

The Best Microteaching Practice Platform: Offline, Zoom, or Whatsapp Group?

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Abstract.

Teaching practice may be done in various platforms in this modern era. The platforms enable the interaction of students and student teachers in Microteaching practice to be implemented in offline face to face class as well as in online classes. They are optionally implemented; even the current worldwide pandemic situation forces the online platforms to be implemented in higher frequency. This research is aimed at finding the best Microteaching practice platform by comparing the student teachers' Microteaching practice achievement as well as their perception in Microteaching Class by using offline, synchronous, and asynchronous platforms of learning during this pandemic at English Education Department Muria Kudus University. Through an expose-facto design this research shows that the best Microteaching practice platform uses Zoom Meeting. This refers to the comparison of the student teachers' best Microteaching practice achievement scores and opinion of using offline, Zoom, and WhatsApp Group platforms; and the result of the student teachers' opinion indicates that they basically prefer having offline teaching platform; and supporting that Zoom Meeting is as the best Microteaching practice platform, they have reasons: they felt more comfortable and confident; they felt more efficient; they felt not being directly observed; and they had bigger freedom in practicing teaching.

Keywords: microteaching practice platform, offline, Zoom, WhatsApp group

INTRODUCTION

Microteaching is actually teaching, but with the micro scope. Micro scope means the smaller number of students, the shorter time of teaching, even as well as the briefer material of teaching. Microteaching might be where the student teachers practice teaching. The student teachers prepare, implement, and evaluate the teaching practice he/she does. Microteaching is a crucial foundation for student teachers before they have the real teaching at schools. Basically, microteaching as a learning strategy is implemented to help student teachers prepare the teaching skills in the learning process, so that they are ready to manage all components of teaching circumstances including teaching materials, and time allocation (Ash and Clayton, 2004).

Referring to the current condition with the most trending topic of Covid 19 Pandemic, Microteaching as a compulsory subject the EFL student teacher at English Education department Muria Kudus University must take, is done with several teaching platforms by considering the status of Covid pandemic. Microteaching is done with offline teaching platform when the Covid-19 pandemic is in green (safe) status; while it is done with online platforms, in this case, using Zoom and WhatsApp application when the Covid-19 pandemic is in red or even black (harmful) status. These various teaching platforms certainly bring different experience and perception to the student teachers. They also result in different achievement of teaching practice for the student teachers.

This study is aimed at finding out the best Microteaching practice platform by comparing the student teachers' Microteaching practice achievement and their perception on

Microteaching practice platforms among offline teaching platform, Zoom teaching platform, and WhatsApp Group teaching platform.

Teaching Platforms

A platform is typically defined in the generic sense as a raised surface of some type that supports other interacting objects (Phil, 2012). Related with teaching, that surface might refer to a kind of classroom; while interacting objects indicate those involved in the classroom, teacher and students. Teaching platform is then defined as a kind of classroom where teacher interacts with students in the process of teaching and learning.

In nowadays context teaching platform tends to relate with a kind of classroom where teacher and students interact in distant or online teaching and learning (Sun, 2015). The digital era right now makes the world seem smaller and makes the long distance shorter. It gets this to happen and gives all fields of life involvement in utilizing those magic tools; internet, computer, and smart phone. As one of the fields of life, teaching and education are also insisted to bring them into the process of teaching and learning for the sake of practicality and for adapting to the current situation forcing people to stay in a distant.

However, platform is basically not always used to refer to a kind of online media or distant place via internet for several sides or people to connect and communicate each other. Particularly in teaching and learning process, teaching platform may concern with offline and online classroom.

Offline Teaching Platform

Offline teaching platform resembles direct face to face classroom between teacher and students. It is a conventional classroom where the teacher and the students share in one room together to be engaged in the process of teaching and learning. The offline teaching platform has no physical distance between the teacher and the students.

Offline teaching platform has the teacher give more attention to the students. It also enables the students to have more attention on the studies. Besides, the teacher and the students can build more interactive teaching and learning. In the other hand, offline teaching platform can produce wastage of time and sources. Compared to online teaching platform, in offline teaching platform the students may get less comfort and not learn modern technology (Harpreet, 2020).

Online Teaching Platform

Online teaching platform is a kind of classroom where the teacher and the students have a form of distant teaching and learning. The courses are entirely delivered over the internet (Bartley & Golek, 2004). Online teaching platform is recently popular to be used as the pandemic situation forces the teacher and the students to have distant classroom which utilizes internet-based tools. Again, the use of online teaching platform also has some benefits dealing with that it is effective to educate students, it can be used as professional development, its cost is effectiveness to anticipate the rising cost of postsecondary education, credit equivalency at the postsecondary level, and the possibility of providing a world class education to anyone with a broadband connection (Bartley & Golek, 2004; De la Varre, Keane, & Irvin, 2011; Gratton-Lavoie & Stanley, 2009; Lorenzetti, 2013).

