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School-Based and Faculty-Based Teaching Practices: Student Teachers Gain Classroom Experiences

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Abstract

Teaching experiences in school-based contexts considerably contribute to student teachers' teaching performance throughout their pre-service education process. An additional attempt to increase teaching competency is incorporating microteaching practices into pre-service education. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how awareness level of student teachers of English for the teaching profession is increased in terms of both microteaching and school-based experiences. The participants of the study were the fourth-year student teachers studying at the English Language Teaching Department (ELT) at a Turkish university. The study is a descriptive and longitudinal one in nature. Both qualitative and quantitative research tools were used for data collection. The overall results of the study revealed that school-based experience fostered professional consciousness and teaching practice development. The comparative results of the study demonstrated that schools are more ideal learning communities than microteaching sessions for student teachers to be professionally matured. On the other hand, microteaching practices were also proclaimed to be priming and supportive teaching experiences.

Key Words: school-based experience, teacher learning, microteaching, student teacher

Introduction

Teachers' learning process is normally initiated in faculty-based contexts and is strengthened in school-based contexts. In faculty-based contexts or throughout the pre-service education process, student teachers are predominantly exposed to field knowledge of which focal point is on the theory of teaching profession. Teacher learning is not viewed as translating knowledge and theories into practice but rather as constructing new knowledge and theory through participating in specific social contexts and engaging in particular types of activities and processes (Burns & Richards, 2009). Accordingly, there is a strong link

between teacher learning in faculty-based contexts and enhanced teaching practice in school-based contexts. In other words, teachers' expertise can be possessed through individual skills and knowledge development during teaching profession implemented in the classroom events of school-based contexts, though there are as yet no established common criteria for identifying expert teachers (Tsui, 2009). In other words, teacher quality cannot be apprehended with any standardized list (Korthagen, 2017).

Professional learning policies and practices can be appraised as the key components which lead to alterations in teachers' learning outcomes and professional learning experiences. In this respect, the teacher has the responsibility of theorization of practice through collaboration in social settings so as to gain professional consciousness, knowledge, and development (Johnston, 2009; Korthagen, 2017). Concerning English language teacher education, the embedded values and attitudes in teacher education programs impose the theoretical knowledge on student teachers for professional diploma, and those imposed notions are negotiated and conceptualized in school-based contexts where they professionalize as teachers (Borg, 2003). The demand for competent teachers of English necessitates supplementary approaches for their education and professional development. In English language teacher education, the support is commonly provided for content knowledge, linguistic knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. In content knowledge, student teachers are taught theoretical field notes, in linguistic knowledge they are exposed to language skills development, and in pedagogical knowledge they learn how to teach. In field courses, they are exposed to microteaching practices before they graduate from the faculty. In the final year of education, they experience various pedagogical practices in school-based contexts which contribute to teacher learning opportunities.

Microteaching practices and teacher training

Microteaching is a professional training activity offered by teacher training programs with the aim of providing student teachers with opportunities to practice teaching through observation and reflection on their own and others' teaching styles. Microteaching is used to expand the scope of student teachers while mastering various teaching skills and teaching experiences. Alternatively, it orients them to gain teaching experiences for natural classroom environments (Amobi & Irwin, 2009; Richards & Farrell 2011). In accordance with this, it is the integral component of teacher education and professional learning.

Microteaching could be defined as the micro lesson of a student teacher which is videotaped and evaluated by both lecturers and classmates through the feedback on the

student teacher's teaching style and performance, material development, and repertoire improvement. The feedback session is a regular practice in terms of encouraging the development of self-analysis and reflective practice (Kponja, 2001; Legutke & Ditfurth, 2009; Kourieos, 2016). The quality of reflection boosts student teachers' competent teaching experiences and leads to professional growth. Since a micro lesson offers opportunities to student teachers to be involved in teaching practices, they are prepared for what/how/where/whom to teach.

A microteaching lesson is initiated by preparing lesson plans comprising activities in conformity with the lesson cycle. In this respect, primarily the success of a micro lesson is directly related to lesson planning with comprehensible objectives in a planned sequence. Whilst implementing classroom activities, student teachers are observed by lecturers and classmates. In the next stage, evaluation and reflection on teaching practice that are the contributing factors of the cycle are reported. In the re-teaching stage, student teachers re-teach the lesson by considering the proposed suggestions in the evaluation and reflection stage in which they have been expected to employ a variety of coping tactics (Richards & Farrell 2011). As has been noted, microteaching activities can be identified as professional experiences prompting efficiency on preparing and applying lesson plans by gathering data from target students' capabilities, learning capacities, needs, and expectations. Several studies have suggested that microteaching encompasses practical experiences for meeting the desired objectives of training teachers to become effective and reflective in their teaching profession (Benton-Kupper, 2001; Amobi, 2005; Eick et al., 2005; Akalın, 2005; Luk, 2008; Rich & Hannafin, 2009; Britton & Anderson, 2010; Tavil, 2012; Majoni, 2017). Some studies have concluded that microteaching activities assist student teachers to overwhelm their anxiety levels, defeat hesitation and fear, increase professional commitment, raise consciousness about teaching profession, become efficient in all topics related to teaching proficiency, learn how to interact with students, become experienced in testing and evaluating, become competent in directing student's attention into the class, manage and use their time conveniently, utilize educational technologies, and perform efficient classroom management (Karamustafaoğlu & Akdeniz, 2002; Arends, 2005; Mergler & Tangen, 2010; Majoni, 2017).

