

From Theory to Practice: Challenges Encountered by Students in Microteaching

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ABSTRACT

Microteaching is a vital component in teacher education, yet many pre-service teachers struggle to apply theoretical knowledge in practical classroom strategies. This qualitative case study explored the challenges faced by BEED pre-service teachers during microteaching at a teacher education institution in Misamis Occidental. Using Yin's (2014) case study design and purposive sampling, five students, five parents, and five supervising teachers participated. Data were gathered through interviews and analyzed using HYPERRESEARCH software. Findings revealed difficulties in applying learner-centered strategies, classroom management, and designing age-appropriate lessons. Emotional barriers such as anxiety and self-doubt further impacted performance. Despite these, students adopted coping strategies like active planning, practice, and reflection. Six themes emerged: (1) Struggles in Translating Theory to Practice, (2) Emotional Barriers in Instruction, (3) Strengthening Preparedness through Planning and Rehearsal, (4) Reflective Growth via Feedback and Support, (5) Capacity-Building through Mentorship, and (6) A Structured, Supportive Learning Ecosystem. An enhancement program was proposed to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Keywords: theory to practice gap, reflective practice in teacher education, microteaching challenges, case study approach

INTRODUCTION

Rationale of Study

Microteaching is a key element in teacher education, providing pre-service teachers with a structured space to practice pedagogical skills, rehearse lessons, receive feedback, and build confidence in a simulated setting. Despite its benefits, microteaching also presents challenges. This study identifies the difficulties students encounter during microteaching sessions, as noted by (Casal, Quintana & Romero 2024). One of the most serious difficulties is the fear of teaching before peers and instructors, particularly for those who are experiencing microteaching for the first time (Magenthiran, 2023; Bulut, 2024). Most pre-service teachers are nervous and apprehensive about themselves, which can adversely impact their performance during microteaching activities. Additionally, fear of speaking is especially high among language teachers, as clear and confident communication is a critical component of their teaching competence (Bulut, 2024). To overcome this difficulty, teacher preparation programs need to include measures that enhance confidence and reduce performance-related anxiety.

Another major challenge is the requirement of substantial resources, supervision, and time commitment for microteaching to be highly effective (Mukuka & Alex, 2024). An effective microteaching session needs adequate instructional materials, access to technology, and committed mentors to oversee and assess student-teachers. Inadequate resources in most institutions, however, can undermine the effectiveness of microteaching, compelling students to improvise (Mhagama, 2024). This is particularly the case in developing countries, where technology and instructional materials are in short supply, and it becomes challenging for pre-service teachers to plan engaging and well-structured lessons.

In the modern day and age of technology, technology has increasingly become a significant aspect in microteaching, providing innovative avenues to expand teaching and learning experiences. The application of

digital tools, however, has its drawbacks, especially for students without access to stable internet connectivity or the requisite technical skills (Baluyos et al., 2024). Some pre-service teachers also find it challenging to master digital tools like Office 365 and Google Suite, which increasingly are part of teacher training courses. Overcoming such drawbacks requires institutions of learning to provide sufficient training and resources for enabling students to advance their digital skills.

Moreover, peer feedback, as much as it is important in fostering a culture of collaborative learning, can also be a source of challenge for some students. Research indicates that peer feedback must be carried out in a systematic and supportive way in order to be effective (Cendani & Purnamaningwulan, 2023). In the absence of supervision, students may find it difficult to provide or accept constructive critiques, which would be detrimental to their professional development. Ensuring pre-service teachers recognize the role of feedback and how to leverage it optimally is important in ensuring maximum benefit from microteaching.

Reflective practices have also been recognized as a significant factor in improving the teaching competence of pre-service teachers (Deocampo, 2024). Self-reflection enables student-teachers to examine their performance, determine areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments. Some students, however, may struggle to engage in deep reflective practices, especially if they are not provided with proper guidance on how to critically examine their teaching experiences. Facilitating structured reflection through guided discussions and self-assessment tools can enable students to better understand their teaching development. Microteaching can also be challenging in balancing personal and professional values. Some students may struggle to adjust their teaching approaches to institutional demands while upholding their personal teaching philosophies (Wahyuni & Kuswandono, 2024). Balancing this requires pre-service teachers to develop metacognitive strategies that enable them to balance their teaching approaches with personal beliefs and professional expectations.

Lastly, research shows that microteaching is a significant stepping stone in preparing future teachers for actual classroom settings, but it is not an exact replica of the complexities of actual teaching settings (Carrascosa & García-Hernández, 2024). While microteaching enables students to practice in a controlled environment, it may not expose them to all the challenges of having to manage a diverse classroom. Thus, future research suggests the inclusion of other practical teaching experiences that involve real students in real school settings to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

While existing research explores the challenges of microteaching among pre-service teachers, most studies focus on secondary education programs (Mukuka & Alex, 2024; Cendani & Purnamaningwulan, 2023). However, there is limited research specifically addressing the unique difficulties faced by elementary education students in microteaching. This gap in the literature suggests a need for further investigation into the specific challenges encountered by pre-service elementary teachers, such as classroom management in early childhood settings, adapting microteaching techniques for younger learners, and the role of developmentally appropriate pedagogy in microteaching sessions.

This study explores the challenges faced by pre-service elementary teachers during microteaching and proposes strategies to improve its effectiveness in teacher education. While microteaching offers a structured environment for developing teaching skills, it is often limited by factors such as performance anxiety, insufficient resources, digital literacy gaps, peer feedback difficulties, and weak reflective practices. Additional challenges include reconciling personal teaching philosophies with institutional expectations and the limited transferability of simulated teaching to real classroom settings. By analyzing these issues, the study aims to provide practical insights to enhance microteaching methods, promote better institutional support, and bridge the gap between theory and real-world teaching practice.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in three influential learning theories: Jerome Bruner's Discovery Learning (1966), Jean Piaget's Constructivist Theory (1967), and Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978). These theories help us understand the challenges pre-service elementary teachers face in microteaching and offer insights into how to support them in developing their teaching abilities.

Jerome Bruner's Discovery Learning Theory (1966) emphasizes that people learn best when they actively engage with concepts rather than passively receiving information. In microteaching, this means that pre-service teachers are not just given instructions on how to teach they learn by planning, delivering, and reflecting on their lessons. Scholars such as Mayer (2004) and Sweller (2006) have examined the practical application of discovery learning, highlighting both strengths and limitations. Mayer emphasized the importance of guided discovery to support novice learners effectively. In this study, Bruner's theory applies to the microteaching experience of pre-service teachers who actively construct understanding through hands-on practice, reflection and self-directed learning activities. This hands-on approach encourages creativity, confidence, and adaptability, essential qualities for future educators.

Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (1978) highlights the gap between what learners can do on their own and what they can achieve with guidance. In the context of microteaching, this means that pre-service teachers grow the most when they receive constructive feedback and mentorship from experienced educators. They might struggle with lesson delivery or classroom management at first, but through supportive coaching and peer collaboration, they gradually develop these essential skills. Numerous researchers, including Chaiklin (2003) and Hammond (2005), have explored ZPD's relevance in teacher education, noting that mentoring and peer collaboration can enhance professional growth. In the context of this study, ZPD supports the idea that pre-service teachers benefit from mentorship and peer feedback during microteaching, helping them progress from theoretical understanding to competent teaching practice.

Jean Piaget's Constructivist Theory (1967) reminds us that learning is an active, personal process where individuals build knowledge through experience and reflection. Microteaching provides a space for future teachers to experiment, make mistakes, and learn from them. By analyzing their own teaching performances and listening to peer feedback, pre-service teachers refine their methods. Perry (2005) emphasized its relevance in designing constructivist classrooms, while Ewing (1996) applied Piaget's ideas in mathematics education to encourage independent thinking. Applied to this study, Piaget's theory suggest that pre-service teachers develop pedagogical understanding as they engage in structured teaching tasks, confront cognitive challenges and reflect on classroom experiences during microteaching sessions.

These theories work together to help us understand and address the struggles pre-service teachers face in microteaching. By applying these theories, this study explores ways to improve microteaching and ease the common challenges pre-service teachers encounter, such as fear of public speaking, limited resources, difficulties with digital tools, struggles with peer feedback, and uncertainty in reflective practices. The goal is to create a microteaching environment that not only prepares future elementary teachers for the classroom but also builds their confidence, resilience, and ability to adapt to diverse teaching situations.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in a conceptual framework that explores the lived experiences of pre-service teachers as they move from theoretical knowledge to practical classroom application, especially in microteaching. The framework consists of six related themes, these themes represent the internal and external factors that influence the instructional, emotional, and professional growth of pre-service teachers.

