

Vietnamese Students' Perspectives on Online Micro-Teaching (OMT) as a Technique in English Teacher Education in the 4.0 Era

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Abstract

Since its emergence in 1963, micro-teaching has been widely adopted as an effective technique in teacher training and development across various disciplines, especially in English language teaching. A huge body of research focuses on its effectiveness and students' and teachers' perceptions of this practice. However, scant literature can be found on online micro-teaching (OMT), particularly in Vietnam. Therefore, this survey research is aimed to explore Vietnamese students' perspectives on OMT, centering on (1) what and how they learned, (2) what difficulties they faced, and (3) what suggestions they made on future OMT. To address those questions, both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to collect data. Specifically, a questionnaire via Google Forms, consisting of 17 closed- and open-ended questions, was delivered to 142 students at the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature, the USSH, VNUHCM. The study results show that the participants could learn teaching and digital competencies from OMT through six main ways. Additionally, they faced three main difficulties, namely (1) checking students' learning progress/attention/concentration, (2) promoting students' participation, engagement, and collaboration, and (3) technology (Internet connection and teaching equipment). However, to better improve future OMT sessions, the participants provided five key suggestions, including (1) backup plans, (2) preparation, (3) training and rehearsal with tools and OMT, (4) engagement methods, and (5) classroom management and professionalism. They also recommended some online tools for OMT.

Keywords: micro-teaching, online micro-teaching, teacher education

1. Introduction

Since its emergence in Stanford University's Teacher Education Program in 1963, micro-teaching has been conceived as an effective teacher-training technique and has been implemented around the globe. Micro-teaching, with its typical characteristics of (1) reduced length, (2) narrowed scope, and (3) fewer students than usual, has been considered as a "safe" setting in which students may learn how to teach (Allen & Ryan, 1969, cited in Park, 2021). Therefore, micro-teaching has been implemented in a myriad of forms in various disciplines, especially in English Teacher Education programs.

In Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, several institutions offer English Teacher Education programs, most of which embed micro-teaching as part of the training process for preservice teachers or student teachers. One such institution is the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature (EF), University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH), Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (VNUHCM). At the EF, it is compulsory for all students to take the Teaching Methodology course, which provides them with the fundamentals of English Language Teaching, followed by a micro-teaching episode as one final assessment task. In addition, students majoring in English Language Teaching are required to take further teaching-related courses, namely Teaching Practice 1 and 2. While the Teaching Methodology course is theory-oriented, Teaching Practice 1 and 2 courses are practice-oriented, and micro-teaching is also an integral part of the two courses. Besides the full-time undergraduate program, the EF offers a TESOL Certificate Program intended for those who do not major in English Language Teaching or TESOL but wish to teach English at foreign language centers. The program enrollees receive a TESOL certificate when they finish all the required courses, one of which is Teaching Practice 3. The course gives the students opportunities for more intensive English teaching practice with the micro-teaching technique.

Last May 2021, when the students of Teaching Methodology, Teaching Practice 1, 2, and 3, taught by the researcher, were preparing their lesson plans for the coming micro-teaching episodes, the Covid-19 pandemic started raging in Vietnam for the fourth time. Consequently, the remaining theory-oriented sessions switched from face-to-face to online teaching and learning, and all students of those courses conducted their micro-teaching sessions online for the first time. However, this new type of practice, online micro-teaching (OMT), particularly in the Vietnamese teaching context, is needed given technological advancements in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, also known as the 4.0 era of the digital revolution. Azrai, Rini, and Suryanda (2020) concluded in their study that micro-teaching was still essential in teacher education in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Also, teacher education programs are now challenged with the goal of developing the next generation of teachers who are proficient in integrating technology into their daily practice (Diana, 2013). To that end, OMT needs to be studied to provide student teachers teaching practice opportunities but also help familiarize themselves with teaching online.

Given the potential value of OMT, the current study is aimed to explore the students' perspectives on their OMT experiences. The study results are expected to give the researcher, the teacher in charge of the teaching-related courses mentioned earlier, a better understanding of OMT to improve it in the future. Further, the study is hoped (1) to make a theoretical contribution to the research body on micro-teaching in general, on OMT in particular, (2) to benefit other teachers, managers, or developers in the design of OMT as part of their English teacher education programs, and (3) to lay the groundwork for future research on OMT.

2. Literature review

This section displays related theories on micro-teaching and explores how micro-teaching can be conducted online in relevant studies.

2.1 Micro-teaching

In this part, micro-teaching is reviewed in terms of its definitions, rationale, procedure and cycle, applications, benefits and limitations, and some other related aspects.

2.1.1 Definitions of micro-teaching

Several definitions of micro-teaching can be found throughout the literature. For example, Cooper and Allen (1971) defined micro-teaching as “a teaching situation which is scaled down in terms of time [4-20 minutes per teaching episode] and numbers of students [3-10 students]” (p. 8). Another definition which also focuses on the "scaled-down" nature of micro-teaching was given by McAleese and Unwin (1971), who considered micro-teaching as a "scaled-down teaching encounter, scaled-down in terms of class size, lesson length and teaching complexity" (cited in Trott, 1976, p. 2). In addition, micro-teaching was later defined as "a laboratory training procedure aimed at simplifying the complexities of regular teaching-learning processes" (Perlberg, 1987, cited in Grossman, 2009).

Despite the variations in the way micro-teaching was defined, micro-teaching frequently involves a micro-teaching episode, including a lesson and immediate feedback on a student teacher's effectiveness. The sources of feedback can be diverse, from videotape or audio-tape recordings, supervisors, students to the student teacher's self-perception. Some other aspects of micro-teacher encompass lesson length, number of re-teaches, the amount and kind of supervision, the use of video or audiotape recordings, and the number and type of students (Cooper & Allen, 1971).

Further, Allen and Eve (1968, p. 181) put forward five essential conditions for creating a micro-teaching setting as follows:

- 1) *Actual teaching takes place.*
- 2) *The complexity of the normal teaching situation, including the student numbers, the lesson scope, and the class time, is deliberately reduced.*
- 3) *The focus of teacher training is reduced to accomplishing a specific task, such as the practice of instructional skills or techniques of teaching, the mastery of specific curriculum materials, or the demonstration of a particular teaching methodology.*
- 4) *A high degree of control over elements such as time, the use of students, and the methods of feedback and supervision are structured into the training situation.*
- 5) *The typical feedback dimension in teaching is greatly expanded through an immediate follow-up critique utilizing sources such as the student teacher's own analysis, students' or peers' reactions, videotapes, and the supervisor.*

Overall, a major attraction of the micro-teaching format is that it simplifies the teaching activities and provides an opportunity for real experimental control and manipulation of variables in teaching (Allen & Eve, 1968).

2.1.2 Rationale for micro-teaching

In addition to the definitions of and essential conditions for micro-teaching, Cooper and Allen synthesized and presented the rationale for its application as a teacher training technique (1971). However, some of the following claims made about micro-teaching overlap the five essential conditions mentioned above.

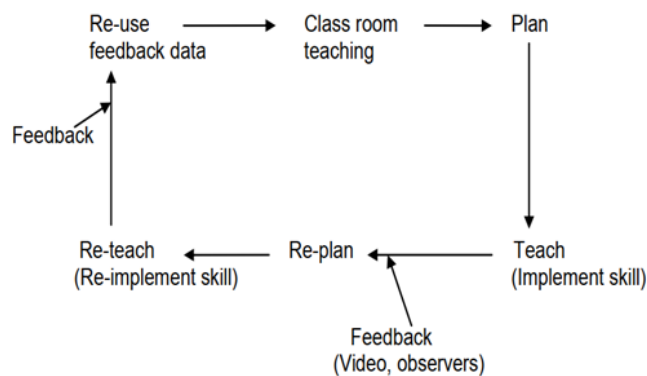
- 1) *Micro-teaching is real teaching, reduces the complexities of normal classroom teaching, and permits greater control over the trainee's environment regarding students, feedback methods, supervision, and other aspects.*
- 2) *Knowledge and information about the student teacher's performance (through various sources of feedback) aids him/her in his/her acquisition of teaching skills.*
- 3) *Micro-teaching provides a setting in which the trainee can teach students of varying backgrounds, intellectual abilities, and age groups before teaching a real class.*
- 4) *Micro-teaching provides a low-threat and low-risk situation in which the trainee can reduce his/her anxiety level and fear of failure experienced by beginning teachers in actual classrooms.*
- 5) *Micro-teaching allows for spaced or distributed, repetitive practice over a period of time, necessary to overlearn skills that will be used during regular teaching.*

In general, micro-teaching has been a favorable teacher training technique because of its real, simplified, controlled, low-threat, low-risk, practical, and feasible nature. Therefore, the above rationale for micro-teaching can function as the foundation for its benefits later mentioned in Section 2.1.5.

