

## Improving Students' Teaching Skill in Micro Teaching Class Using Peer Comments

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### Abstract

Peer comment is increasingly used in microteaching course as a method of teaching practice to provide student-teachers in mastering basic teaching skills. However, there is still insufficient evidence that peer comment is beneficial for student-teachers. This study was aimed to describe the contribution of peer comment to improve student-teachers teaching skills at English Education Department of Bung Hatta University. The method of this study was a qualitative descriptive to analyze the contribution of peer comment to the improvement of teaching skill of English student-teachers. The sample of this study was 13 students of the fourth-year students in 2021-2022 academic year. In this study, to assess the student-teachers' teaching skills, the researcher used a rubric sheet. The result of the study revealed that peer comment could make student-teachers' teaching skills in pre-teaching, whilst-teaching and post-teaching activities became better. Finally, recommendations and constraints for researching and implementing peer comment are discussed from the perspective of innovation within pre-service teacher education.

*Keywords:* microteaching, peer comment, pre-teaching, whilst teaching, post-teaching

### INTRODUCTION

Micro-teaching is one of compulsory courses that have to be taken by all students at faculty of teachers training and pedagogy in Indonesia, as a conscious effort to provide students with experiences dealing with teaching-learning process before doing teaching practice at school. Micro-teaching is a "technique used in the training students to act as teachers, in which different teaching skills are practiced under carefully controlled conditions" (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 365). In this course, one student plays a role as a teacher who teaches a part of a lesson while his or her classmates play a role as students, and in many cases, still some other students are instructed as observers who will comments later. In accordance with the assumption that on purpose of creating an opportunity for student teachers and increasing the quality of their teaching, they need

to have opportunities to review their teaching experiences. In other words, doing those activities will ensure them to make decisions about how their teaching practice will be in the future. (Schelfhout et al., 2006). Consequently, certain modifications functioning as a form of intervention have been experienced by a large amount of educational institutions in all over the world, and they might ensure the teacher-candidates to have various teaching experiences and to build reflective thinking skills that enable them to have effective teaching practices (Harford & MacRuairc, 2008).

One of the ways of improving students' performance in teaching is by involving them in assessing their classmates' teaching performance in microteaching course in the form of peer comments; written and oral. Falchikov (1995) defines peer comment as the process whereby groups of individuals rate their peers. It engages students in making judgements about the work or the performance of other students (Somervell, 1993). "Peer-comment is a tool for students to think over and classify the level, value, or quality of performance of other equal-status students" and it can increase variety and interest, activity and interactivity, identification and bonding, self-confidence, and empathy with others (Topping, 2009, p. 20). One of the important instructional functions of peer comment is providing detailed feedback (Falchikov & Goldfinch, 2000).

In line with the ideas above, Kpanja (2001) stated that what we do in microteaching class can be regarded as an effective technique for to implement theory into practice for teacher-candidates in any educational institutions. As a matter of fact, it is widely known that microteaching in which the students teach their classmates was conceptualized and developed to provide them an opportunity to assess and improve their teaching skills (Allen & Ryans, 1969). Many researchers have conducted studies on the use of microteaching followed by peer comments. Cliffored,, Jorstad, and Lange (1977) did a survey investigating how pre-service student-teachers evaluated peer-group microteaching as part of their preparation for student teachers in a foreign language methods course in the United States. They found that the students considered this type of microteaching to be a valuable experience and "very helpful in preparing them for student-teaching experience" (p. 233). Furuya (2006) has also done a study to identify and clarify the problems found in microteaching, and he found that even though there is a very limited time in microteaching course, it is very benefit for students since they can have the opportunity to perform two or three teaching demonstrations, they can do reflection on their first or second performance and later they can do some revisions based on comments given by their classmates. Another related research was conducted by Mio and Makino (2010), and based on the result of such study, they provide a detailed explanation about the system of microteaching and evaluation they developed.

The present study is an attempt to implement peer comment in written and oral form to improve student-teachers teaching skills. Teaching skills is a knowledge that must be possessed by a teacher to understand the difficulties that will be faced by the students in the process of teaching and learning and compile the material to be taught (Anwar *et al.*, 2014). Specific attention is given to teaching skills like greeting, checking students' readiness, telling teaching goal, the use of teaching media, knowledge of subject matter, class management and teacher's personality, making summary, telling follow-up activity.

