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Araştırma Makalesi

INVESTIGATION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' REFLECTIVE VIEWS ON MICRO-TEACHING IN REAL CLASSROOMS

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the contribution of micro-teaching experience in real classroom from the pre-service teachers' perspectives. The study was conducted as a descriptive study adopting the convergent parallel research design with 56 pre-service teachers. For data triangulation, both quantitative and qualitative data sets were collected through a questionnaire and reflection journals. The findings indicated that the participants appreciated the micro-teaching experience and defined it as helpful and effective to prepare them for further teaching. The main contributions of micro-teaching were reported as to develop and use materials, focus on students and prepare lesson plans. At the end of the term, they mostly felt ready for teaching facing their weakness but finding a way to improve them. The main challenge of micro-teaching was mentors. The results revealed that practice is crucial and have significant contributions if they start earlier and do more practice.

Keywords: Micro-teaching, pre-service teachers, teaching practice, Reflection.

ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ GERÇEK SINIFLARDA MİKRO ÖĞRETİM ÜZERİNE YANSITICI GÖRÜŞLERİNİN İNCELENMESİ

Öz

Bu makalenin amacı, gerçek sınıf ortamında yapılan mikro öğretimin katkılarını, öğretmen adaylarının gözünden incelenmesidir. Yakınsak araştırma deseni benimsenerek, 56 öğretmen adayının katılımı ile betimsel bir çalışma olarak desenlenmiştir. Veri çeşitlemesi amacıyla, nitel ve nicel veriler, anket ve yansıtıcı günlüklerden toplanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların mikro öğretim uygulamasını onayladıklarını ve ileriki öğretmenlik deneyimi için yardımcı ve etkili bir yöntem olarak görüldüğünü göstermiştir. Özellikle materyal geliştirme, öğrencilere odaklanma ve ders planı hazırlama konusunda bu uygulamanın katkısının daha çok olduğu belirtilmiştir. Dönemin sonunda, katılımcıların çoğunun öğretmenlik için kendilerini hazır hissettiği, eksikliklerini fark ettiği ve bunları geliştirmek için bir yol bulabildiği tespit edilmiştir. Uygulamada, mentor öğretmenler konusunda olumsuz değerlendirmeler olduğu görülmüştür. Sonuçlar mikro öğretimin öğretmen adaylarının ihtiyacı olan daha fazla uygulama için önemli bir

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yöntem olduğu ve öğretmenlik uygulama alanına büyük katkılarının olduğunu göstermiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mikro Öğretim, öğretmen adayları, öğretmenlik uygulaması, yansıtma.

Introduction

The quality in teacher education is believed to be the key to the quality in education in any country. The more trained and experienced teachers we have, the better education they can deliver to the future generations. Therefore, what is needed is to have a successful teacher-training program with a successful pre-service teacher education and the major goal of a successful teacher-training program is to expose prospective teachers to effective teaching strategies and experiences. Besides theoretical training, practice is important in training prospective teachers for the future and real life at schools.

Practicum teaching is an important phase for any teacher education program in Turkey, during which student-teachers are required to put forward the theoretical knowledge into practice and exposed to the real classroom teaching for them to be fully prepared and qualified teachers in the country. In the literature, a number of studies can be found on the emphasis of the nature and importance of practicum teaching. For example, Haigh, Pinder, and McDonald (2006) note that if student-teachers are active on the actual practice teaching experience and they get proper and constant guidance from their mentors and supervisors and even peers, they may learn the art of teaching. Starkey and Rawlins (2012) emphasize that understanding the teaching environment in which the student-teachers are exposed is a significant factor towards learning during practice teaching. By understanding the teaching environment and doing practice at schools, pre-service teachers may know what and why they are supposed to do. Doing so, the concepts and theories which are in their minds are not wasted since they have the chance of practice what they have learnt in a real classroom setting. Tuli and File (2009) argue that practicum teaching experience in student-teachers provides them the necessary experience towards knowing the responsibilities of a teacher. Likewise, Cheng (2015) also promotes the finding that practicum is of importance in teacher education by stating that teaching practicum is a kind of tool which helps pre-service teachers become competent in teaching. Related to Turkish context, Özdaş and Çakmak (2018) revealed the contribution of the teaching practice according to the pre-service teachers through metaphor analysis that as a result of the experience, the pre-service improved their time-management, classroom management skills as well as they learned how to use their voice effectively while teaching. Additionally, Özkan and Kınay (2015) mentioned the advantage of pre-service English language teachers on the speaking

performances and coping with speaking anxiety and they credited the intensive training on listening and teaching language skills and their active participation to the practicum process.

