Preparing Teacher Through Micro-Teaching:Introduction And Stimulus Variation Skills

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Abstract

The modern age is changing fast. In every field researches and experiments are being done to modify and improve the existing methods and techniques. in the field of education teaching researches are being done resulting into innovations. Educators are trying to make teaching & learning more effective, easier & pleasant. Microteaching is one outcome of such research. Microteaching is describe as ''a scaled down teaching encounter in class-size and class-time'' (Allen,1966) . Microteaching is defined as a teacher-education technique that allows teacher to apply clearly defined teaching skills to carefully prepared lessons in a planned service of time to ten minutes encounters with a small group by conscious practice of teaching, she / he has a greater chance of practicing &improving upon that skill. The component skills approach emphasizes the acquisition of one skill at a time. This is particularly helpful to the beginners. It makes the task much less complex. The teacher starts understanding the teacher's skill to be learnt. He begins to recognize behaviours that make up the skills.A skill is a specific behaviour or activity or activity, which requires doing a particular work. The performance of the concerned activity is automatically improved through its learning & practice. Teaching activity involves different skills, which are essential to teach effectively.In this respect the skill of introducing the topic & the skill of stimulus variations play the pivotal role in making the teacher successful in classroom activity.

Keywords: Microteaching, Teacher, knowledge, Education, Student, Research, Techniques,Teaching, Innovation

Introduction

In olden days teaching was a simple phenomenon without any complexities.The teacher knew his job well and there was a close and good rapport with the students. It was a smooth –running process. But nowModern age in teaching towards the concept that the teachers are not born only, but they can be produced. The responsibility of producing teacher goes to the training institutions. It can also be said on the basis of this concept that the teacher's behaviour can be modified. In order to modify teacher's behaviour the method developed to prepare effective teachers is known as "Microteaching".Microteaching was first introduced at the Stanford University, USA in 1963. The Stanford Teacher Education Staff Members sought to indentify, isolate and build training programmes for critical teaching skills. Microteaching has since then been refined and applied not only in teacher training but also in business, nursing and Army. Research in India and other developing countries has shown that conventional microteaching methods help to improve teaching competence.D.D. Tiwari was the first to take up a project on microteaching at the Govt. Central Pedagogical Institute at Allahabad in 1967. G.B. Shaw tried an experiment in microteaching with the help of a tape recorder in faculty of education at Baroda in 1970. NCERT has conducted a series of research projects and training session for teacher educators in all states and Microteaching is now a part of B.Ed. programme in almost all the Indian universities.According to Alien (1970), teaching consists of acts or behaviours. It is conceded that attitudes, personality, intelligence and many other factors have an effect on the success of a teacher. However, all of these factors contribute to produce certain acts or behaviours of teachers. The complex act of teaching can be broken down into simpler components making the learning task more manageable for the beginner.

At present, the student-teachers are trained through the traditional approach of teaching and measurement of the extent to which the trainee acquires a skill in particular and general teaching competence is very vague and unscientific. Hence some other techniques or approaches should be adopted so that the opportunity for the development of various teaching skills among of real students often with an opportunity to observe the results on videotape (Buch,1968) is provided.Microteaching is real teaching but that complexities of normal classroom teaching are lessoned (Alien and Ryan, 1968)

Teacher-Preparation

There has been a growing realization among the educators throughout the world that the problems of improving the quality of education at all levels is universal and that one of the important preconditions for better education is the improvement of teacher education programmes. The traditional teacher education programme mainly consist of two elements: theoretical courses conversing the philosophical, historical, sociological and psychological foundations of education, content and methods of teaching on the one hand and practice teaching and its supervision on the other. It is generally expected that such a programme provides prospective teachers with the basic skills and knowledge essential for good teaching.Perlberg (1970) has opened, "The theoretical courses to which greatest attention is given at present in teacher education are mainly verbal, abstract and sometimes even vague. In many cases student teachers do not see the exact relationship between the content of the courses and actual teaching in the classroom. With regard to supervised student teaching it is assumed that during that period the student will practise intensively and will develop proficiency in instructional procedures and classroom management. Inreality, however, supervision of student teachers tends to be very limited and superficial. "The professional supervisors not only fail to give required guidance but also do not provide student teachers with objective feedback about their performance, essential both for motivating and redirecting their teaching behaviour. The regular classroom setting also neither encourages nor allows the student teachers the opportunity to test alternative methods of teaching essential for developing effective teaching strategies.

Defects in the Existing System

The Education Commission (1964-66) have observed, "the quality of training institutions remains, with a few exceptions either mediocre or poor." The system of student-teaching or practice teaching is very defective. Adequate guidance is not give4n to student teachers in their preparation and practice teaching. Although universally student teachers are required to give a specified number of isolated lessons, many of them are often unsupervised or ill-supervised. Due attention is not paid to various aspects of a practice-lesson, starting from planning to evaluation either by student teachers or by teacher-educators. Besides defective supervisory system, there is no proper scope for feedback and alternative models of teaching. Stereotyped methods and authoritarian as well as general type of supervision have stood in the way of improving student teaching.