Even though microteaching can be assumed as an avail tool in teacher training programs, student teachers may not display the expected efficiency due to various reasons. Possible reasons such as artificial classroom environments, material production procedures, time-limit in course schedules, and maintenance of equipment regarding reduced budgets of student teachers (Cripwell & Geddes, 1982; Stanley, 1998; Lederman & Gess-Newsome,

1991; He & Yan, 2011) and increased anxiety levels of student teachers (Donnelly & Fitzmaurice, 2011; Lumpe et al., 2012) have been argued in various studies. With regard to the advantages and disadvantages of microteaching, it can be noted that microteaching can contribute to professional learning to some extent during teacher education process. Similarly, numerous supportive teacher learning activities also occur in school-based contexts through interaction, discussion, collaboration, reflection, and mentoring with the others who teach within the same discipline so as to enable novice teachers to cope with teaching matters.

School-based contexts and teacher learning

School-based contexts engage colleagues in working collaboratively while planning teaching activities such as designing a syllabus, a course, and an activity; planning and assigning tasks; developing course materials and practicing them; making assessment and evaluation, and so forth (Caires & Almeida, 2005; Grudnoff, Haigh, & Mackisack, 2017). Therefore, school-based practices are initiated in teacher training education as the cooperation between faculties and schools with the aim of leading professional learning. In teacher training programs, this cooperation is employed within school experience courses. Since school practicum courses are constructive for gaining experiences concerning many aspects of the teaching profession (Ekşi et al., 2019), those courses are considered to be the most essential ones in initial teacher education (Tang, 2003).

School-based contexts may offer several conducive opportunities to student teachers. In teacher education process, student teachers are exposed to theoretical knowledge about teaching matters; however, experience gained through practicum enables student teachers to expand awareness of how to set their own goals related to their own teaching (Halbach, 2000; Crookes, 2003). In school contexts, mentoring is offered to student teachers in order to establish a formal relationship by a competent and experienced teacher and to make suggestions and give feedback (Malderez, 2009). In this perspective, school-based contexts engage their staff -either experienced or novice- in professional discourse and encourage them to reflect on what and how they are attempting to accomplish with students.

The studies on the expectations and attitudes of student teachers have implied that student teachers develop broad, well-structured practical theories that focus on pupils' learning processes, and their learning processes display considerable individual variation

(Buitink, 2009; Stanulis & Floden, 2009; Khairani, 2011). Similarly, some studies have identified several key features of mentoring that are assumed to be improving teacher confidence, knowledge, and instruction; raising student achievement; and increasing retention (Stanulis, Little &Wibbens, 2012; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Ekşi et al., 2019). In this sense, school experience offers numerous occasions for the improvement of a significant scope of knowledge and reflective skills for student teachers.

Although school practicum is acknowledged as a bridge between theoretical knowledge and teaching practice to update student teachers' teaching knowledge and skills, to lead professional learning, to achieve agreed goals and expectations, and to guide a convenient understanding of teaching practices through the cooperation between the faculty and school experiences, some studies outlined a quantity of lacking aspects of school experience in terms of the roles of supervisor, mentors, school administration, weekly activities, and etc. (Demirkol, 2004; Güven, 2004; Caires & Almeida, 2005; Aksu & Demirtaş, 2006; Gömleksiz et al, 2006; Aydın, Selçuk & Yeşilyurt, 2007; Özmen, 2008). By all means, it is not sufficient for student teachers merely to have the skills of reflection but they must additionally be able to convey their pedagogical knowledge into practice and transfer that knowledge to others by devoting time to think about the types of knowledge and skills (Mergler & Spooner-Lane, 2012). Thus, student teachers can access to specialized knowledge through learning from each other and evaluating the impact of classroom practices.

In Turkey, school-based experience is initiated in the final year of teacher education programs at faculties of education. Each week for four-six hours, student teachers have to attend the schools actively which have a contract with the faculties of education. At the end of the semester, they are assessed by both mentors and supervisors. The criteria for the assessment of each student teacher are related to the objectives of the course that are principally based on the experience of teaching capability as an associate member of the staff in the school setting. The chief concern in assessment is to evaluate student teachers' professional performance and to scrutinize whether they would gain the requirements and details of teaching profession.

Methodology

The study aims to explore how effective microteaching practices in teacher education programs are, what impacts those practices have on student teachers' teaching performance,

and whether the gains from school-based experiences are more efficient than the experiences from microteaching practices. The study also aims to investigate the efficiency of some applications used to encourage student teachers through feedback, reports, seminars, weekly plans, and observation. Based on the above-mentioned objectives, the following research questions and sub-questions were designed and answers were sought to the questions:

1. What are the differences of teacher learning in microteaching and school-based practices?
2. What policies are promoted during microteaching practices and school-based teacher learning in terms of:
   a. the nature of professional knowledge
   b. professional development
   c. the nature of professional consciousness
   d. problem solving in teaching process
   e. understanding and integrating in the teaching profession

The study is longitudinal and descriptive in nature. The research was implemented through surveys and observations. It was assumed that to examine a group of student teachers in a profound and longitudinal way would provide a systematic way of considering the teaching events which were employed in both faculty-based and school-based contexts.

