

Implementing an Observation and Feedback Form for More Effective Feedback in Microteaching

Mikroöğretimde Daha Etkili Bir Geribildirim İçin Gözlem ve Dönüt Formunun Uygulanması

Gonca EKŞİ**

Gazi University

Öz

Bu eylem araştırması, öğretmen adaylarının mikroöğretim sunumlarında, bazı duygusal ve kültürel kısıtlamalar yüzünden, gözlem ve geribildirim sürecine etkili katılmadıklarının fark edilmesi üzerine yapılmıştır. Öğretmen adaylarının hem kendi performanslarından hem de başkalarınınkinden öğrenmelerini sağlayan geribildirim, mikroöğretimin vazgeçilmez bir bileşenidir; bu nedenle, bu çalışma mikroöğretim uygulamalarında daha yansıtmacı ve yapılandırmacı bir yaklaşım geliştirmeyi hedeflemektedir. Katılımcılar büyük bir devlet üniversitesi, İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Bölümü'ndeki 24 öğretmen adayıdır. Çalışmanın süresi 7 haftadır. Çalışmada veriler, iki tutum anketi ve yarı-resmi görüşmeler yoluyla edinilmiştir. Bulgular, öğretmen adaylarının teori ile uygulamayı bağdaştırdığı için mikroöğretim tekniğini profesyonel gelişim konusunda yararlı bulduklarını göstermiştir. Ayrıca, daha etkili bir geribildirim sürecinin yararlarını kabul etmişlerdir. Ancak, başkalarının duygularını incitme konusunda derin endişeleri olmuştur. Öğretmen adaylarının çoğu, muhtemelen eleştirinin rahatsız edici yönü ve bazı kültürel kısıtlamalar nedeniyle, sözlü geribildirim verme konusunda isteksiz olmuşlardır. Ancak, yazılı bir geribildirim formu ile çok daha rahat hissetmişlerdir. Ayrıca yapılandırılmış bir geribildirim formu ile daha etkili dönüt verebildiklerini ve başkalarının performanslarından da daha iyi öğrenebildiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu çalışmada ayrıca mikro sunumlar için bir yazılı gözlem ve geribildirim formu geliştirmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Mikroöğretim, öğretmen adayları, yapılandırmacı yaklaşım, geribildirim, gözlem, hizmet öncesi öğretmen eğitimi.

Abstract

This action research is conducted upon noticing that the teacher trainees in this study do not get involved in the process of observation and feedback in microteaching sessions due to certain emotional and cultural constraints. Feedback, which allows teacher trainees to learn from their own performance as well as others', is an indispensable component of microteaching. Hence, this study aims to develop a more reflective and constructivist approach in microteaching sessions. The participants were 24 teacher trainees in an English Language Teaching Department at a large state university. The duration of the study was 7 weeks. The data were collected through two attitudinal questionnaires and semi-formal interviews. Findings from the analysis of data reveal that teacher trainees regard microteaching as useful for professional development as it connects theory to practice. They also acknowledge the benefits of giving and receiving feedback and of reflection. However, they express deep concern for others' feelings. The teacher trainees are often reluctant to provide overt oral feedback, probably due to the face-threatening nature of the event and some cultural constraints. However, they feel more at ease with a written feedback form. The trainees also report that they reflect more effectively and learn from one another's performance better through a structured feedback form. The study has also developed a post observation feedback form for microteaching presentations.

Keywords: Microteaching, teacher trainee, constructivism, feedback, observation, pre-service teacher education

* Assist. Prof. Dr. Gonca EKŞİ, Gazi University, Department of English Language Teaching, goncayangin@gmail.com

Introduction

Teacher education programs provide theoretical knowledge, yet, they require more field-based experience for teacher trainees because mere knowledge of a teaching skill does not automatically guarantee its mastery (Lewin, Heublein, Ostertag & Sommer, 1998; Seferoğlu, 2006). The ideal way to really master a skill is to execute it in practice. However, before more school-based experiences, pre-service teacher education should offer learning based teaching simulations in which the trainee is both the performer and the observer, namely microteaching. It is an effective and learner-centered technique to integrate theory with practice in teacher education and it contributes to the success of teacher trainees (Aksan & Çakır, 1992; Bayraktar, 1982; Benton-Kupper, 2001; Blankenburg & Thompson, 1971; Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003; Kazu, 1996, Nortman, 1989). In this popular form of instructional training, groups of fellow trainees observe each other teaching, provide feedback and engage in discussions with the aim of improving one another's instructional abilities. It also helps build self-confidence.

