

# Repositioning Microteaching for Quality Teacher Production in Nigeria: The Niger Delta University Experience

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## Abstract

For any state to be on the driver's seat in this era of globalization, the provision of essential quality services and products by its people is a necessity. In the production of these goods and services for the development of the society, education has a great role to perform. For education in the formal setting to do this, the place of the teacher becomes a necessity. And for the teacher to do this creditably for societal development, his/her professional preparation must as a matter of necessity be of a high quality. This is so because it is quality teachers that will stimulate the rendering and production of quality services and products respectively, after all the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004:39) brought home this assertion when it opined inter alia that "... no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers..." which implies that the quality of development in a country is a function of the quality of its educational system which is being facilitated by its teachers. In the production of the teachers for this assignment, the practicum which starts with microteaching is a sine qua non. It is the opinion of these authors that the way this aspect of teacher preparation is being executed in most teacher preparation institutions will not make provision for the production of such quality teachers for development in the country. This, therefore, calls for the repositioning of this very important component of the professional preparation process of the Nigerian teacher for the challenges ahead of him on graduation from these professional preparation institutions.

**Keywords:** Repositioning, Microteaching, Globalization, Professionalization.

## 1. Introduction: Who is a Teacher?

The achievement of the national aspirations of the Nigerian society as provided in the country's National Policy on Education (FRN:2004:6) are hinged on quality teachers. The making of quality teachers is again the function of a quality teacher education programme of which a well-planned and implemented microteaching is an indispensable component. The question for us, therefore, is who is a teacher that quality teacher education is to facilitate? This question becomes imperative because even though teaching is as old as human existence, it is not everybody who engages in teaching that is a teacher. This means that many who engage in teaching are not aware that they are teaching.

A teacher, according to the Teachers Registration Council Nigeria (TRCN) Handbook (FRN:2002:11), is a person who had undergone approved professional training in education at appropriate levels and capable of imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills to the learner. Paulley (2011:62) sees a teacher as a professional who helps learners through a purposeful activity or activities in transmitting or facilitating the transmission of skills, attitudes, values, ideas and knowledge that will create or influence desirable change(s) in the behaviour of the learner so as to be a functional member of the society he/she belongs. This, the teacher does because he/she has been specially prepared in a professional institution to teach in both formal and non-formal institutions of learning. This is further so as teaching in the professional context has methodology which forms the pedagogy for teachers. As a result, any person who aspires to be a teacher must be taught the methodology of teaching. It is this that makes one a professional teacher. The teacher, therefore, must not only be a well educated person and a specialist in an academic subject but one who has been an educated person and having a specialized knowledge related to his professional task. Those who do not have these professional principles are, therefore, not teachers.

As a professional, the teacher to this end is a change agent, a builder of a country's tomorrow and a prime mover of the educational sector. He is the hub around which the entire educational system revolves. He is in fact the soul and heart of the modern educational enterprise. Putting the above in perspective, Okeke (2004:90) maintained that "minus students, teachers are the largest and the most critical inputs of an educational system for

they constitute the quality of education anytime and anywhere". The teacher, therefore, according to Buseri (2010:65) quoting Henry Adams, "affects eternity; (for) he (himself) can never tell where his influence stops". For the teachers to be effective in the execution of their assignment, they must be subjected to a qualitative professional preparation which as stated earlier on in this paper is the responsibility of a qualitative **teacher education programme**. The traits of a good teacher such as being tactful, efficient, adaptable, of good character, hard working, eager to learn, emotionally stable, rational, resourceful and reliable among others more often than not are thus being induced in the individual through a qualitative teacher education programme. In other words, the making of quality teachers who are catalysts for development in any state requires adequate professional preparations otherwise called teacher education.

Paulley (2010:17) defined teacher education as a deliberate, well articulated, purposefully organised and managed programme with the aim of producing the desired qualities in the would-be teacher who will actualize the education dreams of the society concerned. In other words, no one comes into the business of teaching in the real sense of the word without a conscious effort of undergoing a formal process of professional preparation in a specialized institution specifically designed for this purpose, if such person wants to be a competent professional teacher.