Two years' time was spent on the planning process of the study. In the first year, the participants were exposed to compulsory microteaching activities as designed in the curriculum of ELT programs at the faculty of education. In the second year of the research process, they were exposed to school practicum applications during which they had to implement the activities in the school experience guide prepared for the faculties of education under the supervising of the mentors in the school environment and the supervisors in the faculty. Each week, the participants' reports on the activities were evaluated, and they were given feedback on their experiences by the supervisors.

Participants

The participants of the study were 122 fourth year student teachers attending the English Language Teaching Department (ELT) at a Turkish university. All participants were expected to complete the consent process through which they allowed their work to be published. The study was carried out for two years. During the first year of the study, all student teachers (122) participated in the study and were observed in the microteaching sessions by the researcher while they were attending the third year of education. In the second

year of the research process, the school experience of those participants was investigated; however, 96 participants became volunteer to participate in the study and reflect on their teaching experiences in the schools.

Data collection and analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to evaluate the data collected through questionnaires and interview reports. The questionnaires were evaluated through quantitative analysis, and the statistical program SPSS 20 was utilized to compute the data. The classroom observation reports and interviews were evaluated through qualitative methods.

With a view to collecting data to explore the benefits of microteaching and school practicum practices, two questionnaires were designed by the researcher. Prior to data collection, to test the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted, and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of the microteaching questionnaire was obtained as .84 and for school experience .92.

Findings and results

Microteaching Evaluation

At the end of the first-year research process, the student teachers' views about microteaching were explored through 20-item microteaching questionnaire and the responses are displayed in Table1.

Table 1. *Evaluation of microteaching sessions*

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	$\overline{X}$	SD
1. Microteaching process was motivating for my teaching profession	36.8	47.4	14.0	1.8	-	4.36	0.67
2. Microteaching activities helped me to design my lesson plan	5.3	49.1	43.9	1.8	-	3.54	0.95
3. I comprehended teaching methods and techniques better in microteaching process	-	10.5	38.6	50.9	-	1.70	1.18
4. I practiced how to develop efficient materials in microteaching process	7.0	60.9	26.8	5.3	-	4.07	0.69
5. Microteaching activities prompted my teaching performance	33.3	47.4	19.3	-	-	4.35	0.65
6. Observing my classmates' microteaching sessions contributed to my teaching proficiency	-	57.9	14.0	21.1	7.0	3.67	0.92
7. Microteaching helped me to spend teaching time efficiently	5.3	15.7	21.6	41.6	15.8	2.20	1.10
8. Microteaching activities were not productive because of artificial classroom environments	29.1	52.5	9.8	17.5	-	4.43	0.59
9. Through feedback by my lecturers, I learnt a lot about teaching proficiency	8.8	32.1	27.5	31.6	-	3.13	1.14

10. I got the chance of congregating various teaching models in microteaching sessions	26.3	50.9	12.3	10.5	-	4.32	0.64
11. It was beneficial for my future occupation to see course designs in different linguistic and age levels through microteaching activities.	-	52.6	40.4	1.8	5.3	3.54	0.94
12. Microteaching was favorable for my future occupation.	21.1	32.1	26.3	20.5	-	3.40	1.21
13. Giving feedback to my classmates during microteaching activities contributed to my teaching performance	1.9	11.1	12.3	30.4	44.3	1.62	1.15
14. During microteaching sessions I could teach freely as a teacher.	-	8.8	-	73.7	17.5	1.86	1.21
15. I could apply classroom management in microteaching sessions appropriately since the participants were my classmates	-	5.3	12.3	26.3	56.1	1.85	1.22
16. Classroom assessment were efficiently implemented in microteaching sessions	-	7.0	10.4	67.3	15.3	1.88	1.16
17. During microteaching process, I was informed about school policies	-	18.4	-	45.0	36.6	1.90	1.24
18. Microteaching activities gave the opportunity of participating in faculty projects	-	1.8	3.8	32.6	61.8	1.32	1.29
19. Microteaching forced me to use the classroom as a lab	1.7	3.2	27.4	67.7	-	1.87	1.16
20. I was taught how to obey professional behavior	7.4	20.6	19.0	45.4	7.6	2.10	1.09

When the responses were examined, it was noticed that they had both positive and negative attitudes toward microteaching practices. In positive sense, they admitted that microteaching which increased their motivation level for teaching profession (item 1) was a kind of helping tool for getting the opportunity to design course plans and develop course materials (item 2 and item 4 respectively). In addition, microteaching practices were evaluated as occasions which prompted teaching performance (items 5 and 12) and led to professional growth from others' teaching experiences (item 6). Regarding the responses of the participants in this context, it is possible to state that by observing others' teaching styles and strategies and by discussing common subjects of teaching and learning, microteaching applications gave participants the opportunity to practice in a supportive surrounding. In this respect, they acknowledged that through microteaching sessions they got the opportunity to practice teaching in the light of the lecturer's feedback (item 9) and congregating various teaching models for the learners at different age and linguistic levels (items 10 and 11). However, in some respects, microteaching training was not recognized to be as productive as assumed due to the artificial classroom environment (item 8). Furthermore, since the learner groups in those artificial environments were their classmates, they could not give feedback effectively (item 13), pertain efficient classroom management (item 15), and assess the

success or failure of the learners in a natural way (item 16). The other negative responses were focused on the notion of the time spent during microteaching (items 7 and 14); they mostly admitted that the microteaching time was not consistent with a real classroom teaching time, therefore they could not feel themselves efficient and free enough while teaching in microteaching sessions. Similar to this, they stated they could not comprehend the distinctive features of teaching methods and techniques in a better way during microteaching applications (item 3). Additionally, they declared that information about school policies was not given during microteaching (item 17); they did not get the opportunity to participate at any project performed at the faculty (item 18), and they could not be successful at using the classes as lab (item 19); therefore, they were not trained satisfactorily in obeying professional behavior (item 20).