Microteaching is invaluable in pre-service teacher education in that it is a systematic trial-and-error technique providing classrooms with relatively more control and low-risk where teacher trainees participate either in the role of teachers or pupils and observers. Through a mutual exchange of observations and experience, they have the chance of practicing and learning teaching skills effectively. It was first designed and implemented in Stanford University, the USA in the 1960s by Dwight Allen and his colleagues as an attempt to increase the quality of teacher education. Teacher trainees teach a short lesson to a small number of students, usually fellow trainees. There is generally an "expert". If desired, the session can be videotaped for review at a later date. The presentation is followed by a feedback session. In some cases, the feedback session can be followed by a re-teach in line with the improvements suggested during feedback (Vare, 1993). The aim is not to teach the subject but to practice different teaching techniques. Today, in many modified forms, it is still a widely used technique in teacher education programs worldwide including foreign languages (Amobi, 2005; Benton-Kupper, 2001; DeLorenzo, 1975). Over the years, microteaching has taken many forms. The original cycle of teach, review, reflect and re-teach in microteaching can be adapted to fit the needs and requirements and limitations of educational institutions.

It may be argued that microteaching is hardly a substitute for real teaching in that it is inherently unrealistic and involves artificial interaction. Yet, given the circumstances, peer trainees are readily available. In fact, acting as pupils provides trainees with invaluable insight into the teaching practice both when observing and being observed. Feedback by peers might be more specific and more useful because they are all involved with the same kind of problems. It can be a low-threat situation since no real pupils are involved (Clifford et. al., 1977: 229-230). Microteaching offers a lot of valuable experience, such as a realistic practical teaching experience in a controlled environment and opportunity for self-evaluation in the light of supervision, feedback and discussion.

Review of the related literature reveals numerous studies, both nationwide and in the world. Microteaching is an effective technique that embellishes teacher trainees with desired teaching skills (I'Anson, Rodrigues & Wilson, 2003; Kpanja, 2001; Benton-Kupper, 2001; Fernandez and Robinson, 2006; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003). Microteaching has been reported to develop positive attitudes in teacher trainees, enhance their self-confidence and improve their instructional skills (Ceyhun & Karagölge, 2002; Çakır, 2000; Çakır & Aksan 1992; Görgen, 2003; Gürses et. al., 2005; Kazu, 1996; Külahçı, 1994, Peker, 2009; Şen, 2009). Research on teacher trainee perspectives show that trainees themselves find microteaching experience useful (Amobi, 2005; Benton-Kupper, 2001). Microteaching experience helps teacher trainees overcome problems in preparing lessons and it also improves classroom management skills (Aksan & Çakır, 1992; Bayraktar, 1982, Külahçı, 1994). In his study, Şen (2009) points out that microteaching helps teacher trainees reduce first-time teaching anxiety.

As to the effectiveness of feedback in microteaching, studies reveal that informal discussions with peers and the supervisor are effective in determining the degree of success of the training (Brandl, 2000; Jerich, 1989). The outcomes of feedback sessions are assumed to lead to improvements in the trainees' teaching practice (Arikan, 2004). In order for the feedback to be effective, Brinko (1993) suggests guidelines in the practice of giving feedback to improve teaching.

From a cognitive perspective, knowledge construction is assumed to be dynamic and active. Learners construct knowledge while attempting to make sense of their experience. The construction of knowledge includes the interaction of past knowledge with the experience of the moment (Resnick, 1987). Microteaching is learner-centered, collaborative and constructivist in nature; in that, it provides interaction of theory with the experience of teaching practice. Knowledge is build upon through cycles of planning, implementing, and reflecting as a group and individually. Moreover, feedback and constructive criticism by the peers also makes it possible to learn from others and construct knowledge socially.

