



The effect of microteaching technique of Iraqi EFL student teachers on their teaching performance and attitudes

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Abstract

Microteaching is a significant strategy in teacher education programs for giving student teachers opportunities to practice their teaching techniques. This study aims at investigating how using microteaching affects the teaching performance and attitude of Iraqi EFL student teachers. For this purpose, 30 Iraqi EFL student teachers were selected and then randomly assigned to two groups: control and experimental, 15 in each. To collect the data of the study, two instruments were used. The first one is a checklist used to measure student teachers' teaching performance; while the other is a questionnaire used to measure their attitudes toward microteaching. The study hypotheses state that the learners' mean scores in the post-administration of teaching performance checklist and microteaching attitude questionnaire for the two groups were not significantly different. The findings revealed that performance of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group and that using the microteaching method was more rewarding than the traditional tutoring. Furthermore, microteaching as a training method was also viewed favorably by the participants in the experimental group.

Keywords: Microteaching technique; EFL Student teachers; Teacher Training; Teaching performance; Attitudes

1. Introduction

The development of any country depends completely on education. Various factors can influence improving education and the most essential one is the teacher. The teacher plays a vital role in bringing about and shaping behavioral changes in learners. Thus, teacher's primary role in school may be to guide and direct students while still giving information. The instructor in this job encourages students to form positive relationships and develops their skills. As a result, it's critical to train instructors to be experts in their fields to be competent in their discipline (Liston, Whitcomb & Borko, 2006).

Noticing and accomplishment in schools, according to Kuran (2009), are crucial steps in enhancing pre-service teachers' realization. These strategies can be used by pre-service teachers to practice teaching information and skills in a genuine classroom situation. Yet, for pre-service teachers who have never taught before, the behaviors in teaching practices may seem rigid and puzzling.

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Thus, the microteaching approach and other similar techniques are being implemented in for the sake of satisfying the wants of teacher education programs and overcoming difficulties that develop. (Güney, 2008). It has been pointed out that effective microteaching provides a significant opportunity to improve the teaching abilities of student teachers in their practicum. To be more specific, microteaching serves as a testing ground for teaching practice (Can, 2009).

Research studies on second/foreign language teaching have consistently emphasized the importance of using the microteaching technique in enhancing and developing the student teachers' competencies. It has been acknowledged that the microteaching technique provides student teachers with important opportunities to improve successful teaching methods and aids in the promotion of real-world teaching experiences (Ambili, 2013). In addition, Çelik (2001) states that microteaching's core skills, such as presentation and reinforcement, assist new teachers in learning the art of teaching. Furthermore, microteaching facilitates the transition from theory to practice. Thus, the current study tries to use micro-teaching -as one of the most effective techniques- to help Iraqi EFL student teachers improve their teaching performance. Moreover, the study examines the effect of using this technique on student teacher's attitudes. In particular, we need answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of using the microteaching technique on the teaching performance of Iraqi EFL student teachers?
2. What is the effect of using the microteaching technique on Iraqi EFL student teachers' attitudes?

2. Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions above, the null hypotheses were formulated as follows:

1. Using the microteaching technique does not significantly affect the teaching performance of Iraqi EFL student teachers.
2. Using the microteaching technique does not significantly affect Iraqi EFL student teachers' attitudes.

3. Literature Review

The Significance of Microteaching Technique

Microteaching is an instructional approach used in teacher professional development. (Adewoyin, 2007). Jebungei (2017) defines micro teaching as a process in which novice teachers gain knowledge of the teaching fundamentals to know what they need before going out into the classroom to practice teaching. It is practical experience that prepares student teachers for the obstacles they will face in the classroom.

According to Otsupius (2014), microteaching is a training methodology that allows student teachers to learn teaching skills. It makes use of real-life teaching situations to help students develop their skills, gaining a greater understanding of the art of teaching and demonstrating a significant reduction in the complexities of teaching in terms of students' number in a class, the subject variety, and the time (Çelik, 2001; Gürses, Bayrak, Yalçın, Açıkdız & Doar, 2005).