Moussaid and Zerhouni (2017) also indicated some frequent problems encountered by student teachers such as teaching methodology, classroom management, teaching preparation, reaching out the students, context of placement, content adequacy, and self-concerns. In this study, peer comment on those problems are grouped into three categories; that is peer comment in pre-teaching stage, peer comment in whilst-teaching stage and peer comment in post-teaching stage.

The present study was aimed to describe the implementation of peer comment in microteaching course in improving students-teachers' teaching skills in conducting the process of teaching English as a foreign language in a formal classroom.

## **METHOD**

The participants in this study were thirteen student-teachers enrolled in microteaching course at English Education Department of Bung Hatta University Padang, Indonesia. All of them have taken all courses required for taking microteaching course. The participants were briefed how to give peer comment with rubric sheet before conducting a micro lesson of 30 minutes on the topic of their choice from materials given to students at senior high school. Each participant got three opportunities to conduct microteaching and he or she also got three opportunities to give peer comment of different student-teachers. Each commentator gave opportunity to give their comment as the feedback both oral form (after teaching) and written form indicated by score on observation sheet. The commentators put check list (V) on the observation sheet. The parameters on which participants were assessed are classified into three categories, and each category (pre-teaching activities, whilst teaching activities and post teaching activities) has amount of sub parameters. Pre-teaching activities cover (1) taking students' attention, (2) encouraging the students' motivation, (3) explaining the materials for apperception, (4) explaining relevant and useful materials about the topic (5) explaining the competence achieved, and (6) reviewing the previous materials. Whilst-teaching activities include (1) explaining the materials, (2) giving relevant examples with the topic taught, (3) organizing teaching materials, (4) organizing the explanation of teaching materials, (5) giving feedback to students, (6) using teaching media in teaching learning process, (7) activating the students in teaching learning process, (8) giving opportunity to students to ask questions, (9) giving reinforcement, (10) motivating students, and (11) using appropriate teaching model.

According to curriculum of English Education Department of Teachers Training and Education Faculty, Bung Hatta University Padang, microteaching course is offered at the sixth semester. It met once a week with the duration of three hours per meeting for fourteen weeks. The fourteen meetings were divided into four segments. The first segment taking a duration of two weeks was allocated to provide students with basic skills of teaching. Then, during the second segment for four weeks, every student was instructed to teach a micro class on the topic that he or she had chosen, framing with one of the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading or writing skill). After each student' teaching performance, the other students directly gave comments on it. The third

and fourth segment also took a duration of four weeks, and they were handled as the second segment was.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This description will be divided into four parts; they are improving students' teaching skill in micro teaching class, improving students' pre-teaching activities in micro teaching class, improving students' whilst teaching activities in micro teaching class, and improving students' post teaching activities in micro teaching class

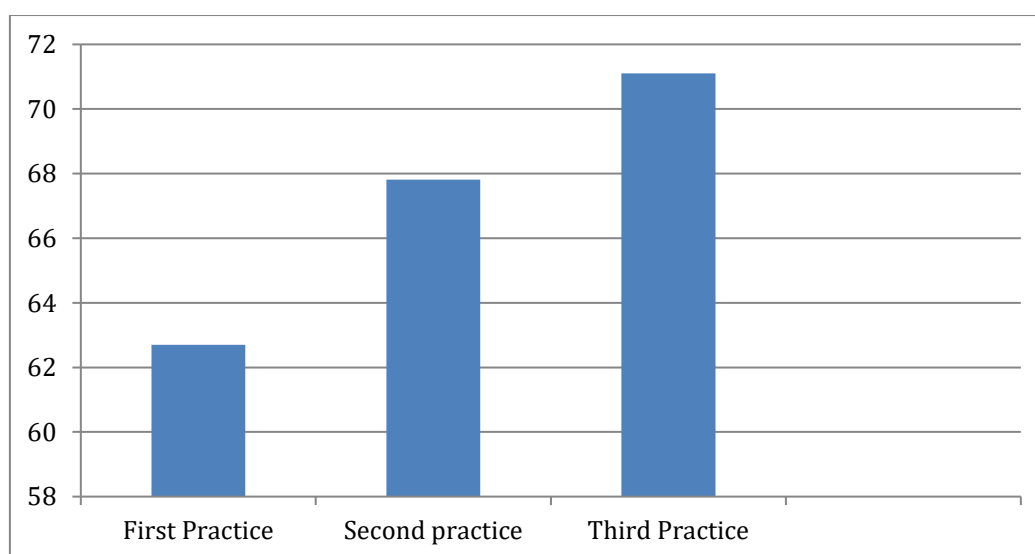
### Improving Students' Teaching Skill in Micro Teaching Class