Teacher education is, therefore, a programme designed to groom those who teach or would like to teach or would be engaged in relevant professional service in our schools, colleges and ministries of education as needed. It is a component of any educational system charged with the education and professional preparation of teachers so as to equip them with the competences and skills of teaching for the improvement of the quality of teachers for the school system. In Nigeria, the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004:39) listed the goals of teacher education to include the

- ✓ production of highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our education system.
- ✓ further encouragement of the spirit of enquiry and creativity of teachers.
- ✓ helping teachers to fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national goals/objectives.
- ✓ provision of teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to any changing situation (not only in the life of their country , but in the wider world); and
- ✓ enhancement of teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

According to Buseri, Paulley, Agih & Egumu (2013) a well-groomed teacher through this form of education, it is hoped, should be able to

- ✓ arouse and maintain learner's interest in learning things presented to him or her.
- ✓ motivate learners towards achieving set targets.
- ✓ helping the learner to develop appropriate life-skills that will make him or her to be a functional member of the society he or she belongs to.
- ✓ help learners to develop critical thinking skills.
- ✓ help the learners to communicate ideas learnt in a clear, lucid, logical and in an organized manner.

The essence of the above is to provide quality teachers for the state. In other words, quality teachers are the by-products of a quality teacher education. What then is a quality teacher education programme?

### 1.1 Quality Teacher Education

Quality, according to Hornby (2000:1035) means a degree or level of excellence, degree of conformity to standard and interest or enduring good trait or characteristics that make a person (thing) special or superior. In defining quality education, Fadipe, cited by Oguntimehin (2004:143-4), states that quality deals with issues of relevance, validity, functionalism, excellence and efficiency in the achievement of educational goals and practices. For Majasan (1998:1), qualitative education is a good and relevant education achieved through diligent learning and research, which produces sound, useful knowledge and creative skills for production and development. It is education that is characterized by the admixture of the elements of culture, morality, manners, arts, science, technology, creativity, valuable skills and positive personal values such as personal freedom, hard work and self organization. Babalola (2004:305) defined quality education as "the worth of education with reference to its input, the teaching-learning process and output/outcome". He noted that

it is measured against standards and could either be seen as below, exactly or as above a given standard. The quality could be poor, just as expected, excellent or exceptional. When it is exactly as it ought to be, we say it is an expected quality.

Elaborating further on the various components of quality education vis-à-vis input, process, outcome and output as well as environment, Babalola (2004:305) said:

Quality of inputs refers to the worth of teachers, trainees, textbooks, technology of delivery and tasks or curriculum. Quality of process deals with the worth of the teaching-learning process that involves lesson plans, delivery methods, class organization in control, student-teacher interaction, pupils' participation, assessment and evaluation, marking etc. Quality of outcome and output involves the academic achievement and attainment, value-added through education, results and internal and external examinations etc. (While) quality of environment involves the worth of all environmental factors and situations.

Oji (1982:85-86), on his part, identified five important issues that are necessary to ensure this form of education, namely:

- ✓ Programme of such education must accommodate the three ends of education, namely, cognitive end which has to do with the development of deeper intellectual skills, affective end which has to do with character training or citizenship education concerned with the appreciation, feelings and values of those educated and the development of the psychomotor end, which deals with acquisition of mechanical skills.
- ✓ The need to ensure that the required inputs and materials for instruction and also the surrounding environment of instruction must be of a standard in numbers, assortments and quality; sufficient to be conducive to the learning process and promote emotional balance and reasonable comfort in which the student can study effectively.
- ✓ The manner and routine of instruction must motivate the student to dedicate his efforts to excellence in order that a learner's impact on the world of knowledge may become a possibility in the foreseeable future.
- ✓ Such education must be cost effective and reflect a balance with the cost of other social needs that must necessarily be pursued simultaneously by the state for overall harmony in the development of the state; and
- ✓ It must pursue education in accordance with the letters of the constitution of the country, since it is the state that will be the ultimate beneficiary of the product of quality education (emphases are ours). This is because proper education should not only help one to acquire knowledge, skills, habits, values or attitudes, but to help its recipients to acquire suitable appreciation of one's cultural heritage so as to live a fully more satisfying life in that society as a functional member.

A cursory look at all the components above shows that they are all revolving round the teacher. Accordingly, any society that inculcates this type of education in its members, particularly in its teachers, the major knowledge transmitting agent, must make impact in an enlightened environment as such people are the ones that will push forward the boundaries of human progress. This form of education according to Paulley (in print) does not take place by chance; rather it requires good vision, careful and purposeful planning, as well as faithful implementation of educational goals, objectives and policies at the various sectors and levels. It also requires genuine commitment to such goals in terms of funding to the educational sector at least up to a minimum of 26% of a state annual budget as prescribed by UNESCO. Indeed, it is quality education to which the school environment, the teacher, the parents, the Nigerian society in principle as exemplified in the National Policy on Education (FRN: 2004) and the students themselves are all yearning for over the years. When this form of education according to Paulley (2011:5) is applied to the professional preparation of the teacher, it becomes quality teacher education.