Struggling to Translate Theoretical Knowledge into Practical Teaching Pre-service teachers often face significant challenges when they try to apply their theoretical knowledge in real teaching situations. A major issue is the difficulty in implementing differentiated and learner-centered instruction. Pre-service teachers often have trouble turning educational theories into real classroom practice. Gunning and Hughes (2021) pointed out that although teacher education programs focus on differentiated instruction, many student teachers do not have the experience or understanding to use it well. This gap between theory and practice becomes clearer when classroom management issues come up. Montilla and Carrasco (2020) found that new teachers often struggle to manage classroom behavior and keep students engaged. These skills are better developed through hands-on learning rather than just theory. Another significant concern is designing and delivering age-appropriate lessons. Hammond et al. (2005) stress that effective teaching requires a match between developmental appropriateness and teaching strategies, which is a point where pre-service teachers often feel unsure and unclear. These findings

highlight the need for field-based learning and practice-teaching opportunities to strengthen the connection between theory and teaching.

Experiencing Emotional Barriers in Delivering Instruction Emotional barriers are a natural part of teaching, particularly for new teachers who are still forming their professional identity. Many pre-service teachers feel stress and nervousness when delivering lessons, which can affect their teaching effectiveness. Gorospe (2021) found that pre-service teachers experience a lot of teaching anxiety during their practicum, negatively affecting their confidence and classroom management skills. Similarly, a study published in *Zeitschrift für Bildungsforschung* (2022) showed that anxiety and nervousness during practice teaching lower self-efficacy and block effective teaching strategies. On the other hand, positive emotions like enthusiasm improve teaching performance. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory shows how beliefs about one's abilities affect motivation and actions. These emotional barriers may worsen due to limited coping skills and insufficient emotional preparation in teacher training programs. Therefore, emotional support and targeted interventions are critical for helping pre-service teachers manage anxiety and build teaching confidence.

Strengthening Instructional Preparedness through Active Planning and Rehearsing Effective instructional delivery depends on good planning and practice. Creating structured and engaging lesson plans is a key skill that helps teachers organize their instruction clearly. Shulman (1987) introduced pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as a fundamental part of effective lesson planning. Structured lesson planning and practice are vital for preparing pre-service teachers to teach. Murphy (2023) showed that getting peer feedback on videos during microteaching helps pre-service teachers reflect and improve their lesson plans, leading to more engaging instruction. Likewise, Ledger et al. (2021) indicated that simulated teaching and role-play boost teaching confidence and help teachers improve their planning and delivery. These methods encourage active engagement with lesson content and motivate student teachers to review and revise their instructional strategies. Consequently, practicing lesson delivery in controlled settings enhances teaching skills and lowers anxiety.

Fostering Reflective Growth through Feedback, Support, and Adaptation Reflective practice is essential for continuously improving teaching skills. Keogh and Walker (1985) highlight the importance of reflection in learning from experiences and refining teaching methods. Receiving feedback and engaging in self-assessment help pre-service teachers recognize their strengths and areas needing improvement. Support from mentors, peers, and family is crucial for maintaining emotional balance and professional growth. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory shows how social interaction contributes to learning. Reflection and feedback are key to the professional growth of pre-service teachers. Murphy (2023) found that using peer reaction videos in microteaching promotes deeper self-reflection and better teaching strategies. Additionally, a study by Lee and Choi (2023) revealed that combining reflective feedback with emotional support improves self-regulation and teaching adaptability. These insights suggest that ongoing feedback, emotional support, and flexible strategies help pre-service teachers improve their instruction and respond well to different classroom needs. Such practices also cultivate resilience and create reflective teaching identities.

Capacity-Building through Practical Exposure and Guided Mentorship Gaining real classroom experience and receiving mentorship are effective ways to connect theory with practice. Real teaching experiences and quality mentorship are essential for developing pre-service teachers. Phang and Azmin (2021) found that mentorship during practicum greatly affects the growth of pre-service teachers, but clearer guidelines are necessary to increase its effectiveness. Similarly, Springer's (2022) study on virtual classroom simulations showed that mentor-guided simulations significantly improved instructional delivery, especially in crisis learning situations. Mentorship also plays a key role in building capacity. Hudson (2013) found that structured and supportive mentorship significantly helps develop teaching confidence and competence, especially in the early stages of teaching. These findings emphasize the need for intentional, well-structured experiences that blend hands-on teaching with expert mentorship. Such experiences connect theoretical knowledge with classroom realities and boost teaching confidence.

Structured and Supportive Learning Ecosystem A structured and emotionally supportive learning environment encourages growth and success for pre-service teachers. Constructive and ongoing feedback is essential for guiding improvements in instruction. Hattie and Timperley (2019) emphasized that high-quality feedback

significantly improves learning for both students and teachers, especially when part of an ongoing feedback cycle. Letzel and Schneider (2020) argued that effective differentiated instruction relies heavily on collaborative peer support and strong institutional support. Access to targeted training and instructional resources is also crucial. Koehler and Mishra (2005) stress the need to provide pre-service teachers with necessary pedagogical knowledge and digital tools. Together, these findings indicate that a supportive environment including peer collaboration, access to resources, and regular feedback, helps pre-service teachers grow professionally. Such settings encourage risk-taking, reduce anxiety, and improve instructional quality.

These six themes together form a framework that explains the complex nature of pre-service teacher development during microteaching. Each theme highlights the interaction between cognitive, emotional, and contextual factors that affect effective teaching. This framework offers a perspective for understanding how pre-service teachers handle instructional challenges, build professional skills, and shape their teaching identities by reflecting on their experiences and learning from practice. It serves as a foundation for analyzing qualitative data and drawing meaningful conclusions about the teaching journey of education students.

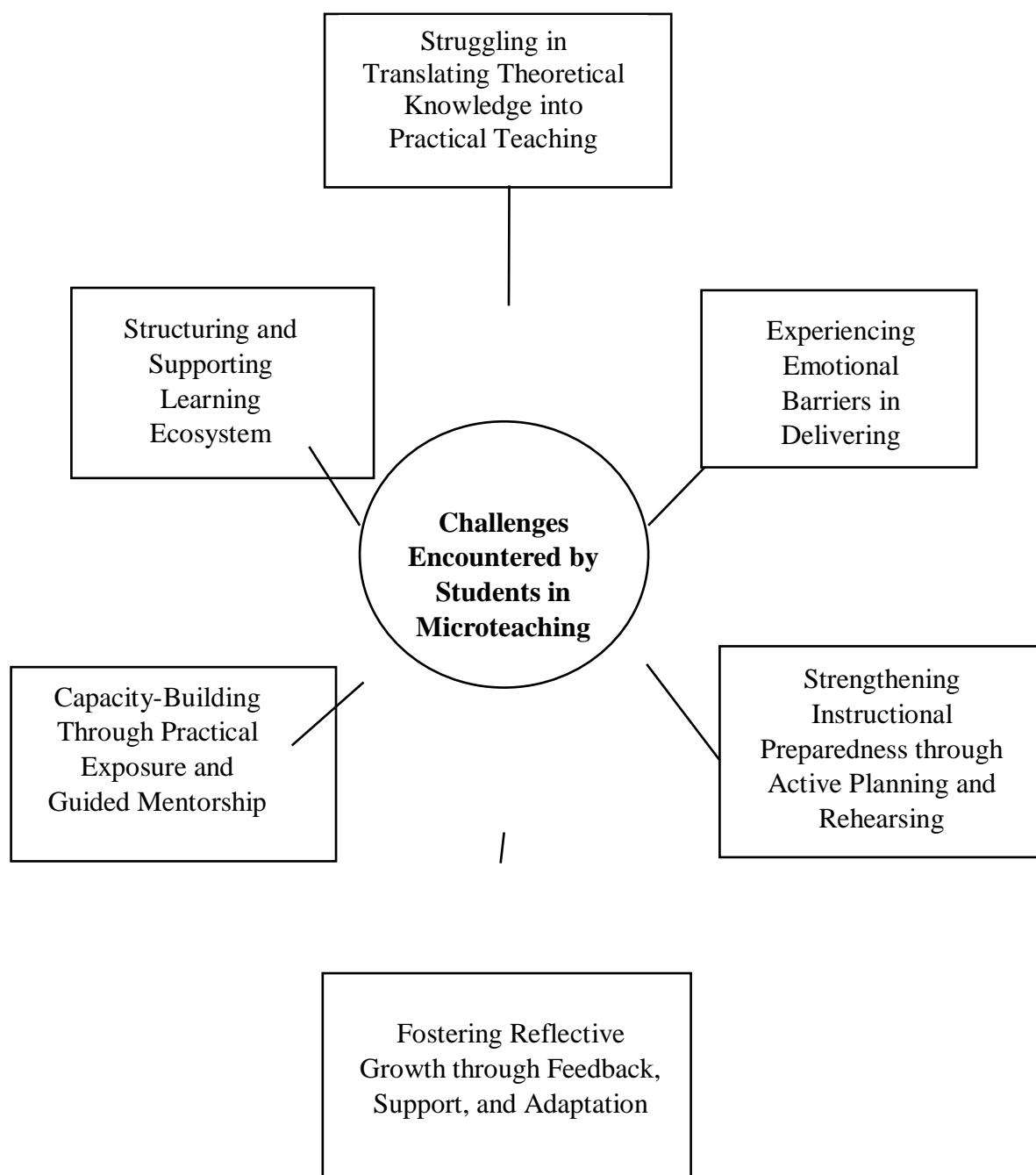


Figure 1.0. Research Diagram of the Study

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the challenges pre-service elementary teachers face in microteaching and identifying ways to support their growth. Specifically, it sought answer to the following questions:

