

The Role of Micro-Teaching in the Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria: Issues, Challenges and Way Forward

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Abstract

This paper examines the role of micro-teaching in teacher education in Nigeria, focusing on its conceptual foundations, historical evolution, and practical implementation within Nigerian teacher preparation programmes. Through a critical review of existing literature and policy documents, this paper identifies the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study, empirical studies on micro-teaching, the role of micro-teaching in the development of teacher education; challenges undermining effective microteaching implementation and its implications for teacher quality and professional development. Key issues include inadequate training facilities, limited access to teaching resources and technologies, large class sizes, insufficiently trained supervisors, and weak linkages between theory and classroom practice. To address these concerns, the study proposes strategic recommendations, including curriculum reform, enhanced investment in micro-teaching laboratories, professional development for teacher educators and integration of digital tools.

Keywords: Micro-teaching, Teacher Education, Teacher Preparation and Teaching Skills.

Introduction

Teacher education plays a critical role in national development, as the quality of any educational system largely depends on the quality of its teachers. In Nigeria, teacher education is expected to produce professionally competent teachers equipped with pedagogical knowledge, practical skills, and ethical values necessary for effective classroom practice. However, a persistent challenge confronting teacher education in Nigeria is the disconnection between pedagogical

theory and classroom practice, which has continued to undermine the professional readiness of pre-service teachers.

Micro-teaching has emerged as an important instructional strategy for addressing this challenge. Developed in the 1960s, micro-teaching involves the practice of specific teaching skills in a controlled environment, with reduced class size and duration, followed by structured feedback and reflection. In Nigeria, micro-teaching is a compulsory component of teacher education programmes in Colleges of Education and university faculties of education, and it serves as a preparatory stage for teaching practice. Through micro-teaching, pre-service teachers develop core instructional skills such as lesson planning, questioning, classroom communication, use of instructional materials, classroom management, and evaluation techniques.

Despite its acknowledged importance, the implementation of micro-teaching in Nigerian teacher education institutions is fraught with several issues and challenges. One major concern is the lack of uniformity in how micro-teaching is conceptualized and implemented across institutions. In many cases, it is treated as a routine course requirement rather than a reflective professional learning process. Large student enrolments often result in overcrowded micro-teaching sessions, limiting opportunities for repeated practice, individualized feedback, and meaningful reflection.

Resource constraints further weaken micro-teaching practices in Nigeria. Many institutions lack well-equipped micro-teaching laboratories, functional instructional technologies, and video recording facilities that support effective observation and self-evaluation. In addition, limited funding and poor infrastructure restrict the adoption of digital and video-based micro-teaching approaches. The quality of feedback provided during micro-teaching sessions also varies considerably, as some teachers lack adequate training in mentoring and reflective facilitation. This may result in superficial feedback that fails to promote professional growth. Teaching anxiety among pre-service teachers further complicates the process, particularly when supportive supervision is inadequate.

These challenges are compounded by broader issues within teacher education, including curriculum overload, weak alignment between micro-teaching and teaching practice, and limited consideration of contextual realities such as large class sizes and resource-poor classrooms. Addressing these concerns requires a deliberate rethinking of micro-teaching within the framework of teacher education reform in Nigeria. Standardizing micro-teaching procedures,

strengthening infrastructure, improving faculty professional development, integrating technology, and aligning micro-teaching with national teacher education standards are essential steps toward enhancing its effectiveness. Through such reforms, micro-teaching can serve as a powerful tool for preparing reflective, competent, and professionally grounded teachers in Nigeria. This paper was aimed at investigating the role of micro teaching in the development of teacher education in Nigeria. The paper gives insight on the acquisition of practical teaching skills by student teachers through active engagement of students in micro-teaching sessions leading to the production of competent teacher

Theoretical Framework on Micro-Teaching and Teacher Education in Nigeria

Understanding the theoretical foundations of micro-teaching is critical for effective teacher education reforms in Nigeria. Micro-teaching, a practice-oriented instructional strategy, emerges from interdisciplinary learning theories that foreground skill acquisition, reflection, social participation, and situated cognition. This paper articulates a robust theoretical framework that situates micro-teaching within Behaviourist, Cognitive, Constructivist, reflective practice, and sociocultural paradigms, demonstrating how each informs the design, enactment, and assessment of micro-teaching in Nigerian teacher preparation programmes. Implications for research, policy, and practice are discussed, advancing a multidimensional conceptual lens that supports effective integration of micro-teaching in Nigeria's teacher education landscape.