The items in the microteaching questionnaire were classified in five categories and discerned as a) items 2, 3, 5, 11 imply the nature of professional knowledge; b) items 4, 6, 7, 9 refer to the nature of professional development; c) items 1, 8, 12, 13 denote professional consciousness; d) items 10, 14, 15, 16 are about problem-solving; e) items 17, 18, 19, 20 pertain to the notions of understanding and integrating. Each category is represented through five themes: a) professional self-development; b) sharing others' experiences; c) developing educational aims; d) enhancing skills development; e) focusing on learners. While categorizing the data, each category was primarily described clearly, the categories were then designed in a consistent and logical relationship, and finally the conceptions in the categories were identified and analyzed. The categories were re-checked a few times periodically and the original data were re-visited to confirm the results and to set aside the individual perspective of the researcher. The researcher expected another colleague to read the original data and reflect on the categories. The colleague confirmed the analysis of the researcher.

The responses were reevaluated with the mean scores of each category to check how effective the categories are and displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. *The mean scores of the categories of microteaching*

	the nature of professional knowledge	*professional development*	*the nature of professional consciousness*	*problem-solving*	*understanding and integrating*
$\overline{X}$	3.28	3.26	3.45	2,48	1.79
ss	0.90	0.96	0.91	1.05	1.19

The mean scores and standard deviations of each category in the microteaching questionnaire were calculated and displayed in Table 2. As indicated in the table, the participants' professional consciousness was found out to be the most effective category ($\bar{x}$ = 3.45). This category is relatively followed by professional knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 3.28), professional development ($\bar{x}$ = 3.26). Those three categories received comparable means; however problem solving ($\bar{x}$ = 2.48) and understanding/integrating categories ($\bar{x}$ = 1.79) were found out (discovered) to be less affective in terms of gaining professional experiences in microteaching practices.

Interview reports

The reliability of the participants' responses to microteaching was also checked through semi-structured interviews. Below given some sample statements:

1. *Microteaching for developing professional knowledge*

"Microteaching practices helped me specify appropriate teaching goals…

"Designing lesson plans for microteaching sessions promoted my ability for choosing appropriate activities and materials…"

"I felt myself well-prepared after preparing lesson plans…"

"Microteaching was not so supportive for me to modify the teaching methods and techniques when necessary…"

"Microteaching was a way of getting an occasion to find opportunities to design course plans for learners at different age, linguistic levels…"

2. *Microteaching for professionally development*

"I experienced how to produce teaching materials for microteaching activities…

"I think the most important contribution of microteaching was to gain insights form others' teaching experiences…while giving feedback to my classmates after the microteaching session, I acquired professional expertise…"

"I had difficulties while teaching because of limited time…"

"…the more I applied microteaching sessions in the course, the more, I believe, I learnt…"

3. *The impact of microteaching on the nature of professional consciousness*

"…we mostly faced some troubles, but through microteaching we created some opportunities to reflect our ideas…"

"…teaching practices were difficult but motivating…"

"…I didn't feel myself as teacher…"

"I had difficulty in incorporating real life classroom settings with the artificial ones…

"Preparing teaching aids is too expensive and time consuming…"

4. Microteaching is a practical way of problem solving

"Microteaching provided a space for me to bring together others' teaching models…"

"Since microteaching practices were performed with our own classmates, I knew that the students were not real students. They were just my friends…"

"I did not feel myself so comfortable while assessing and giving feedback…"

"The criticisms made by my classmates seemed threatening therefore microteaching sessions were a demoralizing experience to me…"

5. Understanding and integrating through microteaching

"Microteaching was not available for learning about school policies…"

"Microlessons were the directive practices for improving yourself through other models…but I could not use the class to practice a lot…to learn a lot…"

"Microteaching didn't contribute to understanding professional behavior…"

"… the opportunity of discussing and sharing the experience of others was good for us…but we didn't share any experiences about the projects…"

As seen above, similar ideas were declared in the interview sessions by the participants. The views of the participants were categorized and narrated in Table 3 with the corresponding themes:

Table 3. *Categories of the student teachers' views about microteaching and the corresponding themes*

