

Trainee Teachers' Perspectives on Microteaching

Yam Nath Adhikari

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Abstract

Microteaching is one of the most recent innovations in teacher training programme. It is used as a professional developmental tool for pre-service or in-service teacher training courses. Microteaching seems a good technique to train trainee teachers, when he/she has to perform his/her teaching either in practice or real life. The objective of this research was to explore perspective of trainee teachers towards microteaching. The sample size of the study consisted of 40 trainee teachers of B.Ed. from Prithvi Narayan campus, Pokhara. The informants were selected purposively. By taking their consent, I visited the school and distributed the questionnaire, where the student-teachers were practising in practice teaching. A set of close-ended questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. The data were presented in percentage and analyzed and interpreted descriptively. The results reveal that microteaching plays a vital role to improve the trainee teachers' pedagogical skills, competencies, build self-confidence, make positive attitudes towards teaching life by limited sources and within minimum available facilities, provide valuable teaching experiences, and make them aware of the benefits. Further, microteaching deals with the emerging challenges that will happen in the real teaching career of the trainee teachers. All the respondents put their positive perspectives on microteaching although microteaching is not seriously taken by the practitioners. This study implies that microteaching is necessary for trainee teachers to prepare themselves in a better way for upcoming teaching career.

Keywords: microteaching, technique, trainee-teacher, practice teaching

Introduction

Microteaching has been broadly used in pre-service teacher training programme to enhance perspective teachers' instructional experiences in teaching and learning procedure. Formally pre-service teacher education started by the college of education in Nepal in 1956 then, five years later Tribhuvan University (TU) started primary teacher training, Secondary teachers training, (B.Ed.) and Teachers' educator programme (M.Ed.) started in 60's. The aim of teacher education was to make competent teachers both in content and pedagogy to help students learn better. Microteaching and practice teaching both have been conducting by faculty of education, TU as in the form of pre-service teacher education (National Campaign for Education Nepal, 2017). Microteaching offers valuable opportunities for student teachers to develop and understand the process of effective teaching and learning strategies which helps them to

promote their professional career and provides the opportunities to learn teaching skills. (Francis, 1997) stated that the art of teaching is highlighted in microteaching by the constant practice in producing quality lesson plans which serve as a guide for student-teachers to plan and execute their lesson. Furthermore, the feedback provided by the lectures and peers enhance student teachers' understanding and knowledge of pedagogical skills. Teachers always want to have quality learning to occur in their classroom for that the teacher must deliberately teach in ways that will enable and encourage students to engage in the intellectual activities that promote quality learning (Killen, 2006). So, for quality learning the trainee teachers prepare well before going to perform his/her lesson in their practice teaching as well as for their real teaching in future.

Wallace and Bau (1991) write microteaching is an organized, scaled-down teacher training program where a trainee teacher plans a short lesson, teaches it to a reduced group of students (Three to ten) in a 5 to 20 minutes lesson, and then reflects on their teaching afterwards. The lesson can be video recorded for either individual or peer review. The trainee teacher's micro-lesson is reviewed, discussed, analyzed, and evaluated to give a feedback. Based on this feedback, the trainee teacher re-teaches the micro-lesson, incorporating those points raised during the discussion and analysis. The objective of this study was to explore the perspective of trainee teachers towards microteaching.

Microteaching offers an important opportunity for trainee teachers to implement their pre-occupied theoretical knowledge in to real life situation. With the help of microteaching, the trainee teachers in different universities or other institutions of TESOL programmes have got success in their practicum and real teaching career (Brenes-Carvajal, 2009, pp. 3-4). Similarly, Microteaching and Practice teaching are the part of teacher education programs in language teaching. Richards and Farrell (2011, p. 3) also stated that "many teachers found microteaching one of the most useful way of teacher preparation". These all make clear that microteaching is being one of the best ways to prepare competent teachers to handle the class in a meaningful way.

To put in Allen's (1960) words, the history of microteaching goes back to the mid-1960s. It was developed when Dwight Allan and his colleagues from the Stanford University developed a training programme which aimed to improve verbal and non-verbal aspects of teachers' performance. They developed the first Stanford model which consisted of a three step approach; teach, review and reflect, re-teach. They used actual students as an authentic audience. This model was first applied to teaching science and later it was introduced to language teaching. Today microteaching has been increasingly spreading tool of professional development in the field of teacher education.