Behaviourist Learning Theory

Early conceptualizations of micro-teaching are deeply rooted in Behaviourist learning theory, which emphasizes observable, measurable instructional behaviours that can be practiced, reinforced, and evaluated (Allen & Ryan, 1969). From this perspective, teaching is viewed as a set of discrete skills such as questioning, explanation, reinforcement, and closure that can be isolated, rehearsed, and perfected through repeated practice and corrective feedback. Within Nigerian teacher education, behaviourist principles inform the design of micro-teaching sessions where specific teaching behaviours are practiced, evaluated, and refined. For example, pre-service teachers are trained to use structured lesson plans and receive immediate teacher-educator feedback to reinforce effective teaching actions. This approach underscores practice-and-feedback cycles that strengthen performance before the complexity of full classroom engagement.

Cognitive Theory

Cognitive learning theory focuses on how individuals process, organise, and retrieve knowledge. In micro-teaching, cognitive processes such as planning, problem-solving, and decision-making are activated as pre-service teachers prepare lessons, anticipate learner responses, and adapt instructional strategies. Metacognition awareness and regulation of one's own thinking is central to effective teaching. During micro-teaching, pre-service teachers engage in mental modeling of instructional sequences, structuring content coherently, and anticipating student misconceptions. Nigerian teacher education programmes that incorporate reflective journals, lesson rationales, and scaffold lesson planning support these cognitive processes. This aligns with research indicating that reflective engagement during micro-teaching enhances pedagogical reasoning and classroom decision-making among Nigerian pre-service teachers (Ajibade & Daranijo, 2025).

Constructivist Theory

Constructivist theory posits that learners actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment. Applied to micro-teaching, this theoretical stance emphasizes active engagement, collaborative learning, and knowledge construction through authentic practice. In Nigerian micro-teaching contexts, constructivism manifests when pre-service teachers co-construct understanding of teaching with peers and facilitators through dialogue, peer feedback, and shared reflections. These interactive processes support deeper conceptualization of pedagogical strategies beyond rote implementation. The co-construction of teaching knowledge through micro-teaching aligns with constructivist perspectives that learning is socially mediated and contextually situated.

Socio-cultural and Situated Learning Theories

Sociocultural and situated learning theories, inspired by Vygotsky and Lave & Wenger, suggest that learning occurs through participation in social communities and authentic contexts. Micro-teaching in teacher education can be conceptualized as participation in a community of practice, where novice teachers engage with peers and mentors to negotiate meanings, norms, and pedagogical identities. In Nigerian teacher education settings, micro-teaching communities foster collaboration, shared feedback, and collective problem solving. These communities help pre-service teachers navigate the complexities of instructional practice while internalizing

professional norms that reflect local classroom realities. Situated learning in micro-teaching thus bridges the gap between educational theory and culturally relevant classroom practice.

Theoretical foundations provide a robust lens through which micro-teaching can be understood, implemented, and improved within Nigerian teacher education. An integrated framework informed by behaviourist, cognitive, constructivist, reflective, and sociocultural theories deepens understanding of how micro-teaching fosters instructional competence and professional growth. By grounding micro-teaching in these theoretical paradigms, Nigerian teacher education programmes can enhance the preparation of teachers capable of navigating complex classroom contexts with reflective skill and cultural relevance.

