

Research Article

Pre-service Teachers' Challenges in Teaching During and After the Covid-19 Pandemic

Dwi Agustina*, Sarlita Dewi Matra, Inayatul Ulya, Susanto, Dwi Ario Fajar, Rizka Hayati, M. Fajru Sidqi, Pradnya Permanasari, Ida Ayu Panuntun

Pekalongan University, Pekalongan, Indonesia

Abstract.

Microteaching is an important subject taught in all teachers' training and education faculty in Indonesian higher institutions. It is offered at the end of the course to equip the students majoring in teaching with teaching experiences. Microteaching is usually done in a face-to-face setting, where one student takes the role of a teacher while the others pretend to be students. With the outbreak of covid-19, however, microteaching practices had to be made online. This sudden shift subsequently posed various challenges to pre-service teachers since they were not fully prepared to teach online. This article reports the findings of a qualitative study on pre-service teachers' challenges in teaching during and after covid-19 pandemic in Pekalongan University Indonesia. Taking the data from online microteaching class, the study reveals various challenges faced by pre-service teachers such as the difficulties in managing time, in managing the class, in interacting with the students, and in using the technological tools.

Keywords: teaching practices, challenges, covid-19 pandemic

Corresponding Author: Dwi Agustina; email: tina50@yahoo.co.id

Published: 9 August 2024

Publishing services provided by Knowledge E

© Dwi Agustina et al. This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License](#), which permits unrestricted use and redistribution provided that the original author and source are credited.

Selection and Peer-review under the responsibility of the 6th SoRes Conference Committee.

1. Introduction

Microteaching is an important part of any teacher education programs offered in higher educations all over the world. In every teachers training and education faculty, there must be microteaching. In Indonesian higher institutions, those taking education majors will have microteaching before they have teaching practices at schools. Microteaching aims at equipping the pre-service teachers with the teaching skills which would be used in their future teaching careers.

Microteaching itself is defined as "a well-established practice realised in teacher education as a learning-to-teach experience" [1, p. 270]. Koech and Mwei [2] define microteaching as a technique in teacher education which gives the pre service teachers the chances to acquire the basic teaching skills. Further, Koech and Mwei [2, p. 47] mentioned the coverage of those skills namely "set induction and closure, classroom management, reinforcement, stimulus variation, explaining, questioning, illustrating with

OPEN ACCESS

examples, and so on". Another definition is offered by Aarsal [3] as well as Ledger and Fischetti [4] in which microteaching is seen as a condensed lesson plan which is used to do practices, rehearsal and reflections. Further, Bodis, Reed and Kharchenko [5] believe that microteaching is a safe way for the pre service teachers to practice the skills of teaching as well as the theory learnt in the previous semesters before teaching practices.

Microteaching also has had a long history. It has been introduced within teacher education at Stanford University around 1960s [6]. Microteaching is currently viewed as highly contributing to pre service teachers' pedagogical skills development [7]. The importance of microteaching is highlighted due to the need to improve the education quality which can be attained through improving the quality of the teachers. Koross [8] argues that it is the teachers who own the key roles in the education as they are not only guiding and directing students but they are giving knowledge to students. Koross further emphasises the importance of training teachers so that they have the ability to compete in this highly developing era.

In teachers training and education faculty at Pekalongan University, microteaching must be taken by students majoring in teaching. Microteaching is done at microteaching laboratory in which students will take turn in doing teaching practices. The microteaching is done at the sixth semester after the students finish taking the subjects on the theories of teaching. As part of the class regulation, the students joining microteaching should wear the white and black uniforms (white top and black skirt/ trousers along with the black shoes). The students are not allowed to wear too tight top and skirts or trousers as in Indonesian culture teachers should not show the shape of their bodies. Their hair should be neat too and no male students are allowed to have long hair. There are some other regulations which are applied to familiarize the students with the look and appearance of the real teachers. Students must be disciplined too in which they are advised to always come on time in the microteaching laboratory. Thus microteaching has become a subject which really trains the pre service teachers to behave and act like the real teachers while at the same time equips them with the teaching skills.