Online teaching platform has been that popular in Indonesia in the last few years. Many platforms provide affordable courses to students via Massive Open Online Courses. Still a lot

of institutions in India were reluctant toward online teaching and learning. However, the challenges posed by the Corona Virus pandemic introduced everyone to a new world of online learning and remote teaching. Instructors indulged them in remote teaching via few platforms such as Google Hangouts, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, Skype, Adobe Connect, Microsoft teams, and few more, though ZOOM emerged as a clear winner (Saxena, 2020).

In Microteaching Class, the students are given three sessions to have Microteaching practices. They implement offline platform teaching in the first session. In the second and the third sessions they use online teaching platforms; Zoom as the synchronous teaching platform for the 2nd session and WhatsApp as the asynchronous one for the 3rd session. The online teaching platforms used by the student teachers for conducting Microteaching practice are Zoom and WhatsApp; as they are the most popular ones.

Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Teaching Platforms

Online teaching platform learning is claimed as “learning experiences in synchronous or asynchronous environments with internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with instructors and other students” (Singh & Thurman, 2019). The synchronous learning environment is designed in the sense that students attend direct and live lectures, there are real-time interactions between educators and learners, and there is a possibility of instant feedback, whereas asynchronous learning environments are not properly structured. In such a learning environment, learning content is not available in the form of live lectures or classes; it is available at different learning systems and forums. Instant feedback and immediate response are not possible under such an environment (Littlefield, 2018). Synchronous learning can provide a lot of opportunities for social interaction (McBrien et al., 2009). Amidst this deadly virus spread such online platforms are needed where (a) video conferencing with at least 40 to 50 students is possible, (b) discussions with students can be done to keep classes organic, (c) internet connections are good, (d) lectures are accessible in mobile phones also and not just laptops, (e) possibility of watching already recorded lectures, and (f) instant feedback from students can be achieved and assignments can be taken (Basilaia et al., 2020).

Zoom Meeting as Teaching Platform

Zoom Meeting as an example of synchronous online teaching platform is a cloud-based video conferencing platform that can be used for video conferencing meetings, audio conferencing, webinars, meeting recordings, and live chat. According to a research, Zoom is the most popular video conferencing solution for companies with 500 employees or fewer, and the second-most popular solution for companies with more than 500 employees, after Skype for Business. According to Zoom's S-1 filing in early 2019, more than half of *Fortune* 500 companies are using Zoom, and it earned an average NPS of more than 70 in 2018 (Barron, 2020).

Zoom Meeting as teaching platform is the use of Zoom Meeting as an online classroom in which the teacher and the students have direct and live teaching and learning process as well as they have the offline teaching and learning process. Zoom Meeting teaching platform is just like the ordinary offline class. The difference is that the distance between the teacher and the students; in the offline class the teacher and the students are in one same room; while in the Zoom Meeting class the teacher and the students are in far distance, in the different room.

WhatsApp Group as Teaching Platform

WhatsApp, the simpler version of WhatsApp Messenger, is a freeware, cross-platform-based messaging and voice-over-IP (VoIP) service from Facebook, Inc. It enables users to deliver text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations, and other content in person or in group. WhatsApp's client application runs on mobile devices but is also accessible from desktop computers, as long as the user's mobile device remains connected to the Internet while they use the desktop app. The service requires a cellular mobile telephone number to sign up. In January 2018, WhatsApp released a standalone business app targeted at small business owners, called WhatsApp Business, to allow companies to communicate with customers who use the standard WhatsApp client.

The client application was created by WhatsApp Inc. of Mountain View, California, which was acquired by Facebook in February 2014 for approximately US\$19.3 billion. It became the world's most popular messaging application by 2015, and has over 2 billion users worldwide as of February 2020. It has become the primary means of internet communication in multiple locations, including Latin America, the Indian subcontinent, and large parts of Europe and Africa (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WhatsApp>).

WhatsApp Group as teaching platform is as classroom in which the teacher and the students share live or delayed teaching and learning process. It can be used to support the live teaching and learning process as well as Zoom Meeting if video call feature is used; whereas the most popular usage of WhatsApp is the messaging service to deliver texts, voice notes, pictures, video, or stickers. In the matter of messaging service, WhatsApp Group teaching platform is usually applied to conduct blended online teaching platforms; combination between synchronous or live and asynchronous or delayed teaching platform; but the asynchronous is the most frequently used one.