Conceptual Framework

Under this section, the concepts of micro-teaching, micro teaching within teacher education, empirical studies on micro-teaching and teacher education in Nigeria and the role of micro-teaching in the development of teacher education were discussed. Micro-teaching is a teacher training technique developed in the early 1960s at Stanford University by Allen and Ryan as a response to the inadequacies of traditional teacher preparation methods. Conceptually, micro-teaching is a scaled-down teaching encounter in which a trainee teacher practices a specific teaching skill for a short duration, usually before a small group of learners, followed by feedback and reflection (Allen & Ryan, 1969). Critically, micro-teaching is grounded in the assumption that teaching is a composite of identifiable skills that can be isolated, practiced, evaluated, and refined. These skills include lesson introduction, questioning, reinforcement, explanation, classroom management, and closure. This analytical approach to teaching has been praised for demystifying classroom practice and making teacher preparation more systematic and scientific (Singh, 2016).

However, critics argue that micro-teaching oversimplifies the complex and dynamic nature of real classroom environments. Teaching in actual classrooms involves unpredictable learner behaviors, diverse socio-cultural contexts, and emotional demands that cannot be fully replicated in a controlled micro-teaching setting (Kpanja, 2001). Thus, while micro-teaching enhances technical competence, it may inadequately prepare teachers for the realities of full-scale classroom interaction if not complemented by extensive teaching practice. In the Nigerian context, micro-teaching has been institutionalized in colleges of education and universities as a

core component of teacher education programmes. Despite its recognized value, its implementation is often weakened by poor infrastructure, large student populations, limited instructional materials, and inadequate supervision (Ogunyemi & Ifeoma, 2018). Consequently, micro-teaching sometimes degenerates into a theoretical exercise rather than a practical professional development tool which is one of the challenges militating against the smooth conduct of micro-teaching session.

Teacher education refers to the systematic process of preparing individuals for the teaching profession, encompassing pre-service, in-service, and continuous professional development. According to the National Policy on Education in Nigeria, teacher education aims to produce highly motivated, efficient, and professionally competent teachers capable of implementing national educational goals (FRN, 2014). Conceptually, teacher education goes beyond subject mastery to include pedagogical knowledge, professional ethics, reflective practice, and adaptability to societal change. Modern perspectives emphasize teacher education as a transformative and lifelong process, rather than a one-time certification programme (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Critically, teacher education in many developing contexts, including Nigeria, has been accused of being overly theoretical and examination-driven, with insufficient emphasis on practical skill acquisition. Scholars argue that the disconnection between theory taught in training institutions and practice in real classrooms contributes to poor teacher performance and declining educational quality (Adeyemi, 2011). Moreover, teacher education systems often operate within structural constraints such as underfunding, weak policy implementation, and low professional status of teachers. These factors undermine the effectiveness of teacher preparation programmes and reduce the motivation of trainees to internalize professional values (Okeke & Dlamini, 2013).

Micro-Teaching within Teacher Education: A Critical Interface

Micro-teaching occupies a strategic position within teacher education as a bridge between educational theory and classroom practice. From a critical standpoint, its value lies in its experiential learning orientation, which aligns with constructivist and reflective learning theories. By engaging trainees in practice, observation, feedback, and re-teaching, micro-teaching promotes reflective professionalism (Kolb, 1984; Schön, 1983). Nevertheless, the effectiveness

of micro-teaching within teacher education depends largely on contextual and institutional factors. Where teacher education programmes lack adequate facilities, skilled supervisors, and time allocation, micro-teaching loses its developmental function.

In Nigeria, studies have shown that many student-teachers complete micro-teaching courses without meaningful feedback or access to modern recording technologies, thereby limiting skill mastery (Afe, 2015). Critics also contend that micro-teaching tends to prioritize technical efficiency over critical pedagogy, focusing on “how to teach” rather than “why to teach” within specific socio-cultural realities. This narrow focus may produce technically competent but intellectually passive teachers who lack critical awareness and adaptability (Giroux, 2011).

In conclusion, micro-teaching and teacher education are conceptually interconnected, with micro-teaching serving as a vital pedagogical mechanism for professional skill development. While micro-teaching offers structured opportunities for practice and reflection, its limitations become evident when it is implemented mechanically or without adequate institutional support. Similarly, teacher education, though conceptually comprehensive, often struggles with translating theory into practice. A critical understanding of both concepts underscores the need for context-responsive, practice-oriented, and reflective teacher education systems that maximize the strengths of micro-teaching while addressing its limitations.