Similarly, Ambili (2013) states that microteaching preserves to be an effective approach to improve abilities and build skills and trust, as well as to try out different lecturing/tutoring methods and offering positive feedback. In addition, trainers are presented with a chance to observe and comment on their peers' performances. Moreover, it is thought to be a method for teacher training in which teaching habits and skills can be practiced in small groups with the help of video tapes. It's a good time

to learn about students' needs and desires and develop one's own repertory of teaching methods. It is a tried and true approach in support of novice teachers to expand their overall instructional competenc. Grgegen (2003) argues that microteaching can equip the pre-service teachers with opportunity of shaping a tryout condition for instructing activities and gaining experience in creating lesson plans, determining teaching objectives, testing students' interest, talking in front of a class, posing queries, effectively administrating time, and evaluation procedures.

In addition, teaching practice, according to Owosu and Brown (2014), is a vital move in the professional progress of teachers because it allows novice teachers to put their classroom knowledge and skills to be used in authentic situations. According to Mahuta (2009), novice teachers are predictable to acquire the various competencies during the course of their training practice such as attaining teaching skills, using them in a practical environment, changing the focus and playing a central role throughout teaching and learning, presenting attitudinal change, and demonstrating and manipulate teaching abilities and techniques, as well as the practicalization of teaching in an observable and measurable milieu.

In conclusion, according to some researchers, activities of microteaching assist student teachers in overcoming anxiety, hesitation, and apprehension, increasing professional engagement, raising awareness about the teaching profession, being effective in teaching skills, learning how to interact with students, and gaining expertise in measurement and evaluation, gaining experience in measuring and evaluation, and becoming qualified at drawing students' attention to the lesson, consuming time professionally, using instructional technology, and managing classroom (Arends, 2000; Kpanja, 2001; Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; Ogeyik, 2009; Fernandez, 2010).

Phases of Microteaching

Microteaching involves different stages of skill acquisition. A microteaching cycle includes teaching, reviewing and reflecting, and re-teaching. The teaching stage of a microteaching lesson begins with presenting a lesson by student teachers. While teaching, they are observed by their classmates and instructor; the lesson is then discussed to assess student teachers' performance; and finally, during the re-teaching step, student teachers re-teach the lesson based on suggestions given during the discussion and evaluation stages. (Arends, 2000).

The knowledge acquisition phase, skill acquisition phase, and transfer phase are the three steps of microteaching (Majoni, 2017; Ambili, 2013). The pre-active phase is referred to as the information acquisition phase. Beginner teachers learn about the abilities and their components through orientation, seminars, conversations, lessons, diagrams, and other types of learning. They gain an understanding of the skill significance as well as the situations that are valuable within teaching and learning process. The second phase is the skill acquisition phase. It's an immersive process in which student teachers must plan micro-lessons based on expert demonstrations. In the microteaching cycle, student teachers practice the skills and keep working until they achieve mastery. The feedback is provided to change the actions of the student teachers in the preferred direction. The transfer stage is the final one of microteaching. It is known as the post-active phase. When the student teachers have learned and command each of the skills, they combine them all and move on to real classroom teaching.

For Peker (2009), Planning is the first step in the microteaching cycle. The process includes planning, teaching, criticizing, re-planning, re-teaching, and re-criticizing. Pre-service teachers must design a format of work, instructional materials, and a lesson plan as part of their preparation. Psychological readiness of the pre-service teacher is required. Pre-service teachers plan and present micro-lessons to real students during the teaching stage (a micro class). These lessons are often recorded using video cameras or portable receivers. After that, the pre-service teachers would see a

video of the teaching session. Micro lessons are examined, discussed, analyzed, and evaluated during the critique stage (Çelik, 2001). The critiques and suggestions of the guiding teacher and their colleagues are taken into consideration by novice teachers. The lesson plan was updated, and pre-service teachers re-taught micro-lessons to the same audience. The second micro lessons are also recorded using video cameras or portable receivers. After watching the second micro lesson, the teacher and peers share their reviews of the first and second micro lessons, emphasizing on the worst and greatest features of each. Finally, the microteaching practice's process allows pre-service teachers are allowed, through microteaching practice's process, to assess their strengths and weaknesses, as well as try to enhance weak aspects (Ekşi, 2012).