In the making of the quality teacher, teacher education is made up of various components, one of which is microteaching which is a practicum in the professional preparation process. This as noted by Paulley (2012:105), is the tradition with all known professions as no professional upbringing or preparation for any profession in the world be it medicine, nursing, law, engineering, surveying, pharmacy and so on is complete without a practicum. Teaching as a profession is, therefore, not an exception. What then is microteaching?

## 2. Definition of Microteaching

Microteaching, according to Olatunji and Olatunji (2006:1-2), is a version of real teaching whose duration of teaching, number of students, concepts taught and teaching complexity are all scaled down. It is a prerequisite learning experience that is subordinate to both teaching practice and on-the-field or professional teaching upon certification as a professional teacher. It enables the student in a professional teacher preparation institution to develop new skills and refine old ones. The process permits teachers to improve their teaching performance on graduation from the professional teacher preparation institutions through constant practice of teaching skills.

The issue of constant practice as reflected in the above definition is very instructive in this paper because in the repositioning of this process, the idea of constant practice is very necessary as constant practice will make for perfection, which is a sure way in the production of quality teachers to meet the challenges of modern society in this era of global competitiveness. Microteaching has a peculiar characteristic of giving student-teachers a great deal of feedback on their performance.

## 2.1 The History and Purpose of Microteaching

The term microteaching according to Aggarwal (2004:449) was first coined at Stanford University in 1963 by A.W. Dwight. The reason for this according to Allan & Ryan (1969:2) was because the beginning teachers in the Stanford teacher education program needed a realistic training situation on which to practise before they took on classroom responsibilities.

According to Okorie (1979:34) originally microteaching was designed to provide teachers with a safe setting for the acquisition of the techniques and skills of their profession. It is not only be used for skill training, but also as a method of trying out new curricular materials and instructional techniques.

Allan & Ryan (1969:2) listed the following five core teacher essential preposition through microteaching to include:

- ✓ It is real teaching, although the teaching situation is a constructed one in the sense that the teacher and students work together in a practise situation, nevertheless, bona fide teaching does take place.
- ✓ It lessens the complexities of normal classroom teaching as class size, scope of content, and time are all reduced.
- ✓ It focuses on preparing the teacher in professional preparation process for the accomplishment of specific tasks. These tasks may be the practice of instructional skills, the practice of techniques of teaching, the mastery of certain curricular materials, or the demonstration of teaching methods,
- ✓ It allows for the increased control of practice. In the practice setting of microteaching, the rituals of the time, students, methods of feedback and supervision, and many other factors can be manipulated. As a result, a high degree of control can be built into the preparation program.
- ✓ It greatly expands the normal knowledge-of-results of feedback dimension in teaching as the teacher in preparation after a micro-lesson in a critique session has a maximum insight into his/her performance through several sources of feedback at his/her disposal. This could come from either his supervisor or colleagues who with a videotape playback to show his/her performance in the light of set goals with the object of analysing to show how one performs and how he/she can improve. According to Allan & Ryan (1969:2) these can be immediately translated into practice when the one in preparation re-teaches shortly after the critique conference. What then are the elements of microteaching?

### 2.1.1 Elements of Microteaching

Yusuf (2009:217-218), quoting Pelberg identified five major elements of microteaching, namely:

- ✓ **Teaching-Learning Laboratory-** which is an early field experience where the teacher in a teacher preparation institution practice in stimulated situations preceding practising and learning through real life situation
- ✓ **Safe Practice Ground-** ensures that teacher in preparation is able to experiment, to try out, explore, and fail out without being penalized. This frees the affected teacher of tension and anxiety as in a normal teaching practice exercise.
- ✓ **Microelement and Teaching Skills-** ensures that the teacher in preparation learns through the mastery of component of teaching tasks, thereby ensuring that the professional preparation of the teacher is focussed on specific task and reducing the complexity of teaching. Again the scaling down of lesson length, class size and task ensures that more effective initial learning is achieved.
- ✓ **Feedback-** this element means the communication of information about performance to the learner, here the teacher in preparation. Through this means the teacher in preparation identifies discrepancies between actual and the desired performance. Accordingly, during the re-teaching session, the teacher undergoing microteaching will correct through his/her desire to eliminate the identified discrepancies. The feedback is usually being achieved through the use of videotape, audiotapes, and critique by supervisors and peers.
- ✓ **Modelling-** this refers to learning by observing master teacher(s) demonstrating particular classroom or teaching skill or interaction.