Categories	*Themes*				
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
	professionally self-development	*sharing others' experiences*	*developing educational aims*	*enhancing skills development*	*focusing on learners*
the nature of professional knowledge	Specialized knowledge for planning lessons	Knowledge in teaching performance	Having difficulties while adjusting teaching methods and techniques	Skill-based knowledge in language use	Improving the ability of teaching to learners at different age and linguistic levels
professional consciousness	Gaining artificial professional consciousness	Appreciating the shared experience of practice with others.	Deciding on the appropriateness of teaching materials	Discovering good or bad language teaching behaviors	Promoting the knowledge of spending teaching time

the nature of professional development	Building self-confidence through the motivating factor of microteaching	Evaluating others' teaching techniques	Developing experiential knowledge in a controlled way	Recognizing new skills while learning about teaching	Due to artificial classroom settings, not being able to give feedback
problem-solving	Reflecting on professional competence and performance	Deciding on better ways of teaching through the feedback by lecturers	Not being able to modify the procedures freely due to limited teaching time	Getting opportunities for congregating various teaching models	Menacing and demoralizing experience on classroom management
understanding and integrating	Lack of bridging the gap between professional and personal behavior	Not being able to participate in faculty projects	Not being able to promote the ability of using the class as lab	Scarcity of observational and analytical skills about school policies	Having difficulty in incorporating real life classroom settings with the simulating ones

In the second year of the research process, subsequent to the completion of the school experience process, the student teachers' attitudes were additionally evaluated through a 30-item questionnaire. The items were designed to investigate the activities they reported weekly in order to check the validity of the reports on the whole. The responses and mean scores are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4. *Evaluation of school-based teaching experiences*

Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	$\overline{X}$	SD
Schools are beneficial for							
1. Fulfilling the proposed activities of the plan prepared for the school experience course	17.5	52.5	10.2	16.3	3.5	4.28	0.98
2. Taking guidance from school mentors in the proposed periods	33.0	41.5	19.2	6.3	-	4.30	0.77
3. Taking suggestions from school mentors on the principles of teaching in a classroom	27.5	55.0	12.2	5.3	-	4.28	0.98
4. Taking suggestions from school mentors on classroom management	41.2	41.2	12.3	4.0	1.3	4.35	0.66
5. Dealing with classroom assessment	26.2	36.5	22.3	15.0	-	3.84	1.06
6. Giving feedback to students in real classroom context	40.4	52.6	5.3	1.8	-	4.38	0.65
7. Obeying professional behavior	15.8	61.6	15.8	5.6	1.2	4.07	0.73
8. Attending school as determined in regular schedule	56.1	43.9	-	-	-	4.83	0.49

9. Applying the required school experience activities	64.7	32.3	3.0	-	-	4.47	0.72
10. Giving instructions and explanations in real classroom environment	40.4	52.6	5.3	1.7	-	4.77	0.54
11. Evaluating course books and materials	7.0	60.9	26.8	5.3	-	3.99	0.93
12. Developing drills for the needs and expectations of the students at different age levels and linguistic levels	20.4	72.6	5.2	1.8	-	4.71	0.51
13. Group work observation	10.3	42.6	25.3	21.8	-	3.54	0.85
14. Developing course materials	35.4	57.6	5.4	1.6	-	4.70	0.51
15. Preparing and using worksheets	45.0	55.0	-	-	-	4.85	0.43
16. Evaluating and recording student performances	26.3	44.4	4.0	25.3	-	4.38	0.81
17. Using simulations in education	21.1	30.4	36.3	9.2	3.0	3.61	1.10
18. Evaluation of school management	73.0	25.3	1.7	-	-	4.78	0.56
19. Learning about school policy	26.3	42.9	10.2	11.5	10.0	3.61	1.10
20. Getting feedback from supervisors	50.9	26.3	12.3	10.5	-	4.49	0.59
21. Being exposed to classroom research	16.3	30.9	22.3	30.5	-	3.31	1.15
22. Applying the suggestions of mentors and supervisors	35.1	56.1	8.8	-	-	4.34	0.81
23. Observing experienced teachers' classrooms	82.0	18.0	-	-	-	4.81	0.52
24. Developing appropriate teaching strategies	38.6	43.1	11.3	7.0	-	4.14	0.85
25. Working with colleagues for team planning	23.6	40.7	2.3	23.3	10.1	3.61	1.10
26. Participating in school projects	-	32.5	19.0	31.1	17.4	2.91	1.06
27. Using the school as lab	15.5	52.8	9.8	20.1	1.8	4.23	0.98
28. Reading literature in the field	24.6	46.1	18.0	11.3	-	4.15	0.85
29. Attending the seminars organized by schools	10.3	27.9	45.3	16.5	-	3.01	1.24
30. Developing skill-based knowledge in language use	46.4	44.3	-	9.3	-	4.36	0.67

The items in the school experience questionnaire were classified in five categories and discerned as a) professional knowledge; b) the nature of professional development; c) professional consciousness; d) problem-solving; e) the notions of understanding and integrating.

