was 1.64. The result indicates that microteaching forced student-teachers to think of grade and grading criteria while preparing micro lesson plan.

Conclusion

The finding of this study revealed that student-teachers` perceptions of microteaching exercise was positive. Student-teachers believe that microteaching exercise gives them opportunity to enhance their practical teaching experience. The attitudes of student-teachers towards microteaching exercise, on the other hand, were found to be positive. However, the result also revealed that microteaching exercise forced student teachers to think of grade while preparing their micro lesson plan and while presenting as well.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Microteaching resources and facilities should be adequately provided and be made accessible for student-teachers to use.
2. Student-teachers to be motivated to take the exercise not only as fun but sessions of practicing the pedagogical theories.
3. Microteaching should be made student-centered rather than teacher/lecturer-centered.

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