

## **Preservice Teachers' Reflectivity on the Sequence and Consequences of Teaching Actions in a Microteaching Experience**

**By Funmi A. Amobi**

### **Introduction**

Effective teaching and reflective teaching have long been acknowledged as desirable goals of teacher education programs. Several studies have demonstrated that on-campus clinical experiences are a viable vehicle for meeting the desired goals of preparing preservice teachers to become effective and reflective teachers (Cruikshank, 1985; Cruikshank et al., 1996; Cruikshank & Metcalf, 1993; Metcalf, 1993; Metcalf, Ronen Hammer & Kahlich, 1996; Benton-Kupper, 2001; Vare, 1994). One of the most widely used methods for providing on-campus clinical experience for preservice teachers is microteaching. Developed in the early 1960s at Stanford University, microteaching has evolved in some variation or another as the on-campus clinical experience method in "91% of teacher education programs"

(Cruikshank et al., 1996, p.105). In its traditional form, microteaching is used to teach preservice teachers to master specific teaching skills. Nowadays in many teacher education programs, the use of microteaching has expanded from its original focus of helping preservice teachers to master discrete teaching skills, to giving them the complete teaching

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experience and orienting them to teach in the natural classroom during field experience. Two associated components are critical in the implementation of this on-campus clinical activity: videotaped micro lessons and feedback (Mills, 1991; Metcalf, 1993; Metcalf, et al. 1993; Cruickshank and Metcalf, 1993; Vare, 1994; Brent, Wheatley & Thomson. 1996; Benton-Kupper, 2001).

Working alone, with the instructor and/or a handful of peers in the microteaching group, preservice teachers view the videotape of their individual lessons to analyze and reflect on the lesson as taught. Individual viewing of the videotaped lesson for the purpose of writing a critique of instructional performance is a common practice aimed at encouraging the development of self-analysis and consequently, reflective practice. The other common element in microteaching activities is the provision of feedback. Led by an instructor or another trained supervisor, or sometimes working without a more knowledgeable person, peers engage in a discussion of each microteaching presentation and point out the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson. Oral feedback is followed by written feedback of the lesson on a microteaching review and feedback form developed for the purpose. Based on the data from the field-test of a laboratory sequence for secondary preservice teachers, Metcalf (1993) reported that organized peer groups “who are provided guidance may be as effective in promoting desirable outcomes in laboratory settings as feedback provided by the instructor” (p. 172).

Reflective practice in teaching connotes a tendency to revisit the sequence of one’s teaching for the purpose of making thoughtful judgment and “decisions about improved ways of acting in the future, or in the midst of the action itself” (Kottcamp, 1990, p. 183). This pattern of paying close attention to all aspects of the teaching action, deliberating on one’s teaching online and offline (Schön, 1983), and making thoughtful decisions about improvement agrees with the two terms that Valli (1997) used to summarize Dewey’s (1933) representation of reflective thinking: “sequence and consequence” (p. 68). In teaching preservice teachers to develop reflective habits of mind, Valli (1997) recommended that teacher educators determine the content for and quality of reflection. While the content of reflection requires furnishing neophytes guidelines about what to look for as they think back on their teaching, the quality of reflection involves guiding preservice teachers to use all aspects and types of reflectivity as they think about their teaching.

The present study inquired into the varying kinds and degrees of reflectivity that ensued as first-semester secondary education preservice teachers’ revisited their teaching actions and confronted peers’ evaluation of their performance in a microteaching experience. The study posed three questions:

1. What are the recurring themes of reflectivity in the participants’ sequencing of their teaching actions before and after microteaching?
2. What are the recurring themes in the participants’ *confronting* reflectivity of peers’ evaluations of their microteaching performance?

3. What effect did differential patterns of confronting reflectivity have on the participants' transition to *reconstructing* reflectivity?

#### **Participants**

Participants (N=31) were students enrolled in a general methods course for secondary education teachers with co-requisite field-based experience at an urban university located in the southwestern United States. Preservice teachers enter the university as juniors and move through the two-year teacher education program in cohorts. The students in the general methods course are first-semester juniors pursuing teaching certification in mathematics, science, English and social studies education. Demographically, the participant pool was predominantly Caucasian, consisting of 12 male and 19 female undergraduate students ranging in age from 21 to 51 years old.