In this vein, Mattheoudakis (2007) explained the contribution of teaching practice that pre-service teachers are required to acquire a series of complex body of knowledge on how languages are learnt, methods of language teaching, classroom procedures and management, child psychology and pedagogy. At practicum, by observing their mentors in terms of classroom management, planning, teaching and dealing with some difficulties in real classroom environments and doing teaching practice, pre-service teachers are supposed to reflect what they have learnt in theory by creating their own way of teaching based on the education they have gained. When Celen and Akcan (2017) evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation of practicum at the program of the English Language Teacher Education in Turkey, they found out that such a teaching experience provides a chance to teach in classrooms, discussions and peer feedback, observation of various grade levels, good relationship with mentors, and guidance by supervisors, which are the main pros of the program.

The core dynamic of being teacher is to put the theory into practice. One may have a very good knowledge of theory but without putting it into practice, it has no value. One may know all the techniques of classroom management in theory but when they are in real classroom situation, they may experience something unexpected and feel themselves helpless. Therefore, what pre-service teachers need more is practice both in stimulated contexts and then in real classroom situations. Based on ‘the good employee’ paradigm, teacher education should prepare pre-service teachers in the existing norms and practices of classrooms and schools. According to Doyle (1990), ‘The ideal and successful teacher, is one who can efficiently cope with the “real world” of schooling’. That a pre-service teacher becomes efficient in teaching and copes with real classroom atmosphere is carried out by practice. Since starting to practice a whole lesson at once is almost impossible and weird, pre-service teachers first observe their supervisors and mentors, and then start practice with micro-teaching. Thus, micro-teaching is useful and productive for pre-service teachers to shape their teaching practices. Micro-teaching is believed to be an effective method for professional training of pre-service teachers prior to full-time teaching in real school environments (Kpanja, 2001).

The term “micro-teaching” was first invented by Dwight Allen as a kind of training technique at Stanford University in the early 1970s and it has been used by many universities and teacher training departments to help teachers to get proper teaching skills since then (Morrison, 2010). The term “micro-teaching” can be defined as a training context in which a teaching situation has been reduced and simplified in terms of time and scope by focusing only

one aspect of teaching like teaching vocabulary etc. In micro-teaching, in order to provide optimal training situations, class size, time, task and content are minimized (He & Yan, 2011). The aim is to help pre-service teachers gain experience by preparing micro-teaching lessons and present themselves to their mentors, supervisors and peers. Seidman (1968) has a different definition for micro-teaching as “teaching under microscope” since a lesson is scaled down as parts. For Wallace (1991) micro-teaching may be seen as a technique for reflection rather than just a technique for shaping teaching. Ghanaguru, Nair and Yong (2013) defined micro-teaching as the art of teaching is highlighted in micro-teaching by constant practice in producing quality lesson plans which serve as a guide for pre-service teachers to plan and execute their lessons.

The feedback provided by mentors and peers during teaching practice is the triggering factor for such development, since it enhances pre-service teachers’ understanding and knowledge of pedagogical skills. The influence of mentors for pre-service teachers is also important during micro-teaching activities since feedback from mentors may affect pre-service teachers’ upcoming real teaching lives at schools. A mentor teacher can be described as an experienced classroom teacher responsible for training pre-service teachers on the subject matter, classroom management, teaching and all other classroom related subjects (Davies, Brady & Wall, 1999). According to Wang and Odell (2002), a mentor is supposed to provide teaching support, technical assistance and all other classroom and school related issues to pre-service teachers. It may be said that as an experienced teacher, a mentor should enhance students teachers’ learning and help them teach better in the light of curriculum with the rules of school and society.

A study by Ingersoll and Smith (2004) depicts that when mentoring is successful and mentors are helpful to pre-service teachers in all areas needed, the pre-service teachers are likely to stay at the profession and less likely to leave the teaching occupation and they are more motivated to teach and become teachers. Thus, effective mentoring with good supportive feedback help pre-service teachers develop good attitude towards teaching hence efficient teaching practice. As the time the pre-service teacher spends with the mentors increases the cooperation with mentors is apt to enhance (Mann & Tang, 2012). In that point, the pre-service teachers’ practicum, during which they practice different instructional skills and experience real school context with real teachers, mentors, has a critical role for their professional development.

In Turkey, 4th year of teacher education is devoted for school observation and teaching practice to prepare pre-service teachers and put the theory they have studied so far into practice. According to the program launched by HEC, the pre-service teachers are to attend to School Observation course during the fall term as the first step for teaching practice. There is a variety

in the requirements of this course among different departments and even among the ELT departments of different universities. Based on the English Language Teaching program offered by HEC in 2006; in School Observation course, students are required to attend the assigned state schools for a term, to observe the mentors' teaching and classroom routines. Besides, they are required to do some limited teaching activities such as exercise checking, question-answering etc. Basically, for this course, it is not compulsory for the pre-service teachers to do any teaching practice. While some ELT departments limited this course just as observation of school life, mentor and teaching, some departments require students to do micro-teaching for 20 minutes as training for teaching practice which is another compulsory course in the following term. The rationale of including micro-teaching into school observation just before full-time teaching practice is to make students experience actual professional teaching, classroom atmosphere, to gain awareness of teaching, manage the classroom, develop and adapt effective materials, design effective lessons, and to establish rapport with students (Borg, 2006) At the end of this course, students could be more motivated and ready for macro teaching and they could design more effective lessons considering their first trials during micro-teaching.

