

From theory to practice: Preservice teachers' perceptions of microteaching in a Teacher Education Program

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Abstract

This study aims to describe preservice teachers' perceptions of microteaching as a formative technique in an English teacher education program in Mexico. The research method used was qualitative research to investigate about the experiences of a non-probability sample of 62 student teachers, aged 20-51, enrolled in an English Language Teaching Methodology course. Data was collected through a survey organized in two sections: the first included eight Likert-scale items, and the second comprised three open-ended questions, distributed via Google Forms. Data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The findings reveal a consistent pattern of positive perceptions, indicating that microteaching supports the integration of theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. Participants reported teaching strengths including organization, confidence and the ability to contextualize instruction by considering language learners' characteristics, needs and interests. In addition, areas that require further development were identified, particularly in time management and clarity when explaining content and giving instructions. Moreover, preservice teachers highlighted the need for increased teaching practice opportunities, suggesting microteaching as an iterative process rather than a single experience. These findings represent practical implications for teacher education programs in terms of the implementation of microteaching as a teacher training technique.

Keywords: microteaching, teacher education, perceptions, language teaching

1. Introduction

Preservice education, in teacher education, refers to a program of study in which future teachers (henceforth, student teachers or preservice teachers) learn basic teaching techniques and develop a general background in teaching before they begin teaching (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Teacher education programs face the challenge of preparing preservice teachers for the demands of language teaching in an increasingly complex world. Nowadays English language teachers are required to integrate innovative methods and technologies while responding to diverse student needs. Consequently, programs need to find methods and teacher training techniques to effectively bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and actual language teaching to achieve this goal.

Microteaching is a widely recognized training technique that aims to support the construction of teaching competencies. Through microteaching, preservice teachers are provided with opportunities to connect theory and practice, refine instructional techniques, test strategies and receive feedback in a controlled and safe environment, preparing them for their future teaching practice (Iliasova, 2025; Lozicka, 2025).

In this transition from theory to classroom practice, recognizing how preservice teachers evaluate these microteaching experiences will provide valuable insights to inform and strengthen the design and implementation of teacher education programs and methodology for language teaching courses. Therefore, the aim of this study is to describe preservice teachers' perceptions of microteaching as a formative technique in an English teacher education program in Mexico needs and enrich the learning experience of preservice teachers.

1.1 Language Teacher Education

Education is shaped by rapid social, technological and political changes requiring teachers to find new routes to learning and rethink their practices. In this context, teacher education programs must remain responsive and adaptable, offering preservice teachers with opportunities to develop the skills to navigate and respond to evolving educational demands (Salerno et al., 2025).

Current perspectives on effective language teacher education emphasize the need to equip student teachers with three core domains: personal and professional attributes, content knowledge and contextual adaptability. Personal and professional attributes include qualities such as empathy, enthusiasm and engagement in reflective practice. Content knowledge encompasses not only pedagogical knowledge such as language teaching methods, but also common knowledge, including command of the target language and specialized knowledge related to applied linguistics. Additionally, contextual adaptability has been identified as another critical domain, it refers to the teacher's ability to tailor instructional strategies to diverse cultural and educational settings as well as the skills to respond to students' diverse characteristics and needs. Therefore, it is essential that teacher education programs adopt a holistic approach to ensure that preservice teachers acquire both relevant knowledge but also attributes and adaptability to navigate contemporary challenges of language teaching (Ngo & Nguyen, 2025).

From this perspective, ensuring the systematic development of teacher competencies is essential for enhancing the quality of English language teaching and microteaching has proved to contribute significantly to preservice teachers' professional learning by fostering the development of key pedagogical skills, including lesson planning, classroom management, instructional delivery, assessment, learner-centered instruction, and reflective practice which can result in increased student engagement and enhanced learning outcomes (Iliasova et al., 2025; Lozgka, 2025; Koşar, 2021; Salih & Barzani, 2025). Nevertheless, opportunities for teaching practice in teacher education programs are sometimes limited by time and resources constraints (Rogerson-Revell et al., 2024; Ögeyik, 2009) this may result in teacher education becoming overly theoretical and disconnected from the realities of teaching. In the light of these considerations, teacher education programs should provide authentic and relevant learning experiences that enable preservice teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in practice (Lozgka, 2025; O'Flaherty, 2024).

1.2 Microteaching

Since its introduction at Stanford University by Allen Dwight in the 1960's, microteaching has been used in teacher training programs as an efficient technique to connect theory and practice (Salih & Barzani, 2025). Microteaching generally involves planning and teaching a brief lesson or part of it to a group of student teachers or volunteer English language learners. It is assumed that successfully managing small-group instruction will build preservice teachers' confidence and skills needed to effectively teach larger classes in future professional settings (Richards & Farrell, 2011; James, 2022).