1. What are the challenges encountered by students in applying theoretical knowledge to actual teaching during microteaching session?
2. How do students cope with the challenges they face in microteaching sessions?
3. What support mechanisms can enhance students microteaching experiences?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This qualitative study will use Yin's (2014) case study design to deeply explore the challenges students face in microteaching. A case study is detailed examination of a single individual, group, organization, or event to explore and understand complex issues within their real-life context. This research design is well-suited because it allows for a thorough understanding of real-life experiences within teacher preparation programs with emphasis on the challenges they encountered in applying pedagogical theories into practice. By focusing on BEED students' experiences, this study explored to capture the complexities of microteaching, giving insight into the difficulties they encounter and how they navigate them.

Research Setting

The study was carried out at a chosen Higher Education Institution in Ozamiz City, namely the College of Education. The school is the first university in Northwestern Mindanao to be awarded "Autonomous Status" by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Being a non-sectarian institution, it provides a diverse and inclusive setting, accepting students from different cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Misamis University (MU) is among the top higher education institutions in Ozamiz City and, as such, is an important center for teacher education in the area. The university has a complete pre-service teacher training program, including internships that are part of the curriculum. Through these internships, BEED students can apply what they have learned in actual classroom settings, which is a key to their growth as future teachers.

Participants of the study

This study involves five parents, five teachers and five Bachelor of Elementary Education students in Misamis University, specifically those currently enrolled in (Strategy) subjects as part of their teacher training curriculum. A criterion-based purposive sampling method was employed to select participants who have direct and relevant experience with the challenges encountered during microteaching, which is an essential component of their strategy subjects. The criteria used for selecting participants: students enrolled in a general education program school year 2024-2025 taking strategy subjects and students willing to participate. These students were selected because they are directly engaged in applying pedagogical theories in real classroom settings, particularly through microteaching.

Instruments

The study utilized a semi-structured interview guide as the primary research instrument to explore the challenges faced by Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) students during their microteaching experience. The interview began with demographic questions designed to gather essential background information such as age, gender, academic standing, and teaching experience during practicum. These demographic items helped contextualize the participants' responses and allowed for meaningful analysis across different personal and academic profiles. Following these were open-ended, probing questions that addressed key areas of concern: lesson planning, classroom management, teaching approach, performance anxiety, and receiving feedback. The interview guide was divided into three parts—opening, core, and exit questions. The opening questions were intended to ease participants into the conversation by asking about their early experiences with microteaching, particularly their efforts to integrate theoretical knowledge into classroom practice. The core questions explored

the students' experiences in preparing and delivering lessons, managing classroom dynamics, overcoming self-confidence issues, and processing feedback from mentors and peers. The exit questions provided an opportunity for participants to summarize their insights and offer suggestions for improvement. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility, enabling the researcher to probe further based on participants' responses, which led to richer and more detailed narratives. To ensure the instrument's validity, experts in education and qualitative research reviewed the interview questions for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's objectives. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted challenges BEED students face in microteaching, offering insights into both their struggles and their developmental progress.

Gathering Procedure

Before starting the study, the researchers obtained permission from the College of Education dean and then secured approval from the chairman of the BEED department, and obtained consent from the Dean of Student Affairs (DSA), since the study focused on that course. After receiving the necessary permits, we informed the research instructor and prepared a consent letter for the participants, clearly explaining the study's purpose. The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews with five BEED students, five parents, and five teachers, with each session audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy of the responses and facilitate reliable transcription. The data collected was treated with strict confidentiality. Finally, the researchers transcribed the audio recordings and analyzed the responses using Hyper RESEARCH software, which allowed them to generate codes, group these codes into themes, and interpret the results.

Ethical Consideration

The participant's informed consent was secured by the ethical standards of the study and obtained prior to the interview. The researchers made the participants aware of the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to provide accountability for the sharing of their personal data. Participants were informed of the objectives of the study, the potential benefit to them and others, the confidentiality of the data, and the anonymity of the participants of the study. Researchers assured participants that their interview questions were open-ended so that they could respond positively or negatively at any time. The participants can withdraw their responses at any time without fear and harm. Interviews were done by setting aside potential prejudice from the researchers. Incorrect advice, coaching, and incorrect interpretation of original data were also prevented. Completed conversations with the study were carried out with complete honesty and integrity.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed based on Yin's (2014) case study design, which offers a systematic method of interpreting real-world problems. A holistic reading of the gathered data was done first to understand the general experiences of BEED students during microteaching. Pattern matching was subsequently used to determine significant statements and match them with prevailing theories on moving from theory to practice. Explanation building was utilized to identify the root causes of the struggles faced by the students, gaining a better understanding of their problems in lesson delivery, classroom management, and self-esteem. Cross-case synthesis was also utilized to provide contrasting experiences among different participants, showing similar trends and differences in their struggles. Using Yin's paradigm, this study aimed to pursue a systematic and extensive examination of the lived lives of BEED students in pursuit of enhanced awareness regarding how the quality of microteaching should be enhanced towards addressing their needs in professional growth.

Reflexivity

As future BEED instructors and students, we undertook this research with a sincere interest in knowing the problems encountered by students in microteaching. We aimed to find not just the problems themselves but also the reasons why these problems exist, eventually leading to better teaching practices. In the process, we practiced reflexivity, being cautious to scrutinize our own views and possible biases as researchers and students. This critical self-awareness enabled us to acknowledge and put aside any preconceived notions that could affect our judgments. Through this reflective position, we ensured that our analysis was as objective and perceptive as

possible, opening the door to a better understanding of the actual challenges in microteaching and laying the groundwork for valuable educational progress.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This qualitative study explored the challenges pre-service elementary teachers face in microteaching. The participants were based on the perspectives of three distinct groups: students, parents, and teachers. Each group offered a unique lens on the microteaching experience and the transition to actual classroom teaching. Student participants shared their challenges in transitioning from microteaching to actual classroom teaching. Parents provided insights into their support and observations of their children's experiences. Teachers offered professional perspectives on microteaching implementation, challenges, and the need for continued training.

A face-to-face interview was conducted with the participants, following established interview protocols. Prior to the interviews, informed consent forms were distributed and signed. An audio recorder was used to accurately capture participants' responses during each session.

Through analyzing the participants' significant statements and meanings, the researcher identified six main themes that emerged from the data, highlighting the key challenges faced by participants during their microteaching experiences. These themes involved: 1) Struggling in Translating Theoretical Knowledge into Practical Strategies; 2) Experiencing Emotional Barriers in Delivering Instruction; 3) Strengthening Instructional Preparedness through Active Planning and Rehearsing; 4) Fostering Reflective Growth Through Feedback Support and Adaptation; 5) Capacity-Building Through Practical Exposure and Guided Mentorship; 6) Structured and Supportive Learning.

Struggling in Translating Theoretical Knowledge into Practical Strategies

This theme explored how pre-service teachers struggle to translate theoretical frameworks into classroom-ready teaching strategies. While they possess knowledge of educational theories, applying them in dynamic classroom contexts proves to be a major challenge. Three subthemes appeared: Struggling in Translating Theoretical Knowledge into Practical Teaching Strategies: (1) Difficulty Implementing Differentiated and Learner-Centered Instruction; (2) Classroom Management and Student Engagement Issues; and (3) Challenges in Designing and Delivering Age-Appropriate Instruction.

Difficulty Implementing Differentiated and Learner-Centered Instruction refers to the challenges teachers face when trying to tailor lessons to meet students' diverse needs, abilities, and learning styles while promoting active student engagement and autonomy. Although these approaches are widely recognized as effective, educators often struggle due to time constraints, large class sizes, limited training, and a lack of resources. Additionally, strict curriculum requirements and the complexities of classroom management can further hinder the consistent application of these strategies. As a result, teachers may find it difficult to create flexible, responsive learning environments that fully support individual student growth within the realities of everyday classroom practice.

Participants reported difficulty implementing differentiated and learner-centered instruction due to time constraints, mixed student abilities, and limited teaching experience. SP1 found it challenging to manage varying learning styles and keep all students engaged, while SP3 emphasized the struggle of designing effective learner-centered activities within limited time. SP5 also noted that applying differentiated strategies was hard to manage during a single session. These responses reveal a gap between theoretical understanding and practical application, highlighting the need for more support and training in these approaches during teacher preparation.