In spite of such essential benefits of micro-teaching on pre-service teachers, the implementation of micro-teaching requirement is constrained at many teacher education programs, the aim of this study is to unveil the contribution of micro-teaching experience on the pre-service teachers' teaching skills and their professional development from their own lenses through reflections. In this way, it was attempted to reveal how more teaching practice could make difference in pre-service teachers' attitudes and performances.

Method

In this study, it was aimed to describe the contribution of micro-teaching during school observation course according to the ELT pre-service teachers' perspectives. To investigate the contribution in more comprehensive way, a mixed method combining both qualitative and quantitative data was applied. As Creswell (2013) emphasized that through mixed method multiple perspectives and complete understanding of the research topic could be achieved. Integrating both qualitative and quantitative data, the quantitative data could be confirmed and explained by the qualitative data that uncovers the individual perspectives. Out of the basic mixed methods, convergent parallel design was used in this study to ensure the data triangulation, expansion of the research topic, and with the purpose of corroboration and validity of the results. A convergent parallel design entails that the researcher concurrently conducts the quantitative and qualitative elements in the same phase of the research process

(QUAL + QUAN); Morse, 1991), weighs the methods equally, analyzes the two components independently, and interprets the results together (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011).

In the research process, the researchers aimed to triangulate the methods by directly comparing the quantitative statistical results and qualitative findings. Two datasets have been obtained, analyzed separately, and compared, then interpreted referring to the research questions. As the first data set; quantitative data was collected from the questionnaires examining the participants' perspectives on the contribution of micro teaching. At the same time, the participants' reflection journals were analyzed for the qualitative data to shed the light on their experience and ideas on the micro-teaching. As compared, two data sets were interpreted. Rather than using one set, this study applied mixed method combining both qualitative and quantitative data in order to gain better in sight about how the pre-service teachers perceived the micro teaching and what actually experienced in practice. As the perceptions and actual experience influence each other, in other words; what they experience can shape what they perceive, the convergent parallel design which enables researcher to collect two data sets at the same phrase and compare the different data sets at the same context, was used. In that way, the effectiveness of micro teaching could be examined comprehensively and more practical suggestions could be discussed.

Through this design, it was aimed to gain in-depth understanding of the contribution of micro-teaching through the pre-service teachers' lenses. The research questions to be answered in this study are as follows:

1. How does the micro-teaching during school observation contribute to the pre-service teachers?
2. What are their self-reflections on their progress in teaching practice?
3. How do they evaluate the process in terms of supervisors, mentors, peers, practicum schools?

Participants and Research Setting

Through purposive sampling, 56 senior students, who attended to 4th year at ELT department of Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Turkey, were included in the study. The participants were attending to the school observation course, which is the first compulsory teaching practice course of English Language Teaching departments according to HEC (2006).

During the school observation course, as the first and most important phase of practicum, the students were assigned to the state schools, elementary, secondary and high

schools in Eskisehir; and one mentor. They attended to four lesson hours a week during 14-week length practicum at the fall term. In addition to the requirements determined by HEC, which are to observe the school environment, classroom dynamics and take part in teaching activities (HEC, 2006), the participants of the present study were to do micro-teaching once per week, according to the course requirements identified and added by the department. For the micro-teaching, the students were to prepare and plan 20 min. lesson for the subjects and classes that the mentor approved. The 20-min micro-teaching could cover any stage of the lesson, namely pre-stage, presentation or post activities. They worked with their teaching peers, who observed and taught together in the class during the practicum. Thus, two pre-service teachers taught one lesson with 20 min. micro-teaching lesson plans. They were to shift the teaching stages regularly so that they could have opportunity and experience to teach different stages and do the different teaching activities. Before the micro-teaching, they had to prepare the 20 min. lesson plans and send to the supervisors for the feedback. After certain correction and improvisations, they taught the lesson under the observation of the mentors. They received the feedback after teaching and they got the topic for the next week. The students also wrote their reflections for each teaching practice afterwards.