The purpose of reducing teaching to a short lesson rather than a full session is to deconstruct teaching into manageable components, allowing preservice teachers to focus on a specific teaching skill or strategy in a controlled environment.

1.2.1 Phases in Microteaching

Microteaching usually follows a cycle that begins with **planning** a microlesson incorporating the skill or strategy to be practiced, followed by the **teaching** of the microlesson while it is observed or recorded. The cycle then moves to the stage **critique**, in which the lesson is discussed, analyzed and evaluated by a teacher supervisor or teacher educator. This may also be followed by a new cycle in which student teachers engage in re-planning, re-teaching and re-critique allowing them to incorporate the feedback that was received in the initial sequence promoting confidence and improvement (Richards & Farrell, 2011).

This process promotes progressive learning and skill development as student teachers have the opportunity to experiment, receive feedback, reflect and make progress.

1.3 Advantages and Limitations of Microteaching

There are multiple advantages of microteaching, one key benefit is its emphasis on focused skill development, as it allows complex teaching practices to be broken down into specific, manageable components that can be practiced within a low-risk environment where student teachers can learn from mistakes. Microteaching also provides timely and structured feedback by instructors and peers which make it possible to quickly identify and address areas that need improvement. In addition, the nature of microteaching encourages gentle discussion of strengths and difficulties (Richards & Farrell, 2011; Salih & Barzani, 2025; O'Flaherty, 2024).

Despite its benefits, literature also points to limitations of microteaching that should be considered in teacher education programs. One drawback is its limited authenticity, as teaching peers in simulated settings cannot fully replicate the complexity, unpredictability, and learner diversity of real classrooms (Iliasova et al., 2025; Bakir, 2014). Another limitation relates to time constraints, since microteaching sessions are often brief and they may not allow preservice teachers to experience lesson continuity, classroom routines, long-term classroom management, or the development of a personal teaching philosophy (Richards & Farrell, 2011).

In response to those challenges, teacher educators have advocated for a more reflective approach to microteaching. From this perspective, microteaching is viewed not as a means to train and rehearse isolated skills, but as a structured experience that supports preservice teachers in developing a deeper understanding of language instruction as a complex activity (Richards & Farrell, 2011). On this basis, reflection becomes central as preservice teachers are encouraged to examine the total teaching act in all its dimensions with the purpose of making thoughtful judgments and decisions about improved ways of acting in their future teaching.

Within reflective teaching, feedback becomes dialogic and reflective rather than corrective, as it aims to deepen the student teacher's understanding of teaching through a process of dialogue and reflection. Therefore, microteaching activities are viewed as positive learning experiences which contribute to the development of awareness and professional growth (Richards & Farrell, 2011; Ögeyik, 2009).

2. Method

This qualitative research aims to describe preservice teachers' perceptions of microteaching as a formative technique in an English teacher education program in Mexico. Bhangu et al. (2023) state that qualitative research offers a framework for exploring phenomena that cannot be quantified, such as individuals' experiences as it is in this study.

2.1 Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions

- What are student teachers' perceptions of the contribution of microteaching to the development of their knowledge and practical teaching skills?
- What insights emerge from their reflections regarding their strengths and areas that require further development?
- What recommendations do student teachers propose for enhancing microteaching as training strategy?

2.2 Participants

The study took place at an English teacher education program at a public university located Mexico. It was conducted for a period of four weeks and engaged 62 student teachers in their third year of the English Teaching Major. The sampling was non-probability based on convenience since the student teachers were enrolled in a mandatory an English Language teaching Methodology course.

2.3 Microteaching

The study was conducted in five phases outlined in Table 1. These stages were designed to enable student teachers to first observe and analyze key teaching skills in experienced English teachers (qualified practitioners who work in a language center or programs where English is taught as a subject). Later, student teachers planned a lesson for volunteer English learners. In this study volunteer learners refer to individuals who voluntarily participated in the lessons taking the role of English learners.

Following the teaching phase, student teachers received feedback on their performance and later they engaged in a reflection seminar where they were able to recognize their strengths and areas that required future development.