Empirical Studies on Micro-Teaching and Teacher Education in Nigeria

Recent empirical research conducted within Nigerian teacher education programmes provides important insights into the implementation, outcomes, and perceived value of micro-teaching for pre-service teachers. Several studies highlight the positive relationship between micro-teaching and classroom performance among pre-service teachers. For example, research conducted among English language pre-service teachers by Ajibade and Daranijo (2025) at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, found that candidates exposed to a structured micro-teaching programme significantly outperformed a control group during subsequent teaching practice exercises, suggesting that micro-teaching enhances readiness for real classroom instruction. Corroborating these findings, a study conducted by Olusanya (2025) at Osun State University revealed a strong positive correlation between micro-teaching scores and teaching practice performance across multiple academic sessions, indicating that competence in micro-teaching is predictive of success in authentic classroom settings.

In another descriptive survey, micro-teaching was shown to improve the preparatory outcomes of Business Education students, enhancing their inclination toward the teaching profession and supporting their performance during actual teaching practice in Federal College of Education, Abeokuta (Olusanya, 2025). These results align with broader evidence that micro-teaching increases professional confidence and motivation among trainee teachers.

Other research emphasizes pre-service teachers' beliefs and perceptions about micro-teaching. A study of biology teacher trainees in Lagos revealed predominantly positive beliefs concerning the influence of micro-teaching on lesson preparation, classroom management, and teaching competence, underscoring the perceived value of the micro-teaching experience in teacher preparation (Kareem, 2020). Beyond skill acquisition, the integration of innovative instructional approaches has also attracted recent scholarly attention in Nigeria. A 2025 investigation into the use of flipped classroom methods for implementing micro-teaching courses in public universities in Anambra State demonstrated that blended instructional methods may support more effective engagement with micro-teaching content, though detailed results are forthcoming (Okoye, 2025). Additionally, comparative research in Plateau State reported that experiences in micro-teaching tended to improve pre-service teachers' achievement during teaching practice exercises, further affirming the pedagogical utility of micro-teaching as a precursor to full classroom engagement (Bistu & Mangwat, 2024). Collectively, these empirical studies provide strong evidence that micro-teaching contributes to improved instructional competence, positive professional attitudes, and better teaching practice outcomes among pre-service teachers in Nigeria. They also suggest the value of booster strategies such as blended learning, enhanced feedback mechanisms, and skill-based assessments to amplify the benefits of micro-teaching within teacher education curricula.

Role of Micro-Teaching in the Development of Teacher Education in Nigeria

Micro-teaching has become an indispensable component of teacher education in Nigeria, serving as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and practical classroom competence. It is an instructional strategy that enables pre-service teachers to practice discrete teaching skills such as lesson planning, questioning techniques, classroom management, reinforcement, and closure in a simplified and controlled environment before full-fledged classroom engagement (Ajibade & Daranijo, 2025). This methodological scaffold is vital in teacher education because it

systematically reduces the complexity of real classroom teaching into manageable micro-episodes, allowing trainee teachers to focus intensively on specific instructional behaviours and receive immediate feedback for improvement (Nti Library Repository, 2025).

One of the primary roles of micro-teaching in Nigerian teacher education is enhancing pedagogical competence and performance during teaching practice. Empirical evidence from the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, shows that students exposed to structured micro-teaching performed significantly better in teaching practice than those who did not receive such training, indicating that micro-teaching strengthens instructional delivery and readiness for real classroom challenges (Ajibade & Daranijo, 2025). Similarly, a study at Osun State University reported a positive correlation between performance in micro-teaching and teaching practice achievement, suggesting that skills developed in micro-teaching reliably transfer to authentic classroom contexts (Mukuka & Alex, 2024).