Data Collection and Analysis

To provide data triangulation, which is important for the reliability and validity in mixed method research designs, both quantitative and qualitative data sets were collected in the study. The research process in this study is given in Figure 1:

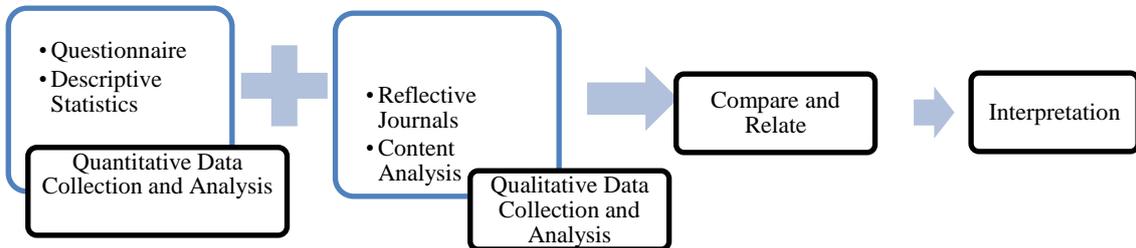


Figure 1: The Research Process in This Study Using the Convergent Mixed-Parallel Design

For quantitative data, a questionnaire was developed by one of the researcher to investigate the contributions of micro-teaching to the pre-service teachers' teacher performances and their overall evaluation on the process. Through a questionnaire, it was aimed to cover different dynamics of teaching practice and allow students to reveal their perceptions in different ways. Also, with the help of ratings, the participants could state their overall evaluation clearly. In the questionnaire, there are 22 statements in the questionnaire divided into three sections. The first section, consisting 13 statements in 5 point Likert scale, questions the contribution of micro-teaching experience, the second section with 6 statements triggers self-reflection on their progress in teaching skills as a result of micro-teaching. The last section is for the evaluation of micro-teaching implementation in terms of school, mentor and supervisor through ratings and supported with the open-ended questions on the reason of their evaluation.

The questionnaire was given at the end of the term. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed through the descriptive statistics: The mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages were calculated to determine the pre-service teachers' perceptions on the contribution of micro-teaching.

For qualitative data, the participants' reflection journals that they wrote after each micro-teaching during 14 weeks of practicum were analyzed. In their reflection journals, they were asked to explain the strengths, weakness of their class and what they learned and developed after each micro-teaching. For qualitative data, the participants' 14 reflection journals written after each micro-teaching by each participant (total 784 journals) were analyzed qualitatively through content analysis, which allows for the generation of themes, categories, and patterns from the data itself (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008). The reflections that had repeated or empty contents were excluded from the analysis. As a result of the analysis conducted independently by the researchers, four generic categories in line with the research questions were obtained, which are self-reflections on teaching performance, class dynamics and evaluation of micro-teaching process and mentors. The emerged codes under categories were found as overlapping with the statements in the questionnaire.

Results

The results of the qualitative and quantitative analysis on the data collection are presented addressing to the research questions. Firstly the contribution of micro-teaching, then their progress and overall evaluation of micro-teaching is explained from the participants perspectives revealed with their answers on the questionnaire and reflections in their journals.

The Contribution of Micro-Teaching Experience

To examine and evaluate the micro-teaching experience in the practicum process from the ELT pre-service teachers' views, the participants were asked to evaluate the contributions of micro-teaching through the items in a questionnaire and write reflection journals. For the first research question, which inquiries how the micro-teaching during practicum contributes to the pre-service teachers, the findings obtained from the analyses are given in the following.

Table 1: The Pre-service Teachers' Perceptions on the Contributions of Micro-Teaching

	Mean	SD
Micro-teaching contributed because I		
develop appropriate materials for teaching	4,25	0,85
focus on school students' learning	4,25	0,69
prepare lesson plans according to students' needs	4,25	1,30
grasp the context of actual classroom	4,20	0,42
become more reflective about my teaching skills	4,09	1,21
put the theory I learned in the University into practice in the classroom	4,07	0,74
choose and use appropriate technologies for students to use	3,96	1,01
have the opportunity to work with experienced teachers	3,89	1,02
develop effective classroom management strategies	3,88	1,32
understand the overall context of the school	3,86	1,45
apt teaching methods, approaches & techniques for particular students	3,59	0,68
extend the range of teaching strategies I used in the classroom	2,32	1,58
improve my teaching practice in areas that needed development	2,25	1,01

As seen in Table 1, the pre-service teachers agreed on many contributions of micro-teaching experience, questioned in the questionnaire. Particularly, the skills of developing appropriate materials for teaching, focusing on students' learning and preparing lesson plans according to students' needs come to the fore with the highest mean (4,25 for each). Then, the pre-service teachers stated that the micro-teaching experience during practicum helped them grasp the context of actual classroom (mean = 4,20). These figures imply that the participants agreed on most of the contributions of micro-teaching experience. One of the striking findings regarding the contributions is that the pre-service teachers perceived that micro-teaching as an opportunity to put the theory into practice. The least favorite statement regarding the contributions of micro-teaching was improving teaching practice in areas that needed development (mean = 2,25). This finding could be explained with the fact that micro-teaching experience required pre-service teachers to teach the certain teaching stage just for 20 minutes. Such tailored experience could have a limited contribution to teaching practice skills and styles in comparison with full time teaching. Nevertheless, the more than half of the participants were aware that this experience helped them understand the overall context of the school (mean = 3,86) and apt teaching methods, approaches and techniques for particular students (mean = 3,59). To sum up, the participants agreed most of the contributions of micro-teaching experience with relatively high mean values.