2.1.3 Micro-teaching procedure and cycle

Traditionally, according to McKnight's description (1980), in a typical micro-teaching program, after a teaching skill is described for the trainee through a videotape of a master teacher modeling the skill, the trainee delivers a brief teaching performance which is videotaped and played back for review and feedback/critique from various sources including the trainee's supervisor, peers, students, and self-perceptions. The trainee later revises his/her lesson and teaches it again to a different group of students. The second teaching situation is also followed by a critique session.

Such a procedure is repeated until the trainee can master the identified teaching skills and has been known as the teach/re-teach format. The micro-teaching cycle is summarized and visually represented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Micro-teaching cycle (adopted from Reddy, 2019, p. 69)

As shown in Figure 1 (adopted from Reddy, 2019, p. 69), the trainee first plans his/her lesson based on a set of teaching skills which have been described and demonstrated or modelled by his/her supervisor. The trainee teaches the first lesson, which is usually observed by his/her supervisor and peers and videotaped for review and critique. Based on the given feedback, the trainee re-plans,

revises the lesson, and teaches it again for another critique session. The cycle may repeat several times until the trainee can gain an adequate level of mastery of the designated teaching skills and apply them in actual classroom teaching.

Overall, this cycle resonates with the micro-teaching procedure as earlier described by McKnight (1980).

2.1.4 Applications of micro-teaching

Given the rationale for micro-teaching as presented in Section 2.1.2, micro-teaching can be applicable in a wide range of situations, contexts, and disciplines. Cooper and Allen (1971) summarized six main applications of micro-teaching as follows:

- 1) **Preservice training:** This was the original purpose of micro-teaching when it was developed at Stanford University, which is the preservice training of student or intern teachers through their practice and acquisition of teaching skills.
- 2) **In-service training:** Several uses of micro-teaching for in-service teachers have been suggested. Micro-teaching can be used as one of the following: (a) as a trial framework for team presentation (experiments with new techniques in content and mode of presentation), (b) as a site for ascertaining the proper instructional level of materials, (c) as a method of pre-employment prediction (as a framework for selection or rating experienced teachers seeking employment), and (d) as a means of training supervisors to evaluate beginning teachers.
- 3) **Micro-counselling:** Through micro-teaching, trainees practice basic component skills of counseling such as attending behavior, the reflection of feeling, and summarization of feeling.
- 4) **Supervisor training:** Micro-teaching has great utility for training supervisors, especially with the strongly recommended use of videotape recorders in enhancing the supervisory effectiveness in observation and assessment of instruction.
- 5) **College teachers training:** Micro-teaching has been used to improve college teaching, for example, by developing teaching skills and techniques.

- 6) ***Peace Corps Training:*** *Micro-teaching became a major component in the training of Peace Corps volunteers into English teachers.*

Apart from the six main applications above, micro-teaching has been employed in a wide variety of areas such as in (1) medical education (assisting medical students to acquire the skills of relating to patients), (2) administration and personnel (training administrators, secretaries, receptionists, politicians, or ministers presentation and communication skills), or (3) service areas (enhancing professional competence of social workers, psychiatrists, and police officers) (Allen & Eve, 1968).

2.1.5 Benefits and limitations of micro-teaching

This section examines the benefits and limitations of micro-teaching, primarily based on the review of some related theoretical papers on micro-teaching. Seven groups of benefits of micro-teaching can be identified as follows:

- 1) *Micro-teaching promotes real-time teaching experiences (Remesh, 2013), offers an opportunity for actual practice (Ralph, 2014), a real teaching situation for developing teaching skills (Reddy, 2019), opportunity to apply and practice the pedagogic theories student teachers learned (Azrai, Rini, & Suryanda, 2020).*
- 2) *It has a positive influence on student teachers' consciousness and perceptions about their teaching skills (Ismail, 2011) and helps to develop, improve, sharpen, accomplish, and master specific teaching skills and competencies (Ismail, 2011; Fernadez, 2012; Reddy, 2019; Azrai, Rini, & Suryanda, 2020).*
- 3) *Specifically, it helps student teachers develop timing, planning, asking questions, management of the class, using different materials and examples, and physical appearance during the teaching process (Saban & Çoklar, 2013); improved classroom use of language, introductory, procedure, and closure (Wangchuk, 2019), and lesson planning skill (Ralph, 2014).*
- 4) *Besides, micro-teaching provides expert supervision and constructive feedback on prospective teachers based on their individual differences in teaching behavior; especially with the support of video recordings of their performances (Ralph, 2014; Reddy, 2019).*
- 5) *Micro-teaching allows a chance to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses (Saban & Çoklar, 2013), learn from trainees' peers' performances (Ralph, 2014), and is effective in understanding and modifying teaching behaviors (Reddy, 2019).*
- 6) *It increases the confidence of trainee teachers in their teaching (Ralph, 2014; Reddy, 2019; Wangchuk, 2019).*
- 7) *Finally, the typical characteristics of micro-teaching were also considered as its advantages, summarized by Ralph (2014), including (a) it is a vehicle of continuous training applicable at all stages not only to teachers at the beginning of their career but*

also for more senior teachers, (b) it enables the projection of model instructional skills, (c) it provides repeated practice (re-planning, re-teaching, and re-critique) without adverse consequences to the trainee teacher or his/her students, (d) it reduces the complexity of teaching process as it is scaled-down teaching (reduced class time, class size, and lesson content), and (e) it is a safe environment for prospective teachers to plan, teach, and reflect on their teaching.

However, six groups of limitations of micro-teaching can also be found throughout the literature.

- 1) *Sometimes, micro-teaching does not involve teaching actual students, deviates from normal classroom teaching, requires a special classroom setting, resulting in the lack of real experience regarding classroom conditions at school (Ralph, 2014; Reddy, 2019; Azrai, Rini, & Suryanda, 2020).*
- 2) *Student teachers experience initial nervousness about teaching their peers (Ralph, 2014).*
- 3) *There is limited class time, thus limited opportunities to reflect on trainees' own teaching (Lee & Wu, 2006).*
- 4) *Micro-teaching is skill-oriented (only focusing on a few specific skills), and content is not emphasized (Reddy, 2019).*
- 5) *A large number of trainee teachers cannot be given the opportunity for re-teaching and re-planning (Reddy, 2019).*
- 6) *Finally, micro-teaching is a very time-consuming technique and may raise administrative problems as regards arranging micro-lessons (micro-teaching episodes) (Reddy, 2019).*

In general, the benefits and limitations of micro-teaching will serve as the theoretical basis for the discussion of the study findings later presented in Section 4.

2.1.6 Other aspects of micro-teaching

To justify the study's conceptual framework, which is given in Section 2.3, the design of the questionnaire, the main data collection method in the study, and the implementation of OMT, some other components of micro-teaching are worth considering. Those components include (1) modeling and supervision, (2) feedback, (3) observation, (4) criteria for teaching evaluation, and (5) teaching skills.

First, Cooper and Allen (1971) stressed the importance of modeling, reporting that when videotaped modeling performance demonstrates desired behavior, trainees' ability to acquire modeled teaching skills in a transfer task is enhanced. Likewise, Grossman (2009) placed great value on supervision as part of professional development. Specifically, the important roles of the supervisor or teacher trainer are highlighted during the student teachers' planning stage when the supervisor provides them with the necessary knowledge and skills of teaching in

preparation for their micro-teaching episodes. Additionally, the supervisor helps to point out teacher trainees' teaching strengths and weaknesses in the feedback giving sessions.

Second, feedback is a very effective technique for modifying some teaching behaviors (Cooper & Allen, 1971). It plays a pivotal role in enhancing the preservice teachers' skills by enabling them to pursue a reflective teaching experience, reflecting on their strengths, and rectifying their errors (Wangchuk, 2019). As mentioned earlier, feedback can derive from various sources such as the student teacher's own analysis, students' or peers' reactions, videotapes, and the supervisor (Allen & Eve, 1968). To obtain information about a teaching performance for critique, feedback needs to be closely associated with observation.