The importance of feedback sessions lies in construction of knowledge through discussion and feedback from multiple sources; namely, the trainer, peers and the trainee himself/herself. Yet, there are very few studies as to what exactly happens during feedback sessions or whether feedback sessions are effectively conducted or not. In microteaching, the major aim is to embellish teacher trainees with desired instructional abilities. This can be done by increasing the quality of observation and feedback. To achieve a more learner-centered, collaborative and constructivist practice of teaching, it is necessary that the observation be more systematic and feedback be more specific, descriptive and detailed. However, while simultaneously acting as pupils in the classroom, the trainees may fail to observe the microteaching presentation adequately. They may have further problems in sharing their observation due to not knowing how to provide to-the-point feedback without hurting the other's feelings. Furthermore, Fernandez (2005) reported on accounts of trainees who were "overtly concerned with others' feelings" when discussing the lessons taught even if they state that the feedback they received from their peers and their own experience of teaching were the most beneficial in the microteaching experience. Edge (1984) also mentioned the difficulties experienced in feedback stage because of teacher sensitivity and reluctance to comment in a study in in-service training in Turkey. It appears that concerns for others' feelings are a common obstacle that hinders teacher trainees or practicing teachers from providing genuine feedback. The author of this article was not content with the way feedback sessions were conducted. As a methodology instructor, she was quite upset that the teacher trainees were not participating in the discussions and she was the only one providing feedback. There was very little participation by the teacher trainees in feedback and discussion sessions. The need to discover the factors that prevented the trainees from giving feedback and helping them to participate more in discussions guided this action research. Based on the two studies mentioned above by Edge and Fernandez, the author thought that a well-structured feedback form might provide more active participation by the trainees without fear of offending their peers.

Research Questions:

Several studies focused on microteaching as an effective teacher training tool and feedback as its indispensable component as mentioned above. However, the factors that hinder peer trainees from giving feedback and how to help trainees hold a more reflective approach towards microteaching sessions have rarely been considered in previous research. This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the factors that hinder teacher trainees from giving effective feedback on microteaching sessions?
2. What are the perceptions of teacher trainees regarding feedback stage of microteaching sessions before using the Peer Observation and Feedback Form?
3. How can teacher trainees get involved much more in the feedback stage of microteaching sessions?

4. What are the perceptions of teacher trainees regarding the effectiveness of using the Peer Observation and Feedback Form at the feedback stage of microteaching sessions?

Method

Participants

The participants were 24 teacher trainees who were studying in English Language Teaching Department at a large state university. There were 22 female and 2 male participants. The ages of the participants ranged from 20 to 22. The number of participants was relatively fewer, but in return, the duration of the study was longer and it allowed the researcher to observe the process and development adequately. A class of about 25 to 30 teacher trainees is a common feature of language teaching departments. A teacher trainer usually starts methodology courses with one group and studies with them throughout three years, which allows them to get to know one another, built rapport and improve teaching skills. The trainees in this study were taking a methodology course, *Teaching Language Skills*, with the trainer. This was their third year and they had taken only one methodology course before, which involved microteaching.

Problem

As mentioned before, the trainer was familiar with the trainees and had observed their reluctance to give feedback or to participate in discussions. Feedback allows the trainees to reflect on the microteaching performance of themselves or of their peers. Deeper reflection is crucial for microteaching sessions to run effectively. In the study, the participants performed microteaching presentations for 3 weeks and the rest were asked to act pupils while observing the presentations with the aim of sharing opinions and participating in follow-up discussions. However, it soon turned out that the trainees did not actively participate in the feedback stage. They also seemed to be discontent with the feedback they received. It was almost always the same few students who made comments; which was occasional. The rest seemed uninvolved or reserved. In general, the trainer appeared to be the only feedback provider. It was clear that the reflection and feedback stage, which was supposed to provide trainees with deeper insights, did not work properly. Hence, the researcher wanted to determine the reasons why the trainees did not effectively share observations and join discussions. She also aimed to engage the trainees more effectively into the process.

Assumptions and Limitations

As stated earlier, 22 female and 2 male participants were involved in the study. This male/female ratio is common in departments of foreign language teaching. It is assumed that the findings are similar in other foreign language teaching departments. However, this might be a limitation of the study. In a different or reverse ratio, the factors that hinder trainees from providing overt feedback might be different.

Data Collection

Data were obtained from two different attitudinal questionnaires developed by the researcher and a whole-class interview conducted in the form of a discussion. The first questionnaire was implemented to diagnose the reasons why the trainees refrain from giving feedback. To further analyze their responses, the trainees and the methodology trainer held a whole-class discussion and the themes emerged were noted down. The second questionnaire was administered to discover the perceived usefulness of the feedback and observation form. The questionnaires included Likert-type questions and open ended questions. Answers to open-ended questions and those received in the interview were analyzed through content analysis and the responses were coded and classified. Answers to Likert-type questions were processed by transferring frequencies into percentages.