According to Dweikat (2010), microteaching is divided into four stages: The trainee learns a specific teaching skill in the first step, next implement it in a small part of a lesson; the trainee then receives feedback from the supervisor on the importance of his or her presentation; and finally, the trainee get feedback from classmates and supervisor.

Ananthkrishnan (1993) identified nine stages in the microteaching process: Lesson Planning: entails having specific goals and a well-thought-out sequence. Set induction: is a technique for capturing students' awareness at the starting point of a lecture. Presentation: explaining, narrating, including relevant diagrams and examples, and expected repetition where possible are all part of the presentation. Stimulus variation: gestures, motions, concentration, quiet, changing sensory channels, and other techniques are used to keep students from becoming bored.

Usage of audio-visual aids correctly. Reinforcement: recognizing student challenges, listening, and facilitating student engagement and response are all examples of reinforcement.

Questioning. : fluency in posing, passing, and adjusting questions are all aspects of questioning.

Silence and nonverbal indications (body language). Closure: at the end of a teaching session, a means of emphasizing the importance of what has been learnt, its relationship to past learning, and its contribution to future learning.

Microteaching and Attitudes

In general, attitude is a state of readiness influenced by experience that affects a person's response to stimuli. A person's attitude is made up of three parts: affective, behavioral, and cognitive, and it can be, and can thus serve as a standard for individual behavior (Feldman, 2003). Attitudes are judgments; positive or negative remarks about objects, people, or events(Ustuner, Demirtas, and Comert ,2009).

Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei, & Fook (2010), People's responses to a specific situation are influenced by their attitudes. The attitude of the teacher is a critical factor in the implementation of new concepts and approaches to teaching in the classroom. As a result, the most crucial determinants of any program's success is attitude (Bichi, Embong & Mamatn, 2015).

Al-Zaidiyeen, Mei and Fook (2010) found that people's attitudes play a big role in how they respond to different circumstances. In the implementation of innovative concepts and experimental approaches to teaching in the classroom, the teacher's attitude is a critical variable. As a result, one of the most important determinants of any program's effectiveness is attitude.

The teacher's attitude is influenced by a variety of factors, including the teacher's domestic climate, family history, social background, values, and educational institutions. School status, school facilities, school safety conditions, social and professional status are all important factors in influencing teachers' attitudes (Barros & Elia,1998).

Another aspect that influences one's attitude is experience. This is also applicable in the field of education. The teaching experience of the teacher has a significant impact on attitudes. The attitude of

the teacher toward the subject and the students has a great impact on the students' ability to learn. (Suja, 2007).

Various studies have shown a favorable attitude toward microteaching. Amobi (2005) analyzed pre-service teachers' reflective outputs from a second microteaching session and concluded that microteaching was a good and meaningful learning experience for them. During a second microteaching session, student teachers concluded that microteaching was a constructive and worth while learning experience for them.

Fernandez and Robinson (2006) investigated the experiences of student teachers at Florida State University, finding that the ability to put the pedagogical principles they learned in class into practice was extremely beneficial. They stated that they had spent a lot of time discussing theories and that they needed the opportunity to put the theories into practice and receive feedback on their real performance. Finally, the treatment subjects recognized the value of perspectives and feedback exposed by others in improving their teaching abilities, as well as the importance of reflection in the development of teaching skills. Ogeyik (2009), another study looked into the benefits and drawbacks of microteaching among student instructors at Trakya University in Turkey, and concluded that incorporating such a technique into a teacher-training program could help students develop successful teaching strategies and reflective practices

4. Methodology

Research Design

The method used in this research was a quantitative one. This designing method involves selecting two groups randomly and assigning them into experimental and control groups. Both groups were subjected to pre-administration of the teaching performance checklist. Only the experimental group received the independent variable (microteaching technique). The traditional method of teaching was used with the control group. To measure the dependent variable (teaching performance), both groups were undergone to a post-administration of the teaching performance checklist. The results of the pre-administered were then compared to those of the post-administered for both groups. If the experimental groups' scores vary significantly from the control groups' scores, the variance is attributed to the independent variable.