All these are aimed at achieving certain objectives. What then are these objectives?

### 2.1.2 Objectives of Microteaching

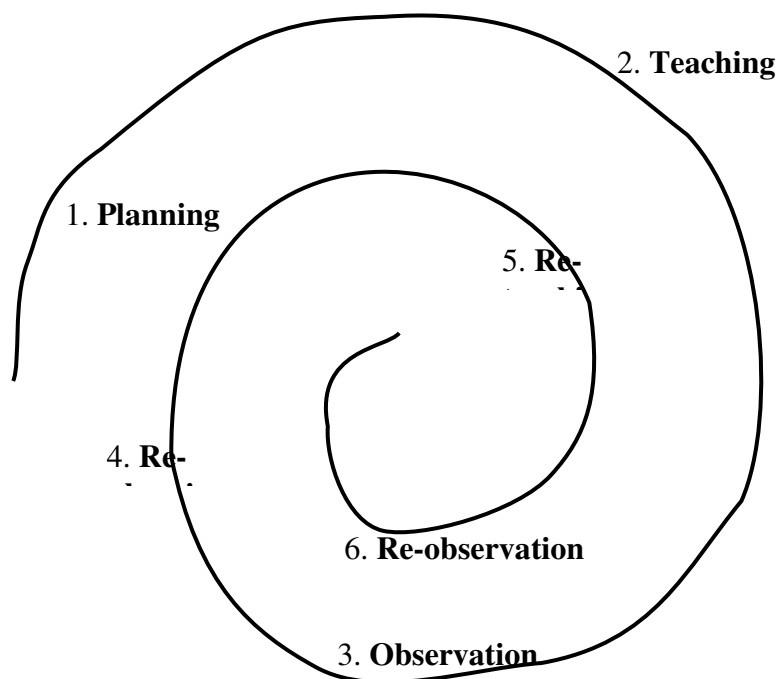
Ike (2003:38-39), quoting Musa, Kpeke, Ogbebor and Kpangban, sees microteaching as an innovative technique in teaching that is aimed at achieving the following objectives;

- ✓ helping the student-teacher to identify the discrete skills of teaching which the teacher will use in his everyday teaching upon certification.
- ✓ providing the student-teacher an opportunity to examine one by one the various teaching skills more closely through practice.
- ✓ helping the student-teacher to practise the teaching skills in a supportive environment of his supervisor and peers, with the complexity of teaching reduced.
- ✓ enabling the student-teacher to build up confidence as a teacher before starting to teach in a school.
- ✓ enabling the student-teacher to acquire adequate preparations in teaching skill just as other professionals in preparation institutions such as law and medical students among others acquire variety of their professional (teaching) skills respectively.
- ✓ enabling the student-teacher to practise teaching in terms of definable, observable and measurable teaching skills.
- ✓ giving the student-teacher the opportunity to accept his/her supervisor as a friend who is interested in his/her professional growth as a teacher devoid of the pressure of assessment for grading. Accordingly, it provides a relaxed and controlled secure environment for the would-be teacher to acquire the necessary skills for the task ahead.
- ✓ enabling the student-teacher to adopt an objective approach towards assessing his own teaching through following the complete circle of microteaching. In other words, it provides the teacher being prepared the opportunity for immediate feedback and repetition of task for improved performance as the individual has the opportunity to critically assess his/her own performance.

Microteaching from the above objectives if properly implemented is one of the best practical approaches in the professional preparation of the teacher for the assignment ahead as it is aimed at demonstrating competency on the would-be teacher.