Until early 2020, the microteaching was done in the microteaching laboratory where one student acted as teacher and the other students acted as the students. With this face to face mode of microteaching it was expected that the pre service teachers could develop their teaching skills as the situation and atmosphere in the microteaching laboratory resembled the real classrooms at schools. When the covid-19 pandemic took place, the microteaching was not allowed to be done offline. It had to be switched into

an online one. This sudden shift was not anticipated before and none of the teachers and students were fully ready to cope with the online microteaching. As the pandemic never happened before, the writers were interested to study the pre service teachers' challenges in doing microteaching during and after the pandemic especially in English Language Education Department of Pekalongan University. This study was deemed urgent to be done as there has been no study on this topic done before either in Pekalongan University or in any other settings.

2. Method

The study was a qualitative study involving online microteaching classes done during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. It was done in English Language Education Department of Pekalongan University Indonesia. As the microteaching was done online, the lecturers of microteaching observed the students' challenges in performing microteaching. The data of this study was taken from these lecturers' notes and observations. Both the direct teaching via google meet or zoom and the videos were observed by three microteaching lecturers and thus the data came from three different sources namely Lecturer 1, Lecturer 2, and Lecturer 3.

3. Findings and Discussion

Based on the observation and notes made by the microteaching lecturers, it was revealed that during the covid-19 pandemic the changing mode of microteaching from the offline one into an online one has posed several challenges for Pekalongan University pre service teachers. Among the challenges observed include:

3.1. Poor Time management

Microteaching was scheduled for 20 minutes to cover the opening, the main teaching session and the closing. However only a few students could use these 20 minutes well. Many pre-service teachers spent less than twenty minutes due to the lack of materials to teach the students, the nervousness, and the lack of ideas on how to spend the remaining times. As an example, there were some students who only prepared little materials to deliver online. When it came to teaching time, these students finished explaining quickly. Similarly the exercise was completed in a very short time. Thus

the microteaching took place for only a few minutes. Other students who stopped the teaching practice before 20 minutes included the pre service teachers who were too nervous in teaching. These students showed low level of confidence and looked very nervous in teaching. It was very clear from the observation that these pre service teachers wanted to stop teaching as early as possible. The introduction made was very quick one and so were the main session and the closing. There was also a case where the students kept silent during the online teaching via google meet. The peers who acted as the students were waiting and so did the lecturers. It was very obvious that the pre service teachers were confused on how to proceed to the next teaching stages. They had no idea on what to do. After some period of silence, these students suddenly closed the session.

Next, Some students spent more than 20 minutes as they spent too much time in explaining the materials and when it came to the exercise time, the students were unable to complete the assignment and exercises on time. Another example could be observed from those who were teaching listening. The materials chosen were too difficult for the students and students requested the audio to be played several times. Therefore the time was spent much on playing the audio and the remaining time was not sufficient to complete the lesson (exercises and review).

3.2. Poor Classroom Management

Poor classroom management was another obstacle in online microteaching performed by the pre service teachers. As the pre service teachers were prepared to teach in an offline mode, they never expect to handle an online class. Thus they showed the lack of classroom management skills as they could not handle their peer who acted as students who were busy with themselves. From the screen, it was actually noticeable which students were very attentive and which students were ignorant. However the preservice teachers did not warn the ignorant students and kept explaining the materials. Sometimes the students were also talking and doing something else when the pre service teachers performed the teaching.

The lack of class management was also shown when the pre service teachers tried to give exercise to the students. In speaking or reading activities, these teachers had no ideas from which students to start the practice. They got confused when they had to choose their students to speak or to read the text. They did not check whether the students had good understanding of the materials and the tasks either. Apart from this,

some pre service teachers did not provide their students with the opportunity to ask questions and when the students were doing the tasks, the pre service teachers did nothing.

3.3. Lack of Teacher -- Students Interaction

In addition to poor time and classroom management, the pre service teachers performing online microteaching showed their lack of ability in maintaining the interaction with their students. In the very beginning of the online class, the pre service teachers were able to open the class well. They got the attention from the students. Whenever the teachers asked questions, the students responded enthusiastically. Soon after the opening, unfortunately, they did not really maintain the interaction with the students. The teachers were busy explaining materials by reading their slides and did not provide any spaces for two way communication. It was the teachers who spoke more and looked dominating the online class sessions. The students were only listening and being passive. The students did not even say a word until they were asked by the teachers to speak, read or respond. In the case when students did not open their cameras, the pre service teachers did not try to ask them to open the camera. This reduced the chance of gaining active participation from the class.