As the percentage values are displayed in the table above, most of the student teachers agreed on the benefits of school experience. In general sense, their responses confirmed that fulfilling and applying the activities proposed in school experience were predominantly appreciated and evaluated positively by them (items 1 and 9). The outstanding high values belong to the items which can be evaluated in the category of professional knowledge. Among those items, taking guidance and suggestions from school mentors on certain topics which are principles of teaching, classroom management in the proposed periods (items 2,3,4 respectively), getting feedback from supervisors (item 20), and applying them (item 22) are the striking issues in gaining professional knowledge, and those items were valued with high percentage rates by the participants. Items such as 7, 8, 27, and 26 comprise the notion of integrating in the teaching profession. Among those items, obeying professional behavior, attending school as determined in the regular schedule of the schools, and using the school as lab are highly valued by the student teachers for being integrated in the school context. But

participation in school projects (item 26) got the lowest percentage value, the reason may be the scarcity of school projects conducted in the schools the attended. With regard to the responses given for the items related to professional development, it was detected that the student teachers were highly satisfied with school experience. Since they practiced teaching in real classroom environments, classroom assessment (item 5), giving instructions and explanations to students (item 10), evaluating and recording student performances (item 16), observing experienced teachers' classrooms (item 23), and giving feedback to students (6) were perceived as the most beneficial aspects of school experience. On the other hand, of the items belonging to professional development, group work observation (item 13), being exposed to classroom research (item 21), and using simulations in classroom environments (item 17) were not considered as beneficial as the other items, instead those ones were identified with the 'undecided' option.

In the questionnaire some items can be evaluated within the domain of problem-solving category: evaluating course materials (item11), developing drills and course materials for the needs and expectations of students (items 12 and 14), preparing and using worksheets (item 15), developing appropriate teaching strategies for the target group (item 24), reading relevant literature (item 28), and developing skill-based knowledge (item 30) were appreciated as the extremely favorable activities. Additionally, some items about professional consciousness were also encapsulated the questionnaire: working with colleagues (item 25), learning about school policy (item 19), evaluation of school management (item 18), and attending seminars organized by schools (item 29). Among those items, 18, 19, and 25 were responded positively. But item 29 was scored as the lowest one in positive manner. The reason may be highly likely that the schools they attended did not organize any seminars during their attendance.

Similar to the microteaching evaluation, the mean scores of school experience were evaluated to check how relative effectiveness of the categories and displayed in Table 5. The categories a) the nature of professional knowledge; b) the nature of professional development; c); professional consciousness d) problem-solving; e) understanding and integrating are also represented through five themes: a) professionally self-development; b) sharing others' experiences; c) developing educational aims; d) enhancing skills development; e) focusing on learners. The relevant categories and themes in school experience corresponding to the categories in microteaching questionnaire were categorized in the same manner.

Table 5. *The mean scores of the categories of microteaching*

	the nature of professional knowledge	*professional development*	*the nature of professional consciousness*	*problem-solving*	*understanding and integrating*
$\overline{x}$	4.37	4.08	3.75	4.41	4.02
ss	0.76	0.83	0.99	0.67	0.81

In Table 5, the mean score and standard deviations for each item in the school experience questionnaire are displayed. The computed mean scores in the table present the increased effectiveness of school experience when compared to the results of microteaching in Table 2. As seen in the above table, the participants' problem-solving abilities were promoted through school experience activities and was found out to be the most effective category ($\overline{x}$ = 4.41). Additionally, professional knowledge ($\overline{x}$ = 4.37), professional development ($\overline{x}$ = 4.08), and understanding and integrating professional matters ($\overline{x}$ = 4.02) were also found out to be highly effective benefits and gains of school experience activities. Of those categories, the least effective one was professional consciousness ($\overline{x}$ = 3.75).

Interview reports about school experience

In order to check the responses of the student teachers to school experience, a semi-structured interview was planned. The participants generally agreed on the positive impacts of school experience as displayed in the following sample extracts:

1. School experience for developing professional knowledge

"School experience helped me gain how to practice teaching…"

"It provided me with high standards of professional understanding…"

"It helped me gaining experiences about classroom management…"

"I comprehended knowledge in specifying and evaluating teaching issues…"

"I gained insights about teaching profession through the feedback…"

2. School experience for professionally development

"School experience provided a space for me to evaluate others' teaching techniques…

"It offered the opportunity of discussing and sharing the experience of teaching…"

"In the classroom, I could evaluate the learning outcomes the students…"

"I think the most important contribution of school experience is to gain insights from experienced teachers…"

"…while giving feedback to my students after, I acquired professional expertise…"

3. The impacts of School experience on the nature of professional consciousness

"School experience practices help me build rapport with the other teaching staff…"

"School experience was the occasion to learn about school policy…

"School management was one of the novel items for me…I learnt a lot about the management in the school…I think such experience is important for teachers…"

"Teaching to real students helped me how to reflect on my teaching behaviors…"

4. School experience is a practical way of problem solving

"School experience is a way of getting an opportunity to find our own ways in teaching profession…"

"I developed self-confidence and became competent enough in teaching issues because I read a lot about teaching matters…"

"School experience allowed for demonstrating certain skills while presenting my teaching strategies…"

"It provided me an opportunity to use appropriate classroom language…"

"Before attending school experience, I did not practice how to evaluate and use course books…in my school experience period I experienced various systems…"

5. Understanding and integrating through school experience

"I discovered how to behave professionally…"

"I learnt how to use the school as my experimental lab…"

"During school experience, I ascertained how to apply organized group/pair/individual work..."