Perlberg (1970) has also added, "The improvement of teacher education is not only a matter of additional supervision, better feedback or adequate facilities for practice; there is also the need for better understanding of the complexities of the teacher process. There is neither a comprehensive theory of teaching, nor are there generally accepted criteria for evaluating teaching effectiveness."Micro-teaching is a recently developed procedure in teacher-education which offers a new model for improving teaching. It is an innovative technique in educational technology and a product of research at Stanford Centre of Research and Development in Teaching. It has been found to be an effective modern strategy for modification of classroom behaviour of teachers.

Micro-teaching for Preparation of Teachers

The term "micro-teaching" was first coined by Dwight Allen andhis colleagues at Stanford University in 1963. It implies micro element that systematically attempts to simplify the complexities of the teaching process. Teaching is a complex process and felt difficult to be mastered in the rigid and general setting. So it is analysed into well defined components that can be practised, taught and evaluated. Specific tasks are emphasized one at a time and complexities of teaching are reduced by diminishing the number of students, the duration of the lesson and subject matter to be covered.

Micro-teaching is a simulated social skill development process to provide feedback to teachers for modification of their behaviour. It is a clinical teaching programme which is organised for providing teachers miniature teaching encounters, moving from the less complex to the more complex. Allen (1966) has aptly defined micro-teaching as "A scaled down teaching encounter in class size and class time." It is in fact mini-teaching for adequate practice in mastering various skills.

It gives an opportunity both to pre-service and in-service teachers to develop their pedagogical skills with a small group of pupils by means of brief single concept lessons which are recorded on videotape or audiotape for reviewing, responding, refining and teaching. Allen and Eve (1968) have defined micro-teaching as a ''system of controlled practice that makes it possible to concentrate on specific teaching behaviour and to practice teaching under controlled conditions." In very clear terms McAleese and Unwin (1971) have described that micro-teaching is a scaled teaching encounter, scaled down in terms of class size (5 to 10 pupils), lesson length (5 to 10 minutes) and teaching complexity. This helps in solving the problem

which a beginning teacher faces in the classroom situation due to lack of a knowledge of teaching methods and provides bridge between the theory and practice.

Teaching Skills

The concept underlying micro-teaching assumes that teaching consists of various skills. Teaching practice becomes effective only on acquisition of specific skills. It is found by experiment that through micro-teaching the behaviour of the teacher and pupil is modified and the teaching-learning process is made more effective by the skill training.Passi(1976) has describe in detail the thirteen skills in his book ''Becoming Teachers:A microteaching Approach'' as the following : Writing instructional objectives ,Introducing a lesion ,Fluency in lesson, Probing questioning ,Explaining ,Illustrations with example, Stimulus variation ,Silence & non- verbal cues, Reinforcement,Increasing pupil participation,Using blackboard,Achieving the closure, and Recognizing attending behavior.

These are different according to the subject area, class level and other varieties.

According to the importance & need, a student-teacher selects one skill of teaching for microteaching .Microteaching is one of the recent innovations in teachers' education.Among the above mentioned thirteen skills, the two most important skills are---Introduction& stimulus variations. These two skills will be discussed in this present paper.

Introduction skill

Success of teaching a lesson depends on its introduction. The attention of the students towards learning the matter starts with the introduction of the lesson. In social Studies the new knowledge may be properly linked with the existing knowledge related to the present content and the teacher has to proceed from known to unknown. The skill of introducing a lesson establishes rapport with the learners and the facilitates concentration on his teaching. Effectiveness of introducing a lesson depends on the maximum use of previous knowledge and attention gained of the learners adopting appropriate devices, continuity and relevant Introducing a lesson significantly influences the learning of a new lesson. The various components of the skill involved in introducing a lesson are the following: Use of previous knowledge (UPK),Preliminary attention gaining (PAG),Use of Appropriate Device (UAD),Arousing Motivation (AM),Relevance and continuity (or) sequencing of questions and statements (RC),and Topic declaration (TD).

Use of Previous Knowledge (UPK)

Previous knowledge of students refers to the level of achievements from previous experiences. Testing the previous knowledge of students helps the teacher to establish integration between the pre-existing knowledge that the teacher wants to impart. Through this skill, the teacher knows the status of motivation, intellectual abilities and socio-cultural background of the student.

Preliminary attention Gaining (PAG)

In the beginning of a lesson, the students may not be in an attentive mood being mentally unprepared for learning. The teacher's duty is to create desire for learning among the students. The teacher attracts the students towards his teaching by doing some attractive activity and creating curiosity. To gain attention at the preliminary stage, interest or curiosity should be aroused among the students. The teacher can employ different attention attracting activities such as telling a story, recalling the previous experiences etc.

Use of Appropriate Device (UAD)

The teacher should make use of appropriate devices or techniques while introducing a lesson to motivate the students. The teacher creates such a situation by use of different types of devices such as the following: Questioning,Use of examples, analogies, similarities,Story-telling, describing related instances, Lecturing, describing, narrating,Use of A.V. aids, Role playing, dramatization, and Demonstration, experimentation etc.