Microteaching is a way to build up skills and confidence. It is a tool for teacher preparation. Richards and Schmidt (2010, p. 365) have defined microteaching as "a technique used in the training of teachers, in which different teaching skills are practiced under carefully controlled conditions." Similarly, Wallace (2010, p. 92) says that microteaching as "a training context in which a teaching situation has been reduced in scope and/or simplified in some systematic way." Microteaching and practice teaching are both conducted for the training of teachers. Microteaching is helpful for student-teachers who are going to perform practice teaching. Those who participated in microteaching actively are found successful to manage the classroom.

There has been the trend of conducting Microteaching and practice teaching in the faculty of education by the different Universities in the final year of each level for the partial fulfillment of study as the practical part. The student teachers prepare micro lesson of 5-10 minutes and present in front of fellow student-teachers. A student teacher has to present at least three micro lesson during microteaching. It is normally carried out for a week in their respective college and practice teaching for 45 days'. In microteaching student teachers teach their friends, the participants and the teacher observe and provide constructive feedback for betterment of their teaching. In practice teaching they teach real students. The fellow student teachers, subject teacher, head of the school/campus, internal supervisor and external observer observe their classes and provide some feedback. The student teachers need to take part in microteaching compulsorily to get the chance to perform practice teaching. Otherwise, they are not permitted to take part in practice teaching. The objective of this research was to explore perspective of trainee teachers towards microteaching and this study also aimed to put some pedagogical implications for microteaching and practice teaching in the field of education. Beside the facts mentioned above by the different scholars in the existing knowledge of micro teaching. I have observed that in the faculty of education in Nepal, microteaching and practice teaching are not given more importance by the student teachers as well as the experts. Many researches related to this have conducted but the perspective of trainee teachers has not researched. So, I put my interest on microteaching then conducted the research to get the fact about microteaching and practice teaching, hope this study will help to carry out some better strategies to conduct microteaching and practice teaching.

Review of Literature

The original development of microteaching as a teacher training technique at Stanford University was very much in 'applied science' tradition and the theoretical basis was related to psychological theory of behaviourism (Wallace, 2010.p.93). Bartley (1969) earlier reported that microteaching provides immediate feedback, reinforcement and behavior shaping as similar to Skinnerian concept. Similarly, Mergler (2010) argued that microteaching helps pre-service teachers to generate proper lessons that they can use during their practicum in schools and the feedback they get from students help them to remove their weaknesses for upcoming teaching career. So, microteaching supports pre-service teachers to develop different teaching strategies for their real life situation. McGravey and Swallow (1986, P. 7) point out that the behavior modification approach was strong in the 'minicourse' model of microteaching developed by Borg and his co-workers at Berkeley University in California. So, microteaching is taken as a teacher training technique to prepare better teachers. On the other hand practice teaching enables the student-teacher to discover his/her potential abilities and to bring these into classroom teaching situations.

Richards and Farrell (2011, p. 4) talked about two kinds of practice teaching i.e. microteaching and teaching an ESOL class. These two kinds of teaching experience are often provided during practice teaching. At first, Microteaching involves planning and teaching a short lesson or a part of a lesson to a group of fellow student-teachers or sometimes to ESOL students who have volunteered to serve as student in microteaching class. The microteaching session is followed by feedback in teaching by the supervisor

and fellow trainee teachers. It is often conducted as a part of group activity to teacher training courses. The second type of teaching experience in practice teaching is teaching an ESOL class. This normally makes up the major part of practice teaching experience and may constitute the entire teaching practice. So, microteaching is a part of practice teaching. The term microteaching is a way to build up skills and confidence. It is a way to experience tutoring styles to learn and practice giving constructive feedback.

Microteaching is defined differently. Rao and Rao (2004, p. 226) defined microteaching as "a scaled down teaching encounter in class size and period." Wallace (2010, p. 92) states micro teaching as "a training context in which a teaching situation has been reduced in scope and or simplified in some systematic way." He further presents three main ways in which teaching can be scaled down:

Teacher task may be simplified and made very specific.

Length of the lesson may be shortened.

The size of the class may be reduced.