### 2.1.3 The Procedure

Microteaching, being a laboratory-based experience is well structured into distinct phases. Different authors have delineated between four to six stages. Awotua-Efebo and Williams (2010:151) citing Kumar (2000) has presented a spiral, non cyclic structure containing six phases of microteaching. The first stage is the planning or preparatory stage where the teacher in a preparatory institution plans a micro lesson during which a specific teaching skill will be applied. At the second stage, the actual teaching is carried out in the microteaching laboratory for five to ten minutes. The third stage is the observation stage during which the teacher in preparation is constructively critiqued to identify strengths and weaknesses. The teacher in preparation then re-plans the lesson aimed at improving on the deficiencies noted in the previous stage. This is the fourth stage which gives way to the fifth stage which is the re-teaching stage. The essence of this stage is to ensure how well the corrections made at the observation stage are being assimilated by the teacher in preparation undertaking microteaching. The sixth stage is the re-observation stage. This stage marks the end of the microteaching cycle, as the student teacher is re-observed and reassured by the supervisor, fellow student teachers, the video recording and by him/herself if the micro lesson was video recorded. The essence is to ensure that observed deficiencies at the fourth stage are taken care of with minimal criticisms. With the cycle completed satisfactorily by a student teacher in preparation, he/she is now free to practice another skill as it is indicated in the microteaching schedule. The above description is presented in the diagram below.



**Fig 1: Diagram Showing the Spiral Structure of Microteaching**

Levi (1981) cited by Iteun (2004:57), on his part pointed out three main phases of microteaching. According to him, these stages are moulding, practice and feedback. During the modelling stage, a professional teacher (model) first exhibits the teaching skill which the teacher in preparation is expected to learn and apply during the lesson. Based on this, the teacher in preparation plans the micro lesson. These two make up the first stage followed by the practice period which is the actual teaching and observation in the laboratory which is the second stage. The third stage is the feedback based on the observations made. During this stage, the teacher in preparation re-plans and re-teaches the lesson. He/she is also further observed.

The procedure for microteaching is obvious from the above analysis. There must be a period where the teacher in preparation is exposed to the requisite teaching skills. Based on this, what they have learnt, they plan their own micro lesson which they teach in the microteaching laboratory. The micro lesson is reduced in time and scale and fellow teachers in preparation about five (5) to ten (10) constitute the students. The micro lesson focuses on a teaching skill such as set induction, stimulus variation, reinforcement and questioning skills.

The teacher in preparation is subjected to constructive criticisms by the supervisor and his/her peers. Based on this the teacher in preparation re-plans and re-teaches the lesson and is re-observed. It is expected that he/she would have mastered the given skill appreciably at this time and the criticism would be much less. The lesson is usually videoed so that the teacher in preparation would have the opportunity of watching their performance to see what errors they have made and to correct them subsequently.

#### 2.1.4 Repositioning Microteaching for Quality Teacher Production in Nigeria

The acquisition of relevant knowledge becomes a necessity for any state to be in the fore front in this era of globalization. This is needed by states for the provision of essential quality services and products which are needed for development. It is through this means that any country will remain on the driver's seat in a highly competitive society. In the production of these quality services for the development of the society, the role of the education sector is a sine qua non. For the education sector in the formal setting to do this creditably, the place of the teacher becomes a necessity. Again for the teacher to do this creditably for the society, his/her professional preparation must as a matter of necessity be of a high quality. This is so because it is quality teachers that will stimulate the rendering of quality services and the production of quality products, after all the National Policy on Education (FRN:2004:39) brought home the veracity of this claim when it asserted inter alia that "... no education system may rise above the quality of its teachers..." This, therefore, calls for the repositioning of this

very important component of the professional preparation process of the Nigerian teacher for the challenges ahead of him on graduation from these professional preparation institutions.

This becomes necessary in the Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State of Nigeria where the implementation of this important aspect in the production of quality teachers is a far cry from the ideals proposed by A.W Dwight Allen of the Stanford University in 1963. Again as society is dynamic, there is the need to innovate so as to introduce novel ideas that will make the process become relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as dictated by the reality of the society.

The practice in the Niger Delta University which is the case in most teacher preparation institutions in the country is that this all important component of the quality preparation process is not given a place to stand on its own in the whole process. Instead it is made an appendage of some courses in year two such as **EDU 242** which is **Principles of Instruction** and **EDC 212** which is **Subject Methodology**. While **EDU 242** is a faculty course meant for all students in the Faculty of Education that of **EDC 212** is a departmental course being, provided by the Department of Teacher Education for its students. In all cases due to the many issues to be covered as provided in the respective course outlines, little emphasis is placed on the practicum to be carried out by the students which is the focus of microteaching as the lecturer is usually in charge of lecturing the students in preparation for the assignment ahead.