Traditionally, classroom observation has occupied a prominent role in terms of its use as a tool by which to judge and subsequently promote good practice (O'Leary, 2004, cited in Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008). Cooper and Allen (1971) summarized three main advantages of observation, including (1) observation broadens the experience of the observer and lessens the number of actual presentations by each trainee to alter his/her teaching behavior, (2) it enables the trainee to assess his/her own teaching behavior more critically, and (3) it results in a variety of creative approaches for presenting similar lessons or concepts. Some of the most common tools for observation are (1) observation forms, (2) detailed written notes on the lesson, (3) audio-recordings for reinforcement of written notes, and (4) video recordings (Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008). However, whatever observation tools are used, teacher trainees need explicit criteria for effective teaching to identify the quality of their teaching (Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008). Examples of criteria for assessment on an observation form were given by Leshem and Bar-Hama (2008, p. 259), consisting of:

- 1) ***instructional components***: *clarity of instructions, sequence of activities, and classroom management;*
- 2) ***affective components***: *giving feedback and reinforcement, awareness of students' needs;*
- 3) ***language components***: *use of L1, oral, and written proficiency;*
- 4) ***cognitive components***: *lesson planning, stating clear objectives, and designing activities to achieve lesson objectives; and*
- 5) ***metacognitive components***: *the ability to analyze the lesson and to reflect upon their professional development.*

Those criteria were considered, together with the teaching skills synthesized by Cooper and Allen (1971) and Reddy (2019) regarding the design of the questionnaire used in the study. The following is the list of teaching skills summarized by Cooper and Allen (1971):

- 1) ***Frequency in asking questions*** (*asking as many questions as possible*)
- 2) ***Probing questions*** (*asking students for more information, asking them to justify their responses, prompting or giving them hints, refocusing their attention on a related issue*)

- or earlier responses)*
- 3) **Higher-order questions** (*prompting students to use reasons/ideas instead of remembering information*)
 - 4) **Divergent questions** (*requiring students to think creatively, asking them to make hypotheses and use their imagination to reorganize concepts into novel patterns*)
 - 5) **Reinforcement** (*using positive reinforcement such as rewards to increase students' participation*)
 - 6) **Recognizing attending behavior** (*observing students' verbal and non-verbal responses so that the teacher can make proper instructional and classroom management decisions*)
 - 7) **Silence and non-verbal cues** (*controlled use of teacher silence to get students to speak and techniques of using non-verbal communication*)
 - 8) **Cueing** (*giving students hints or clues regarding their answering questions or making comments to enhance their perception of success experience*)
 - 9) **Set induction** (*ways of introducing upcoming activities and establishing common frames of reference between the teacher and students to facilitate communication*)
 - 10) **Stimulus variation** (*techniques and behaviors to keep students attentive and alert throughout a lesson*)
 - 11) **Closure** (*helping students to perceive a logical organization of the main points/ideas presented in a lesson and perceive a feeling of achievement through their ability to connect past and new knowledge at the end of a lesson*)
 - 12) **Lecturing** (*delivery techniques, use of visual aids, pacing, etc.*)
 - 13) **Use of examples** (*using examples relevant to students' experience and knowledge, relating examples to the principles or ideas being taught, asking students to give examples that illustrate the points of teaching to check their understanding or whether lesson objectives are met, and using analogies or metaphors to relate the unknown to the known*)
 - 14) **Planned repetition** (*clarifying and reinforcing major ideas, keywords, principles or concepts in a lecture or discussion*)
 - 15) **Completeness of communication** (*sensitivity training on the importance and difficulty of being understood, helping teaching to be more responsive to possible miscommunication*)

Reddy (2019) also gave a list of teaching skills for micro-teaching, most of which overlap Cooper and Allen's (1971) such as (1) Introduction skill (Set induction), (2) Reinforcement, (3) Skill of stimulus variation, (4) Skill of probing questions, (5) Silence and nonverbal cues, and (6) Skill of achieving closure. The remaining additional teaching skills are presented below.

- 1) **Lesson planning** (with clear-cut objectives and an appropriate planned sequence. The content should be concise, appropriate, relevant, and could cover the specified duration.)
- 2) **Presentation and explanation skills** (Teacher enthusiasm, explanation, narration, giving appropriate illustrations and examples, planned repetition, and encouraging group discussion wherever necessary. The trainee teacher should be able to explain the concept by simple, relevant, rightly, and interesting examples to increase students' understanding.)
- 3) **The skill of stimulus variation** (The effective components of the skill are gestures (hand, facial, body), change in the speech pattern, voice variation and modulation (pitch, volume, speed), change in the interaction pattern, focusing, pausing movement, and emphasis on significant points) (added description from Reddy (2019))
- 4) **Proper use of audio-visual aids** (the key components for this skill are neatness, readability, adequate spacing, distinct size, proper spacing between words and lines, and use of relevant words or phrases)
- 5) **The skill of black-board writing** (The components of the skill of black-board writing: legibility (easy to read), size and alignment (in a straight line), highlighting main points, utilization of the space, black-board summary, correctness, the position of the teacher, contact with students.)
- 6) **Classroom management** (Providing proper instructions, restricting inappropriate behavior, and calling the students by name are essentials of this skill.)

Overall, the two lists of teaching skills above serve as the frameworks of reference regarding the design of questionnaire items on teaching competencies which are discussed later in Section 3.4.

2.2 Online micro-teaching (OMT) and relevant studies

This section explores how micro-teaching can be conducted online through a review of the most related studies.

It appears that no specific definition of online micro-teaching (OMT) can be found in the literature. However, a thorough review reveals four main ways in which micro-teaching takes place, highly associated with online tools for teaching. Online tools refer to any kinds of applications, programs, or software that are used on the Internet. Son (2011) classified online tools for language teaching into 12 categories, including:

- 1) **Learning/content management systems (LMSs/CMSs):** Blackboard, Drupal, Joomla, Moodle, and Sakai
- 2) **Communication tools:** Gmail, Skype, TokBox, Windows Live Messenger, Yahoo! Messenger, Jabberwacky, Verbot, MyBB, phpBBTangler, and Voxopop
- 3) **Live and virtual worlds:** Elluminate, Livestream, OpenSimulator, ActiveWorlds, Second

Life, Ustream, Wimba Classroom, and WiZiQ

- 4) **Social networking and bookmarking sites:** *Delicious, Diigo, Elgg, Facebook, Grouply, MySpace, Ning, SocialGo, LinkedIn, Twitter, Lang-8, and Livemocha*
- 5) **Blogs and wikis:** *Blogger, Edmodo, Edublogs, LiveJournal, WordPress.com, PBWorks, Wikispaces, and Penzu*
- 6) **Presentation tools:** *280 Slides, Animoto, Empresser, Prezi, SlideRocket, and Zoho*
- 7) **Resource sharing tools:** *Google Docs, TitanPad, Zoho Writer, Box.net, Dropbox, VoiceThread, Xtranormal, Flickr, Picasa, MyPodcast, PodOmatic, Glogster, Screenr, Slideshare, PhotoPeach, Dipity, OurStory, Jing, SchoolTube, TeacherTube, VideoPress, Vimeo, WatchKnow, and YouTube*
- 8) **Website creation sites:** *Google Sites, Jimdo, KompoZer, Mahara, Movable Type, SnapPages, Weebly, Webnode, Webs, and Wix*
- 9) **Web exercise creation tools:** *ContentGenerator, SMILE, ESL Video, JClic, Hot Potatoes, Quia, Lingt and Listen and Write*
- 10) **Web search engines:** *Ask.com, Bing, Google, and Yahoo! Search*
- 11) **Dictionaries and concordances:** *Dictionary.com, Merriam-Webster Online, YourDictionary.com, Compleat Lexical Tutor, Forvo, Howjsay, Visuwords, OneLook Dictionary Search, and VLC Web Concordancer*
- 12) **Utilities:** *CalculateMe, CalendarFly, Doodle, ClustrMaps, Currency Converter, Dvolver Moviemaker, Google Earth, Lesson Writer, Storybird, Cacao, Mindmeister, Mindomo, Remember the milk, SurveyMonkey, Voki, Time and Date, TinyURL.com, W3C Link Checker, Wallwisher, Wayback Machine, and Wordle*

The above categorization helps to give an overview of online tools to facilitate a better understanding of how any tools can be integrated into a micro-teaching procedure or episode. An emphasis on the implementation of micro-teaching episodes in the following research examples is placed; only the one that most fits the operational definition of OMT in the current study is closely reviewed.

First, Kelleci, Kulaksiz, and Pala's study (2018) illustrate the first way of how micro-teaching is conducted. The focus of the study is social network-supported micro-teaching (SNSM) which takes place in a two-phase process. In the planning phase, preservice teachers prepared lesson plans and posted them in a Facebook group for the supervisor's feedback. In the implementation stage, preservice teachers conducted micro-teaching sessions face-to-face in real classroom settings. They taught their peers, played the students' roles, the lesson in their revised lesson plans, and received feedback from their supervisor and peers at the end of the second stage. Google Drive, Google Forms, and Spreadsheets were used to upload the lesson plans in the Facebook group as well as to exchange feedback on the lesson plans and micro-teaching. Overall, despite the use of online tools, micro-teaching in this study, with no detailed

description, still took place face-to-face in real classroom settings, as traditionally depicted.

The next three studies show the second way of carrying out micro-teaching episodes, all of which were video-recorded and posted on an online platform. Specifically, Kusmawan (2017) considered micro-teaching in his study as OMT consisting of four key elements, namely video recordings, expert judgment, teacher judgment, and discussion forums. Elementary teacher participants of the study video-recorded their best teaching strategies within five to six minutes, while experts and other teachers gave their judgments on those micro-teaching episodes based on the given guidelines. All those video recordings and experts' and teachers' judgments were posted into the Smart Teacher Portal, created in 2011 with support from the World Bank under the program of Better Education through the Reformed Management and Universal Teacher Upgrading Project (BERMUTU). Afterward, a moderator, usually a lecturer knowledgeable about micro-teaching, moderated discussion forums in the same portal.

