

ENHANCING EFL STUDENT TEACHERS' TEACHING PRACTICE THROUGH MICROTEACHING LESSON STUDY

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ABSTRACT

EFL student teachers are categorized as inexperienced teachers. Most of them have never taught before and do it for the first time in microteaching course. Therefore, they usually encounter some problems in teaching practices but unfortunately are not always able to cope with those problems. Microteaching lesson study enables the student teachers to work collaboratively in teaching practices through its steps of collaborative lesson planning, teaching and observing, and reflecting and revising. Those steps give opportunity for student teachers to recognize their problems as well as deal with them well. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of microteaching lesson study on the EFL student teachers' teaching practice. The method is descriptive with the subjects of the study the EFL student teachers enrolling in microteaching course at the English Education Department of Muria Kudus University. This study used the quantitative and qualitative microteaching scoring rubric as the instrument. The result shows that microteaching lesson study has impact on the teaching practices of the EFL student teachers.

Keywords: EFL student teachers, microteaching, teaching practice, microteaching lesson study.

INTRODUCTION

For most of EFL student teachers, teaching practice in microteaching course is their first experience of teaching. Even though they have acquired theoretical courses such as method of language teaching, second language acquisition, language assessment, and so forth, they still encounter problems during their teaching practice. The problems vary from how to design the lesson plan, how to implement the plan into meaningful activities, until how to reflect on their teaching. As the teaching practice is conducted individually, the student teachers might not always be able to identify their own problems as well as to cope with them. Microteaching lesson study offers the collaborative microteaching that brings about the benefits of lesson study and enables the student teachers to perform better in their teaching practice.

Microteaching lesson study is a collaborative microteaching done by student teachers in microteaching course that combines aspects from microteaching and lesson study (Fernandez, 2008). The aspect of microteaching is that student teachers teach their peers or real students in a small group for about 25 to 30 minutes. The lesson study aspects include dividing the student teachers into groups of three to five, the use of video to record the teaching practice for further analysis, and the cycles of planning, teaching-observing, and reflecting-refining.

As microteaching lesson study requires the student teachers to work in group, it provides them with the experience of collaboration (Cavin 2007; Fernandez and Robinson, 2006). The student teachers must collaborate and cooperate if they are to be successful in their teaching

practice since the lesson plan that they yield comes from their group work. Moreover, the group work enables the student teachers to participate in discussion, analysis and reflection experiences that contribute to their analysis and reflection abilities (Fernandez and Robinson, 2006).

Besides collaboration, some recent studies show the benefits of lesson study as well as microteaching lesson study. Fernandez (2010), Kim (2010), Van Sickle (2011), and Meyer (2005) reported that lesson study deepened teachers understanding of the content and enhanced their ability to teach. Cavin (2007), MacDowell (2010), and Molina (2012) reveal that microteaching lesson study increased technological pedagogical content knowledge, content knowledge as well as pedagogical content knowledge of preservice teachers.

However, most studies on microteaching lesson study were conducted in the field of mathematics and science (Stafford-Plummer, 2002; Fernandez and Robinson, 2006; Cavin, 2007; Fernandez, 2010; Molina, 2012; MacDowell, 2010). Few studies (Suryani and Rismiyanto, 2014) were found in the field of English as a foreign language (EFL). This study aims at investigating the impact of microteaching lesson study on the EFL student teachers' teaching practice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Microteaching lesson study (MLS) is a modification of lesson study to be used for prospective or preservice teachers at university level. Some central features of lesson study maintained in microteaching lesson study, as noted by Fernandez (2008) include an overarching goal for the lesson, collaboration among teachers, the phases of lesson development, implementation, observation, and revision, and a written reflective report on the lesson study work. Molina (2012: 3) also explains that microteaching lesson study is similar to lesson study in that "microteaching lesson study engages preservice teachers in cycles of lesson development, implementation and revision of an assigned topic while teaching to small groups of their peers in their university classrooms or small groups of K-12 students".

Microteaching lesson study also draws elements from microteaching. Those elements include the reduced class size (5-10 student peers or students) and the reduced lesson length (15-20 minutes).

Fernandez (in Molina, 2012: 20) explains that microteaching lesson study forms an experience that is designed to challenge student teachers' conceptions regarding teaching and learning while simultaneously encouraging their connection between theory and practice. In microteaching lesson study, student teachers work in groups of at most three in conjunction with a microteaching lesson study mentor. The microteaching study mentor is the same as the outside specialist in lesson study because they are knowledgeable in the lesson content, content area teaching, and lesson study.