Participants

Thirty students, in their fourth year before graduation, were involved in this study. They were selected randomly from English Department at the College of Education /Al-Qadisiyah, University for the academic year 2017- 2018. Then, they were separated into two groups, each with 15. The experimental group (using the microteaching technique) and the control group (using the traditional method of teaching). Only the experimental group enrolled in a course of microteaching technique which lasted for four weeks, two days a week, two hours a day. The theoretical course involved a microteaching technique in which the participants were taught by the authors how to introduce and carry out a lesson on any required topic including basic components like classroom instruction, teaching practice, and classroom management. After finishing the theoretical course, the experimental group subjects were required to introduce mini-lectures of a specific topic. One thing to be kept in mind is that the groups of the study (control and experimental) were equalized. The equivalence of the two groups was checked according to their age, their intelligence level. Also, their teaching performance was checked via the checklist constructed for this purpose. Table 1 shows that the two groups are equivalent in teaching performance before the application of the experiment.

Table 1. Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups of the Pre-administration of the Teaching Performance Checklist

Variable	Group	No.	Mean	SD	t-value		d.f	Level of sig.
					Calculated	Tabulated		
Teaching Performance	Control	15	1.6472	0.43833	1.454	1.76131	14	168
	Experimental	15	1.7187	0.56579				

Instrumentation

Two instruments were constructed by the researchers to collect the required data of the study. The first one is a checklist used to measure student teachers' teaching performance; while the other is a questionnaire used to measure their attitudes toward microteaching. The checklist is used to document notes about student teachers' teaching performance while presenting mini-lesson using the microteaching technique. The checklist involves 41 items. The items are distributed on 11 standers components. The rating scale is a five-point scale with the attributes: unacceptable, poor, satisfactory, good, and excellent and the corresponding values; 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively (see Appendix I).

A microteaching attitude questionnaire is the second tool used to assess participants' attitudes toward microteaching (see Appendix II). There are a total of 27 items in the final version of the questionnaire. On a five-point scale, these items are rated as follows: strongly agree, agree undecided, disagree, and disagree strongly.

The checklist was checked by experts in the English language and ELT for suitability. Alpha Cronbach's was used to measure the pre and post checklist administration reliability. The scores were 94 and 96, respectively, suggesting that the administrations were reliable. The same procedure was followed with the microteaching attitude questionnaire. A jury of experts reviewed it to decide its appropriateness. They agreed that the questionnaire is appropriate, except for a few minor changes that have been proposed. The reliability of the microteaching attitude questionnaire was assessed using Alpha Cronbach's coefficient. An internal consistency coefficient is 0.81, which means that it is reliable.

Procedures

The author (one of the researchers) gave instructions to both classes. For both groups, the lessons were scheduled as two sessions per week. The main procedures followed in this study are:

1. Choosing a representative sample that will be split into two groups: experimental and control.
2. Constructing a checklist of observation based teaching performance standards,
3. Constructing a questionnaire finding out student-teachers attitudes toward microteaching technique.
4. Applying the questionnaire to the experimental group,
5. Using the microteaching technique with EFL student teachers with the experimental group, while those of the control group received traditional instruction.

Final Administration

Both groups received a post-administration of the teaching performance checklist at the end of the experiment. It was used to see how the microteaching methodology affected the experimental group's teaching efficiency matched to those of the control group who were taught using the traditional

approach. In addition, a questionnaire of microteaching attitudes was used and applied on the experimental group subjects before and after the treatment to examine their attitudes about the microteaching technique.