In Bodis, Reed, and Kharchenko's study (2020), however, the core component of the micro-teaching process is VoiceThread, a multimodal asynchronous computer-mediated communication tool that provides a space for students to upload their work in a secure environment, as well as receive feedback both from their teachers and peers. To prepare the preservice teachers for their final assessment of video-recording a mini-lesson and writing a self-reflection paper on their teaching, two VoiceThread micro-teaching tasks were assigned. VoiceThread task 1 asked the preservice teachers to video-record a lesson teaching a language skill or aspect such as pronunciation, and task 2 teaching any language focus. The instructors made modeling videos of micro-teaching samples, showed the technical capabilities of VoiceThread, and gave feedback. In short, all the video recordings, feedback, and self-reflection practice assignments were exchanged via VoiceThread. In the next study by Roza (2021), the video conferencing application Zoom was used for theory sessions on micro-teaching skills, while YouTube was the channel for student teachers to post their video-recorded micro-teaching lessons. Unfortunately, no detailed description of micro-teaching implementation was given in the study.

The last two studies demonstrate how micro-teaching can be conducted online using the synchronous mode of interaction but in two different manners. Ledger and Fischetti (2020) employed micro-teaching 2.0 in their study. Micro-teaching 2.0 refers to traditional micro-teaching in combination with SimLab HITL simulation technology as a virtual classroom. In simulation technologies, HITL refers to a human interactor working behind the scenes to enable synchronous voice and body responses. An HITL learning environment consists of four components: an interactor (trained improvisation actors and puppeteers to control the actions and responses of the avatars), avatars (symbols representing students in the virtual classroom), students (student teachers), and observers (experts or supervisors/instructors) connected via computer and Internet access. Each micro-teaching experience is recorded for feedback and self-reflection, but how feedback and self-reflection were provided was not described. Besides, some other examples of simulation technologies for micro-teaching include Kindergarten Classroom, simSchool, Second Life, TeachLivE™, Mursion™, and SimLab™ (Ledger &

Fischetti, 2020).

Unlike Ledger and Fischetti (2020), Ersin, Atay, and Mede (2020) studied micro-teaching conducted synchronously online with real people, not in a virtual classroom with avatars. This makes their study the most similar to the current one; therefore, it deserves a closer examination than the others above. The participants of the study were preservice teachers of an English Education program offered by a state university in Turkey. Due to Covid-19 outbreak, their theory sessions switched into the online mode via Zoom, and so did their micro-teaching sessions, as part of the so-called "e-practicum" followed by "e-mentoring". The study is aimed to explore the "e-practicum" and "e-mentoring" from the perspectives of the preservice teachers. Three major phases of the study include (i) preparation and construction phase before the "e-practicum", (ii) the "e-practicum" itself, and (iii) the "e-mentoring" provided to preservice teachers afterward. In the first stage, six volunteer preservice teachers designed their lesson plans on the topics and content given on the syllabus for feedback from their e-mentor, a university supervisor. All communication took place in a WhatsApp group created by the e-mentor earlier. The "e-practicum" micro-teaching consisted of three forty-minute Zoom sessions. The sessions were held in a row with ten-minute breaks in between. During the sessions, four preservice teachers conducted reading lessons, and two of them speaking lessons to teach English as a foreign language. Right after the "e-practicum" micro-teaching sessions, the students (student teachers' peers) shared their reflections, detailed feedback, and comments on the student teachers' micro-teachings in the WhatsApp group. Finally, the e-mentoring was provided by the e-mentor to the student teachers one day after the "e-practicum" micro-teaching sessions. The e-mentor organized three forty-minute Zoom sessions for this purpose. The e-mentor identified the strengths and weaknesses of each student teacher's micro-teaching performance, making suggestions on problematic areas for improvement. Before the end of the "e-mentoring" sessions, the student teachers were asked to write their feelings and thoughts about "e-mentoring" in the WhatsApp group.

The findings from two interviews with the student teachers before and after the "e-practicum" revealed the participants' feelings and thoughts about the "e-practicum" and "e-mentoring". Generally, the participants held a positive attitude towards the "e-practicum" and "e-mentoring", finding them useful, beneficial, achievable, and feasible. They also highlighted the importance of peers' reflections and feedback, the e-mentor's theoretical instructions, practical support, and feedback on micro-teaching sessions, which resonates with the ideas by Cooper and Allen (1971), Wangchuk (2009), and Grossman (2009) as mentioned earlier. In addition, four benefits the preservice teachers could gain from the "e-practicum" and "e-mentoring" include (1) experiencing online teaching practice (aligned with Remesh, 2013; Ralph, 2014; Reddy, 2019; Azrai, Rini, & Suryanda, 2020), (2) developing teaching skills and competences (aligned with Ismail, 2011; Fernandez, 2012; Reddy, 2019; Azrai, Rini, & Suryanda, 2020), (3) reducing their teaching anxiety, and boosting their confidence and readiness in teaching (aligned with Ralph, 2014; Reddy, 2019; Wangchuk, 2019) and teaching online, and (4) learning how to deal with problems posed in online teaching.

Apart from the benefits, during their micro-teaching sessions, the participants faced two main difficulties that are usually faced by teachers in online education: classroom management and technical problems. The participants said they had to struggle with how to keep the students engaged, how to prevent daydreaming, and how to control students' attention span. This problem is also one of the challenges of online teaching and learning given by Gillett-Swan (2017), and Yusuf and Jihan (2020). Further, the listed technical problems in the study entail not being able to broadcast the sound of the video recording, not being able to see the chatbox when they shared their screen or not being able to unmute the students on time, while Yusuf and Jihan (2020) emphasized both teachers' and students' limited access to the Internet. Three main suggestions were also made by the student teachers to address their problems. They suggested that (1) student teachers possess a calm attitude, (2) they make use of the virtues of online tools to facilitate the learning process, and (3) they build up their virtual experience and skills. The last suggestion is in line with Darling-Hammond's (2010, cited in Diana, 2013) recommendation, who believed that access to technology and training with technology significantly influences a teacher's ability to integrate technology into the classroom. Likewise, Gillett-Swan (2017) emphasized step-by-step instructions for how to access and use each of the platforms and technologies as one of the ways to overcome challenges of online teaching and learning, while Yusuf and Jihan (2020) highlighted the importance of providing workshops or training programs on management of online classes for educators.

Additionally, research on the disadvantages or challenges of online learning and teaching in the Vietnamese context is worth considering because OMT in the current study was conducted in Vietnam. For example, Nguyen and Duong (2021) explored the challenges facing students during their online learning using Microsoft Teams, which is a video conferencing application like Google Meet. The challenges include (1) Internet connection, (2) learning equipment (errors of laptop or Microsoft Teams software), (3) power failure, (4) lack of computer skills, (5) working in groups, and (6) students' having no self-motivation to study online. Meanwhile, Hoang and Le (2021) investigated Vietnamese teachers' challenges with their online teaching. Specifically, they claimed problems with (1) teachers' technology competence, (2) their virtual classroom management, (3) heavy workload, (4) students' motivation in online learning, (5) students' technology competence and technical support, (6) the institution's purposes and strategies of online teaching implementation (lack of training workshops on what kinds of tools they should use for their teaching, assessing, and even monitoring their virtual classes).

Further, seven main elements for effective online English teaching gleaned from Le's study (2021) encompass (1) teaching method, (2) course content, (3) learning activities (updated news delivery, games, polls, and student presentations), (4) myriad interaction (short questions), (5) learning incentives (bonus marks), (6) supportive learning environment (teacher voice, praise, encouragement, good teacher-student and student-student relationships, turning on webcams), and (7) supplementary materials. She also made four recommendations on providing effective online teaching, namely (1) structuring an effective course design, (2) creating community and engagement, (3) facilitating online interaction, and (4) supplying adequate learning support. It

can be implied from those four suggestions that the teacher plays an important role in delivering an effective online lesson, which is also agreed by Ngo (2021), who emphasized the teacher's role and their adequate training in online teaching to ensure students' engagement during online teaching and learning. The aforementioned findings by Vietnamese authors serve as a framework of reference for the questionnaire design, especially regarding the students' difficulties during their OMT and the discussion of the current study's findings.

In short, micro-teaching can be conducted online in four main ways: (1) face-to-face micro-teaching with technology-assisted administration process such as exchanging materials and feedback, (2) video-recorded micro-teaching lessons with technology-supported materials and feedback exchanges, (3) synchronously online micro-teaching in a virtual classroom with avatars moderated by an interactor, and (4) synchronously online micro-teaching with real people. Micro-teaching in the current study was conducted in a fourth way, and very few similar studies can be found in the Vietnamese context. Therefore, the current study is expected to bridge such a gap, thus contributing to research on OMT in Vietnam.