As the cycles of microteaching lesson study is the same as the cycles of lesson study, there are three main phases of microteaching lesson study. They include research lesson planning, teaching and observing, and reflecting and refining the research lesson plan. The following figure shows the cycles of microteaching lesson study.

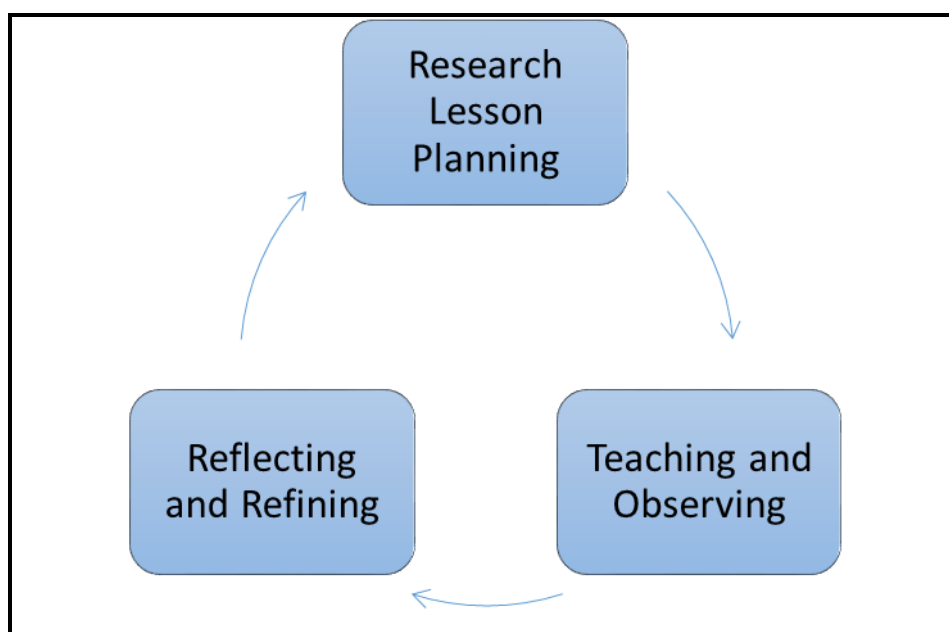


Figure 1. The Cycles of Microteaching Lesson Study

In research lesson planning, the plan of the lesson is discussed collaboratively among the student teachers. The discussion also includes the anticipation of the students' responses when teaching learning process occur and the focus of the observation from the next step. The lesson is then taught by one of the members of the group, while the other two members will observe. Even though what to observe has been discussed in the research lesson planning, the essential key of observation is on the student learning, not on the teacher teaching. In the next step, the result from the observation will be discussed and reflected by the group. This step will bring about the points of weaknesses and strengths from the teaching learning process that lead to the refinement of the lesson plan. The other member of the group will then teach using this refined research lesson. The process will be iterated again.

Just as lesson study that results in many benefits, microteaching lesson study also brings about some benefits. Cavin (2007) notes that microteaching lesson study enables student teachers to gain collaboration experience. This is obvious as microteaching lesson study is conducted in group and requires collaboration among student teachers.

Fernandez and Robinson (2006) state similar benefit as Cavin's that microteaching lesson study makes student teachers experience collaboration. In addition, they also reveal that microteaching lesson study gives student teachers abilities in doing analysis and reflection on shared experience. These abilities are gained through the phases of microteaching lesson study like observation and reflection after the teaching session.

Furthermore, Wood and Cajkler (2013) assert that microteaching lesson study helps to understand "the transition of student teachers into their chosen profession, into pedagogic communities of practice". This transition is necessary regarding that student teachers are not yet teachers and so they need to have 'the feel' of being teachers and being part of the teaching world.

METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of microteaching lesson study on the EFL student teachers' teaching practice. The method used in this study is descriptive.

The subjects were the EFL student teachers enrolling in microteaching course at the English Education Department of Muria Kudus University in the sixth semester of year 2016. Those student teachers have fulfilled the requirements to take microteaching course as they have passed the theoretical courses such as linguistics, approaches and methods in language teaching, language assessment, speaking for instructional purposes, teaching English for young learners, and so forth. The microteaching course itself is a six credit course offered for sixth semester student teachers that requires student teachers to teach in front of the small group of their peers and real students. This course becomes one of the requirements for the student teachers to take teaching internship program in which they will teach in secondary schools in the seventh semester.

In this study, microteaching lesson study was conducted in microteaching class A. The number of the student teachers participating was thirty consisting of twenty two females and eight males. They were divided into ten groups. Each group consisted of three student teachers with heterogeneous English proficiency in each group. The goal of such division is that the EFL student teachers can share and help one another among their peers with various proficiency. Even though they worked in group, they did the teaching practice individually and got opportunity to do it four times during the course.