Beyond teaching performance, micro-teaching plays a crucial role in building confidence, teaching aptitude, and professional identity among pre-service teachers. A study of Business Education students in South-West Nigerian Colleges of Education found that micro-teaching significantly enhanced teaching aptitude, motivation, and classroom readiness (Olusanya, 2025). In the Federal College of Education, Abeokuta, micro-teaching prepared students for teaching practice and positively influenced their attitudes toward the teaching profession (Olusanya, 2025).

Another critical dimension of micro-teaching is its role in reducing teaching anxiety and building foundational classroom skills. A study in Kano State reported that skills such as set induction, stimulus variation, questioning, and lesson closure significantly improved teaching practice performance and reduced anxiety among student-teachers (Kareem, 2020). Micro-teaching also fosters reflective practice, which is central to professional development. Structured opportunities for peer and mentor observation, critique, and self-analysis encourage pre-service teachers to reflect critically on their instructional decisions and adapt their strategies for effectiveness (Nti Library Repository, 2025).

In sum, micro-teaching significantly contributes to the development of teacher education in Nigeria by enhancing instructional competence, boosting teaching confidence and professional motivation, and facilitating reflective practice. Its role in preparing teachers who can translate

pedagogical theory into effective classroom practice is critical, especially as teacher education programs continue to face challenges such as large class sizes, resource limitations, and variable mentoring quality.

Challenges of Micro-Teaching in Nigeria

Micro-teaching is widely acknowledged as a critical pedagogical strategy within teacher education in Nigeria, designed to bridge the theory–practice gap and enhance the instructional competence of pre-service teachers. Despite its intended benefits, the successful implementation of micro-teaching in Nigerian Colleges of Education and university education programmes faces persistent challenges that inhibit its effectiveness. This article examines key structural, pedagogical, institutional, and contextual constraints inhibiting the optimal use of micro-teaching in Nigeria. Some of these challenges include:

1. Inadequate Physical Infrastructure

Effective micro-teaching requires specialized facilities such as teaching laboratories, instructional materials, and audio-visual recording equipment. However, many teacher training institutions in Nigeria lack such infrastructure. Micro-teaching sessions are often conducted in overcrowded classrooms without dedicated labs, limiting opportunities for realistic simulation and observation (Nti Library Repository, 2025).

2. Limited Access to Technology

Digital tools such as video recording devices and online platforms—can significantly enhance micro-teaching by facilitating self-review, peer reflection, and asynchronous feedback. Yet, many institutions lack these technologies due to funding limitations and inadequate ICT infrastructure. This digital divide restricts the ability of pre-service teachers to engage in reflective practice and limits faculty capacity to provide multimodal feedback (Social Sciences & Humanities Open, 2025).

3. Variability in Conceptual Understanding

There is no universally adopted framework for micro-teaching across Nigerian teacher education programmes. Some faculty members treat micro-teaching as a routine requirement rather than a reflective, competency-building process. This inconsistency results in variations in implementation quality and undermines standardized outcomes (Mukuka & Alex, 2024).

4. Quality of Feedback

High-quality feedback is essential for professional growth; however, many teacher educators lack structured frameworks or training to deliver consistent, actionable feedback. Reports indicate that feedback is often descriptive rather than diagnostic, reducing opportunities for analytical reflection and targeted skill improvement (Nti Library Repository, 2025)

5. Curriculum Overload

Teacher education curricula in Nigeria are often overloaded with theoretical courses, leaving minimal time for practice-oriented strategies such as micro-teaching. This leads to superficial and rushed micro-teaching sessions that fail to promote deep learning or interactive practice (Olusanya, 2025).

6. Weak Alignment with Teaching Practice

Although micro-teaching is intended to prepare pre-service teachers for classroom realities, misalignment between micro-teaching tasks and authentic teaching contexts persists. The skills practiced frequently neglect real classroom challenges such as large class sizes, resource constraints, and diverse learner needs, diminishing transfer effects (Kareem, 2020).

7. Teaching Anxiety

Pre-service teachers often experience anxiety and performance stress during micro-teaching sessions, which inhibits risk-taking and experimentation—key components of skill development (Kareem, 2020). Without supportive facilitation and psychological scaffolding, performance anxiety can limit engagement and reflective depth.