The length of the lesson is reduced from 40-45 minutes to 5-10 minutes, the size of the class also reduced fewer than 10 students. Microteaching is a scaled down and simulated teaching designed for the training of both pre-service and in service teachers. Its purpose is to provide teachers with opportunity for the safe practice of teaching skills. Wallace (2010, p. 93) has presented the following four stages of microteaching.

The Briefing

In this stage of microteaching, a trainee teacher is given necessary instruction (oral or written) on the skill he is to practice and the way to be taught. This preliminary work for microteaching is called the preparation phase.

The Teach

This phase is called presentation and observation phase each participant presents his/her 10 minutes teaching. The trainee-teachers may be the real students or fellow participants. The lesson can be videotaped, if possible.

The Critique

In this stage of microteaching, the trainee teachers review feedback on his/her performance from his/her fellow trainees and the supervisor for improvement, the taught lesson is discussed, analyzed and commented by making constructive criticism on various aspects of teaching. It easier for everybody including the person who made it to think about what happened and discussed without personal involvement. If the lesson has been audio or video taped, later on it can be played back for self-evaluation.

The Reteach

After constructive suggestions from the fellow trainees and the instructor, the trainee teacher again presents same lesson by modifying it. At this stage, he/she tries to remove his/her weakness. Generally, microteaching ends in third stage, i.e., commenting. So, it can be called the optional stage of microteaching. A study (Ghanaguru, Nair, & Yong, 2017) in the context of Malaysia found out that microteaching is beneficial in establishing a good experience amongst the student teachers. However, their main focus was

on establishing good lesson planning and carrying out what is planned in a mock classroom. The findings of the research indicate that the respondents viewed learning objectives, stages of the lesson and types of activities that they carried out during the lesson as the three important elements of the lesson planning. The research also revealed that teacher-centered and student-centered approaches were used in microteaching and lesson planning to provide insights in to how these two important elements in teacher education are best implemented.

Mahmud (2013) further conducted the research on Microteaching to improve teaching method: An analysis on teachers' perspectives at Daffodil international university in Bangladesh. The researcher used experimental research and developed the research questions to evaluate the importance of microteaching for teacher development programme. The researcher adopted the two conditions to be analyzed against two different groups i.e. control group (condition 1) and intervention group (condition 2). The study found out that microteaching was used to eliminate the complexities of learning to teach in the classroom situation. Such as pressure of length of the lecture, the scope and content of the matter and so on. Microteaching encourages the student teachers to participate actively and develops the time utilization skill among the participants and provide constructive feedback from students and effective group work. So, micro teaching is regarded a better way of teacher training courses.

Teaching Practicum increases student teachers' self-efficacy regarding classroom management, which will in turn positively influence their skills. Bhattarai (2001) earlier reported that all practice teaching courses are offered in final year of the study, practice teaching as student teaching or practicum has helped the student teachers to achieve the teaching methods, procedures and skills that will be needed for them in their future teaching life. He further added that each level of education degree requires students to undergo a practice course, it is different from practical science or field work in geography or health. The term and conditions are regarded as some widely accepted conventions by the students and teachers of specified level. Microteaching empowers trainee teachers to adopt learner-friendly methods, techniques and principles in teaching and learning activities. The feedback they get in reference to teaching strategies, student-teacher rapport, and evaluating techniques in microteaching are supposed to enhance practice teaching, and microteaching helps to erase the misconceptions of students towards practice teaching which they have to perform to complete particular academic level of their study in the faculty of education in Nepal. That is why efficiency of microteaching is needed to judge objectivity. Microteaching and practice teaching are interlink to each other in the field of teacher preparation. Practice teaching enables the student-teacher to discover his/her potential abilities and to bring these into classroom teaching situations.