2.3 Conceptual framework of the study

Based on the review of micro-teaching and how micro-teaching can be conducted online in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, OMT in the current study refers to a combination of traditional micro-teaching with the support of online tools, namely a video conferencing program such as Google Meet for theory-oriented and micro-teaching sessions, and a learning management system, Google Classroom, to manage the courses, to exchange materials and discussions between the teacher and students. A detailed description of OMT episodes is given in Section 3.3.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Research setting and participants

The study was conducted at the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature (EF), University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (USSH, VNUHCM). With the purposive sampling method, the participants were selected based on two main criteria: (1) they attended at least one of the teaching-related courses, namely Teaching Methodology, Teaching Practice 1, 2, or 3, undertaken by the researcher, and (2) they experienced OMT at the end of the course. Further, participants of the study enrolled in different study programs at the EF, including Standard, High-quality, and TESOL Certificate. However, the syllabuses for Teaching Methodology (TM), Teaching Practice (TP) 1, 2, or 3 are quite similar across the programs except that Teaching Practice 3 is only delivered in TESOL Certificate Program. Table 1 gives a brief description of the participants' backgrounds based on the data from questions 1 to 5 in the questionnaire.

Table 1. Participants' background information (N=100)

Category	Items	Count/ Percentage (%)	Category	Items	Count/ Percentage (%)
Age	18-19	6	Courses taken	Teaching Methodology	86
	20-21	74		Teaching Practice 1	29
	22-over	20		Teaching Practice 2	12
Gender	Male	22		Teaching Practice 3	10
	Female	78		Using IT in Language Teaching	33
Year of study	Second-year	47		Teaching English to Young Learners	24
	Third-year	26		Materials Development for Language Teaching	29
	Fourth-year	15		Classroom-based Assessment	5
	Graduate	12			
	Study program	Standard		69	
High-quality		28			
TESOL Certificate		10			

3.2 Research design and questions

To explore the EF students' perspectives on their OMT experiences, a survey research design was employed because surveys are useful for gathering factual information, data on attitudes and preferences, beliefs and predictions, behavior, and experiences – both past and present (Weisberg, Krosnick, & Bowen, 1996, cited in Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used as regards data collection and analysis, which is further elaborated in Section 3.4. To achieve the study aim, three main research questions (RQ) were raised:

- (1) *What and how did the EF students learn from their online micro-teaching experience?*
- (2) *What difficulties did they encounter during their online micro-teaching experience?*
- (3) *What are their suggestions on how to improve online micro-teaching sessions?*

3.3 Description of OMT sessions in this study

The following describes how the researcher implemented OMT in her classes. During the teaching-related courses, namely Teaching Methodology (TM) and Teaching Practice (TP) 1, 2, and 3, the researcher-cum-teacher-in-charge provided knowledge and instructions on English language teaching approaches, methods, and techniques. Once theory sessions were finished, the researcher guided the students to design their lesson plans in groups focusing on one aspect such as Grammar or Pronunciation or one of the four skills such as Listening or Speaking. Vocabulary teaching was recommended to be integrated into any lesson. The students posted their lesson plans in Google Classroom for the teacher's feedback. The students then delivered their OMT sessions, teaching their revised lesson plans as one final assessment task at the end of the courses. Afterward, those from the TM course took a written final exam, while those from TP courses submitted a reflection paper as a substitute for the final.

As regards OMT sessions, students, in groups, took turns to deliver their micro-teaching (OMT groups) within the given time limit while some others observed their peers (peer observation-PO-groups), and the rest played the role of students (volunteer student-VS-groups). Because TM courses are more theory-oriented than practice-oriented (TP 1, 2, and 3), their micro-teaching duration for TM students is less than for TP 1, 2, and 3 students. Moreover, the researcher utilized the existing micro-teaching evaluation form (also observation form) designed by herself and approved by the EF for those teaching-related courses. There are four main areas for assessment on the form, including (1) lesson effectiveness, (2) teacher's delivery, (3) teacher's language use, and (4) teacher's professionalism. Meanwhile, the reflection form for volunteer student groups consists of four open-ended questions, including (1) What did you learn? (2) What can you do after the lesson? (in relation to the lesson focus) (3) What do you like and dislike the most about the lesson? And (4) What suggestions/recommendations do you make to help improve the lesson? Table 2 gives a more detailed description of OMT episodes based on the conceptual framework of the study.

Table 2. Description of an OMT session (conducted by the researcher)

1. Characteristics	
(1) <i>Delivery mode</i> : synchronous, via Google Meet (2) <i>Lesson focus (based on the approved Lesson plan)</i> : Grammar, Pronunciation, Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, (+ Vocabulary) (3) <i>Duration (per group)</i> : 45 minutes (TM), 60 minutes (TP 1&2), & 120 minutes (TP3) (4) <i>Duration (per student teacher)</i> : 9 or 12 minutes (TM), 15 or 20 minutes (TP 1&2), & 30 minutes (TP3) (5) <i>Student roles</i> : OMT groups, PO groups, & VS groups (6) <i>Forms</i> : the micro-teaching evaluation form, also used as the observation form (for the teacher-in-charge and observers), & a reflection form (for volunteer students) (7) <i>Feedback</i> : feedback based on the given forms (verbally given or typed in the chatbox), directly given at the end of each OMT session	
2. Procedure for an OMT episode	
Before OMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>OMT groups</i>: prepare the materials & equipment for their lesson • <i>PO groups</i>: prepare micro-teaching evaluation (PO) forms • <i>VS groups</i>: get ready to join the lesson • <i>Teacher-in-charge</i>: prepare micro-teaching evaluation (PO) forms
During OMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>OMT groups</i>: take turns to teach • <i>PO groups</i>: observe student teachers & take notes • <i>VS groups</i>: participate in the lesson • <i>Teacher-in-charge</i>: observe and evaluate
After OMT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>OMT groups</i>: take notes of feedback • <i>PO groups</i>: give feedback on their peers • <i>VS groups</i>: give feedback on the student teachers • <i>Teacher-in-charge</i>: give final comments on each student teacher's strengths & weaknesses, feedback on the demonstration lesson, the lesson plan, & provide suggestions for improvement

3.4 Data collection and analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the survey. A questionnaire designed on Google Forms was delivered to 142 students who finished at least one of the teaching-related courses, namely TM, TP 1, 2, or 3, which the researcher was in charge of, but only 100 participants submitted their responses. The questionnaire consists of 17 questions. A brief description of 17 questions is given in Table 3. For quantitative data from questions 9 to 15, descriptive analysis was employed, focusing on measures of frequency. Meanwhile, qualitative data collected from questions 16 and 17 were analyzed using thematic analysis.

Table 3. Description of 17 questions in the questionnaire

Question (Q)	Type of question	Purpose
Q1→Q5	Closed-ended (Multiple choice)	Participants' background information
Q6→Q8	Closed-ended (Checkboxes)	Participants' OMT experience
Q9→ Q13	Closed-ended (Checkboxes)	What participants learned from OMT (RQ1)
Q14	Closed-ended (Ranking)	How participants learned from OMT (RQ1)
Q15	Closed-ended (Checkboxes)	What difficulties participants faced during OMT (RQ2)
Q16→Q17	Open-ended (Short answers)	Participants' suggestions on how to improve OMT (RQ3)

The following justifies the statements used in the questionnaire. For questions 10 to 13, the participants were given a list of statements beginning with “I am able to” followed by specific actions they could do during the OMT to describe their teaching competencies. The rationale for those statements consists of (1) the course syllabus, (2) the micro-teaching evaluation form, (3) the teacher’s instructions and supervision, and (4) the teaching skills (Cooper & Allen, 1971; Reddy, 2019) and observation criteria (Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008), reviewed in Section 2.1.6. Table 4 presents the alignment between the teaching competencies in the questionnaire and those reviewed in the literature. However, though some skills or competencies such as selecting, designing, and using materials, problem-solving, and demonstrating teacher's characteristics such as dressing and appropriate attitude, and teacher preparation do not receive theoretical support from previous studies, they are still worth exploring on the grounds of the course syllabus, the micro-teaching evaluation form, and the teacher’s instructions and supervision.