"One challenging instance was when I tried to implement differentiated instruction. While I understood the concept in theory, I struggled with managing multiple learning styles at once. Some students finished tasks quickly while others needed more time, making it hard to keep everyone engaged." (SP1)

"I guess it is very hard to apply the learner-centered approach because during demonstration, mostly as future teachers, we always conduct activities so that the pupils would be able to explore on their own. So, since this is the scenario, we will be given a chance as the future education students to formulate or to design activities that would really help in scaffolding the learners' learning." (SP3)

"I tried to use differentiated instruction in one session, but it was hard to manage due to limited time and mixed student level." (SP5)

Classroom Management and Student Engagement Issues refer to the challenges teachers face in maintaining order, ensuring productive behavior, and keeping students actively involved in learning activities. Effective classroom management is essential for creating a structured environment where instruction can take place smoothly, while student engagement involves capturing learners' interest, motivation, and participation. Difficulties in these areas may include handling disruptive behavior, managing time effectively, maintaining students' attention, and addressing varying levels of interest or motivation. In the context of teacher education, especially during microteaching or practicum, pre-service teachers often struggle with balancing instructional delivery while managing student behavior and encouraging engagement—highlighting the need for more practical training and classroom exposure in these critical areas.

Based on the participants' responses, classroom management and student engagement emerged as significant challenges during microteaching experiences. PP2 expressed difficulty in capturing students' attention and shared a fear of making mistakes or failing to sustain interest, indicating a lack of confidence in managing classroom dynamics. TP4 observed that while pre-service teachers may grasp classroom management theories, applying them in real settings—especially with active or distracted learners—can be overwhelming. They also pointed out struggles in delivering lessons clearly, adapting to students' needs, and managing instructional time, often leading to rushed or incomplete activities. Additionally, nervousness and low confidence further hinder effective classroom presence. PP1 echoed these sentiments, noting that maintaining student participation can be challenging. Collectively, these responses highlight the complex demands of managing a classroom while engaging learners and underscore the need for more practical, hands-on training in teacher education programs to build confidence and skill in real-time teaching environments.

"Sometimes, it's hard for her to get the students' attention. There is a fear of making mistakes or not being able to capture the class's interest." (PP 2)

"Based on my observations, one of the most common difficulties students face when transitioning from theoretical knowledge to practical teaching is classroom management. While they may understand the principles in theory, applying them in real classroom situations especially handling active or distracted learners can be overwhelming. Another challenge is lesson delivery. Students often struggle to explain concepts clearly or adjust their teaching style to fit the learners' needs. Time management during the lesson is also a frequent issue, as they may either rush or run out of time before completing all planned activities. Lastly, nervousness or lack of confidence can affect their ability to apply what they've learned effectively." (TP4)

"She mentioned that handling the class is difficult, and sometimes the students don't participate much." (PP 1)

Challenges in Designing and Delivering Age-Appropriate Instruction involves the difficulty pre-service teachers face in creating lessons that match the developmental level, interests, and learning needs of younger learners. This includes selecting suitable content, using appropriate language, and incorporating engaging strategies that align with children's cognitive and emotional stages. Pre-service teachers often struggle to simplify complex concepts without losing meaning, balance play and structure, and maintain attention through interactive activities. Limited experience with child development and early education pedagogy can make it challenging to plan lessons that are both educational and suitable for the age group. These challenges highlight the importance of equipping future educators with a strong foundation in child-centered instructional design and practical experience with age-appropriate teaching methods.

Pre-service teachers face notable challenges in designing and delivering age-appropriate instruction, as highlighted by participants. Despite their theoretical knowledge of child development, they often struggle to simplify content and adapt lessons to the cognitive level of young learners. One teacher (TP5) noted that lessons sometimes remain too abstract, making them difficult for pupils to grasp. Another (TP1) observed issues with lesson pacing, where some pre-service teachers teach too quickly or too slowly. These challenges reflect a gap between theoretical understanding and practical application during microteaching experiences.

“One of the most common difficulties pre-service teachers face is making their lessons simple and suitable for the level of young learners. Even though they have learned about child development and how children learn in theory, it is still hard for them to apply these ideas in actual teaching. For example, they might understand that children learn better through hands-on activities and concrete examples, but during their practice teaching, they may still use lessons that are too abstract or difficult for pupils to understand. (TP5)

“Many pre-service teachers find it hard to apply what they learned in theory during their microteaching, especially when teaching young children. One of the most common struggles is lesson pacing. Some go too fast, while others go too slow.” (TP1)

Pre-service teachers sometimes struggle to put differentiated and learner-centered instruction into practice even though they are aware of the theoretical frameworks. This is because they have few chances to use the theories in actual classroom situations. Mukuka and Alex (2024) highlight that pre-service teachers encounter difficulties in converting content knowledge into teaching strategies because they have limited actual teaching experience, particularly in mathematics education. Consequently, Yundayani and Alghadari (2024) discovered that student teachers comprehend differentiated instruction and learner-centered learning in theory but are unable to implement these practices effectively due to classroom challenges and time issues. Additionally, Aslamia (2024) observes that EFL pre-service teachers might not possess the ability to modulate their strategies dynamically within lessons, which prevents pedagogical theories from being applied successfully in practice.

In classroom management and structuring instruction tailored to the age, various studies indicate that pre-service teachers feel disconnection between what they are taught in theory and what happens in reality during microteaching. Baluyos et al. (2024) observe that pre-service teachers often fall back on teacher-centered methods because they do not know how to handle active classrooms while still keeping students engaged. Şahinkayası (2019) further suggests that despite pre-service teachers being provided with theoretical frameworks, they still do not make the right pedagogical decisions that are congruent with learners' levels of development. Moreover, Darsih et al. (2023) highlight that if pre-service teachers do not receive adequate feedback and scaffolded support, they tend to present abstract material with non-age-appropriate language, making students' learning processes even more complex. These studies all make the point that knowing theories about teaching is not sufficient pre-service teachers need to be aided in actually connecting theory and practice

Experiencing Emotional Barriers in Delivering Instruction

This theme captured the emotional challenges faced by pre-service teachers as they transition from microteaching to actual classroom environments. Participants described feelings such as nervousness, stress, and lack of confidence—that hinder effective lesson delivery and application of learned concepts. Two subthemes experiencing emotional barriers in delivering instruction: (1) Emotional Stress and Nervousness; (2) Lack of Confidence and Overthinking;

Emotional Stress and Nervousness common experiences among pre-service teachers during microteaching. These feelings often stem from fear of being judged, making mistakes in front of peers or mentors, and the pressure to perform well. Such anxiety can affect their confidence, lesson delivery, and ability to manage the classroom effectively. Despite being prepared academically, many struggle to stay calm and composed, especially during their first few teaching attempts. This emotional strain highlights the need for supportive environments that build confidence and reduce performance-related stress.

Participants shared that pre-service teachers frequently experience emotional stress and nervousness during microteaching, which negatively impacts their performance. One parent (PP4) noted that nervousness often causes the student to forget the lesson steps she had practiced and struggle with classroom management and delivering the lesson clearly. Another (PP5) highlighted the frustration students feel when receiving inconsistent feedback on lesson planning—being criticized whether their plans are too long or too short. Additionally, a parent (PP2) observed that the pressure of teaching sometimes causes the student to forget the teaching process, despite understanding the theory. These responses reveal how emotional pressure can hinder the ability of pre-service teachers to effectively apply what they have learned, highlighting a disconnect between theory and practice and the need for more supportive, consistent guidance during microteaching.

"She often feels nervous and forgets the steps she practiced. Additionally, she struggles with managing the class and making sure the lesson is delivered clearly and confidently." (PP4)

"She told me that sometimes she gets confused because when her lesson plan is long, it's marked wrong for being too long, but when it's short, it's still marked wrong for being too short." (PP5)

"She said that it's difficult to apply the theory because it is really different in practice. Sometimes, she forgets the process because she feels pressured." (PP2)

Lack of Confidence and Overthinking highlights the internal struggles individuals face when self-doubt clouds their judgment and fuels mental overanalysis. This combination often results in hesitation, second-guessing, and emotional paralysis, where the fear of making mistakes or being judged prevents decisive action. It reveals how insecurity can distort perception, magnify minor issues, and trap people in cycles of inaction, showing the psychological barriers that hinder growth, relationships, or success.

The participants' responses reveal key challenges faced by pre-service teachers, particularly in managing emotions, applying theoretical knowledge, and engaging in reflective practice. PP3 highlights the emotional strain of early teaching experiences, where stress, tears, or silence reflect the overwhelming task of balancing classroom management with clear instruction. TP1 emphasizes the gap between theory and practice, noting that even with knowledge of child development, many pre-service teachers struggle to simplify lessons appropriately for young learners. In contrast, SP3 adopts a reflective stance, viewing these struggles as valuable learning opportunities that highlight areas for growth and improvement. Collectively, these responses underscore the complex transition from theory to practice and the importance of emotional resilience and reflective thinking in teacher development.