In the reflection journals, the participants stated similar contributions under the categories of self-reflections on teaching performance, class dynamics. Of the categories, the category of teaching performance had four frequent codes, namely material, activities, time management and classroom management.

Table 2: The Most Frequent Codes under the Category of Class Dynamics in the Qualitative Analysis of Reflection Journals

CATEGORY	FREQUENT CODES
CLASS DYNAMICS	Material
	Teaching Activities
	Time Management
	Classroom Management

Complying with the quantitative results, the participants favored the material selection and use as the most important contribution of the micro-teaching. Most of the participants agreed from the beginning of the micro-teaching that the materials are important to draw students' attention and teach the subject effectively.

To use visual materials makes the lesson more interesting and draws students' attention.

To follow the course books' activities all the time makes the lesson boring (Student #4)

I'm very inexperienced teacher, yet but I think I can adapt activities in course books in order to make them more interesting and enjoyable, also more appropriate for the context maybe. Also I try to make English more enjoyable for them using animations, songs, videos and games, so this can be shown as strength of a teacher, I guess (Student #2)

In the reflections, it was seen that the adapting the materials according to the students' needs and outcomes of the lesson improved as they experienced micro-teaching during the term. Such a teaching skill is an essential contribution of micro-teaching since it requires students to analyze their students' needs and interest and to find appropriate technique to teach the subject and adapt the material accordingly. In this vein, one of the participants stated that

If the lesson does not proceed as I want, I could adapt the material and make it more fun. I think it is my strength in teaching as a result of micro-teaching (Student #22)

In relation with teaching performance, the participants realized the importance of the activities as a result of micro-teaching as they implemented different types of activities.

I learn that even if they are high school students, they like playing games, animations and acting out. We should make them move and use the technology as much as possible (Students #10)

Additionally, in their reflections they discussed what different activities could be used instead. It was observed that as they experienced more micro-teaching, their creativity in developing the activities and using different materials, mostly visual videos and technology supported activities has improved.

I should improve my creativity and I think it will be in time and as my experience grows. Whenever I plan my lesson, my vision is very wide. But after the class, there are so much thing that I wish I did. (Student 5#)

For the category of the class dynamics, the codes that come to the fore are time-management, classroom management and instructions. Since the micro-teaching is limited to 20 minutes and covers certain teaching stages for each participant, many students tried to improve their time management during the practicum. They reflected more on their reflections hence.

I need to improve time management. I should observe the students and check whether they are done with the activities or not...Also I need to allocate right amount of time for the activities. (Student #4)

I can get students' attention quickly, which is great to get the class together. I improved my time management skills since the beginning of the term. (Student #21)

Another contribution of micro-teaching revealed from the reflections is classroom management as a class dynamic. Since micro-teaching is the first time that they tried to manage an actual class, they had some difficulties at first and then they began to grasp the context of the class and they found their way to manage the class as they experienced many situations during the practicum. In the reflections, they firstly complained about losing the control of the class during micro-teaching but then they gained confidence and they reported to control the class.

I should improve my classroom management. In an activity, the children begin to speak and I cannot control them. Also I should speak loudly and use my voice tone (Student # 11)

I think I do not have so much difficulty in classroom management anymore. As the students accept us as teachers, I get more confident while teaching. Of course I sometimes got excited and forgot something. (Student #6)

I want to improve my classroom management. I don't believe that I can improve it by reading, asking my teachers or my friends. As I experience, I will learn ... (Student 5#)

As an indispensable component of classroom management, the teaching skill of giving effective instruction was revealed as the contribution of micro-teaching mentioned in the reflection related with class dynamics. Many participants stated they lost the control of the class

due to inappropriate instructions and they did not implement many activities since they did not tell the students what and how to do effectively. As they experienced micro-teaching and gave many instructions, they developed how to give instruction through error-trial technique. As one of the participant mentioned they know what and how to give instruction as lectured in the courses at teacher education courses, to give instructions to ‘real’ students is completely different experience. They need more practice to develop this skill. In this point, many participants appreciated the contribution of micro-teaching as providing the opportunity to improve the skill of giving instructions.

What made different this lesson was my voice and pose while giving instruction. I managed to give the instruction effectively. They listened to me at last. (Student #7)

Teaching is giving instruction. If they do not understand they talk and you cannot teach at all. I should improve it (Student #9)

I cannot learn how to be a good teacher and how to give instruction by reading, asking my teacher and friends but I can learn if I do. (Student #12)

Perceptions on the Progress during Micro-Teaching Experience

Considering the reported contributions, the participants were asked to evaluate their progress during the micro-teaching experience as the second research question. The participants’ self-reflections on their progress in teaching skills were examined with the statements inquiring what happened as a result of micro-teaching in the questionnaire. The percentages of the most frequent progress chosen by the participants are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: The Participants’ Self-evaluation on their Progress as a result of Micro Teaching