A total of thirteen third-year-students participated in this study, and the results of data analysis on their teaching performances were shown in Table 1, as commented by their classmates on parameters during micro teaching sessions.

**Table 1.** The Average of Participants' Grade assessed by peers

Teaching	Pre teaching	While teaching	Post
	Activities	Activities	Activities
Fisrt Teaching Performance	59.56	59.78	68.75
Second Teaching Performance	63.46	66.43	73.56
Third Teaching Performance	66.50	73.08	73.58
Average	62.70	67.81	71.10

Dealing with the result of data analysis above, and referring to the research questions, it can be said that there is the improvement of students' skill in conducting teaching learning process after giving comment by one of the peers (observers). The observer covers three kinds of teaching skills, they are pre-teaching activities, whilst teaching activities and post teaching activities. The mean score for first practice is 62.7, the second practice is 67.81 and the third practice is 71.1. In order to be clear, it can be seen in Graphic 1.

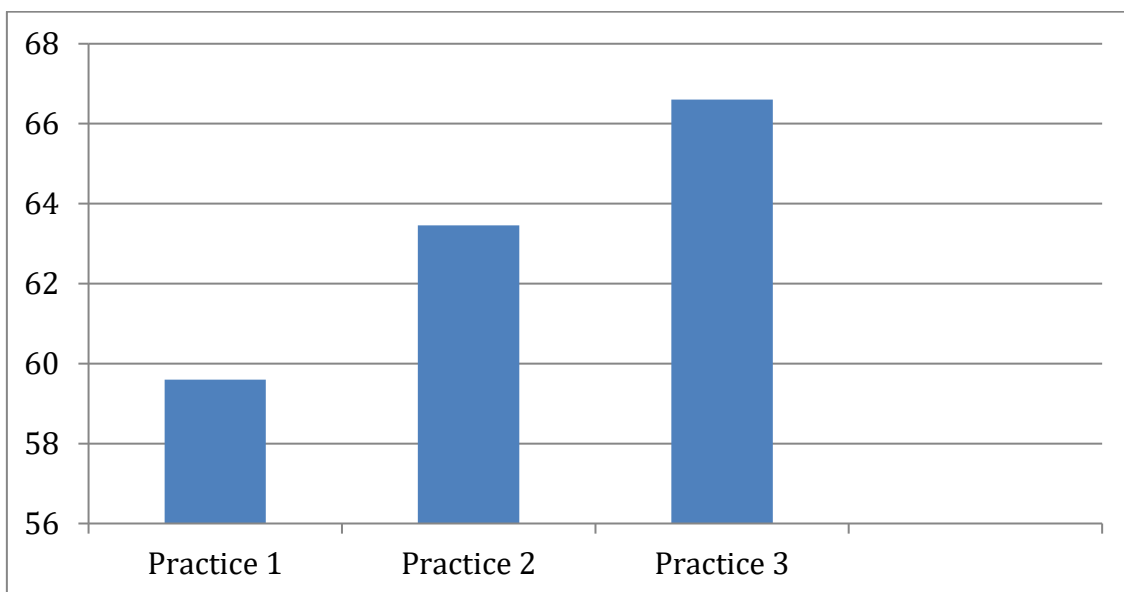


**Graphic 1.** Improving students' Teaching Skills in Micro Teaching Class

From table 1 above, it can be concluded that the improvement of mean score from the first practice to the second practice is about 8.15 %, and their improvement from the second practice to the third one is about 4, 85 %. It means that after the students got some oral comments presented after each practicing performance, and their scores on the observer sheet, they can improve their teaching skills for the next practice. In other words, we can say that peer comment can be useful to improve the students' teaching skill in micro teaching class. The students learn the comment given by their peers (observers) to improve their next practice teaching skills. This result is supported by the study done by Arjanggih and Suprihatin (2101), Soedarto (2017), Amseke (20180, Hanapi and Agung (2018), Safitri (2018). They found that peer support can improve students' self-efficacy in finishing students' thesis, in social adaptation, in motivation and achievement. The next description will be about the students' improvement for each teaching activities; pre-teaching activities, whilst teaching activities and post teaching activities.