In order to motivate the learners, the use of such devices should be suitable to the age, experience and maturity etc., of the learner. The devices could be relevant only if they are related to the aims of the lesson/content. Unrelated devices confuse the learners and do not contribute towards establishing a healthy rapport with them.

Arousing Motivation (AM)

The teaching should link the required previous knowledge and the present knowledge with motivation in introducing a lesson. The teacher should use the questions or activities to motivate the students towards the current topic or concept before declaring the topic or lesson.

Relevance and Continuity or Sequencing of Questions and Statements (RC)

The teacher should use relevant and sequence questions to recall previous knowledge, to generate motivation towards the lesson and attract attention of the students.

Topic Declaration (TD)

The teacher should declare the topic or lesson after introducing the lesson. It indicates the beginning of presentation of the lesson. By this topic declaration the students understand what they are going to learn in that period.

Stimulus variations skill

Continuous use of the same stimulus for a long period reduces the attention in that activity. The teacher behaviours influence pupil attention: variation in stimulus secures more attention among the students.

The following components of the skill, stimulus variation influence the teaching learning process effectively. These are the following : Teacher's Movement (TM),Pupil's Movements (PM),Teacher's Gesture (TG),Sensory Focus (SF),Change in Voice (CV),Change in Interaction Pattern (CIP),Pausing (P),and Audio-Visual Switching (AVS).

Teacher's Movements (TM)

The teacher should move from one place to another on the teaching dias and towards all the students to attract the attention of the entire class and to focus the attention of students towards the teacher. The movement of the teacher secures and maintains attention of the students.

Teacher's Gesture (TG)

Expressions of feelings and emotions involving nonverbal behaviours are called gestures. Gestures consist of hand an head movements, eye movements and facial expressions etc. Use of gestures is important teacher behaviours in variation of teaching. The appropriate gestures increase the effectiveness of verbal communications.

Change in Voice (CV)

The teacher's voice dominates the entire class. Voice modulation pitch towards speed, play a vital role in the classroom communication. Constant use of the same level of pitch, tone and speed by the teacher makes his communication dull, inactive and has an adverse effect. So, the teacher's should modulate their voice.

Sensory Focus (SF)

The movements, gestures and change in voice of teacher secure pupils attention. The verbal statements and gestures together are known as verbal-cum-gesture focusing. Verbal-cum-gesture focusing is termed as sensory focus. The sensory focus influences the attention of the students.

Changes in Interaction Pattern (CIP)

The interactive act of teaching constant in communicates between the teacher and pupils as an initiatory or responsive act. The interaction is broadly of two types. Verbal and nonverbal. This interaction is nothing but communication. When the teacher or pupil communicates verbally, interaction operates through exchange of talk, and nonverbal interaction operates through gestures without talking.The following diagram indicates the change in interaction pattern in a classroom.
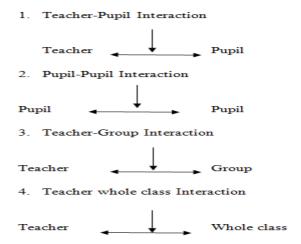
1. Teacher-Pupil Interaction

Teacher ⟷ Pupil

2. Pupil-Pupil Interaction

Pupil ⟷ Pupil

3. Teacher-Group Interaction

Teacher ⟷ Group

4. Teacher whole class Interaction

Teacher ⟷ Whole class

Diagram showing the representation of Interaction patterns between teacher and pupils.

Pausing (P)

Pausing is silence for some seconds. The silence indicates pause during talk. Silence has a meaning of its own and it is used effectively: it helps in securing and sustaining pupil attention. A short pause before saying something important is an effective way of attracting pupil attention. A pause of 3-second duration is considered appropriate for this purpose. If the pause is unduly long, it loses its effectiveness in securing pupil attention.

Pupil's Movements (PM)

A pupil moves from one place to another. The physical participation holds pupils interest and attention in the task in which they are engaged. Physical participation can be in the form of handling apparatus, dramatization and writing on the blackboard.

Audio-Visual Switching (AVS)

Visual medium can be in the form of showing a chart, picture, graph, map and model or in the form of drawing pictures, figures and graphs on the blackboard. But the audio medium can be in the form of speech only. Only audio medium or only visual medium creates boredom in the class. A Teacher while imparting knowledge to his pupils uses either audio or visual medium. A teacher should vary his medium in order to secure and sustain attention. i.e. from audio to visual, visual to audio, audio or visual to audio-visual vis-a-vis.

Conclusion

Although microteaching is regarded as an innovation in teacher education, its various features have long been in use in some modern methods of teaching. It is based on long standing educational theory and practice. For instance, the ''laboratory'' of ''model'' concepts have long been accepted in the teaching and training systems. The micro-concepts which is based on long established learning theory underlies programmed learning and computer assisted instruction. It is assumed that learning is more effective if a complex task is divided into simple components or skills and learned step by step before it is undertaken as a whole. The concepts like feedback, reinforcement or extinction have already been accepted in the teaching and training practice.

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