The instrument of this study was microteaching scoring rubric. The rubric collected data of the student teachers' teaching practice. It comprises of twenty-three items from seven categories: planning and preparation, lesson presentation, assessing pupils' progress, classroom management, classroom climate, and reflection and evaluation. The rubric consists of quantitative and qualitative assessments. The data of the EFL student teachers' teaching practices were then analyzed statistically.

RESULTS

This study is intended to reveal the impact of microteaching lesson study on the teaching practice of the EFL student teachers. The EFL student teachers worked in group of three to conduct the steps of lesson study. Each of them practiced teaching four times during the semester. Two teaching practices were conducted in front of their peers, meanwhile the other two teaching practices were done in front of real students. Those real students were students of junior high school and senior high school that were invited to come to the student teachers' classroom.

In the first and third teaching practices, the student teachers taught their peers using school-based curriculum. In the second teaching practices, the curriculum used to teach their peers was 2013 curriculum. The use of two curriculums to teach their peers is because the two kinds of curriculum are being implemented in Indonesia. Therefore, it is hoped that the student teachers are able to design their lesson and apply it for both curriculums.

In order to determine the impact of microteaching lesson study on the student teachers' teaching practices, the results of the quantitative scoring rubric of the four teaching practices were analyzed using statistics.

As Table 1 shows, the first teaching practice of the EFL student teachers got 66.66 mean value while the second teaching practice had 68.07. It can be stated that the student teachers had more or less the same ability in teaching practices in their first and second teaching practices. When the difference between the student teachers' teaching practices were

examined through paired t-test, it was found out that there was no statistically significant difference between their first teaching practice and their second teaching practice as the $t=-0.41$, $df=29$ and $P=0.67>0.05$. This can be inferred that the microteaching lesson study did not bring impact in the first and second teaching practices of the student teachers.

In the first and second teaching practices, the student teachers taught in front of their peers. They implemented two different curriculums for those two teaching practices. The first teaching practice used the school-based curriculum, whereas the second teaching practice used 2013 curriculum. The use of two different curriculums was meant for the student teachers to be able to design the lessons and implement them using both curriculum. The reason is that because Indonesian government applies those two kinds of curriculum. That is why the student teachers have to know and be able to implement the two curriculums as they will teach in high schools in their teaching internship program in the next semester.

However, the change of the type of curriculum in the first and second teaching practice seems to cause the student teachers unable to develop their teaching practice competence better. This might be due to the substantial differences between the two curriculums that affects the steps of teaching. The different ways of teaching from the first teaching practice to the second teaching practice might mean that not only the student teachers must design their lesson plan differently, but shift their mindset differently also. As a result, they must start the second teaching practice for totally new teaching instead of developing from the first teaching practice. In other words, they did not have a chance to improve their first teaching practice which means that the main objective of microteaching lesson study was not achieved (Dubin, 2009: 31).

Furthermore, the student teachers went through the steps of microteaching lesson study for the first time. Although they had the knowledge of microteaching lesson study from their mentor's explanation, they had never practiced doing the steps before. They were not familiar with activities such as observing, evaluating, and reflecting. This factor might be one of the causes that microteaching lesson study does not improve their teaching practice.

Table 1. The First and Second Student Teachers' Teaching Practices

Teaching Practice (TP)	Mean	t	df	P
TP 1	66.66	-0.41	29	0.67
TP 2	68.07			

In the third teaching practice as shown in Table 2, the mean value of the student teachers' third teaching practice increased to 73.24. However, the result of the paired t-test examination between the second and the third teaching practice reveals that there was no significant difference between them since the $t=-2.13$, $df=29$ and $P=0.04>0.05$. Thus, it can be claimed that the second teaching practice and the third teaching practice were not significantly affected by microteaching lesson study.

The increase in the mean value from the second teaching practice to the third teaching practice can be interpreted that the EFL student teachers perform better in their teaching practice. They made some better improvement in some areas like planning and preparation, lesson presentation, classroom management, and classroom climate. The areas that the student teachers still got difficulty were assessing pupils' progress, reflection and evaluation. They did not always check their pupils' progress during the lesson. Moreover, their lack of

reflection ability also caused their lack of reflecting the lesson with their pupils. Besides, their mismanaging the time brought about the evaluation unable to be run on time.