### Improving Students' Pre-Teaching Activities in Micro Teaching Class

Referring to the students' score in observation sheet, the students' pre teaching activities in micro teaching class became better through considering peer comment given by peers both orally and written form using observation sheet. It is indicated by the increasing of the mean score from the first, second and third practice. The mean score for the first turn is 59.55, second one is 63.46, and the third practice is 66.5, as shown in Graphic 2.

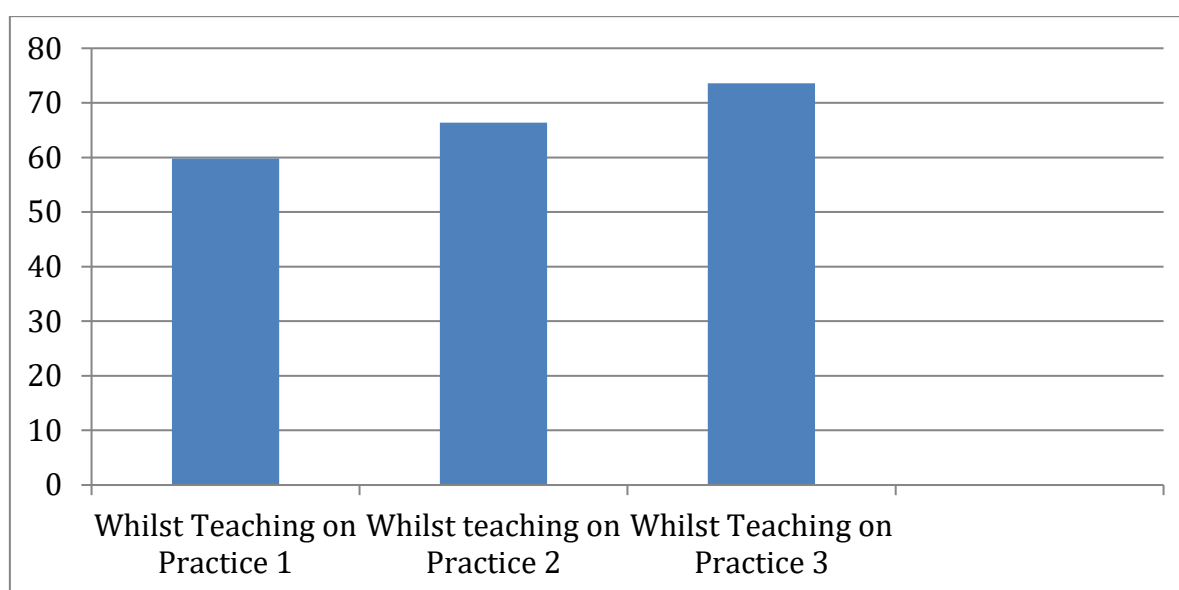


**Graphic 2.** Improving Students' Pre- Teaching Activities in Micro Teaching Class

Form Table 1 above, it can be also stated that the students' pre teaching activities is increased from practice 1 to the second one and to the third practice. The improvement is about 6, 47 % from the first to second practice and about 4,8% from the second to the third practice. It means the students consider input given by peers (observer) for the next turn (second and third practice) of teaching practice. In other words, peer comments can improve the students' pre-teaching activities in micro teaching class.

### Improving Students' Whilst Teaching Activities in Micro Teaching Class

Due to the students' score in observation sheet, the students' Whilst teaching activities in micro teaching class became better through considering peer comment given by peers both orally and written form using observation sheet. It is indicated by the increasing of the mean score from the first, second and third practice. The mean score for the first turn is 59.78 second one is 66.42, and the third practice is 73.6. It can be seen in the Graphic 3.