Conceptual framework of the study

The presented conceptual framework of the study (figure 1) shows the terminologies related to Perspective of Trainee-teachers on Microteaching which are interlinked to each other. Kumar (2009, p. 37) has written, a conceptual framework is an interconnected set of ideas which shows how a particular phenomenon function or is related to its parts. The presented terminologies showed how microteaching and practice teaching are interconnected to each other. The figure exhibited that how the trainee teachers have

to cope with these terminologies to be competent for future teaching. The presented conceptual framework can help the trainee teachers to visualize the procedure of microteaching and practice teaching

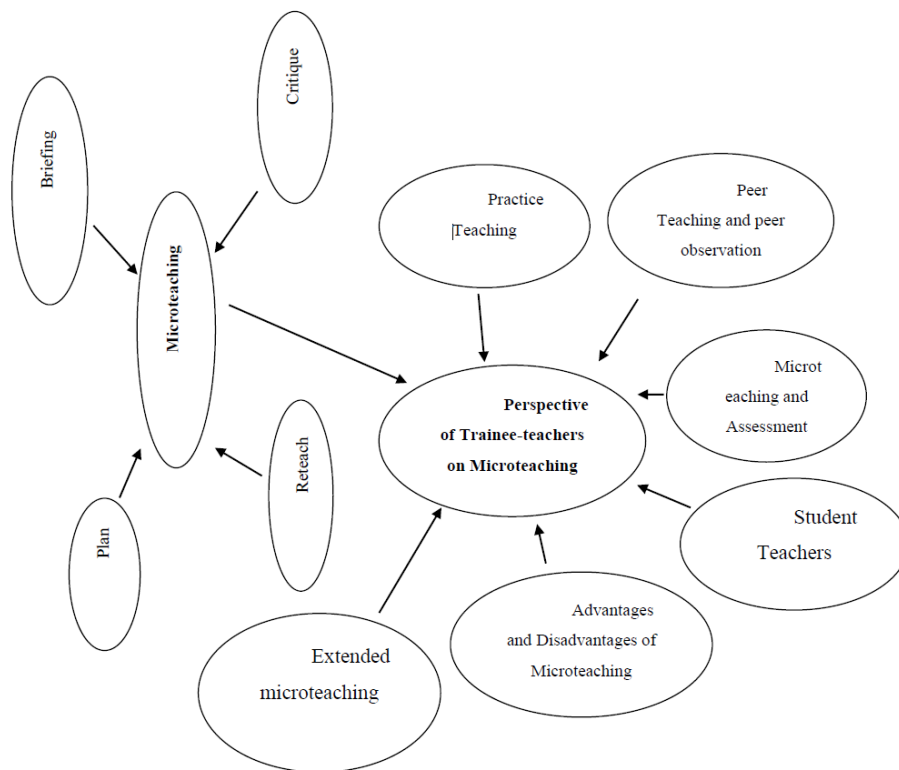


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Above terminologies are interlinked to each other to show the clear concept of microteaching. The presented conceptual framework depicts the perspectives of trainee-teachers on microteaching. These terminologies found supportive to understand both microteaching and practice teaching.

Methodology

In order to explore the perspective of trainee-teachers towards micro-teaching, survey research design was adopted for this study. Survey research is carried out to large number of population in order to find the respondents opinions on certain event issue or situation. In this context, Cohen and Manion (1985, as cited in Nunan, 1992, p. 140) have conceded:

Survey is the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research. Survey research may vary on the basis of large scale governmental investigation and small scale study. Large scale study is carried out by the group and small scale study is carried out by the single researcher. The purpose of survey research is generally to object in the snapshot of condition, attitudes, and/or events at a single point of time. The main purpose of survey research is to find out the opinion on certain issues, assess certain educational

programmes, to find out the behaviours of different professional to study certain trend and existing state of certain institution at a single point of time compare the finding with the standard one.

Forty student-teachers of B.Ed. 3rd year of Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara were as the population of this research. For this I adopted purposive non-random sampling procedure. A set of closed-ended questionnaire was used as the data collection tool. I visited the schools where the trainee-teachers had been practicing their practice teaching. Taking their consent for conducting this research and built the rapport with the schools and the sample population. I distributed the questionnaire and requested them for their responses. Then, I started to calculate the obtained data on the basis of simple percentage and also analyzed them descriptively in a logical way.

Results and Discussion

There are various views on the purpose of conducting microteaching some researchers belief it enables student teachers to improve pedagogical skills in presentation and participation. So, I conducted this research to get the perspective of trainee teachers on microteaching. This study aims to explore the perspective of trainee teachers on micro teaching. I followed the survey research, 40 student-teachers were purposively selected as the respondents of the study. This research aims to explore how the microteaching is viewed by the trainee teachers? The data obtained from closed-ended questionnaire were analyzed on the basis of simple percentage in point-wise. The result showed positive perspective towards microteaching project and accepted that microteaching is necessary for student teachers and should be extended for the better performance in practice teaching as well as real teaching career. The point-wise analysis of the questionnaire given in the table 1.