#### **Instructional Procedures**

The general methods course met for 75 minutes twice weekly for 15 weeks. All students participated in 50 hours of field experience that included observation and some teaching in middle school or junior high school classrooms. The curriculum of the course included units in writing instructional objectives; writing lesson plans in fidelity with the syntaxes of lesson cycle, direct instruction, presentation, concept teaching, and cooperative teaching models (Arends, 2000); classroom questioning strategies; the use of time; classroom organization and management; and reflective teaching. Demonstration of a high level of understanding and application of the lesson planning in fidelity to the flow of events of the five teaching models was critical to success in the course.

All students participated in two microteaching activities during the semester. The first microteaching activity occurred in week seven of the semester. Students prepared a microlesson extrapolated from a 90-minute - lesson cycle design model lesson plan - to teach to their peers for 15 minutes. The second microteaching happened in week 14. Students were required to teach a 20-minute microlesson using the presentation, direct instruction, or concept teaching model of instruction. This microteaching activity was entirely peer-evaluated. Peer evaluations were written on specific feedback forms prepared by the instructor.

#### **Data Collection Procedures**

*Postanalysis reflection.* At the end of the second microteaching experience, participants wrote and submitted a one- to two-page self-reflection of the experience based upon their personal perceptions of instructional performance, written feedback from peers, and information from video playback of the microlesson. Postanalysis reflection was elicited by three self-analysis queries: (a) what did I intend to do in this lesson? (b) what did I do? (include strengths and weaknesses), and (c) what would I do differently if I were to teach the lesson again? The language

*Peers' written feedback.* Each participant received four or five completed feedback forms from the other participants assigned to the same classroom for microteaching. The instructor prepared four kinds of feedback forms with two representing the instructional syntaxes of the direct instruction and presentation teaching models, and the other two, the instructional syntaxes of the direct presentation and concept attainment components of the concept teaching models. Participants provided written feedback by first checking a rating of superior, proficient, or needs work for the execution of each instructional element of the particular teaching model and for overall instructional performance, and second, writing comments to justify or support the ratings.

*Framework for analyzing reflectivity.* The conceptual framework for investigating the patterns of reflectivity that the participants portrayed in their postanalysis reflections was developed by the author and assigned the same names as the four stages of reflectivity that Smyth (1989), called *describe*, *inform*, *confront* and *reconstruct* respectively. However, the similarity ended in the nomenclature. While Smyth used these categories to exemplify experienced teachers' concerns about the political and ethical issues underlying teaching, names of the categories were used in the present study to represent the progression of participants' reflectivity on the sequence and consequences of their actions in a specific on-campus microteaching episode as follows:

*Describe.* The initial stage of reflectivity entailed narration of the reflective thinking that accompanied the planning of the microlesson. Specifically, preservice teachers related the decision making that preceded teaching with respect to establishing the content of lesson, naming the intended learning, and explaining how the learning would be accomplished. As pronounced by the response to the query, "what did I intend to do in this lesson?" narration of the thought processes that preceded and informed the microteaching provides a context for further reflection on what eventually happened during the lesson.

*Inform.* The second stage of reflectivity calls for retrospective reflective thinking on the microlesson after it had been taught. Here, the preservice teacher revisited and sequenced the events of the lesson. As defined by the responses to the query, "What did I do?" sequencing of the lesson also involved reflective thinking about the teaching actions that worked and those that did not. The source of knowledge for the consequences of teaching actions comprised the preservice teacher's perceptions of the classroom context during the presentation of the lesson, especially the response of the learners.

*Confront.* The source of knowledge for reflective thinking in the third stage of reflectivity extended beyond the preservice teacher's envisioning of what should happen and what happened in the lesson to include others' voices about the

consequences of the lesson. Structured by the responses to the query, “What would I do differently if I were to teach the lesson again?” confronting reflectivity encompassed the reflective thinking that occurred as preservice teachers analyzed and synthesized their own perceptions of the consequences of the microteaching, peers’ feedback, and video playback of the lesson after the microteaching session.