Procedure

This action research followed the stages below:

In order to identify the problem of concern, the situation was carefully examined by the methodology instructor. She was frustrated that the trainees did not actively participate in the feedback stage. To obtain the necessary information to discover what prevented teacher trainees from actively getting involved in the feedback stage, the first questionnaire was implemented (see Appendix 1). There were six open ended questions to get a more detailed description of how the trainees perceived the feedback stage. The trainees, then, were engaged in a whole-class discussion to further analyze their responses. The responses were processed through content analysis and were coded.

Following this, a plan of action was developed. Based on the findings, it was agreed upon that an observation and feedback form would be of more benefit for the trainees so that they would know what to observe and would feel more at ease when giving feedback in the written form. The trainees expressed concerns as to how to give constructive criticism. One class hour was devoted on code of conduct during feedback sessions. The teacher trainer and the trainees agreed on ground rules for giving and receiving feedback. The trainees also displayed difficulty in accepting criticism. To overcome this problem, they were advised to be open to suggestions and comments and to use them to their advantage. Although no one wants their deficiencies or imperfections to be shown, the trainees need to realize that identifying them is a must for further professional development. Encouraging feedback and sharing personal beliefs and opinions about the sessions is supported by the social constructivist theory which upholds the view that learning occurs when individuals engage socially in talk and activity about shared problems or tasks (Donaghue, 2003:344)

Then, the cycle was repeated to examine the results of implementing the observation and feedback form. The second questionnaire was administered to gather data about the perceived usefulness of the form (see Appendix 2). The questionnaire involved three questions with Likert-type rating and five open ended questions. After implementing the form for three weeks in microteaching sessions, each trainee had received feedback forms regarding their own performance from their fellow trainees and had filled out the form for every other trainee in the class. The instructor/trainer also filled out the form for each of the trainees. After each microteaching presentation, the forms were written and handed in to the trainee. The whole class, along with the trainer, engaged in discussions and shared the observations as well. With suggestions from the trainees, the observation and feedback form was further improved. At the end of the three weeks, the form was finalized in its improved version (see Appendix 3).

Finally, the findings were interpreted and suggestions and conclusions are drawn for teacher education.

Results and Discussion

The data obtained are discussed with reference to the research questions as follows:

Research Question 1. What are the factors that hinder teacher trainees from giving effective feedback on microteaching sessions?

The responses of the trainees for the *questionnaire for defining the problem* are below. The numbers of students for each statement are indicated. For more insight, some student responses are also added:

Table 1.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 1, question 1

		N	%
1. How often do you give feedback to your fellow trainees and participate in discussions after microteaching sessions?	Never	7	29.16
	Rarely	11	45.83
	Often	4	16.66
	Always	2	8.33

The numbers of trainees who mark the responses “never” and “rarely” (a total of 18, which accounts for 74.99% of the class) clearly indicate that the feedback and discussion stage did not work properly. The three-fourths of the trainees were unwilling and reluctant to share their observations and suggestions. They were not engaged in the process and that was a major problem for the effectiveness of the microteaching technique. It was a constant problem that the author/trainer complained about- being the only feedback provider in the discussion stage. Acknowledging the importance of constructing knowledge socially, the trainer was insisting that the trainees take part in discussions.

Table 2.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 1, question 2

		N	%
2. (If seldom) Why do you refrain from giving feedback?	I don't observe the lesson. I'm not interested.	-	
	I have no idea/ nothing to say.	3	12.5
	I do not know what to look for during observation.	4	16.66
(Tick any appropriate and add more if any)	I'm afraid that my friend will lose face in front of the instructor.	6	25
	I'm afraid that my friend will be offended.	8	33.33
	Other (please specify):		
	<i>Somebody else has already said it, no need to say that again.</i>	4	16.66
	<i>My friends react negatively to people who give feedback. They think I always find something negative in presentations.</i>	4	16.66
	<i>I feel too shy to express what I feel and think</i>	1	4.16
	<i>To give feedback, first I should feel perfect. If I do have mistakes, it won't make any sense.</i>	1	4.16
	<i>I sometimes can't give constructive feedback.</i>	1	4.16

When the trainees were asked the reasons why they refrain from giving feedback, three of the most frequently cited reasons were: avoiding offending peers (33.3%), avoiding causing peers to lose face (25%) and not knowing where to look (16.6%). The trainees expressed their concerns for the feelings of others. They were particularly anxious about hurting their friends' feelings or receiving negative reactions from them. This finding is compatible with Fernandez's (2005) and Edge's (1984) study. They also did not want to point to the gaps or imperfections in friends' presentations for fear that the instructor would have a lower opinion of them. It is understandable when the evaluation of the teacher trainer/instructor would result in a score. Some of the trainers pointed that they do not know how to observe the presentations effectively. Moreover, some trainees complained about intolerance to criticism by peers (16.6%). That is why, a session on giving constructive and supportive criticism was conducted. It is important that the trainees acknowledge the benefit of learning from performances through discussion.

