

Innovative design and practice of English micro-teaching course under the philosophy of teacher education accreditation

Ou LAI, Yunxin LIANG, Jiaying ZHU

College of Foreign Languages, Longyan University, Longyan 364012, China

Abstract: The Level-2 accreditation for teacher education majors centers on the philosophy of "student-centeredness, outcome-orientation, and continuous improvement". Meanwhile, the Curriculum Standard for Compulsory Education-English (2022 Edition) advocates a core-competencies orientation. Driven by these two sets of policy requirements, local undergraduate universities need to restructure practical training courses for English micro-teaching. Taking the English Teacher Education Program of Longyan University as a case study and drawing on teaching reform projects, this research carries out curriculum reform practices to enhance the effectiveness of pre-service training for English student-teachers.

Keywords: teacher education accreditation; English micro-teaching; design and practice

1 Introduction

Micro-teaching was introduced to China in the 1980s. It has been around for decades. The English Teacher Education Program at Longyan University is undergoing Level-2 accreditation. During this period, English micro-teaching needs some adjustments and new ideas. These changes can not only help student teachers maintain motivation but also enhance practical-training activities, laying a solid foundation for their future teaching careers.

2 Limitations of English micro-teaching under the philosophy of teacher education accreditation

The Level-2 accreditation for teacher education follows three core philosophies. They are "student-centeredness", "outcome-orientation" and "continuous improvement". These core philosophies provide clear guidance for the English micro-teaching course. More specifically, the course syllabus, the training activities, and the assessment methods should be designed based on the practical training needs of student-teachers prior to their entry into teaching practice.

2.1 Need for revision of the English micro-teaching syllabus

Prior to the Level-2 accreditation, the English micro-teaching syllabus was student-teacher-centered and prioritized trainees' lecturing skills, yet ignored the growth of student-teachers as learners. Furthermore, the teaching syllabus was not separated from the practical training syllabus. There was a gap between the course objectives and the practice tasks. At the same time, these objectives failed to meet the outcome-oriented requirements of teacher-education accreditation. This gap hinders the systematic training of student-teachers' classroom teaching skills.

2.2 Necessary adjustments to teaching modes and practical training in English micro-teaching

Micro-teaching breaks down complex teaching procedures into discrete individual skills for targeted analysis and training so as to boost training efficiency [1]. Nevertheless, English micro-teaching is generally offered over one semester (20 weeks) with two class hours per week. Each class consists of more than forty students who are required to complete both theoretical learning and micro-teaching practice. Restricted by class hours, every student is allocated very limited time for in-class trial teaching. Many universities offering English teacher education face identical challenges. As one study notes: "English micro-teaching suffers from a severe shortage of class hours. Students can only gain superficial exposure to micro-teaching processes, falling far short of training requirements, and objectives for teaching-skill development can hardly be achieved" [2]. Furthermore, pre-service competency training for English teacher education is insufficiently integrated into core English major courses.

In response to these misalignments under the old curriculum framework, curriculum redesign can be implemented. If middle-school teaching methods for listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated into the related skill-based courses, student-teachers can benefit. They can combine these methods with their own learning experiences and gain a clearer understanding of how to design lessons for different class types.

With regard to field internships, there are only a limited number of partner schools. In addition, internship reports often follow a fixed pattern and lack real content. In practice, the implementation of internship tasks depends on the internship supervisors. As a result, student teachers receive very different hands-on experiences. Consequently, the internship fails to fully achieve its educational objectives.

2.3 Need for refined assessment approaches for English micro-teaching

Traditional micro-teaching assessment largely relied on instructors' evaluations. These evaluations focused only on a limited range of aspects and failed to adequately assess key teaching skills. For example, such assessments overlooked skills such as guiding students' language output, designing classroom interactions, and providing feedback that focuses on learners. Also, students' self-assessments and peer assessments did not help students improve through evaluation. In addition, the assessment mainly used summative evaluation based on in-class presentations. This method failed to provide a holistic view of how student-teachers developed their teaching competencies over time.

3 Innovative design and practice of the English micro-teaching course

In response to the Level-2 accreditation standards for teacher education and existing deficiencies in the course, the College of Foreign Languages of Longyan University has carried out reforms on the English micro-teaching course for English teacher education majors starting from the 2022 cohort. The questionnaire surveys at the end of the semester also revealed a marked rise in student satisfaction. They also indicated that students held more positive views about the reformed course.