	%
As a result of micro-teaching, I ...	
Establish good relationship with students	78,5
Develop and adapt effective materials	76,79
Manage to control the lesson	71,43
Give correct instructions in an effective way	69,64
Design and apply effective tasks	67,86
Design effective lessons	67,86
Correct students’ errors effectively	62,50
Identify my weaknesses	55,36

As the table illustrates, most of the participants stated that as a result of micro-teaching, they managed to establish good relationship with the students. In compliance with the rationale of micro-teaching practice, the participants had the opportunity to know and teach the students in actual classrooms. As the most important step of being a teacher, they learned how to communicate with the students in the classroom. Furthermore, most of the participants (77 %) agreed that they were able to develop and adapt the effective materials at the end of the term as

a result of micro-teaching experience. Different from the aforementioned contributions examined in the first question of the questionnaire, the participants also detected their progress in giving correct instructions for the activities (70%) and correcting students' errors (63%). These responses revealed that the pre-service teachers developed their practical skills for teaching. Moreover, the quantitative analysis of the questionnaire showed that more than half of the pre-service teachers reported their progress in identifying their weaknesses (55,36 %), which indicates that the pre-service teachers improved their reflection skills. Thus, they could reflect on their teaching performance as a result of t-micro-teaching.

Similar to the quantitative results, the qualitative results of the reflection journal analysis also indicated that as a result of micro-teaching, the participants reported their progress in teaching performance in terms of interaction with students, designing lessons, giving instructions and controlling the class.

Table 4: The Most Frequent Codes under the Category of Teaching Performance in the Qualitative Analysis of Reflection Journals

CATEGORY	FREQUENT CODES
TEACHING PERFORMANCE	Interaction with Students
	Designing Lessons
	Giving Instructions
	Controlling the Class

The qualitative analysis of reflective journals indicated that the participants' self-reflections on their progress through the micro-teaching share the similar results with the contributions of micro-teaching aforementioned. In other words, they agreed that they managed to improve the target contributions of micro-teaching at the end of the practicum course. The teaching skills that they thought as the contribution of micro-teaching became their successes at the end of the term. When they concentrated on their progress particularly, they mostly focused on the practical side of their performances, thus they specified their progress about how they interacted with the students, how they could plan and design a lesson and how they could give instructions and control the class.

Regarding student interactions, which is one of the most frequent code under the category of teaching performance, they reported that they learned how to establish rapport with students. They realized the individual differences and different learning styles of the students and they agreed that to get in touch with students is the key for effective teaching. For instance, one of the participants reported her strength that she developed as a result of micro-teaching as:

As a teacher, my strengths are having a good relationship with my students. In addition, I am aware of their needs and interests. For example, they like games, races, interactive activities. So, I pay attention to this point while I prepare my lessons. I try to listen to all

the students when I carry out an activity. I try to make students say something about the lesson or activity. (Student #15)

Additionally, the students reflected that they could design and perform more effective lessons as result of micro teaching. Most of them

I know what to do now...It is great (Student #2).

At first even writing a lesson plan was a nightmare but now I could write it practically and I know what to change while teaching. ..My instructions are better now. The students understand! (Student #54)

Related to the instructions and controlling the class, the students realized that as a result of micro-teaching experience through error-trials, actual reactions of the students and feedback from the mentors and supervisors, they improved these skills hand in hand. For instance, one of the participants wrote about his/her progress that;

I was desperate...I could not make my students quiet and do the tasks. I tried many ways, I even shouted but it did not work. But, day by day, I managed it. Now I can give the instructions and control the class, now. (Student #28)

...I know that my teachers are proud of me. At the end, I managed it. I know how to simplify the instructions. I am not afraid of my students any more... (Student #10)

Evaluation of Micro-Teaching Experience

As the last research question, the participants were asked to evaluate the micro-teaching experience in terms of supervisors, mentors, peers, practicum schools in terms of the rating in the questionnaire. Firstly, they were asked to evaluate the experience overall. The results are illustrated in the following.