This does not provide the platform for the production of the needed quality-teachers in the country. To get it right, therefore, it is suggested that microteaching should be made to stand on its own as a course to be handled by a team of lecturers, bearing in mind the principle of scaling down the number of students per lecturer so that the import of the whole exercise will not be lost in the professional preparation of quality-teachers for the development of the country. In fact the above proposal has the blessing of the Federal Government of Nigeria in its National Teacher Education Policy. In Principle Five of the said document, (FRN: 2011:17) the government opines that

successful student teaching is a result of structured, effective and supportive supervision provided to the student teacher by a variety of educators; and that at least one course shall include a minimum of thirty (30) hours of microteaching, to be carried out before teaching practice (TP) begins (2credits).

This is a move in the right direction to reposition the production of quality teachers in the country for development. Nigeria's problem is not that making policies but it has always been that of having the political will to enforce the policy. Even though, according to Abimbola & Abolade (2009:iii) and Omieibi-Davids (2011:122), in the University of Ilorin and the then Rivers State College of Education, Port Harcourt now Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt this has been the situation where microteaching is both listed as a course with the code **EDU 213**, the enforcement of this proposal in the country will make this wear a national outlook for the production of quality teachers in Nigeria for its development. In the Ignatius Ajuru University of Education Port Harcourt, it is provided as a year two first semester course at the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) level with the title **Microteaching: Theory and Practice**. The course need not to be examined by the end of the semester by students writing an examination as it is purely a practicum.

On likely things to constitute the course outline, the following are suggested

- ✓ the teacher, his/her functions and qualities in the facilitation of learning (since it is the teacher that is at the centre of the whole process);
- ✓ meaning of microteaching;
- ✓ philosophy/relevance of microteaching to a teacher in preparation;
- ✓ principles of microteaching;
- ✓ tools of effective teaching such as (a) syllabus, scheme of work, and lesson plan, the components of a good lesson plan and its value to a teacher, (b) instructional materials;
- ✓ methods/skills of teaching; and
- ✓ evaluation.

The issues listed above should not take more than two contact periods in the semester to be handled by the lecturers concerned as the emphasis here is the practical experience to be exhibited by the student. The one or two contacts by the lecturers is needed to make the students appreciate the import of the whole thing as non appreciation of these by the students is likely to result in abuse of the need for microteaching.

In addition, the suggestions of Aggarwal (2004:453) as listed below can equally be adapted as vital points in Nigeria's effort in the repositioning of microteaching for the production of quality teachers in the country for development. These include:

- ✓ Orientation lectures should be given by the supervisor on each teaching skill before the actual practise by the teacher in preparation.
- ✓ Model presentation of each skill by the supervisor should precede each teaching skill to be imbibed by the student-teacher-that is leading by example (pre-microteaching discussion).
- ✓ Discussion on the presentation with the teachers in preparation (post-microteaching discussion).
- ✓ Preparation of the time-schedule of micro-lesson for each student-teacher by the supervisor.
- ✓ Delivery of the lesson under controlled conditions by the student-teacher.
- ✓ Effective supervision of the lesson by the supervisor.
- ✓ Videotaping of the lesson, or lesson to be televised through closed-circuit television (CCTV). This means adequate funding of the education sector particularly the teacher education component as the bedrock of the entire system. It is through such a process that these facilities can be procured for the execution of this proposal. This is lacking in the present state of affair in the country's education sector which has manifested in the many avoidable industrial actions embarked upon by the various operators of the education sectors at the tertiary level in recent times.
- ✓ Discussion about the lesson with the supervisor.
- ✓ Preparation of the lesson after the feedback.
- ✓ Teaching the same lesson to another small group of students by the student-teacher.
- ✓ Further discussion with the supervisor and feedback.

### Conclusion

The business of teaching is made of so many discrete skills that must be brought into play before it can be successful. These skills must be mastered by the teacher before he/she could be identified as a competent teacher. The starting point in this whole process of getting the competent teacher is microteaching. It is one of the most effective innovative techniques designed to maximize efficiency and effectiveness in the process of grooming teachers in the professional preparation process to acquire the skills, techniques, competences and qualities needed of the teacher for the assignment ahead on graduation. It is a competency-based technique in teacher preparation with in-built opportunities for inquiry and creativity in teaching. It encourages innovation in teaching. Its effective usage by institutions saddled with the responsibility of preparing professional teachers for the assignment ahead will no doubt expose the teacher in preparation for important teaching/learning behaviours which are relevant to the development of the necessary teaching skills required for effectiveness and efficiency in the classroom. This way, the professional teacher will continue to be a real agent of positive social change. This in the opinion these authors will only be made manifest if microteaching is repositioned in the country's teacher preparation institutions.

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