5. Results

The following are the results to each question:

1. What is the effect of using the microteaching technique on the teaching performance of Iraqi EFL student teachers?

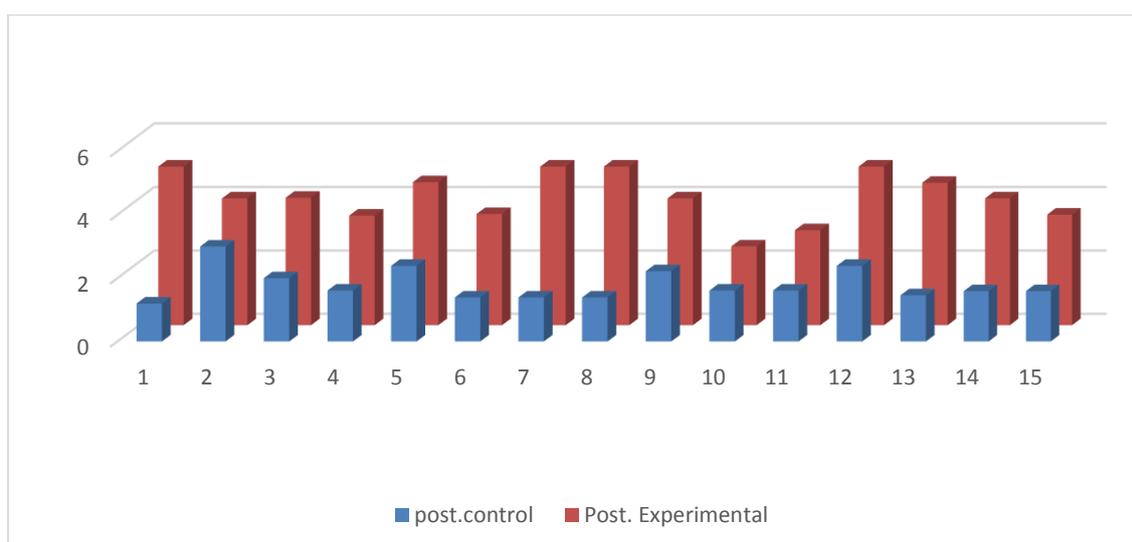
To check the study's first aim, the "t-test formula" of two independent samples was used (see Table 2).

Table 2. Statistics for the Control and Experimental Groups of the Post-administration of the Teaching Performance Checklist

Variable	Group	No.	Mean	SD	t-value		d.f	Level of sig.
					Calculated	Tabulated		
Teaching Performance	Control	15	1.7886	0.50245	9.674	1.76131	14	0.000
	Experimental	15	4.0650	0.77976				

Table (2) signifies that the experimental group's mean score is (4.0650) and for the control group it is (1.7886). The calculated value (9.674) is higher than the tabulated value (1.76131) at the significance level of 0.000 and 14 freedom degrees. This finding shows a statistically significant difference in teaching performance between the two groups in the post-administration in favor of the experimental group. (See Graphic 1).

Graphic 1. The Post- administration Mean of the Teaching Performance Checklist of the Experimental and Control Groups



Hence, the first null hypothesis which states that “using the microteaching technique does not significantly affect the teaching performance of Iraqi EFL student teachers” is rejected.