"I saw that she gets stressed, sometimes she cries or just stays quiet. The challenge is managing the class and practicing the lesson clearly." (PP3)

"One of the most common difficulties pre-service teachers face is making their lessons simple and suitable for the level of young learners. Even though they have learned about child development and how children learn in theory, it is still hard for them to apply these ideas in actual teaching." (TP1)

"I perceive those gaps as a learning or a moral lesson to learn because being involved in a micro-teaching, so I can know what are the aspects that I need to improve and what are the mistakes that I've committed during my micro-teaching. By knowing these gaps, then I would be able to enhance myself better and teach better in the near future." (SP3)

Pre-service teachers sometimes struggle to put differentiated and learner-centered instruction into practice even though they are aware of the theoretical frameworks. This is because they have few chances to use the theories in actual classroom situations. Mukuka and Alex (2024) highlight that pre-service teachers encounter difficulties in converting content knowledge into teaching strategies because they have limited actual teaching experience, particularly in mathematics education. Consequently, Yundayani and Alghadari (2024) discovered that student teachers comprehend differentiated instruction and learner-centered learning in theory but are unable to implement these practices effectively due to classroom challenges and time issues. Additionally, Aslamia (2024) observes that EFL pre-service teachers might not possess the ability to modulate their strategies dynamically within lessons, which prevents pedagogical theories from being applied successfully in practice.

In classroom management and structuring instruction tailored to the age, various studies indicate that pre-service teachers feel disconnection between what they are taught in theory and what happens in reality during microteaching. Baluyos et al. (2024) observe that pre-service teachers often fall back on teacher-centered methods because they do not know how to handle active classrooms while still keeping students engaged. Şahinkayası (2019) further suggests that despite pre-service teachers being provided with theoretical frameworks, they still do not make the right pedagogical decisions that are congruent with learners' levels of development. Moreover, Darsih et al. (2023) highlight that if pre-service teachers do not receive adequate feedback and scaffolded support, they tend to present abstract material with non-age-appropriate language,

making students' learning processes even more complex. These studies all make the point that knowing theories about teaching is not sufficient—pre-service teachers need to be aided in actually connecting theory and practice.

Strengthening Instructional Preparedness through Active Planning and Rehearsing

This theme highlighted the proactive strategies employed by pre-service teachers to enhance their instructional readiness, particularly through detailed lesson planning and repeated rehearsal. This process not only refined their instructional techniques but also fostered a sense of control and clarity. Two subthemes show strengthening instructional preparedness through active planning and rehearsing. 1) Developing structured and engaging lesson plans; 2) Practicing delivery to build confidence.

Developing structured and engaging lesson plans reflects a central challenge and learning curve for pre-service teachers as they transition from theory to practice. Crafting lesson plans that are both well-organized and engaging requires not only knowledge of content and pedagogy but also a deep understanding of learners' needs, attention spans, and developmental stages. Many pre-service teachers initially struggle with balancing structure—such as clear objectives, timing, and transitions—with creativity and interaction that keeps young learners motivated. This subtheme highlights the difficulty of designing lessons that are neither too rigid nor too loose, and emphasizes the need for ongoing practice, feedback, and adaptation. It also points to the importance of mentorship and modeling in helping pre-service teachers move beyond textbook planning toward lessons that are dynamic, learner-centered, and pedagogically sound.

The participants' responses reflect the significance of *developing structured and engaging lesson plans* as a critical subtheme in pre-service teacher development. SP1 emphasizes the value of detailed planning, interactive activities, and visual aids, highlighting classroom management—especially through positive reinforcement and clear instructions—as a key strategy for maintaining student engagement. SP2 echoes this focus on interaction, noting that using real-life examples makes abstract concepts more relatable and accessible to students. SP3 points to the importance of drawing from diverse references when designing activities, which not only enriches lesson content but also helps maintain student interest and prevent monotony. SP4 reinforces the idea that a well-structured lesson plan creates a manageable teaching flow and boosts confidence, underlining that preparation and content mastery are essential to effective classroom delivery. Collectively, these responses illustrate that engaging lesson plans are not just about content, but also about thoughtful structure, student-centered strategies, and the teacher's preparedness and confidence—all of which are vital for creating a dynamic and effective learning environment.

"I used strategies such as creating detailed lesson plans. Incorporating interactive activities. Using visual aids. The most effective strategy was practicing classroom management techniques, such as using positive reinforcement and clear instructions to maintain student attention." (SP1)

"I started incorporating interactive activities to boost student engagement. The most effective strategy for me has been using real-life examples to make abstract concepts more relatable." (SP2)

"I think having variety of references in order to design the activities reflected on my lesson plan had really helped me a lot because through this I was able to find more ideas on how am I going to implement such activities inside the classroom without making my class boring and at the same time it would make our class interesting and fun." (SP3)

"One of the best strategies that helped me was creating a well-planned lesson. When you clearly know the flow of your lesson, everything becomes easier to manage. So being confident in what you are teaching and making sure you're knowledgeable about the topic also makes a big Difference. Preparation and confidence really go hand in hand in overcoming teaching challenges." (SP4)

Practicing delivery to build confidence highlights the essential role of rehearsal and real-time teaching experience in helping pre-service teachers gain self-assurance in the classroom. While theoretical knowledge and lesson planning are important, many pre-service teachers find that true confidence emerges through repeated practice—delivering lessons, receiving feedback, and refining their approach. This process allows them to become more familiar with the flow of instruction, anticipate student reactions, and adjust their pacing and tone.

Practice also helps reduce anxiety, improve classroom presence, and develop a clearer, more authoritative voice. For many, it is through micro-teaching sessions or peer teaching that they begin to recognize and address their weaknesses, gradually transforming uncertainty into composure. This subtheme underscores that confidence is not innate but developed through consistent, reflective practice in authentic teaching situations.

The participants' responses highlight that practicing delivery to build confidence is a key strategy for pre-service teachers. SP5 emphasizes rehearsing lessons and using visual aids and games to boost engagement and preparedness. PP3 and TP3 observe that pre-service teachers often rehearse with peers and seek advice to improve their teaching. TP4 reinforces that peer support, feedback, and repeated practice help reduce anxiety and build confidence. Overall, these responses show that consistent rehearsal and collaboration are essential in helping pre-service teachers feel more prepared and self-assured during microteaching.

"I use visual aids, games and practice my lesson beforehand. Visual aids and games help me a lot to keep students engaged." (SP5)

"She always practices at home, rehearses teaching even just with us. She also asks for advice and support." (PP3)

"As what I observed, the coping strategies that students employ when they face difficulties in microteaching are: - Doing practices with their peers. - Doing rehearsals, especially in giving instructions and questions. - Seeking guidance from their peers and mentors before doing the microteaching." (TP3)

"One coping strategy I observed among students during microteaching is seeking peer support. They often ask classmates for feedback, share teaching materials, and practice together to boost their confidence. This helps them feel less alone and more prepared for their tasks. Another strategy is thorough preparation and rehearsal. Students usually spend extra time reviewing their lesson plans and practicing their delivery to reduce nervousness. These strategies help them manage stress and perform better during their teaching demonstrations." (TP4)

Pre-service teachers showed improved instructional readiness through systematic lesson planning and anticipatory engagement strategies. Well-organized lesson planning, which makes instruction clearer and easier to manage, improves pre-service teachers' capacity for structuring instruction and anticipating classroom dynamics, as noted by Mukuka and Alex (2024). This is supported by Şahinkayası (2019), who highlighted microteaching and cognitive tools' contribution to enabling student-teachers to plan lessons systematically in order to align instructional objectives with learner needs. In the same vein, Deocampo (n.d.) discovered that partaking in reflective planning activities, including the definition of interactive tasks and the utilization of diverse instructional materials, enhances not only lesson clarity but also student motivation and learning achievement. These results point to the fact that diligent planning is an important strategy for closing the gap between intended theoretical actions and effective teaching practice.

Aside from planning, the practice of teaching delivery greatly enhances pre-service teachers' confidence and alleviates anxiety. Yundayani and Alghadari (2024) note that regular rehearsal of lessons either alone or with peers enables student-teachers to develop better timing, transitions, and classroom presence. Bulut (2024) confirms this too, demonstrating how microteaching activities, particularly when complemented by rehearsal, reduce speaking anxiety and enhance self-efficacy of teaching. Similarly, TP4 in Darsih et al. (2023) noted that rehearsal strategies like peer simulations and dry runs result in improved teaching flow and decreased performance pressure. These studies affirm that through consistent practice and peer-supported rehearsing, pre-service teachers can internalize theoretical concepts better and apply them well in actual teaching settings.