"Promoting one's professional competence can be best realized through school experience practices…"

As indicated in the quotations for each category, the student teachers specified mostly the positive aspects of school experience as a pathway for professional development and for acquiring professional proficiency. The views of the participants were categorized in Table 6 with the corresponding themes:

Table 6. *Categories of the student teachers' views about school experience and the corresponding themes*

Categories	*Themes*				
	1 professionally self-development	*2 sharing others' experiences*	*3 developing educational aims*	*4 enhancing skills development*	*5 focusing on learners*

the nature of professional knowledge	Specialized knowledge for teaching and learning	Knowledge in action by taking guidance and suggestions from others	Knowledge in specifying educational aims through feedback	Developing skill-based teaching on principles of teaching	Improving the ability of stimulating classroom management
professional development	Being exposed to classroom research	Appreciating the shared experience of experienced teachers' classes	Deciding on the appropriateness of classroom assessment	Discovering good or bad language teaching behaviors through group work	Evaluating and recording students' performances, giving feedback, instructions, and explanations
the nature of professional consciousness	Building rapport with colleagues	Evaluating school management	Developing experiential knowledge on school policy	Developing new teaching skills by attending school seminars	Reflecting on professional competence and performance
problem-solving	Promoting professional capacity to make adjustments when necessary	Deciding on better ways of teaching through reading relevant literature	Modifying the teaching procedures by developing appropriate teaching strategies	Creating opportunities for developing skill-based knowledge in language use	Developing and evaluating course materials, worksheets for the needs and expectations of learners
understanding and integrating	Bridging the gap between professional and personal behavior	Promoting the ability of participating in school projects with others	Promoting the ability of using the school as lab	Gaining analytical skills by attending school as determined in regular schedule	Regarding learners' expectations, organizing professionally within the school

In all categories, the role of school experience concerning professional knowledge, consciousness, development, problem-solving, and understanding/integrating the issues of school experience was reflected in a positive manner.

To seek answers to the research questions and sub-questions of the study, the above-mentioned differences of teacher learning in microteaching and school-based practices are evaluated through the supported policies in terms of professional knowledge, professional development, professional consciousness, problem solving, and understanding and integrating in the teaching profession. Findings of each sub-question are separately computed through t-tests and displayed in the tables below.

Table 7. *t-test results in terms of the nature of professional knowledge*

Theme	Case	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
the nature of professional knowledge	Microteaching	122	46	10.26	4.01	196	,000
	School experience	96	82	20.88			

Table 7 reveals that the mean score of the participants' professional knowledge through microteaching activities is $\bar{x}$ =46 (sd= 10.26) which is considerably lower than the mean score through school experience ($\bar{x}$ =82, sd=20.88). The t-test result confirms that there is statistically highly significant difference [$t_{(196)}$= 4.01, (p<0,01)] between the mean scores which show the benefits of school experiences in terms of gaining professional knowledge.

Table 8. *t-test results in terms of professional development*

Theme	Case	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
professional development	Microteaching	122	55	11.14	3.07	196	,000
	School experience	96	76.25	18.07			

In Table 8 the mean scores of the participants' professional development through microteaching activities ($\bar{x}$ =55, sd= 11.14) and school experience ($\bar{x}$ =76,25 sd=18.07) are displayed. According to the t-test result, statistically significant difference [$t_{(196)}$= 3.07 (p<0,01)] between the mean scores was discovered. In this respect, it is concluded that school experience contributed a lot to the participants' professional development.

Table 9. *t-test results in terms of the nature of professional consciousness*

Theme	Case	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
the nature of professional consciousness	Microteaching	122	74.5	17.12	2.85	196	,000
	School experience	96	85	21.07			

As revealed in Table 9, the mean score of the participants' professional consciousness through microteaching activities ($\bar{x}$ =74.5 sd= 17.12) was detected as lower than that of school experience ($\bar{x}$ =85 sd=21.07). The difference is statistically significant [$t_{(196)}$= 2.85, (p<0,01)]. In other words, the participants reported high professional consciousness in school experience practices.

Table 10. *t-test results in terms of problem-solving*

Theme	Case	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
problem-solving	Microteaching	122	57	11.48	3.05	196	,000
	School experience	96	87	22.84			

In Table 10, the t-test results designate similarities with the theme results displayed in the tables above. Through school experience activities the student teachers had more opportunities to develop problem-solving abilities ($\bar{x}$=87sd=22.84) when compared to microteaching activities ($\bar{x}$=57, sd= 11.48). According to the t-test result, statistically significant difference was also obtained between the mean scores [$t_{(196)}$= 3.05, (p<0,01)]. The contribution of school experience to the student teachers' ability of problem solving cannot be overlooked in this respect.

Table 11. *t-test results in terms of understanding and integrating*

Theme	Case	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
understanding and integrating	Microteaching	122	28.79	7.84	3.98	196	,000
	School experience	96	69.50	15.42			

The final point investigated is understanding and integrating in professional issues through microteaching and school experience. As Table 11 indicates, the mean scores of the participants in microteaching activities ($\bar{x}$=28.79, sd= 7.84) and school experience ($\bar{x}$=69.50, sd=15.42 are substantially divergent. The t-test result statistically confirms the significant difference [$t_{(196)}$= 3.98, (p<0,01)] between the mean scores.

Discussion

When microteaching and school experience satisfaction levels of the student teachers are evaluated, it is documented that school experience was presupposed to be more beneficial for professional intensification. However, the responses in microteaching questionnaire revealed that in some aspect microteaching activities led to success in school experience process. Microteaching was appreciated as motivating for teaching profession by most student teachers and prompted teaching performance of the student teachers; therefore, fulfilling and implementing school experience activities productively might be come up with their experiences in microteaching. Developing course materials and preparing worksheets in real school context became more trouble-free due to their experiences of developing teaching materials in microteaching process.