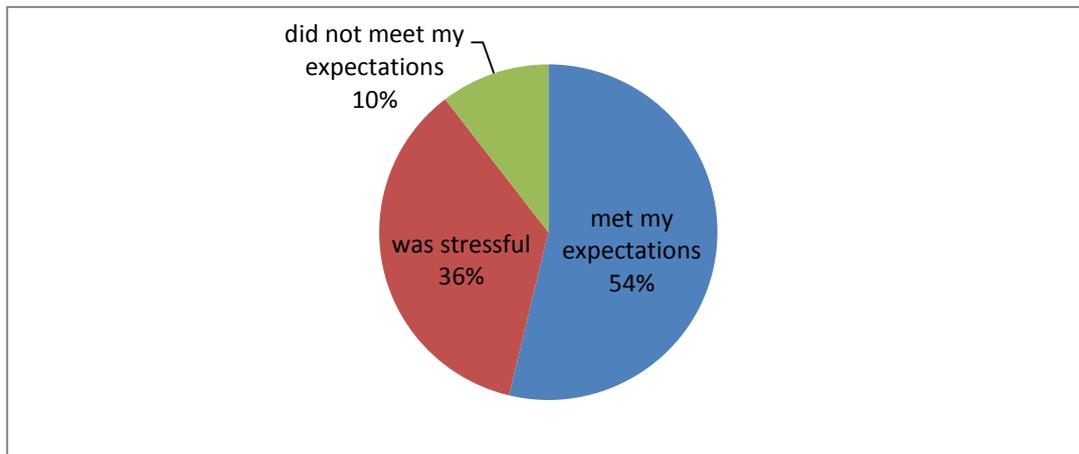


Figure 2: Participants' Evaluation of Micro-Teaching

As the pie chart illustrates, more than half of the participants (54%) reported that micro-teaching experience met their expectations.

In addition to the rating scale in the questionnaire, there was an open ended question to determine the reason of their evaluation. To explain why they thought so, they repeated the similar contributions such as preparing lesson plans, teaching different activities, classroom management etc. All in all, most of them thought that the micro-teaching experience is a good chance for their further teaching practice. For instance, one of the participants stated that

In this course, I felt that I am about to be a teacher. We are improving ourselves day by day. I am not as naïve as the beginning (Student #14)

On the other hand, some participants emphasized that micro-teaching experience was stressful for them. One of the participants explained it as;

I got stressed because of the atmosphere and environment (not natural and real). Being watched by anyone during all lessons prevents me from behaving naturally and having an interactive class. I don't like feeling under pressure by peers and mentors/supervisors so I believe that I can't reflect my real performance. I become discouraged and unwilling to the practicum. (Student #13)

In these quotations and some similar answers, it was seen that the anxiety of being watched and graded hinder some students. They saw the classroom and this teaching practice as one way of assessment rather than real life teaching. This caused a kind of psychological burden for some students.

In addition, a few participants explained that micro-teaching experience did not meet their expectations, as the reason for their dissatisfaction was mostly mentors. When they were asked to explain the reasons in the open-ended statements, they mostly complained about the problematic manners of mentors. One of the participants stated

Mentor was not helpful; she did not give any advice or feedback after my teaching (Student #21)

To have a comprehensive evaluation of micro-teaching experience from the participants' views, they were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of this experience considering the further teaching practice. The answers indicated that most of the participants (82,14%) agreed that micro-teaching was effective and it prepared them for the practicum and further professional teaching career. In compliance with the percentages as obtained for the previous items, 18 % of the participants were either skeptical or pessimistic about the contribution and effectiveness of micro-teaching.

As another ground of evaluation of micro-teaching experience, the participants were asked to define the most problematic parts of this experience. In this way, it was also aimed to reveal the reasons why some participants were negative about the micro-teaching experience. The findings ranged by the participants are given in the following.

Table 4: Overall Evaluation of Micro-Teaching Experience

The most problematic parts of the Practicum	%
Mentors	41,07
Practicum School	35,71
Students at Practicum School	30,36
Supervisors	16,07

As the percentages indicated the participants complained about the mentors most. During the term, they had to observe the mentor for three class hours and then do micro-teaching for 20 min. every week. Thus, they spent most of their school time with the mentors. When they could not establish an effective relationship with the mentor and when they could not get the support they need from the mentor, the participants felt lost and demotivated. In the reflections, the participants also reported that many mentors were not good role models and they did not cooperate with them effectively. The participants also explained that many mentors did what should not be done. One of the participant explained that;

Our mentor spoke Turkish while teaching but we should not. We learned so but she is doing. (Student #22)

The mentor is just using course book. She does not care about the students. We try to find fun activities each week but in her lessons she just asks them to open the books. (Student #13)

Additionally, the participants mostly complained that the mentors did not give supportive and effective feedback to the participants. While some mentors were defined as completely indifferent some did not like whatever they did. The participants expected to have feedback about their teaching performance, classroom management. Rather than just telling what was missing and wrong, they wanted to learn how to correct and improve their weakness. Thus, it could be claimed that the mentors were not effective guide for the participants that could help their teaching practice from the participants' views.

Regarding the other problematic parts of micro-teaching experience, the practicum school, which they were assigned for teaching and the students at the practicum, were reported by the participants. Considering that this was the first time that the participants were at the real school with actual students, the participants' complaints about them could be reasonable. They reported that they need time to grasp the context and routines of the school. Besides, in parallel with the aforementioned anxiety about the classroom management, they had difficulty to control

the students in the classrooms. However, as the results indicated that they overcame many difficulties related with the relationship with the students and controlling the class throughout the micro-teaching experience.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the contribution of micro-teaching experience during practicum from the pre-service teachers' perspectives. Different from the studies in the literature, this study focused on the pre-service teachers' micro-teaching experience in a real classroom with the students at state schools. In this way, it was attempted to reveal the contribution of training pre-service teachers in real life classroom context with a limited time (i.e. 20 min.) and with curtailed teaching content (i.e. certain teaching stages/activities), just before a macro-teaching performance as a requirement of practicum and further teaching practice. This process was evaluated from the pre-service teachers' views, who are the leading stakeholder of the process. By reflecting on the process and their progress, it was aimed to track how the micro-teaching in actual classrooms with students, using current course books, under the guidance of mentors could help them develop teaching practice.