3.4. Technical issues

The last challenge found within the online microteaching was the technical issues which emerged as the pre service teachers used the technological devices. This study found some occasions in which the pre service students were unable to play the video or the audio during their teaching sessions. Sometimes, when the videos or audio were successfully played, the sound was not heard. Time was then spent to fix this technical issue.

There were also some instances when the pre service teachers could not share their power point slides. This happened several times during the online microteaching. They then asked for their peer's assistance to share the slides from the peer's laptop, hand phone or computer.

Internet connection also contributed greatly to the challenges faced by the pre service teachers. There were some examples in which the pre service teachers could not stay online during the teaching session due to the bad internet connection. When this

happened, the pre service teachers left the students alone in the online classrooms and the students had to wait until the teachers came back to the zoom or google meet. This happened mainly in the bad weather or when the electricity went off so that the pre service teachers could not use the Wi-Fi. Even, there was a case when the pre service teachers suddenly ran out of internet data thus they could not continue their teaching.

The four examples of findings above suggest that the pre service teachers really faced the challenges in joining online microteaching during the pandemic time. Among the challenges, the first three, namely poor time management, poor classroom management, and lack of teacher-student interaction infer the pre service students' needs of more teaching trainings. As the data were taken from the first online microteaching done by the pre service English teachers, the observed challenges became the main feedback for the improvement in the remedial microteaching sessions. First, in terms of poor time management, practicing teaching at home by using the timer before performing the online microteaching would help the students to perform online microteaching timely. This can increase pre service teachers' time management. This has been suggested by the microteaching lecturers before the online microteaching was done. It is unlikely that the students had sufficient practices beforehand. Second, for poor classroom management, ideally the pre service teachers could create a lesson plan in which every teaching stage is made clear so that the pre service teachers were clear about what to do in their teaching sessions. Sometimes they forgot what to do and looked confused. Apart from the lack of practices, the pre service teachers may never imagine the class situation and thus did not have ideas on how to handle the students. Third, for the lack of interaction in online microteaching seems to be caused by the pre service teachers' focus on themselves. Due to their focus on their teaching delivery, the pre service teachers were not able to focus more on students and thus did not do any communication with their students. This is quite understandable as usually the pre service teachers have greater focus on teacher talk and not student talk. Sometimes teaching was understood as delivering materials and interactive communication was not seen as part of the main teaching session.

For the technical issues, sometimes they are hard to handle. However with the good preparation, the issues can be minimised. As an instance, the pre service teachers should practice playing the video and audio before performing the microteaching. These teachers should make sure that there is no more issue with the sound of the video or the audio. Checking the devices used for online microteaching is also necessary to make sure that the PPTs can be shown properly.

After the covid-19 pandemic ends, the microteaching in Pekalongan University was done in a blended classroom. The first practice was done in microteaching laboratory by following the health protocols while the last practice was done through recorded microteaching. However similar problems still occurred as there were still some pre service teachers who were unable to spend 20 minutes of the teaching sessions. Some students only spent like 11 minutes or less. Thus they had to do a remedial microteaching. Classroom management and classroom interaction were found much better than in online microteaching sessions as the pre service teachers could interact directly with the students. This made the class lively and the teachers were more active in teaching, moving around the class and engaging the students in every activity. Technical issues were also observed decreasing.

Better performance of the pre service teachers in the microteaching after the pandemic was noticeable in the lecturers' observations. The presence of the teacher and the students seem to bring more energy to the class and this brought significant difference during the microteaching sessions. The peers were more cooperative and this helped the teachers much in completing all teaching stages. The peers acting as students were very enthusiastic and were willing to be the volunteers in answering questions, in reading, and in the role playing. This active participation of the students has resulted in the lively and interactive microteaching session.