Fostering Reflective Growth Through Feedback Support and Adaptation

This theme explored how pre-service teachers develop professionally through ongoing reflection, shaped by constructive feedback, mentorship, and adaptive practices. Participants shared that receiving timely and specific feedback from peers, mentors, and instructors encouraged them to reassess their instructional approaches and make meaningful improvements. Three subthemes show fostering reflective growth through feedback support

and adaptation: (1) Using feedback and self-reflection for improvement; (2) Seeking guidance and emotional support from peers, mentors, and family; (3) Adapting strategies to suit learners and classroom context.

Using feedback and self-reflection for improvement highlights how pre-service teachers grow by actively evaluating their teaching experiences. Through feedback from mentors and peers, they gain insights into what works and what needs adjustment. Self-reflection allows them to assess their own performance, identify mistakes, and recognize areas for growth. This ongoing process helps transform challenges into learning opportunities, encouraging a mindset focused on improvement rather than perfection. It also fosters greater self-awareness, which is crucial for developing effective teaching practices and professional confidence.

The participants' responses highlight the importance of *using feedback and self-reflection for improvement* as a vital subtheme in the development of pre-service teachers. SP1, SP2, and SP3 emphasize how feedback from mentors and peers, combined with personal reflection, helps them identify strengths and areas for growth. SP2 provides a specific example of improving questioning techniques after receiving constructive feedback, showing how reflection leads to tangible changes in practice. TP4 reinforces this by observing how pre-service teachers apply feedback in subsequent lessons and reflect through journals or discussions, noting that these processes lead to improved confidence, clarity, and responsiveness. Additionally, PP1, PP4, and PP5 highlight the role of emotional support and informal feedback from family and friends, which further encourages reflection and resilience. These insights collectively show that engaging with feedback and reflecting on teaching experiences not only enhances instructional skills but also fosters motivation, adaptability, and a deeper commitment to continuous improvement.

"Feedback from my mentors and peers helps me identify areas for improvement, while self-reflection allows me to assess my teaching effectiveness. By analyzing what worked and what didn't, I can make adjustments for better lesson delivery." (SP1)

"Feedback from my mentors helped me identify areas for improvement, while self-reflection allowed me to assess what worked and what didn't. For example, after receiving my feedback on my questioning techniques, I modified them in my next session and saw better student responses. So it is all about the art of questioning." (SP2)

"I really do believe that feedback and reflection play a significant role in my micro-teaching because through these feedbacks, it could be those things to improve and things that I am good at. Through this, it would become my motivation to do better. And also for my reflection, so I can think of what are the things that I have to improve and to do the next time that I would conduct a micro-teaching." (SP3)

"I assess students' ability to adapt and improve by observing how they apply feedback in their next microteaching sessions. I look for specific changes in their teaching methods, classroom management, and communication skills based on the suggestions given. I also assess their level of reflection through journals or discussions, where they explain what went wrong, what they learned, and how they plan to improve. Improvement in confidence, clarity of instruction, and responsiveness to student needs are also key indicators. These show their willingness to grow and learn from challenges." (TP4)

Seeking guidance and emotional support from peers, mentors, and family. Highlights the crucial role of interpersonal support in helping pre-service teachers navigate the challenges of microteaching. Participants such as PP1, PP4, and PP5 emphasize how emotional encouragement, advice, and practical help from family members—like preparing meals, reviewing lessons, or simply listening—contribute to building resilience and reducing stress. Similarly, peer collaboration and mentor feedback, as noted by other participants, offer both instructional guidance and moral support, creating a sense of shared experience that eases feelings of isolation. This subtheme underscores that teaching preparation is not just an individual effort, but a collective process where emotional and professional support systems significantly enhance confidence, motivation, and the capacity to grow.

The participants' responses emphasize the importance of *seeking guidance and emotional support from peers, mentors, and family* in coping with the pressures of microteaching. PP1 shares that the pre-service teacher actively seeks advice from instructors and prays for motivation and peace of mind, reflecting both practical and

emotional coping strategies. PP5 adds that she consults friends who are teachers for ideas and methods, showing a proactive effort to improve through mentorship. PP4 provides a more holistic view, describing how she supports her child by preparing meals, offering emotional encouragement, reviewing lesson plans, and giving feedback—demonstrating the vital role family plays in sustaining motivation and confidence. These responses illustrate that beyond academic preparation, the emotional and social support received from trusted individuals helps pre-service teachers manage stress, stay motivated, and feel more equipped to face the demands of teaching.

“She strives to study well, asks for advice from her instructors, and practices at home. She also prays for motivation and peace of mind.” (PP1)

“She really tries hard to study. She asks help from my friends who are teachers about what she should do, and she asks for ideas and methods.” (PP5)

“The support I provide at home to help my child face the challenges in microteaching includes preparing her meals, ensuring she has time to practice, and offering emotional support. I listen to her concerns, encourage her when she’s feeling down, and give her advice on how to manage stress. I also help her review the lesson and give feedback to improve her teaching skills.” (PP4)

Adapting strategies to suit learners and classroom context highlights the ability of pre-service teachers to adjust their teaching methods based on students’ needs, behavior, and the learning environment. It reflects a shift from relying strictly on planned lessons to being responsive and flexible during instruction. This includes modifying activities, simplifying explanations, or changing classroom management approaches depending on how learners respond. It also involves recognizing the diverse abilities, interests, and attention spans of students, especially young learners, and adjusting strategies to keep them engaged and ensure understanding. This subtheme emphasizes the importance of situational awareness, adaptability, and a learner-centered mindset in developing effective teaching practices.

TP1’s response highlights how pre-service teachers adapt their strategies to meet learners’ needs and classroom challenges. When lessons are too complex, they simplify content into manageable parts and rehearse delivery to build confidence. To address attention and behavior issues, they use engaging methods like visual aids, storytelling, games, and multimedia to keep students focused and interested. This shows their flexibility and growing ability to adjust teaching approaches based on real classroom contexts.

“If the lesson they chose turns out to be too complex or difficult, many pre-service teachers revise and simplify their lesson plans. They break down the content into smaller, more manageable parts to make it easier to understand and teach. This helps ensure their pupils can follow along and keeps the teacher from feeling overwhelmed. They also rehearse their lessons several times, often practicing in front of their peers. This repeated practice helps improve their delivery, build their confidence, and prepare them for actual teaching situations. When facing issues with pupil attention or behavior, pre-service teachers often use engaging strategies to regain control and keep learners focused. These include: Using visual aids, such as colorful charts or pictures, to attract attention. Incorporating songs, storytelling, or interactive games to make the lesson more fun and engaging. Utilizing multimedia resources like videos or animated slides to keep pupils interested and reduce boredom.” (TP1)

This research proposed that building instructional development among pre-service teachers requires more than theoretical instruction. Active participation in detailed lesson and teaching improvement. Emotional and peer support also enables resilience building to deal with adversity better. Teacher education courses, therefore, should offer systematic, practice-based settings that encourage reflective teaching, collaboration, and adaptive approaches geared towards learners’ needs.

Pre-service teachers showed improved instructional readiness through systematic lesson planning and anticipatory engagement strategies. Well-organized lesson planning, which makes instruction clearer and easier to manage, improves pre-service teachers' capacity for structuring instruction and anticipating classroom dynamics, as noted by Mukuka and Alex (2024). This is supported by Şahinkayası (2019), who highlighted

microteaching and cognitive tools' contribution to enabling student-teachers to plan lessons systematically in order to align instructional objectives with learner needs. In the same vein, Deocampo (n.d.) discovered that partaking in reflective planning activities, including the definition of interactive tasks and the utilization of diverse instructional materials, enhances not only lesson clarity but also student motivation and learning achievement. These results point to the fact that diligent planning is an important strategy for closing the gap between intended theoretical actions and effective teaching practice.

Aside from planning, the practice of teaching delivery greatly enhances pre-service teachers' confidence and alleviates anxiety. Yundayani and Alghadari (2024) note that regular rehearsal of lessons—either alone or with peers—enables student-teachers to develop better timing, transitions, and classroom presence. Bulut (2024) confirms this too, demonstrating how microteaching activities, particularly when complemented by rehearsal, reduce speaking anxiety and enhance self-efficacy of teaching. Similarly, TP4 in Darsih et al. (2023) noted that rehearsal strategies like peer simulations and dry runs result in improved teaching flow and decreased performance pressure. These studies affirm that through consistent practice and peer-supported rehearsing, pre-service teachers can internalize theoretical concepts better and apply them well in actual teaching settings.

Capacity-Building Through Practical Exposure and Guided Mentorship

This theme highlighted the importance of direct, practice-based experiences and continuous support from mentors and instructors to build students' teaching competence and confidence. Two subthemes show capacity-building through practical exposure and guided mentorship: (1) Value of Real Classroom Exposure and Simulation; (2) Role of Mentoring in Developing Teaching Competence.