8. Overcrowded Sessions

Large cohort sizes in many Nigerian teacher education programmes result in overcrowded micro-teaching groups, limiting opportunities for individualized practice, peer feedback, and interactive improvement (Mukuka & Alex, 2024).

Micro-teaching remains a valuable pedagogical strategy in teacher education, capable of enhancing instructional competence and reflective practice among pre-service teachers. However, its effectiveness in Nigeria is undermined by multifaceted challenges encompassing infrastructure deficits, pedagogical inconsistencies, institutional constraints, and cultural barriers. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated policy action, investment in resources, faculty capacity building, and curriculum realignment. By tackling these issues, Nigerian teacher

education can better leverage micro-teaching to produce reflective, competent, and effective teachers for the nation's classrooms.

Solving the Challenges of Micro-Teaching in Nigeria

Micro-teaching serves as a structured rehearsal space where pre-service teachers refine pedagogical skills before entering real classrooms. Despite its theoretical promise, its application in Nigeria has frequently been impeded by resource deficits, pedagogical inconsistencies, and systemic constraints that weaken meaningful learning outcomes (Mukuka & Alex, 2024; Nti Library Repository, 2025). Addressing these issues is essential to strengthen teacher preparation and improve educational quality. This paper identifies evidence-based solutions to the problems affecting micro-teaching in the Nigerian context which include:

1. Establishment of Standard Micro-Teaching Laboratories

One of the most significant barriers to effective micro-teaching in Nigeria is the lack of purpose-built facilities. Many institutions conduct sessions in ordinary classrooms that lack recording tools, observation spaces, and instructional technology (Nti Library Repository, 2025). Establishing dedicated micro-teaching laboratories equipped with video recording systems, interactive whiteboards, and flexible seating can simulate real classroom dynamics and enhance observation quality.

2. Improve Access to Instructional Materials

Equipping micro-teaching labs with diverse instructional materials such as charts, manipulative, and subject-specific tools enables pre-service teachers to practise skills in resource-rich settings. Partnerships with educational NGOs and private sector stakeholders can support resource mobilization.

3. Professional Development for Teacher Educators

High-quality feedback is indispensable for professional growth. However, inconsistent and superficial feedback is common. Regular professional development workshops on coaching, diagnostic feedback, and reflective facilitation would strengthen educator competencies. Training should include reflective questioning techniques, video-feedback protocols, and use of standardized rubrics.

4. Mentoring and Peer Collaboration

Structured mentoring systems pairing experienced teacher educators with novice instructors promote shared expertise and reflective dialogue. Peer collaboration networks within and across institutions can foster communities of practice focused on micro-teaching excellence.

5. Adoption of National Guidelines and Rubrics

The absence of uniform implementation frameworks contributes to variability in micro-teaching outcomes (Mukuka & Alex, 2024). The Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), in collaboration with the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) and the Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN), should develop national micro-teaching standards, performance rubrics, and assessment criteria aligned with national teaching competencies.

6. Use of Video Recording and ICT Tools

Incorporating digital video recording allows pre-service teachers to review their teaching performance, self-evaluate, and compare with exemplar lessons. Video-stimulated reflection deepens insight into instructional decisions and supports metacognitive development (Olusanya, 2025).

7. Integrate Micro-Teaching with Teaching Practice

Micro-teaching should not be an isolated exercise. Instead, it must be systematically linked to school-based teaching practice. Pre-service teachers can develop micro-lessons based on actual classroom scenarios they encounter, promoting transfer of learning to real contexts.

Micro-teaching remains a powerful strategy for developing capable, reflective, and classroom-ready teachers in Nigeria. However, the persisting challenges of inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent feedback, limited technology use, and weak curricular alignment undermine its potential. Implementing the solutions outlined ranging from infrastructural upgrades and faculty development to technology integration and policy realignment can strengthen micro-teaching practices and significantly improve teacher preparation outcomes. A concerted effort by stakeholders including teacher educators, institutional leaders, policymakers, and learners is required to realize this potential and support the transformation of teacher education in Nigeria.

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