Table 1

Simple Percentage Analysis of Close-ended Questions

SN	Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Total
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
	Microteaching is necessary for student- teachers in practice teaching.	28	70	12	30							100
	A student teacher gets help from microteaching for his/her practice teaching and further teaching career.	20	50	19	47.5	1	2.5					100
	A student teacher gets feedback through microteaching for practice teaching.	20	50	19	47.5			1	2.5			100
	Microteaching makes a student teacher confident for practice teaching.	20	50	16	40	4	10					100

A student teacher becomes skilled and competent after microteaching for practice teaching.	30	75	8	20	2	5				100	
A student teacher uses materials in microteaching	30	75	10	25						100	
Microteaching is one of the most important tools for teacher preparation.	24	60	16	40						100	
Microteaching and practice teaching are much more helpful for future real teaching.	22	55	17	42.5			1	2.5		100	
Student teachers take microteaching and practice teaching more seriously.	9	22.5	19	47.5	5	12.5	7	17.5		100	
Internal supervision is needed in microteaching.	24	60	16	40						100	
Microteaching activates teaching abilities of trainee-teachers.	27	67.5	13	32.5						100	
Feedbacks are useless in microteaching.							20	50	20	50	100
Supervision during microteaching will be milestone for student teachers.	25	62.5	15	37.5						100	
The period of microteaching should be extended.	24	60	16	40						100	

Table 1 shows that simple percentage of rating scale of closed-ended questionnaire, which showed the perspective of trainee teachers on microteaching. The closed-ended questionnaire have 14 questions with five-point likert scale with options. The closed-ended questionnaire was analyzed in point-wise on the basis of simple percentage. Finally, all the respondents had positive perspective on microteaching. The study found out that all the respondents had positive attitudes towards the microteaching for the better preparation of practice teaching. They also opined that there should be the frequent supervision by the experts during microteaching and practice teaching to avoid the weaknesses of trainee teachers and to develop their performance in the practice teaching as well as real teaching career.

As regards to the statement 1 (Microteaching is necessary for student- teachers in practice teaching), the above table showed that out of 40 informants/participants, 70% informants strongly agree with the statement, 30% agree, 0%undecided, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. From the data, it can be understood that 100 % participants indicated that microteaching is required for practice teaching. In the statement 2 (A student-teacher gets help from microteaching for his/her practice teaching and further teaching career.), the above simple percentage showed that 50% informants strongly agree, 47.5% agree and

2.5% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. From the data it can be said that 97.5% informants said microteaching is helpful for their practice teaching as well as in their teaching career. The statement 3 (A student teacher gets feedback through microteaching for practice teaching.), depicted that out of 40 respondents 50% strongly agreed, 47.5% agree, 2.5% disagree, 0% uncertain and 0% strongly disagree that meant 97.5% respondents were in favor of microteaching, that provides feedback for them but only 1 informant disagrees it is clear that microteaching provided feedback for them to carry out further teaching in a better way. In the statement 4 (Microteaching makes a student teacher confident for practice teaching.), for this statement out of 40 respondents 50% were strongly agree, 40% agree, 10% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree the data also made clear that 90% respondents developed their confidence after the microteaching for their further teaching. Only 10% were in favor of uncertain it means they did not know about it. The above data proved that student- teachers became confident after microteaching.

In relation to the statement 5 (A student teacher becomes skilled and competent after microteaching for practice teaching.), out of 40 respondents 75% respondents strongly agree, 20% agree, 5% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree this showed that 90% of respondents opined that they became skilled and competent after microteaching. In connection to the statement 6 (A student teacher uses materials in microteaching), in this statement out of 40 respondents 75% strongly agree, 25% agree, 0% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. It made clear that all of the trainee teachers used materials in their microteaching and practice teaching. In reference to statement 7 (Microteaching is one of the most important tools for teacher preparation.), out of 40 respondents 60% respondents strongly agree, 40% agree, 0% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. It means 100% respondents agreed on microteaching as the best way of teacher preparation. For statement 8 (Microteaching and practice teaching are much more helpful for future real teaching.), out of 40 respondents 55% respondents strongly agree, 42.5% agreed, 2.5% view on uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. Here 97.2% respondents opined that microteaching is helpful for the students-teachers. The statement 9 (Student teachers take microteaching and practice teaching seriously.), out of 40 respondents 50% respondents put strong agreement, 47.5% agree, 2.5% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. Here 97.5% of respondents accepted microteaching to make themselves skilled on teaching learning.