Overall, the findings of this study agrees with the research findings of [1] in which the pre service teachers experienced technical difficulties and faced challenges in maintaining class participation in their online microteaching. Similar to the previous study finding, the teachers in this current study also faced students with no camera being on during microteaching which indirectly decreased the class interaction. This current study strengthens Atay, Ersin and Mede's [9] view in which they believe that within online teaching, teachers from different part of the world meet the challenges in technology integration and in students engagement.

This current study also supports the findings from Simamora [10] in which internet network and internet outages become factors contributing to the lack of success in the online microteaching. This suggests that internet in one hand can support online teaching but on the other hand it may hinder the effectiveness of online teaching particularly when its network is not stable. The current finding on the preservice teachers' difficulties in managing time is also in line with the finding of the research done by Baştürk and Taştıpe [11] in which pre service teachers had difficulties in using the teaching time. This suggests that time management is an important component in every teaching sessions.

With many teachers' difficulties in managing time, education institution should pay more attention to the development of students' time management skills.

4. Conclusion

Microteaching has been done both online and offline in Pekalongan University. The online microteaching was conducted due to Covid -19 pandemic. In that new mode of microteaching, it was observed that the pre service teachers faced several challenges. Among the challenges were the poor classroom management, poor time management, lack of teacher and student interaction and technical issues. These challenges were reduced in offline microteaching session after the pandemic especially as the presence of students and teachers provide greater support to microteaching sessions. The findings of the study of course cannot be simply used as the general comparison between online and offline microteaching during and after the pandemic as the subject of the study is limited to the microteaching students in English Language Education Department of Pekalongan University, Indonesia. Even so, this study has contributed to the literature on how Covid 19 pandemic affected the practice of microteaching and how this indirectly posed challenges to the pre service teachers. The findings of the current study can also serve as the feedback on the microteaching practice and thus teaching skills development can be attained by the pre service teachers through better microteaching practices.

References

- [1] Zalavra E, Makri K. Relocating online a technology-enhanced microteaching practice in teacher education: Challenges and implications. *Electron J e-Learn.* 2022;20(3):270–83.
- [2] Koech HC, Mwei PK. How secondary school mathematics teachers perceive the effectiveness of microteaching and teaching practice in their preservice education. *Humanit. Soc. Sci. Lett.* 2019;7(1):46–55.
- [3] Aرسال Z. Microteaching and pre-service teachers' sense of self-efficacy in teaching. *Eur J Teach Educ.* 2014;37(4):453–64.
- [4] Ledger S, Fischetti J. Micro-teaching 2.0: Technology as the classroom. *Australas J Educ Technol.* 2020;36(1):37–54.

- [5] Bodis A. Microteaching in isolation: Fostering autonomy and learner engagement through VoiceThread. *Int. J. TESOL Stud.* 2020;2:1–12.
- [6] Grossman P. *Studying teacher education, the report of the AERA panel on research and teacher education: Research on pedagogical approaches in teacher education.* Mahwah (NJ): Lawrence Erlbaum Associates; 2009.
- [7] Karlström M, Hamza K. Preservice science teachers' opportunities for learning through reflection when planning a microteaching unit. *J Sci Teach Educ.* 2019;30(1):44–62.
- [8] Koross R. Micro Teaching an Efficient Technique for Learning Effective Teaching Skills: Pre-service Teachers' Perspective. *IRA Int. J. Educ. Multidiscip. Stud.* (ISSN 2455–2526), vol. 4, no. 2, p. 289, 2016, <https://doi.org/10.21013/irajems.v4.n2.p7>.
- [9] Atay D. Boosting preservice teachers' competence and online teaching readiness through e-practicum during the covid-19 outbreak. *Int. J. TESOL Stud.* 2020;(July): <https://doi.org/10.46451/ijts.2020.09.09>.
- [10] Simamora RM. Microteaching setting during the COVID-19 pandemic from the author's point of view. *JPI (Jurnal Pendidik. Indones.* 2023;12(1):155–64.
- [11] Baştürk S, Taştepe M. Examining primary pre-service teachers' difficulties of mathematics teaching with the micro-teaching method. *Acta Domatica Napocensia*, vol. 8, no. 3. pp. 1–10, 2015, [Online]. Available: http://padi.psiedu.ubbcluj.ro/adn/article_8_3_1.pdf