Research Question 2. What are the perceptions of teacher trainees regarding feedback stage of microteaching sessions before using the Peer Observation and Feedback Form?

Table 3.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 1, question 3

		N	%
3. How do you feel when you receive feedback?	Positive remarks	11	45.83
	Negative remarks	2	8.33
	Both positive and negative remarks	10	41.66

It appears that the trainees have both positive and negative feelings towards the feedback and discussion stage. Although those who feel totally frustrated by the feedback stage were not too many (only 2 trainees), the negative remarks should not be ignored for the effective implementation of the step. Below are some extracts (both positive and negative) from trainees:

“Actually, I like receiving feedback. It helps me, I improve my work.”

“I feel good because I have got prepared and it is appreciated.”

“I feel the feedback sessions will contribute to my teaching skills. The ideas will help me in my future presentations.”

“If it is constructive I feel no stress or embarrassment.”

“If the way I receive feedback is harsh, it disturbs me.”

“Sometimes I find my friends’ ideas nonsense. I get disappointed because I have worked on it so much.”

“Some of my friends give feedback just to criticize.”

“I am afraid of having low marks.”

Table 4.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 1, question 4

		N	%
4. Have you ever felt being unfairly evaluated? If yes, by whom (the trainer or your friends) and why?	Yes	8	33.33
	No	16	66.66

Two-thirds of the trainees think that the feedback they receive was fair. *“Even though sometimes they are fussy on small details, I generally agree with them”*. However, there was a tendency to regard feedback as negative criticism. *“When giving feedback, they sometimes ignore our efforts. My motivation decreases”*. As mentioned before, feedback and discussion stages require active participation of every trainee in the class so that they can learn from each and every microteaching performance, not just from their own. However, the tendency to regard comments as highlighting imperfections and thus causing to lose face impedes the process. Therefore, the trainees were assured that this was necessary for their professional development and the session on giving nonjudgmental comments along with suggestions was conducted.

Table 5.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 1, question 5

		N	%
5. Do you think the instructor/trainer should be the only person to provide feedback?	Yes	-	-
	No	24	100

All trainees think that not only the trainer but also the trainees themselves should also be actively involved in the feedback stage. This was not compatible with the responses to the first question. Although most of them (18 trainees) did not actively participate in the process of feedback and discussion, they do think it was something they should have done. It appears that, even if they are reluctant to provide feedback, they believe that their opinions matter and they should contribute with different points of views.

"We are all studying to be teachers and I am glad to have a chance to express my ideas".

"We should also actively listen and observe the presentations- this is also gaining experience".

"I'd like to hear more about my performance from my peers; otherwise, one person's view cannot be fair".

"Peers can feel empathy with us so their feedback is important".

This was promising because the trainees did not refrain from giving feedback thinking it was useless. They were aware of the potential benefits of the feedback stage and that they had a lot to contribute to the process.

Table 6.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 1, question 6

		N	%
6. What do you think of her (the instructor's / trainee's) feedback?	<i>It should be stricter.</i>	2	8.33
	<i>The time and energy we spent should be appreciated.</i>	1	4.16
	<i>It is constructive, not disturbing and nonjudgmental. It is fair and inoffensive. It points to positive aspects as well. It is useful because it suggests more activities and improvements.</i>	21	87.5

The majority of the trainees were content with the trainer's feedback. They pointed out that they were not stressed and they benefited from her feedback. However, two trainees expressed that they would like it to have been "stricter". They wanted their mistakes to be clearly stated. It is probably due to the personality of the trainees. Some people do get motivated when their mistakes are highlighted, so that they would precisely know what to work on. But the rest of the trainees want their effort to be appreciated.

Research Question 3. How can teacher trainees get involved much more in the feedback stage of microteaching sessions?

The trainees' responses to the questionnaire were evaluated through content analysis and classified. Then a whole-class interview was conducted. The themes emerged during the discussion were in line with the responses to the questionnaires. The trainees expressed their discomfort about providing overt criticism and also stated that they would appreciate some guidance while observing. In response to this, the trainer suggested that an observation and feedback checklist might be useful and the idea was accepted by the whole class. Eventually, the trainer developed the "*Peer Observation and Feedback Form*". Providing feedback through the form would ensure confidentiality because the trainees expressed clearly that they would feel at more

ease when giving feedback in the written form, in that, it was between the trainee who performed and those who observed. What’s more, a well-structured form would help them focus on the process better and give more effective feedback.