3.1 Revising the English micro-teaching syllabus

The curriculum-reform project team aimed to meet Level 2 teacher education accreditation standards. Firstly, pre-service training for English student teachers should be improved. The team then comprehensively revised the syllabus and developed its new version in 2023. To maintain coherent course arrangements, the total class hours remained unchanged at 32 hours, equivalent to 2 credits. The revised syllabus consists of two components: a teaching syllabus and a practical-training syllabus.

The revised syllabus is based on the talent-cultivation goals of the English Teacher Education Program. Its educational objectives are more explicit. These objectives are linked to graduation requirement indicators. The syllabus also states how the course helps student teachers develop their core teaching competencies. Detailed guidelines are provided for each chapter. These guidelines make the theory lectures and simulated training more consistent. Clear specifications for

weighting and carrying out ongoing and summative assessments are also included. Such supports help make teaching and training more standardized and systematic.

3.2 Adjusting teaching modes and practical training for English micro-teaching

Following the new syllabus, the teaching modes and practical activities have been adjusted. Online lecture videos are available, each lasting 40 to 60 minutes. Videos are uploaded to learning platforms like Xuexitong. Students watch the videos before class and finish the related quizzes. With preview statistics and quiz results, the instructor identifies where students have knowledge gaps and then adjusts the focus of offline classes as needed. This saves enough class time for simulated trial teaching. As a result, practical training becomes effective.

The program also addresses the practical demands of middle-school English teaching and homeroom management. Therefore, English classroom language and homeroom communication skills are introduced, and student teachers are trained to master them in this course.

In addition to exemplary middle-school English lessons, online resources also include practical modules on vocal health and teaching-pressure management to meet pre-service training needs. Starting from 2023, outstanding in-service middle-school English teachers are invited to deliver guest lectures aligned with the training schedule. Drawing on real-world classroom cases, they interpret practical skills, evaluation criteria and common teaching challenges and offer professional guidance to student-teachers.

Micro-teaching concepts are also integrated into core skill courses for English majors. This enables student teachers to develop their teaching skills throughout their four years of undergraduate study. For example, the first-year audio-visual-oral course integrates training on listening instruction following the structure of middle-school listening-speaking classes. Designing listening-speaking lessons becomes a key component of final assessment. The second-year Public Speaking course incorporates additional practical teaching tasks.

For internships, the college has increased the number of partner schools from two to over a dozen. The rules for internships have been improved with clear standards and measurements. This helps boost student motivation. The feedback and research reports from internships are used to refine the English micro-teaching course for English majors. This is helpful to keep updating the course content.

3.3 Enriching assessment approaches for English micro-teaching

The course follows the accreditation principle of continuous improvement. It also meets the new curriculum standards for assessment. Since the 2024 school year, the course has moved beyond just instructor evaluation. Now student self-assessment and peer assessment are working along with teacher evaluation. The order and methods for self-assessment, peer assessment, and instructor evaluation are reorganized. Detailed grading sheets are designed based on authentic middle-school English teaching.

Before formal in-class practice, each student delivers a practice lesson within their small group. Group members use the grading sheets to conduct self-assessment and peer assessment. Then, based on the evaluation results and video recordings, the student changes their lesson plan before presenting it in class. After that, the instructor evaluates the lesson plan, language use, interaction design, feedback given to learners, and how the student handles difficult or key points. This process greatly improves the training of teaching skills.

More importance is given to ongoing assessment in the final grade, encouraging student teachers to actively build their teaching skills. Data from online and offline learning are useful for adjusting the teaching content and training intensity as needed.

4 Conclusion

In the context of the Level-2 teacher education accreditation, the reform practices at College of Foreign Languages, Longyan University show that both theory and practice in English micro-teaching must closely match actual middle-school English teaching. The assessment standards should be continuously refined. Students should be encouraged to conduct honest self-assessment and peer-evaluation. They should develop a sound understanding of effective teaching and cultivate the habit of reflecting on their own teaching. This lays a solid foundation for their future professional careers.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by the National Social Science Fund of China—Research Project on the Relationship Between Pragmatic Ability and Executive Function in Preschool Children and Its Applications (Grant No. 2023JY38). The funder had no role in study design, data collection, analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- [1] Yun L. Micro Teaching English[M]. Xiamen: Xiamen University Press, 2013: 23.
- [2] Yuan N H, Zhang J. An extended study on micro-teaching under the network environment: taking vocational-technical normal universities as an example[J]. E-education Research, 2014(8):78-82.

Author contributions statement

Ou Lai: conceived and designed the study, acquired funding, developed the conceptual framework and methodology, performed formal analysis, and wrote the original draft.

Yunxin Liang: collected data and handled software programming.

Jiaying Zhu: curated data and created visualisations.