Despite their lacks in teaching practice which are still found in their third teaching practice, the better areas the student teachers perform indicate that they have implemented the steps in microteaching lesson study better than those in their previous teaching practices. After the teaching practice, together with their group members they evaluated their teaching practice and discussed for further improvements for their next teaching. Through those steps, they were encouraged to share their ideas and experiences as they have various knowledge and ability in teaching. This is one of the underlying ideas of lesson study that makes it a teaching improvement and knowledge building process (Cerbin and Kopp, 2006; Isoda et al., 2007).

Even though the paired t-test shows that there is no significant difference of the student teachers' second and third teaching practices, the steps of microteaching lesson study that the student teachers went through shaped their skills especially in conducting evaluation and reflection. These two skills are of utmost important since they rarely or even never do such things before.

Table 2. The Second and Third Student Teachers' Teaching Practices

Teaching Practice (TP)	Mean	t	df	p
TP 2	68.07	-2.13	29	0.04
TP 3	73.24			

In Table 3, the fourth teaching practice of the student teachers got the mean value 79.95. This means that there is an increase in the student teachers' teaching practices from the previous teaching practices. When the third and the fourth teaching practices were examined using paired t-test, the result showed that there was a statistically significant difference because the $t=-5.68$, $df=29$ and $P=0.00<0.05$. In other words, microteaching lesson study affected the student teachers' teaching practices.

Table 3. The Third and Fourth Student Teachers' Teaching Practices

Teaching Practice (TP)	Mean	t	df	p
TP 3	73.24	-5.68	29	0.00
TP 4	79.95			

When the first and the fourth teaching practices of the student teachers were compared (Table 4), it was also found that there was significant difference as the $t=-6.74$, $df=29$ and $P=0.00<0.05$. It can be claimed that through microteaching lesson study, the student teachers improved their teaching practices.

Table 4. The First and Fourth Student Teachers' Teaching Practices

Teaching Practice (TP)	Mean	t	df	p
TP 1	66.66	-6.74	29	0.00
TP 4	79.95			

The significant differences found in the third to fourth teaching practices and from the first to fourth teaching practices indicate that it takes some time for the EFL student teachers to internalize the steps of the microteaching lesson study. They need to adapt and adjust themselves with microteaching lesson study.

Firstly, they have to get used to work collaboratively in every step of microteaching lesson study. In designing the lesson, they must discuss what theme of the lesson they will teach and how to teach it as well as how to evaluate it. They also determine the aspects of observation they will have during the teaching process. After the teaching, they still need to evaluate and reflect on the teaching together. Collaboratively, they share their skill and knowledge to design the better lesson for the next meeting. Besides, they have to see the aspects of student learning through the eyes of others as well as their own which helps them as inexperienced teachers (Dudley, 2011). This is in line with Elipane (2012: vii) who states that “the essence of lesson study lies in the amount of intellectual and affective engagement of its participants who engender a spirit of collaboration- working on a shared goal that they themselves generated.” Through this working together, they can get the collaboration experience which will be useful for their future teaching internship when teaching in schools.

Secondly, from some steps of microteaching lesson study, the EFL student teachers are not quite familiar with the steps of evaluating and reflecting. That’s why, they got difficulty when firstly did them. However, as human nature to learn from their experiences, they were finally able to evaluate and reflect with their members of the group. Although it might take time and several teaching practices for getting used to it, their efforts are worth resulting due to their significant improvement in their teaching practices.

Regarding the above discussion, the significant difference of the first and the fourth teaching practices indicates that the microteaching lesson study results in the impact on the EFL student teachers’ teaching practice. The improvement covers the seven categories of planning and preparation, lesson presentation, assessing pupils’ progress, classroom management, classroom climate, and reflection and evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that microteaching lesson study brings the impact on the teaching practices of the EFL student teachers. The collaborative activity together with the steps of microteaching lesson study help enhance the EFL student teachers’ teaching practices.

The collaboration enables the student teachers to share their knowledge and skills one another. They also learn to see ideas from others’ points of view which might be different from their own. In addition, this activity engages them in pursuing the same goal for their success of teaching.

In addition, the steps of microteaching lesson study give opportunity for the EFL student teachers to learn such skills as observing, evaluating, and reflecting. Those steps encourage the EFL student teachers to be more reflective and use what they learn for their future teaching.

Nevertheless, this study implies that the EFL student teachers need to get used to the steps of microteaching lesson study. Hence, it is recommended for the microteaching mentors to have several meetings before teaching practices for introducing the EFL student teachers with the steps of microteaching lesson study. Through the introduction meetings, it is expected that the student teachers will perform well in their teaching practices and the microteaching lesson study can affect their teaching practices maximally.

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