In the similar case Instatement 10 (Internal supervision is needed in microteaching), out of 40 respondents 60% respondents strongly agree, 40% agree, 0% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. The data also revealed that the internal supervision really helped the student-teachers for further teaching career. Similarly the statement 11 (Microteaching activates teaching abilities of trainee-teacher), 67.5% respondents strongly agree, 32.5% agree, 0% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree. This exposed that microteaching activates teaching abilities of the trainee-teachers. For the statement 12 (Feedbacks are useless in microteaching), out of 40 respondents 50% respondents disagree, 50% were strongly disagree, 0%strongly agree, 0% agree and 0% uncertain that exhibited all the respondents were in the need of feedback. The statement 13 (Supervision during microteaching will be milestone for student teachers.), out of 40 respondents 62.5% respondent strongly agree , 37.5% agree, 0% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree that also showed need of supervision. Finally, the statement 14 (The period of

microteaching should be extended), disclosed that out of 40 respondents 60% strongly agree, 40% agree, 0% uncertain, 0% disagree and 0% strongly disagree this all revealed the necessity of microteaching for the student-teachers. This simple percentage analysis of data demonstrated that most of the respondents had positive perspective on microteaching. So, microteaching is regarded as the best way of teacher training course.

Conclusion and Implications

The majority of the respondents had positive attitudes towards microteaching and microteaching supported the student-teachers to be confident and competent for practice teaching. As this study aims to explore the perspective of trainee teachers towards microteaching. Using purposive non-random sampling procedure 40 student teachers of Prithvi Narayan Campus were selected as the population of the study. The data were collected with the help of close-ended questionnaire and analyzed on the basis of simple percentage. The result of the data showed that most of the respondents put their strong agreement on the need of microteaching to enhance their teaching proficiency in upcoming practice teaching and even in the real teaching life. Microteaching makes the trainee teachers ready for practice teaching and also erase the misconceptions of practice teaching. Microteaching will be milestone for the better performance of practice teaching. It means that microteaching enhance the student-teachers to cope with the skills of teaching learning strategies. The techniques that they learnt during microteaching found really supportive for the trainee teachers in practice teaching. The statements like; 1 (Microteaching is necessary for student-teachers in practice teaching), 7 (Microteaching is one of the most important tools for teacher preparation.), 10 (Internal supervision is needed in microteaching), 14 (The period of microteaching should be extended), mentioned in the questionnaire revealed the respondents' positive perspective towards microteaching. So, the study showed that microteaching can help trainee teaches to build up different methods, strategies and techniques that are required in the real teaching career of the practitioners in future. The result of the data showed that microteaching makes student teachers self-confidence and competent for practice teaching. Moreover, microteaching also develops the teaching skills of trainee teachers. The respondents of the research strongly agreed to increase the time of microteaching and also favored for frequent supervision by the supervisor to provide constructive feedback for them to enhance their confidence level during microteaching and practice teaching. The finding of this result can be applied in the coming future by the faculty of education to have better policy for microteaching and practice teaching. I hope the study will be beneficial to the students, teachers, researchers as well as the experts who want to involve them in teaching learning academia. This study is only concerned with perspective of trainee teachers on microteaching. So, the further research can be carried out on the effectiveness of microteaching in practice teaching and they can also investigate the impact of microteaching on perspective teachers.

Finally, the research had concluded that microteaching is necessary for trainee teachers because it can help to develop the confidence level among the trainee-teachers. Further, it helps to explore his/her potential abilities and prepares him/her as a competent teacher in future.

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Yam Nath Adhikari is a Teaching Assistant at Prithvi Narayan campus, Pokhara. He has worked as an EFL teacher for a decade. To his credit, a couple of articles have been published in different journals. He has also presented papers in various conferences. His area of interest includes teaching strategies in EFL. Currently, Mr. Adhikari is pursuing MPhil from Nepal Open University.