Additionally, observing their classmates' microteaching sessions was thought to be contributing for teaching profession; yet, they declared that observing experienced teachers' classes was more contributory to the profession. In microteaching, they got the opportunity to

congregate various teaching models; and in school experience they developed appropriate teaching strategies. In microteaching sessions, they learnt how to design courses for the learners at different age and linguistic levels; the similar positive attitude was detected in school experience, though the ratio was was attained as higher. Those mentioned points are the juxtaposition of both processes. However, in a quantity of points microteaching and school experience revealed dissimilar responses. The student teachers claimed that microteaching did not contribute anything to their teaching proficiency corresponding to using appropriate methods and techniques; on the contrary, getting suggestions from mentors on the principles of teaching, using the school as a lab, and developing skill-based knowledge were assumed to be the major gifts of school experience for their teaching profession. When the responses about classroom environments -either real or artificial- are checked, they insisted that microteaching was not so productive since artificial environment the limited class time; therefore, they had adversities while giving feedback and managing the classroom. As for the real classroom environments in school experience, giving feedback, giving instructions and explanations, and performance evaluation were appraised as highly fruitful and avail.

When the items in school experience questionnaire are examined, alternative opportunities are recognized in school experience process: dealing with classroom assessment, obeying professional behavior, attending school as determined in regular schedule, evaluating course books and materials, group-work observation, using simulations, evaluation of the school management, learning about school policy, being exposed to classroom research, team planning with colleagues, participation in school projects, attending seminars, and so forth. Since such opportunities cannot be offered to student teachers during microteaching process, those who perform in school experience can experience all those mentioned practices in terms of professional development and consciousness.

In the research questions and sub-question, it was intended to highlight the benefits of both microteaching and school-experience in terms of professional knowledge, professional development, professional consciousness, problem solving, and understanding and integrating in the teaching profession. For professional knowledge, the results of both microteaching and school experience practices indicated the supreme benefits of school experiences for gaining professional knowledge. Likewise, in terms of professional development, it was also admitted that school experience contributed a lot to the professional development of the participants. For professional consciousness, problem solving abilities,

and understanding professional issues, the contribution of school-based experiences and practices is found out to be highly remarkable.

According to the results, school experience activities offered more encouraging facilities to the participants in terms of professional matters. The results also indicate that high-quality professional learning considerably occurs within school-based contexts independently of faculty-based teacher training outcomes, though such learning can be partially tied to microteaching training process. Interacting with others in school-based contexts, teaching students in real school environments, sharing knowledge with experienced teachers, reflecting on their own teaching, and receiving suggestions and feedback from mentors enable and encourage novice teachers to cope with the teaching issues at the beginning of the profession. These results are in line with the findings of the studies of Buitink, 2009; Khairani, 2011; Stanulis, Little &Wibbens, 2012; Kapadia & Coca, 2007; Ekşi et al., 2019. Contrary to some studies which emphasized the deficient points in school experience (Demirkol, 2004; Gömleksiz et al, 2006; Caires & Almeida, 2005; Aydın, Selçuk & Yeşilyurt, 2007; Aksu & Demirtaş, 2006;) and some studies which generally outlined the problems student teachers encounter (Chambers & Roper, 2000; Güven, 2004; Özmen, 2008), the participants' views demonstrated that they benefited from school experiences by observing and applying all activities in the process of school experience. Additionally, the results demonstrate that the student teachers gained professional maturity in school-based environments. In this respect, schools which prompt professional knowledge, development, and consciousness are ideal learning communities for teachers to be matured as well as students. Professional maturity for teachers, whether novice or experienced, usually expands the understanding, beliefs, attitudes, and teaching skills of teachers.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The positive attitudes toward school experience revealed that school experience build a number of valuable insights about teaching issues such as teachers' professional and personal behaviors, teachers' recognition of teaching profession, the importance of being a competent teacher, teachers' appreciation of students' attitudes and expectations, classroom management, motivation, using teaching aids efficiently, and developing successful teaching strategies in classroom and school, etc.

In the light of the results of this study, the school experience can be valued as a bridging experience between theoretical knowledge and teaching practice in teaching profession. Thus, through the exploration of fears, doubts, needs, expectations and achievements in school-based contexts, student teachers can be aware of overall development and growth of teachers and the guiding principles of teaching (Caires & Almeida, 2005).

With regard to the conclusion of this study, some suggestions can be offered with the aim of evaluating the process of the school experience course. Among these, student teachers should be provided feedback weekly and their experiences should be evaluated cooperatively. They should be encouraged to observe and analyze the classes of experienced teachers. Classroom research and school project studies should be offered as opportunities to student teachers during school experience in order to train them as proficient researchers. Thus, teacher education organizations can develop and attain higher standards. In developing teacher education organizations, priority should be given to the creation of social links and communication between different working groups at different levels (Hökka, Etelapelto & Rasku-Puttonen, 2012). Additionally, throughout the process, student teachers should be encouraged to lecture at schools for being exposed to further experiences in preparing lesson plans, organizing activities, managing classes, evaluating students' performance, and so forth. To conclude, the expectation is that increasing experiences, rather than any definite knowledge, may result in more proficient teaching. The most common outcome of this study is (could be specified as) teacher satisfaction with the professional development.

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