Table 4. Alignment between the teaching competencies in the questionnaire and teaching skills (Cooper & Allen, 1971; Reddy, 2019) and observation criteria (Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008)

Teaching competencies in the questionnaire	Reviewed ideas in Section 2.1.6	Relevant authors
(1) Lesson planning & Teaching techniques	Lesson planning, sequence of activities, setting clear objectives, & designing activities to achieve lesson objectives	Leshem & Bar-Hama (2008)
	Lesson planning skill	Reddy (2019)
	Proper use of audio-visual aids	Reddy, 2019
	Introduction skill (set induction) & skill of achieving closure	Cooper & Allen (1971) Reddy (2019)
(2) Teacher's delivery & Language use	Clarity of instructions, giving feedback and reinforcement	Leshem & Bar-Hama (2008)
	Reinforcement, skill of stimulus variation, skill of probing questions, & silence and nonverbal cues	Cooper & Allen (1971) Reddy (2019)
	Presentation and explanation skills	Reddy (2019)
	Frequency in asking questions, higher-order questions, divergent questions, cueing, lecturing, use of examples, planned repetition, & completeness of communication	Cooper & Allen (1971)
	Oral and written proficiency	Leshem & Bar-Hama (2008)
(3) Teacher's Professionalism	Recognizing attending behavior	Cooper & Allen (1971)
	Classroom management	Leshem & Bar-Hama (2008)
	Classroom management	Reddy (2019)

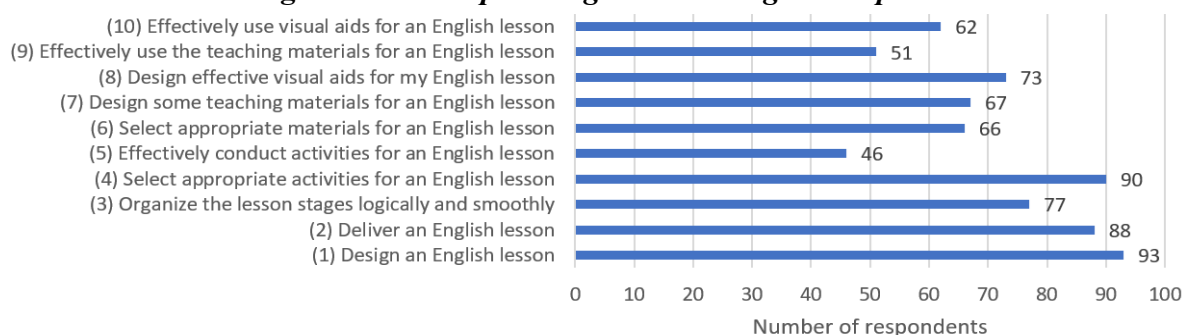
Similarly, a list of "I am able to" statements was included to describe what the participants could do with technology to conduct their OMT, labeled as Digital competence. The statements were made based on the three main components of an online classroom, including (1) delivery and reception of information content, (2) interaction between, among students and teacher, and (3) student rehearsal and practice (Berge, 2000). To better understand how the participants learned what they thought they could learn, question 14 asked the participants to rank the importance of different components of micro-teaching, as discussed in Sections 2.1.5 and 2.1.6. Finally, the statements for students' difficulties in question 15 are primarily gleaned from studies by Gillett-Swan (2017), Ersin, Atay, and Mede (2020), Yusuf and Jihan (2020), Nguyen and Duong (2021), Hoang and Le (2021), and Le (2021).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 What and how the EF students learned from their OMT experience

To answer question 9 "What did you learn from your OMT experience?", 98% of the respondents selected "Teaching competence" and 74% "Digital competence." Data from the participant's responses to questions 10 to 13 show that all participants claimed they could learn both teaching and digital competencies to varying degrees. For Lesson planning & Teaching techniques, a high percentage of respondents, between 77% and 93%, said they could design and organize the lesson and select activities. A little more than half of them, from 62% to 73% said they could select and design materials and effectively design and use visual aids. However, a small number of respondents, 46% and 51%, though they could effectively conduct the activities and effectively use the teaching materials, respectively. Figure 2 illustrates the data for Lesson planning and teaching techniques.

Figure 2. Lesson planning and teaching techniques



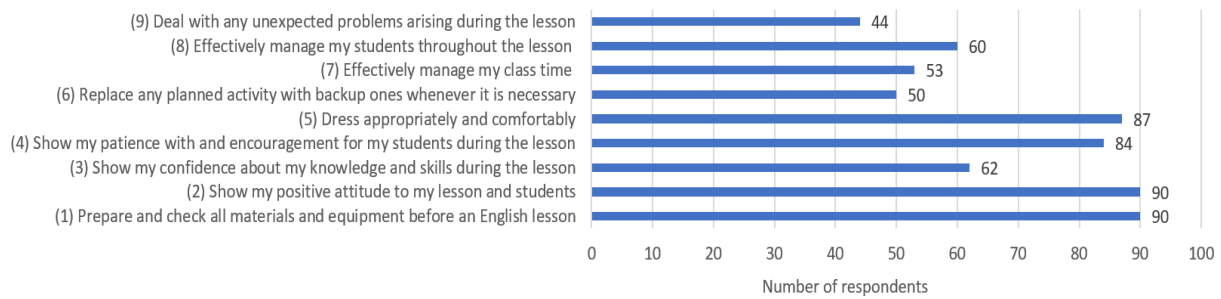
As regards Teacher's delivery and Language use, a high proportion of participants, between 76 and 80%, believed they could present adequate and relevant theory and give appropriate instructions during the lesson. Around 60% to 70% of the respondents thought they could efficiently employ their presentation skills, including delivery manner, body language, voice quality, background avatar, language use, interaction with their students via examples, CCQs (concept checking questions), explanations, answers, feedback and comments, and student encouragement. Finally, approximately less than 50% seemed not to be confident about their abilities to (1) control their speaking rate and amount, teaching pace, tone of voice, (2) promote understanding between teacher-students, (3) relate students to their background knowledge/personal life, (3) promote student-student interaction and collaboration, and (4) draw students' attention to the lesson. Table 5 illustrates the data for Teacher's delivery & Language use.

Table 5. Teacher's delivery & Language use

"I am able to" statement	Count/ Percentage (%)
(1) Present adequate and relevant theory on the taught subject	78
(2) Deliver my lecture smoothly and adequately in terms of speaking rate and teaching pace	54
(3) Deliver my lecture in an enthusiastic, communicative, and lively manner	65
(4) Appropriately use my body language (e.g., eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures)	60
(5) Select a formal and appropriate background in my avatar (OMT)	67
(6) Effectively use my voice (e.g., loud, and clear enough, and easy to follow)	68
(7) Effectively use my tone of voice (e.g., interesting, engaging, and varied)	49
(8) Understand my students well (e.g., what they are saying, what they mean)	57
(9) Be well understood by my students (e.g., what I am saying, what I mean)	52
(10) Use accurate and easy-to-understand English pronunciation	64
(11) Use accurate and easy-to-understand English grammar	72
(12) Use schema theory (e.g., asking questions) to activate my students' prior and existing knowledge about the taught subject	50
(13) Give adequate examples to illustrate the theory as well as the exercises in an English lesson	65
(14) Balance teacher talking time and student talking time	40
(15) Give clear and easy-to-follow instructions	80
(16) Relate the lesson (e.g., theory, vocabulary) to students' personal life (i.e., personalization)	47
(17) Provide social/background knowledge related to the lesson topic	42
(18) Use ICQs (instruction checking questions) to check students' understanding of the instructions for an activity or a task	76
(19) Use CCQs (concept checking questions) to check students' understanding of new concepts or theory in an English lesson	65
(20) Draw students' attention (e.g., asking checking questions) to the lesson when they show some signs of distraction or boredom	44
(21) Give students adequate feedback and comments during the exercise correction	60
(22) Give students adequate explanations and answers for their questions	65
(23) Encourage students to participate in the class activities	60
(24) Promote student-student interaction and collaboration (e.g., by asking them to work in pairs or groups)	50

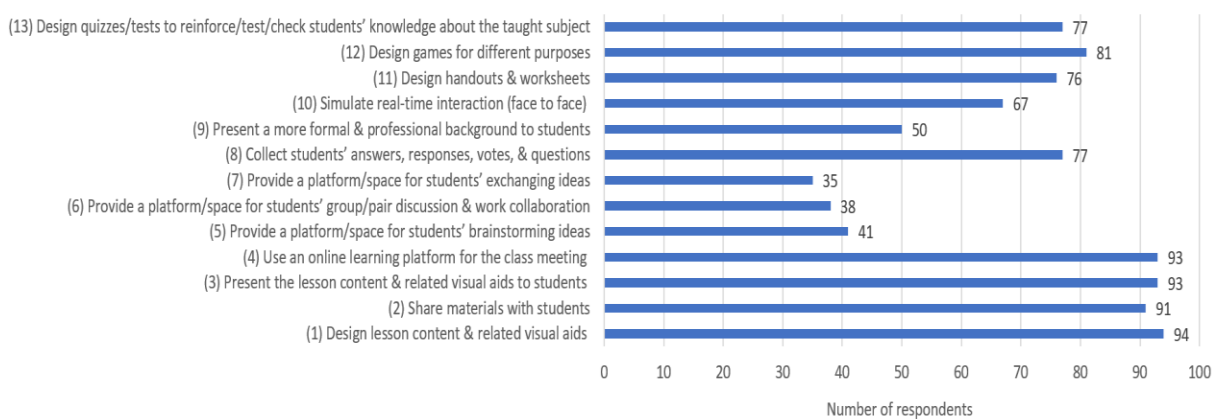
When it comes to Teacher's professionalism, a large number of respondents, from 84% to 90%, believed in their abilities in preparation, showing appropriate attitudes and dressing style during the OMT. 60% and 62% of the participants said they could show their confident demeanor and manage their students, while nearly half thought they could manage the class time and deal with unexpected problems. Figure 3 illustrates the data for Teacher's professionalism.