Table 1. Microteaching Phases

Microteaching Phase	Activities
Observation	Student teachers observed an experienced teacher to identify key teaching skills: teacher roles, teaching techniques, classroom management, elicitation, interaction, error treatment and materials in use
Planning	Student teachers analyzed needs of volunteer English learners by means of a questionnaire. Student teachers created a lesson plan for volunteer learners based on their needs
Teaching	Student teachers implemented the lesson and recorded it
Feedback	Student teachers received feedback based on their performance
Reflection	Student teachers participated in a seminar in which they reflected on their teaching practice. They also completed the survey

2.4 Instrument

The data was collected using a survey administered via Google Forms for reasons of efficiency and accessibility since it is part of the suite provided by the institution. The aim of this instrument was threefold: to gather information regarding student teachers' perceptions of microteaching as a formative technique based on their experience; to recognize insights from their reflections regarding their strengths and areas that require further development, and to collect suggestions for enhancing future microteaching practices.

The survey consisted of two sections as presented in Table 2. Likert-scale items were used in the first section, while open-ended questions were included in the second. Likert scales are widely employed in educational and psychological research to assess attitudes, perceptions, beliefs, importance and likelihood. Their frequent use can be attributed to the fact that many variables of interest in educational research are not directly observable; therefore, they are typically measured through self-report instruments (Alkharusi, 2022; Tanujaya et al., 2022). In this study each response represents an individual's subjective experience, belief, or feeling, which will provide qualitative insights.

Table 2. Survey

Section	Items	Research question
Microteaching practice	8 Likert-scale questions	What are student teachers' perceptions of the contribution of microteaching to the development of their knowledge and practical teaching skills?
Strengths, areas that require further development and recommendations	3 open-ended questions	What insights emerge from their reflections regarding their strengths and areas that require further development? What recommendations do student teachers propose for enhancing microteaching as a teacher training strategy?

3. Results

3.1 Perceptions of Microteaching

The data collected in the first section included statements aiming to capture student teacher's perceptions of microteaching as a strategy to develop their knowledge and practical teaching skills. It should be mentioned that, although these responses are presented in this section in the form of percentages, they are interpreted as indicators of participants' perceptions.

In the first statement a large majority of participants strongly agreed (66.13%) and agreed (33.87%) that microteaching contributed to their understanding of the practical implications of the teaching methods and approaches studied in the course; similarly, in the second statement, 77.42% reported that it helped them understand English lesson frameworks.

In the third statement 80.65%, strongly agreed and 19.35% agreed that this technique also encouraged preservice teachers to develop teaching activities considering student needs, interests, age, and level.

In terms of specific teaching skills, the answers were more diverse but tended to be predominantly positive. For instance, in the fourth statement 67.74% of participants strongly agreed and 29.03% agreed that microteaching provided opportunities to practice presentation techniques, while 3.23% disagreed.

Similarly, in statement number five 58.06% and 38.71% of participants expressed strong agreement and agreement to microteaching allowing them to take on different teacher roles such as model, facilitator, manager, monitor, etc. with 3.23% disagreeing.

In statement number six 61.29% and 37.10% of participants strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, that microteaching enabled them to apply error correction techniques, whereas 1.61% disagreed.

Finally, 77.41% and 22.58% of participants strongly agreed and agreed that microteaching helped them become aware of their teaching strengths and weaknesses.

These results as shown in Table 3 suggest positive perceptions of microteaching as a formative technique that supports the connection of theoretical knowledge and practice, as well as the development of teaching skills. Nevertheless, the presence of disagreement in specific items suggests that some aspects of microteaching may require additional attention. It must be noted that this study reports on one microteaching practice, these results may indicate the need for more cycles of microteaching to further support those specific skills.

Table 3. Section 1

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Microteaching...	41	21	0	0	62
1. helped me to better understand the practical implications of the teaching methods and approaches studied in the course.	66.13%	33.87%			
2. gave me an opportunity to better understand different lesson frameworks.	48 77.42%	14 22.58%	0	0	62
3. encouraged me to develop teaching activities considering student needs, interests, age, and level.	50 80.65%	12 19.35%	0	0	62
4. offered me an opportunity to practice presentation techniques (inductive, deductive or content)	42 67.74%	18 29.03%	2 3.23%	0	62
5. offered me a practical opportunity to take on different teacher roles (model, facilitator, manager, monitor, etc.)	36 58.06%	24 38.71%	2 3.23%	0	62
6. allowed me to apply error correction techniques.	38 61.29%	23 37.10%	1 1.61%	0	62
7. helped me learn the importance of time management.	43 69.35%	19 30.65%	0	0	62
8. helped me develop awareness of my teaching strengths and weaknesses.	48 77.41%	14 22.58%	0	0	62

3.2 Strengths and Areas That Require Further Development

The second section of the instrument aimed to collect participants' reflections in order to recognize perceived teaching strengths and areas that require further development as well as to collect suggestions for enhancing future microteaching practices. The data collected was analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Responses were coded into categories derived from participants' answers and through an iterative process, categories were refined and grouped to identify recurring patterns in preservice teachers' reflections and suggestions.

