

Principles of Medical Education (Microteaching & Taking a Lecture)

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Our teaching techniques improve gradually over the years as we gain experience and because of the continuous practice undertaken for different kinds of teaching learning situations. Educational technology, however, has evolved ways and means for better development of teaching skills even at earlier stages by undertaking some methodical exercises, one of which is Microteaching. What is Micro about it? The technique attaches importance to a small fraction or a particular aspect of the teaching skill and needs a minor to demonstrate the same.

Need

Microteaching is an innovative technique of teacher training. It aims at development of competence in teaching skills through the practice of microteaching sessions. Even an experienced teacher can benefit by this technique, particularly for learning some new skills. The teaching learning activities such as lectures, small group discussions, tutorials or demonstrations involve a combined use of many skills such as the use of overhead projector, slide projector or the age-old blackboard. Each of these components can be performed in a more effective manner by properly planned practice sessions under peer observations. This is the main function of the educational game referred to as microteaching. It is called as a game here, because an effective utilisation of the

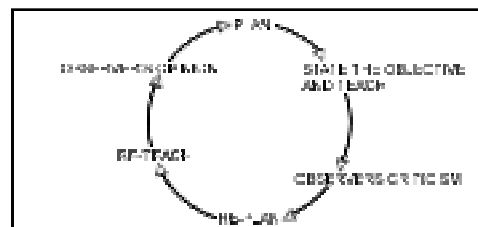
technique is possible when there is a group with sportish atmosphere.

Methodology of Microteaching:

A short lesson is taught by you to a group of four to six peers or pupils for a period of 5 - 10 minutes. The emphasis is on how to teach rather than what to teach. The session can be organised for the proper use of any visual aid such as chalk - board, specimens, models, projection instruments such as OHP, slide projector, audio aids or a audio - visual aids.

Technique

The pupils / peers observe carefully your teaching behaviour during a microteaching session and later discuss whether the particular skill was properly executed or not. Thus the feedback would be immediate and can be both positive or negative.



The cycle of 'Microteaching'.

After a short break you should re-teach the micro lesson making use of the feedback to improve on your previous performance.

Micro Teaching (Observation chart for peers / pupils)

	Yes	No	Cannot say	Not applicable
1. The speaker stated the objectives.				
2. The speaker presented the matter in an organised sequential manner.				
3. The speaker used humor to lighten the mood.				
4. The speed of presentation varied with emphasis.				
5. Examples / illustrations were used to emphasize the component.				
6. The speaker summarised the topic at the end.				
7. The speaker suggested additional sources of reading.				
8. The speaker used audio - visual aids. (slides, charts, chalk - board, over head projector, model)				
9. If he did use the aids, they were clear, explanatory, well prepared.				
10. The speaker allowed students to participate actively by : (a) Allowing questions (b) Inviting questions (c) Suggesting questions (d) Suggesting questions and answering the questions.				
11. Any suggestion for the speakers to improve the teaching / learning exercise.				

Taking a Lecture

You must be aware of the criticism, which is often leveled against lecture as a teaching method - yet most of you must be using this as a primary mode of teaching. The reasons are simple - lecture is one of the most cost-effective methods that can transmit a large amount of information to a large number of students. Given the current situation, there is no doubt that lectures, as a teaching method is here to stay for a long time to come.

Problems

Let us give you some guidelines to make best use of lecture as a teaching method. A certain amount of lecturing is inherent in any course, especially to build up basic theoretical knowledge, which must be gained before we can use other interactive methods like tutorials

or small group discussions. Lecture, however, is unsuitable for teaching of skills or promoting attitudinal change. It is a one way communication in which students largely remain passive. Unless you are sensitive to your audience, you may not know whether students are taking interest in what you are saying. You may have little opportunity to clarify meanings or to handle the wide diversity of abilities and attitudes, which the students represent. You must consider the communication problems before taking your lecture. You must study the nature of your audience, adapting the topic to their interests and understanding. You should organise your material in a manner that is effective and use aids where appropriate. You should also plan for variation in your presentation, including time for questions and discussion, which will reveal how much learning has taken place.

Planning the lecture: Before you plan your lecture, you should try to find answers to the following questions:

- Who is your audience ?
- What is the purpose of your talk ?
- What is the time available ?
- What is the subject matter ?

Knowledge of the audience will help you to know the baseline level of knowledge on which you will have to build up. It may be helpful to start with a general discussion or ask questions to get opinions. This approach will help you to make last minute adjustments, if necessary.

Making a plan

Knowing the purpose of your talk (eg. giving general information, giving detailed information, changing attitudes etc.) will make it easy for you to select appropriate material and to decide on the most effective way to present it.

A good lecturer respects the clock by adjusting his lecture to suit the time available. You should appreciate that it is better to have an audience still interested and wanting to know more after a short and fully used period, than to have them tired and uninterested after a long and boring talk. It may be interesting for you to know that the sag period in the interest of the audience occurs after about 20 minutes and hence you should plan your delivery in such a way that the interest is maintained. This can be done by appropriate use of humor, interesting examples, rhetorical questions and audience participation.

Preparation

Subject matter is crucial for a good lecture, for lack of knowledge about it means a sure death for the lecture. It is important to speak from your own knowledge and experiences but at the same time you should keep the needs of the audience in mind. It is a good idea to mark a few basic headings under which you can list ideas. Jot down the material by consulting reference books, texts, previous notes etc. After you have collected the material, categorise it into 'must say', 'should say', and 'could say'. What do you want your audience to remember at the end of your lecture? Put your emphasis on

this and narrow down your subject matter accordingly, bearing in mind the time available.

There is plenty of evidence to show that people remember a greater percentage of short talk rather than a longer one. Do a little well, rather than a lot badly. Remember the iceberg. Only a small part of the total mass of information available at your disposal may rise above the surface. But this visible part is as truly supported by the rest as in case of an iceberg.

You should make a special effort to plan the concluding part of your lecture. In addition to giving a brief recapitulation of various points, give some indication of where we go from here. The quality of your conclusion is more important than what you think.

Delivering the Lecture: The written word can only be of limited help when it comes to speaking techniques. What you need is practice followed by constructive criticism. You may have guessed it - we are talking of 'microteaching'. You can improve the quality of your presentations by using this simple teacher training technique, which we have discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, some of the essential points you should keep in mind are:

Practical Tips

- Arrive a few minutes before the scheduled time, giving yourself time to overcome any anxiety you may have. You can also use this time to check and arrange your teaching aids.
- You can speak from your notes but do not put your nose into them. Do not read entire lecture - the students feel more interested in your experiences rather than a literary oration.
- Speak from a posture that is comfortable to you, avoid pacing up and down on the stage like a caged tiger!
- Be poised, courteous and sincere. Careless choice of language or humor may create blocks to communication.
- Establish eye contact with your audience. Looking out of the window or down at the notes blocks communication. Talk to whole class and

not just the front row. Do not fix on a particular student or a group of students.

- Any action or gestures should be natural and spontaneous. Mannerism is distracting and should be avoided. Try to avoid leaning on the table or putting your hands in your pockets.
- The tone of your voice should be modulated to convey confidence, emotions, emphasis and indignation. Speech should follow the rate of thoughts - don't be afraid of a pause or silence. They can be used to let an idea sink in.

- Use everyday language avoiding slang. Prefer short and familiar words, keeping sentences if the audience is unknown to you.

Before we end this discussion, let us again remind you that rehearsal and practice are the only two things that will make you good at lecturing. Try to use the technique of microteaching and you will really be surprised at the results that you get.