Figure 3. Teacher’s professionalism



Finally, the participants revealed how they could use technology during their OMT episodes. Specifically, between 76% and 94% said they could use technology to design and present the lesson content, a little over half can simulate real-life and real-time interaction, while below 50% can provide effective platforms for students' collaboration. The data for Digital competence is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Digital competence



Overall, what the participants could learn from OMT corroborates the findings yielded in the study by Ersin, Atay, and Mede (2020) in a way that OMT helps the student teachers to develop their teaching skills and competencies, which is also one of the key benefits of micro-teaching (Ismail, 2011; Fernandez, 2012; Reddy, 2019; Azrai, Rini, & Suryanda, 2020). Further, the student teachers believed they could handle an online classroom, which is aligned with Ersin, Atay, and Mede’s findings (2020), with how they could apply technology to fulfill the three main functions of an online classroom (delivery and reception of information-content, interaction between, among students and teacher, and student rehearsal and practice), put forward by Berge (2000).

Next, question 14, whose results are displayed in Table 6, was raised to answer how the participants learned from their OMT episodes. As shown in Table 6, the most important way that helps the student teachers to learn their teaching and digital competencies is by receiving feedback from the teacher, observers, and volunteer students, one of the biggest strengths of micro-teaching (aligned with Cooper & Allen, 1971; Ralph, 2014; Wangchuk, 2019; Reddy, 2019). The second most important way is by following the teacher’s instructions and guidelines,

which is aligned with the emphasis of the instructor/teacher's role in micro-teaching (aligned with Cooper & Allen, 1971; Grossman 2009; Ralph, 2014; Reddy, 2019). The next three ways, in a decreasing order of importance, include the experience of micro-teaching itself, another benefit of micro-teaching aligned with Remesh (2013) and Ralph (2014), self-reflection, and observation and giving feedback (or evaluating on each other's OMT performances), which are believed to be important and useful in micro-teaching by previous authors such as Cooper and Allen (1971), O'Leary (2004, cited in Leshem & Bar-Hama, 2008), Saban and Çoklar (2013), and Ralph (2014). Finally, the participants could learn from OMT thanks to the criteria for OMT provided by the teacher, which resonates with the importance Leshem and Bar-Hama (2008) placed on the criteria for MT evaluation to ensure the quality of micro-teaching sessions.

Table 6. The levels of importance of how student teachers learned from OMT

Items	Total frequency	Levels of importance
By observing and giving feedback on the other peers' teaching	300	5
By delivering an online micro-teaching section	383	3
By using the criteria for OMT evaluation provided by the teacher	254	6
By receiving feedback from the teacher, observers, & volunteer students	439	1
By following the teacher's instructions & guidelines	390	2
By self-reflecting on my own teaching after OMT & during my peer observation	334	4

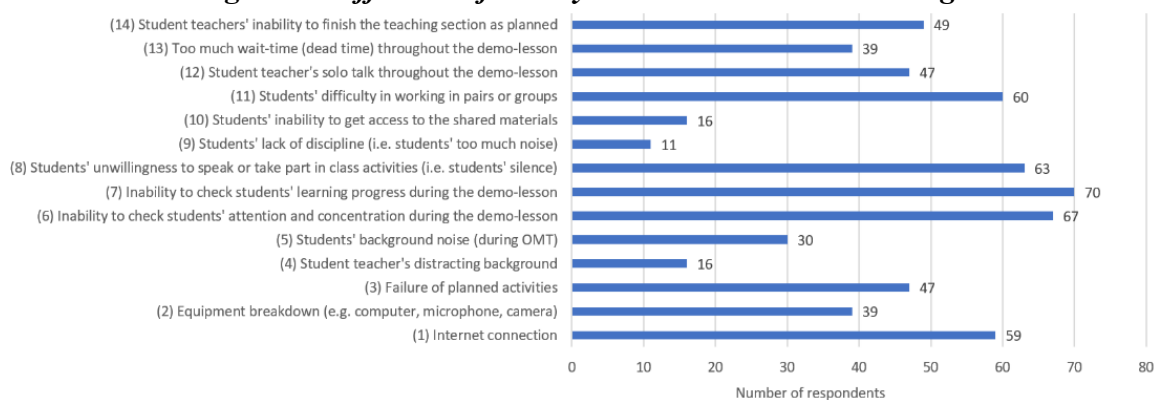
4.2 What difficulties the EF students encountered during their OMT experience

The data from question 15, presented in Figure 5, reveal two main kinds of difficulties student teachers face during their OMT, including mostly online teaching-related and technology-related. Very few participants (11% to 30%) had difficulties with (1) the student teacher's distracting background, (2) students' background noise and lack of discipline, and (3) their inability to get access to materials. The next group of respondents, occupying from 39% to 49%, had difficulty in dealing with (1) failed activities, (2) teacher's solo talk, (3) too much wait-time, (4) their inability to finish the teaching section as scheduled, and (5) their equipment. The largest group of participants, which makes up 59% to 70%, a not so high percentage though, said they faced such challenges as (1) how to check students' progress/attention/concentration, (2) students' unwillingness to work, and students' difficulty with collaboration, and (3) the Internet connection. In general, the participants' greatest difficulties during OMT can be categorized into three big groups, which are also faced by in-service teachers while teaching online, including (1) checking students' learning progress/attention/concentration (aligned with Gillett-Swan, 2017; Yusuf & Jihan, 2020; Ersin, Atay, & Mede, 2020; Hoang & Le, 2021), (2) promoting students' participation, engagement, and collaboration (aligned with Yusuf & Jihan,

2020; Nguyen & Duong, 2021), and (3) technical problems (Internet connection & teaching equipment) (aligned with Yusuf & Jihan, 2020; Nguyen & Duong, 2021).

In addition, Gillett-swain (2017) believed that digital literacy skills can be a hindrance to the online learning environment; however, the results above might implicate that the student teachers do not have much trouble with those skills. Also, the participants' suggestions, presented in Section 4.3, may help address the difficulties they encountered during OMT.

Figure 5. Difficulties faced by the student teachers during OMT



4.3 What suggestions the EF students made on improving OMT sessions

The participants' suggestions can be categorized into suggested tools for OMT, suggestions on Teaching competence (TC) and Digital competence (DC). The top ten suggestions on Teaching and Digital competence from question 16's data are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Top ten suggestions on OMT

Suggestion	Category	Frequency
1. Have backup plans in case of problems	TC & DC	15
2. Design interesting activities (fun icebreakers, games)	TC	13
3. Design some activities for students to interact with each other easily	TC	12
4. Check equipment carefully before start	DC	10
5. Give rewards/ bonuses for voluntary/correct answers	TC	10
6. Call students unexpectedly rather than let them volunteer at all times (use Wheel of names, let more students speak)	TC	10
7. Ask students to turn on their camera	TC	8
8. Ask more ICQs and CCQs	TC	7
9. Familiarize the student teachers with the platforms and tools before OMT / rehearse OMT with timekeeping	TC	5
10. Give students quick quizzes (that need to be answered in 3 or 4 minutes) to stimulate their concentration	TC	5

The other recommendations mentioned once, twice or three times include: (1) show students where they can get technical support, (2) send materials to students in advance, (3) check all

the links and sources for materials carefully before getting started, (4) engage students: use videos and varied activities, do not conduct too many activities, use the chatbox, let students lead the activities, create a friendly learning environment, give students time for questions and practice, and improve the quality of Teacher Talking Time (TTT) by giving more hints and prompts to the teacher's questions, repeating the key points, presenting the theory briefly, and giving detailed and easy-to-follow instructions, and (5) manage the classroom by letting students host the online meeting room, asking students to turn off their microphones, sometimes asking them to share screen to check their attention, selecting an appropriate background, being well-dressed, and giving students more time to fix technical problems.

Overall, the participants' suggestions, some of which are in line with some previous authors', center around Teaching competence, especially in the context of online teaching and learning. All those suggestions can be grouped into:

- (1) backup plans;
- (2) preparation (equipment and materials);
- (3) training and rehearsal with tools and OMT (aligned with Darling-Hammond, 2010, cited in Diana, 2013; Gillett-Swan, 2017; Yusuf & Jihan, 2020; Ngo, 2021);
- (4) engagement methods: a) activities (interesting, varied, sufficient) and “content beyond lectures” (e.g., games, quizzes, and videos) (aligned with Le, 2021), b) collaboration and practice tasks (aligned with Le, 2021), c) rewards/bonuses (aligned with Le, 2021), d) ICQs/CCQs, e) sudden calls/screen check, f) students' camera on (with teacher's encouragement and patience) (aligned with Le, 2021), g) chatbox, h) improved quality of TTT, i) a friendly and active learning environment (aligned with Le, 2021);
- (5) classroom management and professionalism: a) students' microphones off, b) allowing students to host the meeting room, c) selecting appropriate background and dressing style, d) giving students more time to fix technical problems.