In Microteaching practice for the student teachers of English Education Department; WhatsApp Group teaching platform used is for the blend of semi live and delayed in bit slower speed communication between teacher and students than in Zoom Meeting.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is categorized into descriptive qualitative research to find out the best teaching platform of Microteaching practice by comparing (i) the student teachers' Microteaching practice achievement by using offline teaching platform, Zoom Meeting teaching platform, and WhatsApp Group teaching platform; and (ii) the student teachers' perception on those three teaching platforms dealing with which one is as the best teaching platform. The data for those two points are gathered from 62 student teachers who have done Microteaching practice and who have answered the written interview via Google Form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Every student teacher in Microteaching Class had to conduct three times teaching practices during this Covid-19 Pandemic. Those three practices were detailed into teaching practices by using offline, Zoom Meeting, and WhatsApp Group teaching platforms. Those three teaching platforms were assigned to every student teacher by considering that in the next semester they would join Teaching Internship at schools which might still run the blend of offline and online teaching platforms with the portion as recommended by the related government. The student teachers should be prepared to have teaching experiences by using

those three teaching platforms. However, referring the aim of this study, it is necessary to know which teaching platform is actually the best one.

The comparison of the student teachers' Microteaching practice achievement by using offline, Zoom, and WAG teaching platforms can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. The Comparison of Mean of the Student Teachers' Microteaching Practice Achievement by Using Offline, Zoom, and WhatsApp Group Teaching Platforms

Student Teachers	Mean Score of Microteaching Practice Achievement by Using ... Teaching Platforms		
	Offline	Zoom	WhatsApp Group
	73,26	75,36	69,89

Seen from the table above, the score 75,36 shows that the student teachers have Zoom Meeting as their best Microteaching teaching platform. This might be because the student teachers conduct their Microteaching practice by using Zoom Meeting teaching platform in the second session after they have got teaching practice experience in the first session by using offline teaching platform. Besides, they also have got constructive feed back from their lecturer and peers; so that they can revise the mistakes they did in the first session to have better performance and to improve their teaching skills and instructions in the second Microteaching practice.

WhatsApp Group teaching platform, despite of its belonging to online teaching platform, was not the best teaching platform for Microteaching practice as seen from the mean score 69,89. This might be caused by the indirect or unlive communication between the student teacher and the students. Frequently the student teachers were lack of or even ran out of time as the students were slow and late to respond the student teachers' teaching instructions; as well as the students did not feel directly seen by the student teachers, they feel freer not to pay attention to the student teachers' teaching instructions.

Furthermore, there were data from the student teachers' answers for the written interview asking their opinion about the teaching platforms used in Microteaching practice. Although most of the students (86,15%) claimed that they prefer the offline teaching platform to the online one; there were 13,85% students stated that they prefer the vice-versa that support the first data of the student teachers' best Microteaching practice achievement score by using Zoom Meeting teaching platform, with the reasons stated in the following table:

Table 1. The Comparison of Mean of the Student Teachers' Microteaching Practice Achievement by Using Offline, Zoom, and WhatsApp Group Teaching Platforms

No	Questions	Student Teachers' Opinion
1	Do you feel better when you teach using live online platform than offline platform?	Yes, I feel better when I teach using live online platform. My simple reason is I feel more comfortable and confident, i mean, i didn't feel nervous like when I was teaching offline.
2	Do you think your explanation is understood better by your students in live online class than in offline class?	I think yes. My online teaching is understood by my students because I simplify it.
3	Do you feel better in delivering material in live online class than offline class?	For now situation, its better using online platform to minimize pandemic.
4	Do you think your students in live online class pay more attention than your students in offline class?	Yes, because they are more confident online and have less nervousness than offline
5	Do you think you are easier in managing live online class than offline class?	Yes, I think using live online platform makes me feel more freedom when teaching.

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| 6 | Do you think it is more effective to deliver reinforcement in live online class than in offline class? | Yes, because when teaching online time is more efficient and I have more freedom |
| 7 | Do you think you can assess your students' performance better in live online class than in offline class? | yes, the second is good if we have student records. |
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The 13,85% student teachers had their opinion that in this pandemic situation the online teaching platform (Zoom Meeting) was the best teaching platform for them as:

1. they felt more comfortable and confident
2. they felt more efficient
3. they felt not being directly observed
4. they had bigger freedom in practicing teaching
5. they felt the best teaching platform in Covid-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

This study finally comes with the conclusion that most of the student teachers basically prefer having offline teaching platform to online teaching platform; but the finding of this study, especially the Microteaching practice achievement score showed that they have the best teaching performance when using Zoom Meeting teaching platform for the reasons mentioned above.

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