Value of Real Classroom Exposure and Simulation. This subtheme captures participants' recognition of the critical role that authentic classroom exposure and simulated teaching environments play in building instructional confidence and competence. Realistic teaching contexts—whether through school immersion or structured simulation—enable pre-service teachers to bridge the gap between theory and practice, confronting actual learner diversity, classroom management challenges, and spontaneous instructional demands.

The participants' responses emphasize the need for more practical, hands-on experience and collaboration in teacher training. SP2 and SP5 suggest that increased opportunities for real classroom observations and practice teaching with actual students would better prepare pre-service teachers for real-life challenges, helping bridge the gap between theory and practice. They also stress the importance of receiving detailed feedback during these experiences. TP5 adds that fostering a collaborative environment where pre-service teachers can share ideas and experiences would further enhance their learning. Together, these responses highlight the value of experiential learning and peer interaction in developing teaching competence and confidence.

“Providing more opportunities for real classroom observations or practice teaching with actual students could help bridge the gap. More workshops on handling real-life teaching challenges would also be beneficial.” (SP2)

“They can give us more chances to teach in real classroom settings, observe actual classes and give detailed feedback.” (SP5)

“Creating a more collaborative environment where students can exchange ideas and experiences with one another could further enrich the learning process.” (TP5)

Role of Mentoring in Developing Teaching Competence. Emphasizes the importance of experienced guidance in shaping the skills and confidence of pre-service teachers. Mentoring provides personalized support, helping novices reflect on their teaching performance, navigate classroom challenges, and apply effective strategies. Participants note that mentors offer both emotional encouragement and practical advice, especially in areas like lesson planning, student engagement, and classroom management. Through regular feedback and collaboration, mentors help bridge the gap between theory and practice, allowing pre-service teachers to grow more confidently and competently in their instructional roles. This subtheme highlights that mentoring is not just support—it is a key developmental tool in preparing future educators.

Mentorship emerged as a pivotal factor in shaping teaching competence among pre-service educators. Participants highlighted how guidance from experienced instructors, cooperating teachers, or faculty mentors provided both technical support and emotional reassurance. Mentors helped them navigate instructional challenges, reflect on performance, and adopt best practices.

“One of the most important supports for pre-service teachers is mentoring. Experienced teachers or mentors can offer valuable guidance and emotional support, especially when new teachers are struggling. Mentors can help pre-service teachers navigate challenges in classroom management, lesson delivery, and student engagement.” (TP1)

“I believe mentoring is crucial, as experienced teachers can provide insights and guidance. Peer collaboration is also helpful because sharing experiences with fellow students can offer new perspectives and techniques. Additional training in classroom management and lesson adaptation would further enhance my skills.” (SP1)

“I think mentoring and peer collaboration would really help me because having someone more experienced guide me would make me feel more supported. Also, working with my classmates can give me more ideas and boost my confidence. Additional training, like workshops or practice sessions, would also be helpful.” (SP4)

“Having a mentor provides students with personalized guidance, helps them reflect on their performance, and gives them practical strategies to improve.” (TP4)

Real classroom experience and simulation are essential elements in the process of preparing pre-service teachers for the reality of teaching. As noted by Mukuka and Alex (2024), real teaching contexts like microteaching under real-classroom conditions or controlled simulations give room for learners to relate theory with reality. Such environments allow pre-service teachers to gain confidence while dealing with complex pedagogic responsibilities, like dealing with mixed-ability learners or with unforeseen classroom incidents. To support this, Baluyos et al. (2024) highlighted that pre-service mathematics teachers had practical knowledge and ability when they participated in teaching demonstrations and observed experienced teachers. Likewise, Yundayani and Alghadari (2024) discovered that learning through genuine environments of teaching assisted student teachers to deal with challenges in lesson delivery, particularly in language classrooms where flexibility is vital. These studies confirm that classroom simulation and exposure are critical in allowing students to build the pedagogical flexibility and confidence required for effective instruction.

Similarly, critical is the task of mentorship towards developing pre-service teachers' teaching competence. TP1 and TP4, reiterated in Darsih et al. (2023), highlighted that mentoring enables student teachers to reflect on their teaching performance and receive feedback based on practical experience. Mentors are role models who offer constructive improvement strategies, affirming pre-service teachers' professional identity. This is echoed by Şahinkayası (2019), who says that guided lesson planning and reflective mentoring bridge the gap between cognitive and classroom application. Deocampo (n.d.) also emphasizes the strength of reflective mentorship in enhancing English language pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy through individualized coaching and emotional support. These are views which affirm that systematic mentoring—particularly when provided with continuous feedback and joint planning enhances the pre-service teacher's ability to teach with certainty, clarity, and compassion.

Structured and Supportive Learning Ecosystem

This theme reflects the students' need for structured feedback, collaborative learning, emotional safety, and targeted workshops to enrich their microteaching journey. Four subthemes: (1) Constructive and Ongoing Feedback; (2) Collaborative Peer Support and Shared Learning; (3) Access to Targeted Training and Materials; (4) Supportive and Safe Learning Environment

Constructive and Ongoing Feedback. This subtheme underscores the vital role of timely, specific, and supportive feedback in the professional growth of pre-service teachers. Rather than one-off critiques, this feedback is continuous and delivered in a positive, encouraging manner that helps learners identify strengths and areas for improvement. It often involves insights from multiple sources—including mentors, peers, and experienced teachers—offering practical suggestions grounded in real classroom experience. This ongoing dialogue enables

pre-service teachers to reflect on their teaching, make adjustments, and build confidence over time. Ultimately, constructive and ongoing feedback fosters a safe learning environment where mistakes are viewed as opportunities for growth, accelerating skill development and teaching competence.

The participants' responses collectively emphasize the importance of *constructive and ongoing feedback* in enhancing the microteaching experience. TP1 highlights that structured feedback is most effective when it includes diverse perspectives, particularly from experienced elementary teachers who provide practical, classroom-based insights that complement academic guidance. PP5 stresses the value of gentle correction during trial teaching sessions, advocating for a supportive approach that encourages learning from mistakes rather than punishment. PP4 reinforces the need for positive, constructive feedback combined with opportunities for real classroom practice and additional coaching to build confidence. TP3 adds that both formal and informal feedback, alongside peer and mentor support, are crucial, especially when paired with targeted training in specific teaching skills. Together, these responses illustrate that ongoing, constructive feedback—delivered respectfully and enriched by multiple sources—creates a supportive environment that fosters continuous improvement and professional growth.

“Structured feedback is key, but it becomes more meaningful when it includes insights not just from mentors or supervisors but also from experienced elementary teachers. These teachers bring practical classroom experience and can offer valuable suggestions that complement the feedback from college instructors.” (TP1)

“Hopefully, teachers will give students ideas on how to improve their teaching. Let them do trial demos, observe them, and if something is wrong, correct them—not scold them right away if they make mistakes.” (PP5)

“Teachers should offer constructive feedback in a positive manner and create opportunities for students to practice in a real classroom setting. Additional workshops or one-on-one coaching sessions would also help students gain more confidence.” (PP4)

“As a teacher, the forms of support I believe are most beneficial to my students in microteaching are: - Mentor and peer mentoring. - Giving both formal and informal forms of feedback. - Giving constructive criticisms. - Additional training in microteaching, especially in areas they found difficulty with, like constructing statements, asking questions, and giving directions or instructions.” (TP3)

Collaborative Peer Support and Shared Learning. As a subtheme, *Collaborative Peer Support and Shared Learning* highlights how working together with classmates fosters a supportive environment where pre-service teachers can exchange ideas, practice teaching skills, and give constructive feedback. This collaboration encourages mutual learning, boosts confidence, and helps them address challenges collectively. Through shared experiences and peer guidance, they develop practical strategies and deepen their understanding, making the learning process more interactive and effective. This subtheme underscores that teaching competence grows not only through individual effort but also through collaborative support and shared reflection.

The participants' responses emphasize the significance of *collaborative peer support and shared learning* in microteaching. TP5 highlights how group discussions, peer teaching, and team activities create valuable opportunities for students to exchange experiences and strategies, fostering mutual learning and skill refinement. Access to teaching resources and a supportive environment where students can safely experiment and learn from mistakes further enhance this collaborative process. Similarly, SP2 points out that peer collaboration offers diverse perspectives that enrich understanding, while also noting the need for additional training to address real classroom challenges. Together, these responses illustrate how collaborative learning not only builds competence but also creates a nurturing space that encourages growth through shared knowledge and support.