Additionally, question 17 explores what online tools (e.g., applications or platforms) the student teachers used and would recommend for future OMT episodes, supported by one suggestion made in Ersin, Atay, and Mede's study (2020). The suggestion is to make use of the virtues of online tools to facilitate the learning process. The top list of tools the participants suggested includes (1) Google Meet/Docs/Classroom/Slides/PowerPoint/Hangouts/Forms, (2) Zoom, (3) Microsoft PowerPoint/Word, (4) Kahoot, and (5) Canvas, Quizizz, and Quizlet. Those tools serve different purposes in an OMT episode based on the Teacher's Digital competence, as mentioned in Section 4.1 (see Appendix for the comprehensive list of all suggested tools).

Overall, the current study confirms one of the key benefits of traditional micro-teaching, which is to help the student teachers develop their teaching skills and competencies through the essential components of traditional micro-teaching such as observation, feedback, and self-reflection, and supervision. More importantly, a contribution of the study is a specification of

digital competencies the student teachers believed they could learn from their OMT experience. This is important in making OMT a feasible and useful teacher training technique, given the technological advances in the 4.0 era. In addition, the difficulties, mainly associated with online classroom management and technical problems, faced by the student teachers in the study are similar to those faced by existing students and teachers during online teaching and learning. To address those problems as well as to improve future OMT episodes, a list of suggestions was given by the student teachers. This is where another contribution of the study emerges. Apart from the already mentioned suggestion of training and rehearsal with tools and OMT, the student teachers provided very specific strategies and techniques to deal with online classroom management (e.g., students' attention, engagement, and participation) and technical problems (e.g., Internet connection and teaching equipment), plus recommending online tools for different purposes in an online classroom.

5. Conclusion

In short, three conclusions were reached in relation to the three research questions earlier put in the paper. First, the student teachers in the study believed they could develop their teaching and digital competencies from their OMT experiences. Teaching competencies include (1) Lesson planning and Teaching techniques, (2) Teacher's delivery and Language use, and (3) Teacher's professionalism. Meanwhile, digital competencies cover abilities that they could use to serve the three main functions of an online classroom concerning (1) delivery and reception of information content, (2) interaction between, among students and teacher, and (3) student rehearsal and practice. Also, the student teachers reflected their thoughts about the different components of micro-teaching, through which they could learn and develop their teaching and digital competencies, by ranking their importance. The decreasing order of importance of their means of learning from OMT is: (1) by receiving feedback from the teacher, observers, & volunteer students, (2) by following the teacher's instructions and guidelines, (3) by delivering an online micro-teaching section, (4) by self-reflecting on their own teaching after OMT and during their peer observation, (5) by observing and giving feedback on the other peers' teaching, and (6) by using the criteria for OMT evaluation provided by the teacher.

Second, the study results show three main difficulties facing the student teachers during OMT, namely (1) checking students' learning progress/attention/concentration, (2) promoting students' participation, engagement, and collaboration, and (3) technical problems (Internet connection and teaching equipment). Last, the student teachers provided suggestions on how to improve OMT episodes in the future. The suggestions consist of useful tools for OMT such as (1) Google Meet/Docs/Classroom/Slides/PowerPoint/Hangouts/Forms, (2) Zoom, (3) Microsoft PowerPoint/Word, (4) Kahoot, and (5) Canvas, Quizizz, and Quizlet (see Appendix 1 for the exhaustive list of online tools for OMT). As regards the online teaching and learning aspect of OMT, the participants recommended five key solutions: (1) backup plans, (2) preparation, (3) training and rehearsal with tools and OMT, (4) engagement methods, and (5) classroom management and professionalism (see Section 4.3 for more details).

Overall, the study's findings show that from the student teachers' perspectives, OMT offers benefits that traditional micro-teaching does, particularly in helping the student teachers practice and develop their specified teaching skills and competencies. Therefore, OMT is highly recommended as an alternative teacher training technique in various programs, especially in English Language Teaching, which the current study focused on. That is also a trend given the continuous outbreaks of Covid-19 pandemic as well as the possible needs and demands of online teaching and learning in the 4.0 era.

Like any other studies, the current one has its own limitations. Due to the small scope of the paper, the study did not include in-depth interviews to gain the participants' deeper insight into their responses as previously planned. Also, OMT sessions were not video recorded for more thorough analysis because of the student teachers' shyness and discomfort during their first-time experience with OMT. Therefore, further research on OMT can take those two factors into consideration. Besides, future research can continue delving into how technology integration facilitates and promotes OMT, or how OMT can be effectively combined with other methods/techniques in English teacher education, especially in the digital era.

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Biodata

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Appendix. The exhaustive list of suggested tools for OMT with their specific purposes

Purposes	Recommended tools	Count / Percentage (%)	Purposes	Recommended tools	Count / Percentage (%)
1. Design lesson content & related visual aids (e.g., slides)	1. Microsoft PowerPoint	40	8. Collect students' answers, responses, votes, & questions	1. Google Forms	10
	2. Google Slides	25		2. Google Meet, Google Docs	8
	3. Canvas	9		3. Google Classroom, Zoom	6
	4. Google Docs	8		4. Kahoot	3
	5. Powtoon, Quizlet	3		5. Poll Everywhere, Facebook Messenger	2
	6. Kahoot, Prezi	2		6. Gmail, Slido, Quizlet	1
	7. Slidego, Miro, Skype, Microsoft Word	1		Microsoft, Class Dojo, Schoology, Shub Classroom, Google Hangouts, Google Sheets, Zalo, Padlet, Google Jamboard	
2. Share materials with students	1. Google Meet	24	9. Present a more formal & professional background to students	1. Google Meet	24
	2. Zoom	21		2. Zoom	9
	3. Google Docs	18		3. Canvas	2
	4. Google Classroom	10		4. Snapchat, Miro, Google Hangouts, Google Docs, Google Slides, Microsoft Teams	1
	5. Google Slides	4			
	6. Google Sheets, Google Hangouts, Google Drive, Facebook Messenger	2			
	7. PDF File, Miro, Skype, Shub Classroom, Microsoft Word, Gmail, Google Jamboard, Microsoft Teams	1			

3. Present the lesson content & related visual aids to students (e.g., slides)	1. Google Meet	30	10. Simulate real-time interaction (face to face) (e.g., using the camera, microphone)	1. Google Meet	24
	2. Zoom	22		2. Google Hangouts	16
	3. Google Slides	12		3. Zoom, Microsoft Teams	1
	4. Microsoft Powerpoint	9			
	5. Google Docs, Canvas	4			
	6. Powtoon, Videos, Charts, Images, Skype, Google Hangouts, Prezi, Quizlet, Microsoft Teams	1			
4. Use an online learning platform for the class meeting (e.g., Google meet)	1. Google Meet	51	11. Design handouts & worksheets	1. Google Docs	31
	2. Zoom	29		2. Microsoft Word, Microsoft Powerpoint	7
	3. Microsoft Teams	2		3. Google Slides	6
	4. Google Docs, Miro, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts	1		4. Canvas	5
				5. Google Sheets	3
				6. Powtoon	2
				7. Google Meet, Kahoot, Socrative, Google Classroom, Microsoft Excel	1
5. Provide a platform/space for students' brainstorming ideas	1. Google Docs	25	12. Design games for different purposes	1. Kahoot	28
	2. Zoom	10		2. Microsoft Powerpoint	9
	3. Google Meet	8		3. Quizizz	8
	4. Google Jamboard	6		4. Bamboozle	6
	5. Google Slides	5		5. Quizlet	4
	6. Microsoft Word, Mural	2		6. Canvas, Wordwall, Skribbl, MyPuzzle, Edmodo, Google Slides, Google Jamboard, IXL Learning, Puzzlemaker,	1

					Mentimeter, My Aloha	
	7. Miro, Microsoft Powerpoint, Lucidchart Padlet, Mindmap, Google Forms, Facebook Messenger, Microsoft Forms, Microsoft Teams	1				
6. Provide a platform/space for students' group/pair discussion & work collaboration	1. Google Meet	23	13. Design quizzes/tests to reinforce/check students' knowledge about the taught subject	1. Kahoot	34	
	2. Zoom	22		2. Quizizz	18	
	3. Google Docs	14		3. Quizlet	9	
	4. Facebook Messenger	3		4. Google Forms	8	
	5. Kahoot, Google Slides, Google Jamboard	2		5. Socrative	5	
	6. Zalo, Miro, Quizlet, Padlet, Microsoft Teams	1		6. Microsoft Powerpoint	3	
				7. Google Docs, Bamboozle, My Aloha	2	
				8. MyPuzzle, Mentimeter, Edmodo, Google Slides, Microsoft Word	1	
7. Provide a platform/space for students' exchanging ideas	1. Google Meet	25				
	2. Zoom	21				
	3. Google Docs	11				
	4. Padlet, Google Jamboard	2				
	5. Miro, Quizlet, Kahoot, Schoology, Facebook Messenger, Zalo, Google Forms, Slides, Microsoft Teams	1				