The form was developed by the teacher trainer and was improved with the suggestions of the trainees. For the rest of the term in microteaching presentations, the form was used.

Research Question 4. What are the perceptions of teacher trainees regarding the effectiveness of using the Peer Observation and Feedback Form at the feedback stage of microteaching sessions?

The responses of the trainees to the second questionnaire showed *the perceived effectiveness of the “peer observation and feedback form.”* The trainees were asked to provide a rating (*strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree*) and an explanation for their rating if they wish for each of the following statements.

Table 7.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 2, questions 1, 2, 3

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Analyzing other’s lessons helped me think more deeply about mine	10	8	2	2	1
2. The checklist was helpful in observing lessons. It helped me learn to observe and give feedback on lessons.	12	7	1	4	-
3. Feedback from group members was helpful and enlightening.	12	6	3	2	1

As predicted, a well-structured form helped the trainees to observe the sessions better. They also benefited from feedback from their peers. The feedback stage worked more efficiently and helped them gain better insight into the process. Answers to the questions above indicate positive attitudes towards microteaching procedure in general; which is compatible with numerous researches done previously (Aksan & Çakır, 1992; Bayraktar, 1982; Benton-Kupper, 2001; Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; Higgins & Nicholl, 2003; Şen, 2009). The trainees, in general, perceive microteaching as a useful procedure for their professional development.

Table 8.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 2, question 4

		N	%
4. How did you find the process of giving written feedback on your friends’ microteaching performances?	<i>I liked it. It was beneficial and well-constructed. There was much more contribution.</i>	22	91.66
	<i>It was better than just oral discussion.</i>	10	41.66
	<i>It was better because we can keep them and look at them later when we need.</i>	9	37.5
	<i>There were some inconsistencies. Some like it, some don’t. I can’t see why.</i>	1	4.16
	<i>I took into consideration the feedback of those who attentively listened to me during my presentation and ignored others’.</i>	1	4.16

Nearly all trainees (22 trainees) expressed positive attitudes towards using the “Peer Observation and Feedback Form.” It helped them participate much more in the process. They felt

much more at ease when giving written feedback. The form was confidential between the trainee and peers who observed her/him. The form also served as a guide and helped trainees what to monitor during observation.

Table 9.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 2, question 5

		N	%
5. How often did you participate in oral discussion after handing in the form?	Never	6	25
	Rarely	9	37.5
	Often	6	25
	Always	4	16.66

It appears that the trainees participated more in the oral discussion after using the Peer Observation and Feedback Form. Yet, the increase is relatively lower. Those who never or rarely take part in discussion were still 15, which accounted for 62,5% of the whole group. The ones who participated increased by 16,6 %. Given the highly positive attitude towards reflection and feedback stage by the trainees, the increase seems to be relatively disappointing. It appears that the reluctance to provide overt criticism persists. Edge's (1984) study also pointed out a similar finding with Turkish teachers during in-service training. We can conclude that regarding feedback as criticism might be cultural and probably it takes much longer than a session to break the reluctance. Instead, the trainees were content with the confidentiality of the written feedback form. As some trainees point out, they thought the form was sufficient enough and there was no need to join discussions: *"I have already written a detailed feedback form so I did not want to repeat them"*.

Table 10.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 2, question 6

		N	%
6. Were the instructor's and your classmates' comments in the feedback forms compatible?	Often	10	41.66
	Sometimes	6	25
	Rarely	8	33.33

The analysis of the responses of the trainees to question 6 revealed that there were times when the feedback from the trainer/instructor and some of the trainees did not match. Although some trainees find this confusing, they were assured that that was quite normal. The trainer was not the *almighty* authority in the class. One person's view might have missing parts. It also shows how different learners can react in a real class. What might not work with one learner might well work with another. Taking more points of view into consideration broadens our understanding. They were also happy that their views were valued as much as that of the trainer.