2. What is the effect of using the microteaching technique on Iraqi EFL student teachers' attitudes?

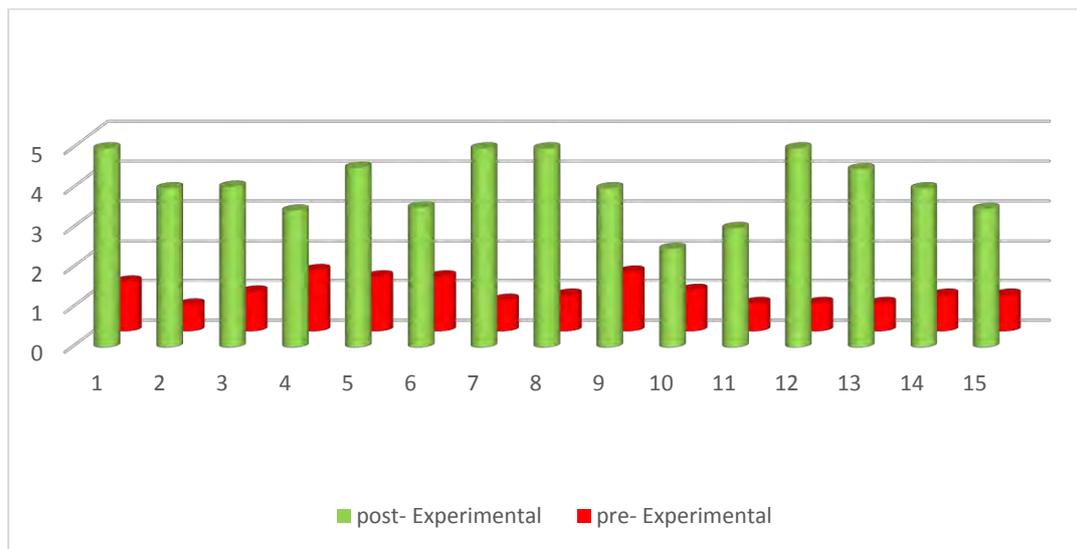
To investigate the study's second aim, the "t-test formula" of two independent samples was used (See Table3).

Table 3. The Participants' Attitudes towards Micro teaching in the Pre and Post-administration of the Questionnaire for the experimental Group

Variable	Group	No.	Mean	SD	t-value		d.f	Level of sig.
					Calculated	Tabulated		
Teaching Performance	Pre-experimental	15	0.7615	0.22199	20.569	1.76131	14	0.000
	Post-experimental	15	4.3556	0.59966				

As shown above, in Table 3, the post-experimental group's mean score is (4.3556) and the pre-group's is (0.7615). The t- calculated value (20.569) is higher than the t- tabulated value (1.76131) at (0.000) significance level and (14) degrees of freedom. This result confirms a statistically significant difference between pre and post administration of the questionnaire for the experimental group in microteaching attitudes in favor of the post-experimental one (See Graphic 2).

Graphic 2. The Participants' Attitudes towards Microteaching in the Pre and Post-administration of the Questionnaire for the experimental Group



As a result, the second null hypothesis which states that “using the microteaching technique does not significantly affect Iraqi EFL student teachers’ attitudes” is also rejected.

6. Discussion

The post-test results demonstrate that the output of the experimental group student teachers is much higher than that of the control group, indicating that microteaching is more rewarding than traditional tutoring. This technique allows student instructors to learn and internalize new teaching abilities in a controlled environment., master a variety of teaching skills, gain interest in teaching. The majority of student teachers said that their microteaching experiences affected their education through strengthening their speaking skills, motivation, and questioning proficiency, self-reliance, preparation, and reinforcement ability. These results support those of Ogeyik (2009), Ismail (2011), and Mahmud

and Rawshon (2013), who found that student teachers' microteaching experiences affect student performance.

7. Conclusion

Based on the results attained, the researchers have come up with the following conclusions: The proposed microteaching technique has an important effect on the level of teaching performance of the experiment's participants. The post-administration results reveal a significant statistical difference for the experimental group that was taught using the proposed microteaching method. Furthermore, the results of the post-administration of the microteaching attitude questionnaire show that the microteaching methodology has a positive impact on EFL learners' attitudes toward microteaching.

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Appendix I *The Teaching Performance Checklist*

No.	Criteria	Items	Unacceptable	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
1.	Planning and Organization	1. Illustrates clear signs of planning and organization.					
		2. Displays a general survey of the lesson.					
		3. Step out lesson appropriately.					
		4. Shows topics in logical order.					
2.	Learning Objectives	5. Construct measurable and realistic objectives clearly.					
		6. Characterizes the learning objectives for each instructional activity.					
		7. Construct objectives that are closely linked to the students' needs.					
		8. Clarifies the lesson's objectives to students.					
3.	Content Knowledge and Relevance	9. Presents the material at a level that is suitable for the students.					
		10. Demonstrates content that is relevant to the course's objectives.					