Table 4. Section 2

Question
1. Name a teacher strength you could identify
2. Name an area you could identify that requires further development
3. Share any suggestions to enhance the benefits of microteaching as strategy for teacher training

In terms of teaching strengths, three main themes were identified in student teachers' answers: organization, confidence and contextualization.

Organization was one of the primary skills reported as a strength. Participants highlighted their abilities to structure lessons effectively by formulating objectives, sequencing lesson stages and designing activities that supported the flow of the lesson. This is reflected in answers such as:

Participant 2. "Teaching and giving activities to work in order"

Participant 9. "Organization and time management"

Participant 13. "I can easily write objectives now"

Participant 16. "Everything followed a good sequence"

Participant 32. "Creation of lesson plans"

Participant 34. "Being organized and disciplined"

Participant 52. "My class had a clear structure from beginning to end"

Participant 61. "I followed a good sequence and everything in the class was clear according to the student"

These responses suggest that microteaching contributed to the integration of key lesson plan components, enabling student teachers to organize a class successfully.

A second recurring theme was **confidence**. Participants emphasized a sense of self-assurance when delivering the class and presenting content. This is demonstrated in responses such as:

Participant 19. "Confidence in front of the class"

Participant 41. "My ability to keep calm and composed even when I feel nervous"

Participant 48. "Confidence in my lesson plan and my patience"

Participant 53. "Confidence, classroom control"

Participant 56. "Self-confidence"

Participant 60. "Confidence when explaining the topic"

These ideas indicate that microteaching provided a supportive environment for preservice teachers to build up confidence and manage the demands and challenges of classroom teaching.

Finally, the theme **contextualization** emerged as a recurring theme. Participants highlighted their efforts to plan learner-centered lessons and activities. Preservice teachers reported to have considered learner's needs, preferences and interests for their decision making.

Participant 6. "I tried to portray real contexts and situations that my student will face"

Participant 10. "I provided examples that helped the student to better understand the topic"

Participant 18. "Designing adequate materials considering student's necessities, likes and interests"

Participant 23. "Attracting the attention of the students by bringing interesting topics"

Participant 45. "I know I have to look for examples that are meaningful rather than using examples isolated"

These findings suggest that microteaching supports the development of more learner-centered lessons that are responsive to learners' needs.

Regarding the areas that require further development, the analysis pointed to two main themes: time management and clarity.

The theme **time management** was identified as a key area for development with ten participants expressing difficulties in pacing the lesson and allocating time appropriately to the different activities. This is reflected in responses such as: "Time management", "Lacking time management" and "Not being aware of the time spent in each activity"

The second theme was categorized as **clarity**. It encompasses two main areas: instruction giving and explanations. Preservice teachers identified difficulties in expressing ideas clearly, adjusting their speech to the learners' level and delivering clear instructions. This is exemplified in reflections such as:

Participant 13. "I need to improve explaining grammar"

Participant 16. "Sometimes I do not explain myself as well as I would like to"

Participant 17. "Giving instructions and giving better explanations"

Participant 29. "I forgot to use vocabulary according to my student's level and sometimes I spoke faster than I should"

Participant 38. "Giving clear instructions"

Participant 44. "I need to be more concise and clearer"

Participant 61. "My discourse when explaining"

These ideas reveal that student teachers are facing challenges in communicating content and instructions effectively and adjusting teacher talk to facilitate comprehension.

3.3 Suggestions to enhance the benefits of microteaching as strategy for teacher training

The analysis of participants' responses to "Share any suggestions to enhance the benefits of microteaching as strategy for teacher training" revealed their interest in having increased opportunities to practice teaching, peer observation and the development of specific teaching skills. Additionally, a number of participants expressed positive perceptions of the current design and did not suggest specific modifications to the microteaching practice.

Participants emphasized the importance of having **increased opportunities for teaching** to consolidate their learning and build confidence. This is illustrated in responses such as:

Participant 33. "Do more than one microteaching along the course"

Participant 45. "Continue practicing in order to gain confidence and improve every time"

Participant 50. "It is really important to keep practicing to enhance the abilities required to be a teacher"

Participant 53. "Maybe two microteaching sessions, the first to see where we can improve and the second to have the chance to try again"

Participant 54. "Identifying your improvement areas to keep developing them in subsequent sessions"

These responses highlight the perception of microteaching as a technique that enables student teachers to progressively improve their skills and gain confidence through ongoing teaching practice.

The second theme was **peer observation**. Some participants suggested that the use of observation instruments may support the analysis of teaching skills.