Table 11.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 2, question 7

		N	%
7. What aspects of using the "peer observation and feedback form" did you like most?	<i>It was easier and well constructed, so we can provide more detailed feedback.</i>	8	33.33
	<i>Written feedback is better. It was more confidential, and thus less offensive.</i>	5	20.83
	<i>Everybody contributed.</i>	4	16.66
	<i>I especially liked overall comments and the smiley faces.</i>	6	25
	<i>I looked forward to reading what was written. It was the moment I liked most. I'll keep them.</i>	5	20.83
	<i>Improving the form was fun. I liked the final version.</i>	2	8.33

Answers to question 7 indicate that the form provided a structured approach to observation and feedback. It was user-friendly. The trainees liked and benefited from the guidance provided by the form. Furthermore, the trainees felt much less intimidated by the process of overt feedback. They tended to see sharing observations and suggestions in the written form more relaxing and less obtrusive. The confidentiality of the form allowed them to express their ideas more easily. The trainees were also glad that there was more participation. The form seems to be favoured by the trainees. They were eager to read the comments and were happy that they could keep them for later reference. They also liked being actively involved in creating the form. They were engaged in the activity and felt a sense of accomplishment about the final product. As their suggestions helped further develop the form, they made it their own and thus were more dedicated to use it.

Table 11.

Trainee responses for Questionnaire 2, question 8

		N	%
11. What aspects of the feedback procedure need improvement? Please list any suggestions for improvement.	<i>I wish we had more time. I think the one who did the presentation should have time to justify why shelhe did that.</i>	3	12.5
	<i>I was disappointed by a few feedbacks from some of my friends who just put ticks. I would appreciate more detailed comments.</i>	2	8.33

Time limitations appear to be a common complaint. With a class of 24 trainees, the form provided easier and concentrated feedback. However, it was also stated that it would be better if the presenters had some more time to defend or explain the motives for their acts. Some trainees expressed disappointment on superficial comments and pointed that they would like more detailed ones.

Because of the aforementioned reasons, reflection should not be superficial and observation and feedback in microteaching sessions should allow for cultivation of exchange of ideas for the successful execution of teaching practice. Based on the findings above, concern for other's feelings and failure to take criticism to one's advantage and to make a structured observation were revealed to be major reasons that hindered teacher trainees from effectively participating in follow-up discussions. This was in line with studies by Fernandez (2005) and Edge (1984). With mutual consent of the trainer and the trainees, the written observation and feedback form

provided the sought-after confidentiality; and this, in return, allowed the trainees to express their ideas and suggestions with more ease. They also accepted criticism in an unobtrusive way and used the initiative to take advantage of it. The form helped them with systematic observation and feedback. The trainees also participated in oral follow-up discussions relatively more.

Conclusion

Microteaching is an indispensable component of teacher education because it provides teacher trainees with the opportunity of integrating theory with practice. The effectiveness of microteaching heavily depends on the quality, that is, the depth and breath, of feedback and evaluation. However, studies related to what actually happens during the feedback stage and how feedback and discussions sessions can be held in a more effective way are few. This action research attempted to integrate more reflection in microteaching sessions.

All in all, the action research appears to find answers to all research questions. Firstly, the study aimed to identify the reasons why the trainees refrained from getting actively involved in feedback and discussions. The analysis of trainee responses to the first questionnaire revealed the three main reasons that prevented effective feedback. The trainees stated that they found the discussion stage intimidating, or at least, uncomfortable. They were highly concerned with the feelings of their peers. They did not want to cause their peers to lose face at the presence of the trainer. As this problem is common with another study conducted with Turkish practicing teachers in in-service training by Edge (1984), we might conclude that cultural norms might restrain the trainees from expressing criticism overtly. Although the trainees acknowledged the benefits of the discussions, they still refrained from giving overt feedback. After the implementation of the feedback form, there was an increase of 16.6% in participation in the discussions. Yet, the ones who never or rarely expressed their ideas in discussions still accounted for 62.5% of the trainees. It is probable that the trainees were contented with giving and receiving feedback in privacy. This finding might also be attributed to the female-male ratio of the group. Empathy with the trainee who performed might be due to the fact that nearly all students were female students. There were only two male trainees, which was so small a number to make any inferences. As mentioned earlier as a limitation of the study, although this ratio is common in language teaching departments in universities, the finding might be different in a different department or with a male dominant group. Therefore, further studies can be conducted regarding the underlying reasons for reluctance to give overt feedback. This reluctance might highly be related to the perception of feedback. The trainees tended to see it as *criticism* or an act of highlighting faults and took a defensive stand. Despite acknowledging its usefulness, they tended to abstain from the reflection and feedback stage. Moreover, 25% of the trainees cited *I'm afraid that my friend will lose face in front of the instructor* as a reason for their reluctance. It appears that they tended to regard this as a kind of betrayal to fellow trainers. It is too difficult to break behaviour that has roots in culture.

