



Transformative Engineering Education through Microteaching Practices

Dr.PR Chandra Reddy, P. Murali

Associate Professors,

Department of English

Mother Theresa Institute of Engineering and Technology

Palamaner, Chittoor Dt, Andhra Pradesh, India

Abstract: There is a saying that when one teaches, many learn and it shows the importance of teaching. Teaching is not an easy profession. It is not just onetime learning as it is dynamic and it is an art and it can always be improved. The influence that teachers have on their students can no longer be ignored. A good teacher can change the course of the life of students. Teaching is a complex activity and teachers need a wide range of skills to make their teaching effective and efficient in the classroom. One cannot become a teacher in a short-time. It may be right to say that teacher is a lifelong student. ‘A teacher has to collect knowledge and wisdom from the society and gives it back to the students otherwise he or she is a despicable miser’ it is said. In this article, we strongly feel that microteaching at the end of every academic year can improve academic quality in engineering colleges. Here our article confines to engineering colleges for we teach English to engineering students.

Terminology: Microteaching, Micro Lesson Plan, Amalgamation, Content, Concepts

Microteaching or micro reflective classes are very much necessary for the teaching faculty especially in engineering colleges because an engineer decides the quality of life, besides there is constant up-gradation of every engineering branch. Hence the engineering colleges have to see that their graduates should be equipped with theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, wisdom and values. Dear teachers, let’s question ourselves, ‘How did we become teachers? Did we become teachers after some required academic qualification or with some kind of formal training in teaching or with a passion for teaching or just for livelihood? No matter how we have become teachers, we should have some teaching skills and the skills can always be improved to become good teachers.’

We believe most of us stumbled into teaching field without any knowledge of what is teaching. In our country, anyone who has completed his or her post graduation with a certain percentage of marks can become a junior lecturer or an assistant professor. But the noticeable point is if a person wants to become a doctor of medicine, he or she has to complete an academic medical degree and serve as an apprenticeship or a house surgeon; it's practical training in any hospital for a period of time. Only then he or she is allowed to practise medicine in a hospital. The same is in the case of an engineer who has to acquire both theoretical and practical knowledge to become successful. If content is delivered properly in the classrooms, students can acquire good practical knowledge in the labs.

Thus engineering education is an amalgamation of learning and practicing. Any skilled person needs theory and practice to have workmanship. No matter, whether it is a carpenter or a driver or a mason or a plumber or an electrician. On the contrary, teachers who teach in colleges and universities need no practical or formal training before they enter their classrooms. One can become a junior lecturer or an assistant professor, who is qualified, at any time, at any stage and at any place, what matters is his or her post graduation with a certain percentage of marks or a Ph.D. It looks a little paradoxical. Once a friend of ours said, 'I was working in army. When I met with an accident which left me limping, the army relieved me from the service. I tried for many jobs, but I was declared unfit for them. Then I became a lecturer in English as I completed an M.A in English through correspondence.'

We feel majority of teachers at colleges and universities didn't have any kind of formal training at all, before they entered their classrooms. We are not writing something bad but something a reality which prevails not only in our country, but also in various other countries. However, all the countries in the world give utmost importance to education. Thus education, especially higher education, enjoys its prominence with sound allocation of funds in the budgets. We wonder whether it is a right thing that a teacher walks into the classroom of an engineering college without any training formula or formal training in classroom teaching. But at the same time, we agree that teaching is not something new to anybody as we all have our own experience of teaching as students. We all observed classroom teaching and intimately experienced it from our primary classes to the higher classes.

Here the matter is, 'it is the experience by observation rather than experience by practice.' This kind of observation can't make one a good teacher. For example, audience can't become actors though they have observed the action of many actors until and unless they start practicing. A person who enters teaching field without any training needs some years to get acquainted with different methods, different means and different techniques, especially in the days of digital classrooms. What will happen to his students for all those years? Will it not be like adding fuel to fire if the teacher has no learning attitude? Is it not a thousand dollars' question? We don't mean that all the teachers are bad, but what our point is if a person wants to become a good teacher, he or she has to undergo some training or at least possess learning attitude.

At this juncture, microteaching within the college makes the necessary means available for teachers and fills the vacuum. In microteaching, in the first phase, teachers learn, under the guidance or supervision of some senior teacher or a retired teacher or a resource person who is committed to teaching, body language, intonation, eye contact, interacting with students, asking feedback questions, facial expressions, methods, strategies, involving students, doubts clarification, the kind of language to be used and the usage of blackboard and the projector in the classroom. Every class should have 'a begin, a middle and an end.' This can be shown in the micro lesson plan too, prepared by all the teachers. But this not enough because in some cases, we learn something or feign to learn something and do something else by treading the same old path. Therefore there should be the second phase of microteaching. In this phase, with prior intimation, each teacher in the college is asked to take 20 to 30 minutes class and the students are the entire teaching faculty of the college, following the guidelines of the resource person. The teachers can choose a single concept of content of their own choice and it can be taken from their own syllabus and prepare a micro lesson plan.

Here it can be found out how is way of teaching of every teacher and in case of need, the observer or mentor or the supervisor or the resource person can give the required teachers his advice to improve the effect of teaching. It is also an opportunity for the staff to learn from one another. The resource person can ask the faculty to submit their micro lesson plans, but the teachers can have their liberty to go vertically or horizontally in the content. In case of need, the teachers can be divided into groups in micro teaching. It can save time however, the teaching of each one has to be observed otherwise, the purpose will not be served. Sometimes some fellow teachers can play the role of peer observers. At the end of every micro teaching, there should be a feedback session by both the peer observers and the other teachers. As I have already said that the micro lesson plan is only for skimming and not for scanning as the microteaching is taking place in an engineering college.

Conclusion: Now that engineers play key role in both software and hardware, both are changing every day. Software is becoming user-friendly and hardware is becoming smaller and smaller and working more powerfully. The same change is happening in other disciplines too. So it is the bounden duty of all the engineering colleges that the students should be provided with the teachers who are professional with learning attitude. By and large, we feel that there should be microteaching classes at the end of every academic year in engineering colleges. These classes can be the harbingers of quality in education.