Participant 41. "Use peer observation evaluation checklists to focus on specific skills"

In addition, peer observation was perceived as an opportunity to learn with others and from others. As one participant noted:

Participant 34. "Maybe share the microteaching, having the opportunity to witness how our colleagues and former classmates did their class could be helpful"

Furthermore, although there was a seminar in which student teachers shared reflections on their teaching practice, participants suggested that sharing videos could provide specific examples of different teaching approaches.

Participant 55. "It would be great to watch what our classmates experienced, not only as a discussion, but also

to watch some videos using different methods and frameworks”

These responses suggest that observing others can provide valuable opportunities for preservice teachers to analyze others' decision making, reflect on different teaching approaches, and use those insights to enhance their own teaching practice.

The third theme focused on the student teachers' interest in the **development of specific teaching skills**. Participants identified areas such as board use, use of visual aids, classroom communications as areas that can be enhanced by microteaching.

4. Discussion

The results of this study provide evidence that microteaching is perceived as a valuable teacher training strategy that supports the application of knowledge gained in the teacher education program. Findings presented in 3.1 Perceptions of microteaching, suggest that this training strategy effectively supports the connection between theoretical knowledge and classroom practice. Participants reported that microteaching contributed to their understanding of teaching methods, approaches, lesson planning, and learner-centered instruction. This aligns with similar studies indicating that this strategy provides scaffold for connecting theory to classroom practice (Lozgka, 2025; Salih & Barzani, 2025; O'Flaherty, 2024; Koşar, 2021). As Richards and Farrell (2011) explain, the academic courses provide disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge; however, teacher practice provides the opportunity to make connections between that theory and practice.

Responses in this study also suggest that microteaching provides preservice teachers with opportunities to develop and demonstrate strengths such as organization and confidence. Microteaching has been regarded in recent studies as an opportunity for preservice teachers not only to acquire basic teaching skills but also to confront emotions and build their confidence. These experiences shape teachers' effectiveness and their ability to navigate classroom challenges (Simamora et al., 2024; Istiqomah et al., 2025).

Additionally, microteaching encouraged participants' reflection on teaching skills that require further development. This highlighted the role of microteaching in fostering awareness of practical classroom constraints, particularly regarding time management. Prior research has identified time management as a key challenge that preservice teachers face, emphasizing the role of microteaching as a strategy to practice prioritizing essential activities and adjusting the lesson pacing accordingly (Shinta & Eryansyah, 2024; Simamora et al., 2024).

Another area identified by participants as requiring further development was clarity particularly in relation to explaining content and giving instructions. Kulkarni (2014, as cited in Salih & Barzani 2025) suggests that microteaching can support student teachers to develop their ability to explain complex ideas in an accessible manner. In this sense, it is assumed that increased opportunities for microteaching practice may enable preservice teachers to overcome these perceived weaknesses.

The findings of this study also offer valuable insights for enhancing the implementation of microteaching. Participants emphasized the importance of increased opportunities for practice as repeated teaching experiences appear to be essential for refining teaching skills and gradually building confidence (Simamora et al., 2024; Koşar, 2021). This view is supported by Lozgka (2025) who argues that it is desirable to conduct multiple rounds of microteaching to strengthen the teaching experience and better prepare preservice teachers for real classroom challenges. Simamora et al. (2024) also emphasize the importance of incorporating a structured plan for teaching skills development following microteaching in order to support continuous improvement. Koşar (2021) suggests that conducting frequent microteaching practices and commencing these practices earlier in initial teacher education programs can improve its effectiveness.

Similarly, reflective peer observations are highlighted as activities that may enhance preservice teachers' skills, which is in line with Lozgka (2025) and Koşar (2021), who report that student teachers recognized their improvement from observing peers' microteaching videos and lessons and receiving feedback. Moreover, Koşar (2021) highlights the importance of carefully preparing participants to offer feedback as self-reflection and self-evaluation will depend on their ability to give unbiased, constructive feedback.

In general, preservice teachers recognized mostly positive perceptions to microteaching in this study; however, its limitations must be considered. Firstly, the data is based on participants' perceptions, which reflect individual experiences that may not be representative. Additionally, the use of Likert-scale items in the survey provides limited representation of these perceptions and the responses may not fully capture the complexity of these perceptions. Finally, the study was conducted within a specific context which may limit the transferability of the findings to other contexts.

Despite these limitations, this manuscript offers evidence that microteaching is regarded as an effective technique to support the transition from theory to classroom practice as well as the development of key teaching skills. Additionally, the identification of specific improvements to be made in the integration of microteaching provides practical implications for Teacher Education Programs.

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