“I believe collaborative learning opportunities are highly beneficial for students in microteaching. Group discussions, peer teaching, and team-based activities allow students to share experiences and strategies, helping them learn from each other. Another effective form of support is providing access to teaching resources and materials, such as sample lesson plans, teaching videos, or guides on effective teaching methods. This helps students refine their skills and broaden their teaching approaches. Lastly, creating a supportive learning

environment where students feel comfortable making mistakes and experimenting with different teaching styles is essential for their growth and development.” (TP5)

“Peer collaboration has been very helpful as discussing with classmates provides different perspectives. Additional training in classroom management would also be beneficial for handling real-life teaching scenarios.” (SP2)

Access to Targeted Training and Materials. As a subtheme, *Access to Targeted Training and Materials* highlights the importance of providing pre-service teachers with specialized workshops, resources, and instructional materials tailored to their specific needs. This includes training on classroom management, lesson planning, and teaching strategies, as well as access to sample lesson plans, teaching guides, and multimedia tools. Such targeted support equips pre-service teachers with practical skills and diverse methods that enhance their preparedness and confidence. By offering relevant, focused training and resources, this subtheme underscores how well-designed support systems help bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling more effective and engaging teaching.

Participants expressed that having access to relevant instructional resources, teaching models, and targeted training sessions significantly enhanced their preparation. This subtheme highlights the importance of providing pre-service teachers with structured content, such as exemplar lesson plans, classroom videos, and topic-specific workshops. These resources served as both references and tools for innovation, helping them build confidence and improve instructional quality.

“It would be more helpful if there are training workshops, demo classes, and mentor support. The availability of teaching materials and access to a real classroom setup are also very important.” (PPI)

“The form of support that can be considered most beneficial to them is through mentoring and giving additional training. Through theses, students would have thoroughly equipped the technique or strategies for them to use.” (TP2)

“Teachers should provide genuine feedback, patience, and guidance. The school should also offer opportunities for actual classroom exposure so they can be better trained on how to handle real classes.” (PPI)

“Training workshops and demo classes are a big help. Hopefully, mentors/instructors won’t be too strict to the point of traumatizing students.” (PP5)

“It would be better if they had a support group or mentor who could help them with decision-making, or if there were stress management or confidence-building activities.” (PP2)

Real classroom experience and simulation are essential elements in the process of preparing pre-service teachers for the reality of teaching. As noted by Mukuka and Alex (2024), real teaching contexts like microteaching under real-classroom conditions or controlled simulations give room for learners to relate theory with reality. Such environments allow pre-service teachers to gain confidence while dealing with complex pedagogic responsibilities, like dealing with mixed-ability learners or with unforeseen classroom incidents. To support this, Baluyos et al. (2024) highlighted that pre-service mathematics teachers had practical knowledge and ability when they participated in teaching demonstrations and observed experienced teachers. Likewise, Yundayani and Alghadari (2024) discovered that learning through genuine environments of teaching assisted student teachers to deal with challenges in lesson delivery, particularly in language classrooms where flexibility is vital. These studies confirm that classroom simulation and exposure are critical in allowing students to build the pedagogical flexibility and confidence required for effective instruction.

Similarly, critical is the task of mentorship towards developing pre-service teachers' teaching competence. TP1 and TP4, reiterated in Darsih et al. (2023), highlighted that mentoring enables student teachers to reflect on their teaching performance and receive feedback based on practical experience. Mentors are role models who offer constructive improvement strategies, affirming pre-service teachers' professional identity. This is echoed by Şahinkayası (2019), who says that guided lesson planning and reflective mentoring bridge the gap between cognitive and classroom application. Deocampo (2024.) also emphasizes the strength of reflective mentorship

in enhancing English language pre-service teachers' teaching efficacy through individualized coaching and emotional support. These are views which affirm that systematic mentoring—particularly when provided with continuous feedback and joint planning—enhances the pre-service teacher's ability to teach with certainty, clarity, and compassion.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Effective teacher education relies on the seamless integration of theoretical knowledge and practical application in real or simulated classroom settings. However, many pre-service teachers at the primary school level encounter significant challenges during microteaching sessions, where they are expected to apply what they have learned in theory to actual lesson delivery. This study aimed to explore three key areas: (1) the challenges students face in applying theoretical knowledge during microteaching, (2) the coping strategies they use to manage these challenges, and (3) the support mechanisms that can enhance their microteaching experiences. Conducted during the second semester of S.Y. 2024–2025 in a teacher education institution in Misamis Occidental, this qualitative case study involved 15 purposively selected participants—comprising 5 BBED students, 5 parents, and 5 teachers. Data were gathered using a researcher-made questionnaire and analyzed through Yin's (2014) case study approach, providing a systematic framework for interpreting real-world teaching challenges and experiences.

Findings

The following were the study's key findings:

1. Students reported difficulties in translating pedagogical theories into practical teaching strategies, often struggling to adapt lessons to varied learner needs. Emotional barriers such as anxiety and fear of negative evaluation also impacted their performance, causing hesitation and disrupting instructional flow. Additionally, challenges in managing learner-centered activities and adjusting to real-time classroom dynamics highlighted the gap between theory and practice.
2. To overcome these challenges, students engaged in active planning and repeated rehearsals of their lessons to build confidence and improve instructional delivery. Reflective practices, especially through analyzing feedback from peers and mentors, enabled them to identify weaknesses and make necessary adjustments. This process of reflection and adaptation contributed to their professional growth and increased readiness for actual teaching.
3. Students emphasized the value of practical exposure combined with guided mentorship, noting that hands-on practice under expert supervision significantly boosted their teaching competencies. Structured programs with clear guidelines, accessible resources, and collaborative peer support created a positive learning environment. Such institutional support mechanisms were seen as crucial for bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom application.

CONCLUSION

The study's results led to the formulation of the following conclusions:

1. Students often struggled in microteaching sessions because of some factors that prevented them from using theoretical knowledge effectively. These include an inability to implement differentiated and student-centered instruction, class behavior management, and developing lessons appropriate for children's ages. Though pre-service teachers had a strong understanding of theory, they faced difficulties in using these strategies during actual teaching situations.
2. The disconnect between practice and theory is what most pre-service teachers experience, as they deal with unforeseen classroom scenarios not adequately covered in theoretical training. Some of these are the mixed levels of student participation, disruption, and the requirement to make instructional changes on the spot. What these experiences reflect is that pedagogy not only demands knowledge but also flexibility, self-assurance, and effective classroom presence.

3. In spite of the difficulties, students have a positive attitude, work towards improvement, and consider microteaching to be a beneficial learning experience. They know their faults and evince a desire to improve their teaching skills through reflection, guidance by mentors, and ongoing exposure to classroom realities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion, it is commented that:

1. Pre-service teachers really benefit from having more guided teaching practice opportunities where they can work closely with mentors. This hands-on experience can help bridge the gap between theory and practice, boosting their confidence and decision-making skills in real classroom settings.
2. Teacher education programs could really enhance their curriculum by adding simulation training and microteaching workshops that focus on differentiated instruction, classroom management, and lesson planning that's appropriate for different developmental stages. This approach can be a great way to build practical teaching skills.
3. Teachers and mentors play a crucial role in providing feedback and emotional support to pre- service teachers during and after their microteaching sessions. This support helps them reflect critically on their experience and find ways to improve their teaching methods.
4. Creating opportunities for peer support and group reflections can be incredibly valuable. Students can learn from each other's experiences, share strategies and discuss both their successes and challenges while they're engaged in microteaching.

Proposed Enhancement Program

Microteaching is deemed a challenging component of teacher education, as many pre-service teachers struggle to apply theoretical knowledge into practical teaching during microteaching. This proposed enhancement program aims to address the difficulties faced by BEED students. The proposed enhancement program for the College of Education students is presented below.

Learning Outcome	Focus Area	Activities	Time Frame	Persons Responsible
Develop confidence in lesson delivery.	Overcoming nervousness and fear.	Conduct a seminar -workshop on stress management, public speaking and confidence building.	August 2025	Guidance Counsel or CED Faculty Dean Students
Apply theoretical strategies in teaching.	Bridging theory to practice.	Conduct demonstration teaching sessions with mentor feedback.	September 2025	CED Faculty Dean Students
Learning Outcome	Focus Area	Activities	Time Frame	Persons Responsible
Improve Classroom management skills.	Managing real-time classroom behavior	Simulated classroom teaching sessions with mentor feedback	September 2025	CED Faculty Dean Students
Design learner-centered and differentiated lessons.	Instructional planning and strategy application.	Lesson plan clinic focusing on differentiated instruction and activity design.	October 2025	CED Faculty Dean Students
Use age- appropriate language and methods.	Child development and pedagogy.	workshop on age- appropriate communication, strategies and material development.	October 2025	CED Faculty Dean Students
Reflect on teaching performance for improvement.	self- assessment and peer reflection.	Conduct post- teaching reflections and peer feedback sessions.	November 2025	CED Faculty Dean Students
Foster adaptability in unexpected teaching scenarios	Decision- making and adaptability.	Organize microteaching challenges with real-time feedback.	November 2025	CED Faculty Dean Students

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