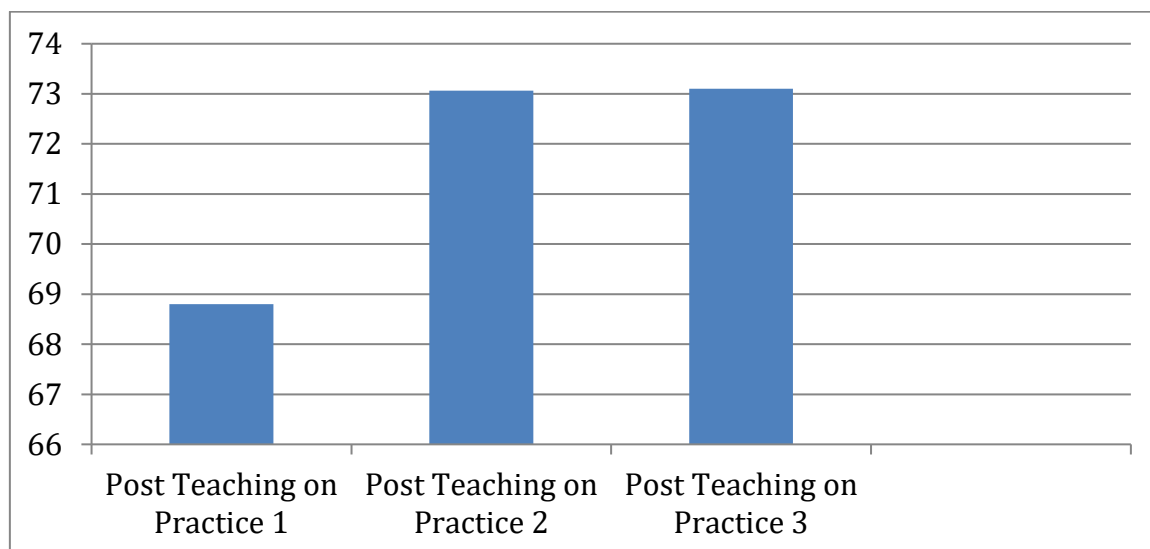


**Graphic 3.** Improving Students' Whilst- Teaching Activities in Micro Teaching Class

Table 1 above also shows that the students' whilst teaching activities is increased from practice 1 to the second one and to the third practice. The improvement is about 11 % from the first to second practice and about 10.8 % from the second to the third practice. It means the students consider input given by peers (observers) for the next turn (second and third practice) of whilst teaching activities. In other words, peer comments can improve the students' whilst-teaching activities in micro teaching class.

### Improving Students' Post Teaching Activities in Micro teaching Class

Based on the analysis of the students' score in observation sheet, the students' post-teaching activities in micro teaching class became better through considering peer comment given by peers both orally and written form using observation sheet. It is indicated by the increasing of the mean score from the first, second and third practice. The mean score for the first turn is 68.75 second one is 73.56, and the third practice is 73.07, as shown in Graphic 4.



**Graphic 4.** Improving Students' Post- Teaching Activities in Micro Teaching Class

Form Table 1 above, it can be said that the students' post teaching activities is increased from practice 1 to practice 2 and to practice 3 of post teaching activities in micro teaching class. The improvement is about 6.2 % from the first to second practice and about 0.05 % from the second to the third practice. The increasing of mean in post teaching activities for practice 2 to the third practice is not a lot because probably the students became more skillful to do post teaching activities and they can cover all activities in post teaching activities such as concluding the teaching materials, giving feedback of teaching learning process, having feedback for the teaching evaluation. In short, we can say that the students consider input given by peers (observers) for the next turn (second and third practice) of post teaching practice. In other words, peer comments can improve the students' post -teaching activities in micro teaching class.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding, it can be concluded that there is improvement of students' teaching practice skill in micro teaching class by using peer comment both orally and in written form (observation sheet). This improvement is reflected to three teaching activities, they are pre-teaching activities, whilst-teaching activities and post-teaching activities. It can be said that peer comment is very useful input for students who did practice teaching in micro teaching class. Due to this conclusion, it is recommended to the micro teaching subject lecturer to give enough time to the peers (peer observers) much opportunities give some comments (input) for their peers. And for the students who is going to have micro teaching class to pay more attention to your peer comments when you will do practice teaching in micro teaching class. For the next researcher, it is recommended to do research about the improvement the students' teaching skill using lecturer's comment in micro teaching class.

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