The overall findings indicated that the participants appreciated the micro-teaching experience during practicum. In a way that most of the participants (82,14%) defined the micro-teaching as helpful and effective to prepare them for their future professional. They supported their ideas by emphasizing its contribution to the skills of developing appropriate materials, focusing on the students and preparing lesson plans mostly. These findings comply with Al-Methan's (2003) study that pre-service teachers generally have positive opinions on micro-teaching especially on the areas of planning skills, personality and teaching competencies. In the same vein, the study by Ismail (2011) in an ELT program in the UAE revealed that the pre-service teachers in the department acknowledge the positive experiences in instructional strategies as a result of micro-teaching experience.

As the results of the study indicated that most of the students were aware of the contributions of micro-teaching experience and at the end of the process, these contributions were approved as their progress in their teaching performance. Such a positive effect of micro-teaching on pre-service teachers was also stated by He and Yan (2011). The analysis of reflective paper on the student teachers' perceptions indicated that microteaching was a useful agent for the pre-service teachers' professional development.

Additionally, the participants in the present study reflected that the micro-teaching performance helped them develop their classroom management as they encounter different

many situations in the classrooms and teach the students with different needs and interests. As they reflected in their diaries, they learned how to control the class and give instructions better than the lectures in the courses they got. Çetin (2013) also put forth similar results on the effect of micro-teaching applications on classroom management and self-efficacy, it was depicted that micro-teaching has increased the self-efficacy scores of pre-service teachers, particularly related to classroom management. The positive relationship between self-efficacy and micro-teaching was also observed in the present study through the participants' self-reflection on their progress throughout the micro-teaching. The participants reported that parallel with the determined contributions, they progressed certain teaching skills and they gained confidence. They felt well prepared for macro teaching and further practice. These findings are supported by Aarsal's (2015) study on the effects of micro-teaching on pre-service teachers' critical thinking dispositions, which shows that the experimental group has had significantly greater progress than in control group.

Nonetheless, there is a minority group (18%) who claimed that such experience was a waste of time. When these groups' reasons were examined, it was seen that the mentors and their attitudes were the main causes of such negative evaluation. The strict or indifferent mentors caused the pre-service teachers to get lost. Some of the participants also drew attention that this experience was stressful; again the mentors were revealed as the main reason for demotivating atmosphere in the practicum. Similarly, Mann and Tang (2002) also found that mentors were not contributing to novice teachers' development but assessing their performance and their feedback was not reflective in nature. Thus, mentoring became burden for many novice teachers. As this study unveiled the mentors could be the main reason for negative experience and attitude towards teaching practice.

The results of the present study suggest that the micro-teaching experience at actual classrooms before macro teaching experience during the practicum and further teaching career is a valuable opportunity for the pre-service teachers to develop many different instructional skills. Rather than artificial contexts for demo teaching at methodology courses, the pre-service teachers meet the students at real classroom context with real-life situations. These results comply with Salihoglu's study (2012), in which the pre-service teachers in Turkey appreciated the practice teaching courses; micro-teaching and practicum, of English Language Teaching teacher education program as the most important courses for their profession. Thus, it could be claimed teacher education programs should plan and implement micro-teaching at departments to trigger professional development of pre-service teachers and to ensure the quality in teacher education as micro then macro teaching practice during the senior year would prepare them for

better professional teaching career. Nevertheless, the results also brought out that mentoring system should be reconsidered as they had a crucial impact on the pre-service teachers' views regarding teaching practice. Taking into account the pre-service teachers' reflections on mentors, the necessary improvement should be conducted.

To support these findings, the participants' progress through micro-teaching practice could be also observed at class and these classroom observations could be elaborated with the participants. In this way, more specific contributions to teaching skills could be revealed. Considering the participants' reflections on the mentors, the contribution or impact of mentors could be handled through such observations and search.

Conclusion

To gain a better insight into the micro-teaching experience in actual classroom, the present study studied on the pre-service teachers' reflections about the contribution and their progress at the end of such experience. The results indicated that the pre-service teachers made benefits of micro-teaching. They mostly agreed that this practice was a good opportunity to prepare them for further teaching practice and it developed certain teaching skills. At the end of the implementation, they mostly felt ready for teaching facing their weakness but finding a way to improve them. Although the nature and implementation of micro-teaching were mostly appreciated by the pre-service teachers, mentors were reported as the main cause of challenge for the pre-service teachers while teaching. It may be claimed that the results of the present study revealed that practice is crucial for the pre-service teachers and it would have significant contribution if they start earlier and do more practice.

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