		11. Demonstrated knowledge of the subject.					
		12. Ensures the harmony of the learning content with instructional goals.					
4.	Presentation	13. Clarifies the main and minor points clearly.					
		14. Describes unfamiliar expressions and concepts.					
		15. Uses good examples to make points clear.					
		16. Merges the materials with the real world.					
5.	Time Management	17. Begins and ends the class on time.					
		18. Uses classroom time wisely to ensure that full learning time is available.					
		19. Uses academic learning time efficiently.					
6.	Interaction with Student	20. Deals with instructional transitions crucially and without wasting time.					
		21. Allows and encourages students to ask questions.					
		22. Present questions to student to check their understanding.					
7.	Classroom Management	23. Answers students' questions in a suitable manner.					
		24. Arranges the classroom in a way that allows for successful teaching.					
		25. Fosters meaningful interaction among students.					
		26. Makes language comprehensible to students.					
8.	Selecting Activities	27. Establishes classroom norms that promote a supportive and welcoming atmosphere.					
		28. Selects activities that are in line with the suggested curriculum.					
		29. Chooses activities that correspond to student abilities.					
9.	Motivation of Students	30. Supports and motivates students while involving in the learning process.					
		31. Demonstrates care for the students.					
		32. Employs a variety of motivational techniques.					
10.	Integrates Materials and Methodology	33. Shows the ability to execute lessons in a variety of ways.					
		34. Arranges instruments, equipment, and materials before the class.					
		35. Incorporates materials and equipment easily into a lesson.					
		36. Determines additionally available recourses.					
11.	Assessment and Feedback	37. Makes and uses effective quizzes to evaluate the students' progress.					
		38. Employs a variety of evaluative methods.					
		39. Provide the students with suitable feedback to check their progress.					
		40. Uses different forms of authentic and alternative assessment methods.					

		41. Provides constructive and motivational feedback to the students to enhance their comprehension and progress.					
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Appendix II
The Attitudes toward Microteaching Questionnaire

No	Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1.	Microteaching aids in creation and proper manipulation of my teaching abilities.					
2.	Microteaching helps me gain faith in my ability to teach.					
3.	Microteaching allows me to overcome my fears and anxieties about teaching.					
4.	Microteaching helps me to effectively handle classroom situations.					
5.	Microteaching assists me in deciding on a teaching target and creating a lesson plan.					
6.	Microteaching aids in the development of my capability to raise questions and talk in front of a group of people.					
7.	Microteaching improves my ability to choose suitable instructional resources for the delivery of lessons.					
8.	Microteaching assists me in successfully managing time in the classroom.					
9.	Microteaching makes me more conscious of my teaching abilities.					
10.	Microteaching provides me with the ability to hone my lesson planning skills.					
11.	Microteaching assists me in honing the actual teaching skills that I will need in the future.					
12.	Microteaching allows me to acquire and use new teaching skills.					
13.	Microteaching assists me in identifying my strengths and shortcomings as a teacher.					
14.	Microteaching allows me to observe and learn from others.					
15.	Microteaching has made me more conscious of the qualities that make a good instructor.					
16.	Microteaching allows me to gain experience with class management.					
17.	Microteaching helps me to develop independence.					
18.	Microteaching aids my learning in time management and organization.					
19.	Microteaching helps me to incorporate concepts I've learned in previous courses.					
20.	Microteaching allows me to develop my lesson planning skills.					
21.	Microteaching assists me in writing effective success goals.					
22.	Microteaching aids in the creation of instructional materials and events.					
23.	Microteaching gives me the courage to speak in front of a group.					

24.	Microteaching takes up a significant portion of my time.					
25.	Microteaching makes me stressed and bored.					
26.	Microteaching pushes me to complete challenging assignments.					
27.	Microteaching necessitates the preparation of a variety of instructional materials.					