The next step of this action research was to involve the trainees more actively in the feedback and discussion sessions. Given their resistance to give overt feedback, a "peer observation and feedback form" was developed in collaboration with the teacher trainees as an alternative. The trainees felt much more comfortable providing feedback confidentially in the written form. The form also served as a guide during observations, and thus the trainees complaining about not knowing what to observe effectively were satisfied. They regarded the form as more convenient as it was more structured. The teacher trainees had favourable perceptions and attitudes towards microteaching presentations with the form. They thought it helped them improve their teaching skills. The use of the form increased participation dramatically. The trainees were content to receive detailed feedback from their peers and stated that the feedback was helpful. In fact, the trainees noted that they looked forward to reading the comments made about their performance. The forms could be kept for later reference, which was an additional benefit. Therefore, in this study it is suggested that the Peer Observation and Feedback Form be used in pre-service teacher

training programs to engage the trainees more deeply into reflection during microteaching sessions. It is also suggested that the form be used by different teacher trainers so that we can obtain more information about the perceived effectiveness of the form in the feedback stage of microteaching sessions. The form might also be further developed with suggestions from other trainers or trainees.

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Appendix 1

Dear participants,

This is to understand how you feel about giving and receiving feedback in your microteaching sessions. The aim is to make the best out of feedback sessions. Your answers will be viewed by your trainer only. Please give your sincere answers to questions.

Thank you

1. How often do you give feedback to your fellow trainees and participate in discussions after microteaching sessions?
 never rarely often always
2. (if seldom) Why do you refrain from giving feedback? (Tick any appropriate and add more if any)
 I don't observe the lesson. I'm not interested.
 I have no idea / nothing to say.
 I do not know what to look for during observation.
 I'm afraid that my friend will lose face in front of the instructor.
 I'm afraid that my friend will be offended.
 Other (please specify):.....
3. How do you feel when you receive feedback?
4. Have you ever felt being unfairly evaluated? If yes, by whom (the trainer or your friends) and why?
5. Do you think the instructor should be the only person to provide feedback?
6. What do you think of her feedback?

Appendix 2

Dear participants,

Please write your comments about using Peer Observation and Feedback Form in microteaching sessions.

Thanks for your sincerity.

The ratings are:

- (1) strongly agree,
- (2) agree,
- (3) neutral,
- (4) disagree,
- (5) strongly disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Analysing other's lessons helped me think more deeply about mine.					
2. The checklist was helpful in observing lessons. It helped me learn to observe and give feedback on lessons.					
3. Feedback from my peers was helpful and enlightening.					
4. How did you find the process of giving written feedback on your friends' microteaching performances?					
5. How often did you participate in oral discussion after handing in the form? never rarely often always					
6. Were the instructor's and your classmates' comments in the feedback forms compatible? yes no to some extent					

- 7. What aspects of using the “Peer Observation and Feedback Form” did you like most?
.....
.....
.....
- 8. What aspects of the feedback procedure need improvement? Please list any suggestions for improvement .
.....
.....

Appendix 3

MICROTEACHING PRESENTATION
PEER OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK FORM

Name of the Student Teacher: _____

Title/topic of the Lesson: _____

Date: _____

Feedback provider: _____

Check all that apply and comment as relevant.

Lecturing Strategies:

- linking to prior knowledge
- explaining/ demonstrating concepts
- relating stories, anecdotes
- making jokes/ using fun
- inviting student examples/ experiences
- pausing to give students time to think
- emphasizing important points
- using clear instructions
- correcting mistakes
- using instructional technology (projector, video,etc)
- other:

Additional comments:

Classroom Management:

- encouraging participation
- conducting effective pair and group work activities
- monitoring students while they are working
- effective use of time
- effective eye contact and use of voice
- effective body language
- Other:

Additional Comments:

Comment on the following procedures on the presentation. Fill in smiley faces to show your overall rating for each step.

(1 smiley = needs significant improvement, 5 smileys = excellent)

Warm-up / Lead-in: ☺☺☺☺☺

Additional comments: _____

Body ☺☺☺☺☺

Additional comments: _____

Conclusion and ☺☺☺☺☺

Wrap-up Additional comments: _____

How would you rate the overall effectiveness of this session (with ‘5 smileys’ representing ‘most highly effective’) and why?

☺☺☺☺☺

- What worked particularly well in this session?
- What suggestions for improvement do you have for the trainee?