*Reconstruct.* The final stage in the sequence of reflectivity included the reflective thinking that occurred as preservice teachers developed and elucidated specific teaching actions aimed at narrowing the dissonance gap between what they planned to do during microteaching and what actually happened. Their responses were guided also by the responses to the query, “What would I do differently if I were to teach the lesson again?” Reconstructing reflectivity is closely linked with confronting reflectivity. The content for reflection needed to reconstruct instructional actions included a participant’s perceptions of elements of dissonance between the lesson, as planned and as taught; peers’ evaluations of instructional performance; and information from video playback of the microteaching. The type of reflective process that structured the confronting of the content for reflection mentioned above was a precursor to the dimension of the resultant reconstructing reflection.

When the three queries that structured the participants’ reflective thinking on their teaching were joined with the categories of reflection described above, the following combinations resulted:

1. Describe . . . what did I intend to do in this lesson?
2. Inform . . . what did I do?
3. Confront and Reconstruct . . . What would I do differently if I were to teach this lesson again?

### **Data Analysis**

In the present study, data were analyzed using a qualitative approach, specifically the content analysis method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Ross, 1989), described below for each of the research questions.

*Research Question 1.* Self-reflections were read repeatedly until themes of participants’ reflectivity related to pre and post microteaching sequencing of teaching actions began to emerge. As shown in Table 1, pre microteaching sequencing of teaching actions produced four describing reflectivity themes represented as D(a), D(b), D(c), and D(d) respectively:

- a. named or implied the teaching model selected for the minilesson,
- b. established the subject area or the content for the minilesson,
- c. identified the learning outcome(s) for the minilesson,
- d. presaged instructional procedures.

Post microteaching sequencing of teaching actions also generated four informing

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**Table 1**  
**Occurrences of the Themes of Describing and Informing Reflectivity**

*Participants (N=31)	Describing Themes - D a - named teaching model b - established content c - identified learning outcome d - presaged instruction				Informing Themes - I a - reviewed events of the lesson b - expressed positive perception of instructional performance c - expressed mixed perception of instructional performance d - recalled first microteaching experience			
	D(a)	D(b)	D(c)	D(d)	I(a)	I(b)	I(c)	I(d)
1. Kate	X	X				X		X
2. Ken		X		X	X	X		X
3. Tara	X				X		X	X
4. Jay	X	X		X	X	X		
5. Allen		X	X		X	X		X
6. Eunice	X	X			X	X		X
7. Erik	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
8. Esther	X	X	X		X	X		
9. Sue	X	X			X		X	X
10. Joni	X	X			X		X	
11. Amy		X		X	X		X	X
12. Ricky					X	X		X
13. Garret		X	X	X	X	X		X
14. June					X	X		X
15. Sandy	X	X	X		X	X		X
16. Todd	X	X		X	X	X		
17. Paul	X	X			X	X		X
18. Lela	X	X		X	X	X		X
19. Sara	X	X			X		X	
20. Molly	X	X			X	X		
21. Linda	X	X	X		X	X		X
22. David					X	X		
23. Margie					X		X	
24. Julie				X	X	X		
25. Sam		X		X	X	X		
26. Heather	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
27. John		X	X		X	X		X
28. April	X	X			X	X		X
29. Mason		X			X	X		X
30. Alice					X		X	X
31. Becky	X	X	X		X	X		X
Occurrences	N=18	N=25	N=9	N=10	N=31	N=24	N=7	N=21

\*The names of the participants are pseudonyms.

reflectivity themes. Represented as I(a), I(b), I(c), and I(d) in Table 1, these themes consisted of:

- a. reviewed the events of the lesson as taught,
- b. expressed positive perception of instructional performance,
- c. expressed mixed positive and negative perceptions of instructional performance,
- d. recalled first microteaching experience.

*Research Question 2.* To establish patterns of confronting reflectivity in the ways that participants responded to peers' evaluations of their microteaching, written self-reflections were reread in association with the completed feedback forms. It was judged necessary to corroborate participants' secondary reports of peers' feedback with the primary documentation of the feedback, in order to obtain a comprehensive and accurate analysis of emerging themes of confronting reflectivity. The symbols C(a), C(b), C(c), and C(d) in Table 2, refer to the following persistent patterns of confronting reflectivity respectively:

- a. passive confronting,
- b. defensive confronting,
- c. affirmative confronting,
- d. self-critique confronting.

Passive confronting denoted participants' reflexive, submissive and lukewarm acquiescence to peers' feedback of microteaching performance. In this instance, participants accepted peers' ratings of and comments about instructional performance without providing reasons or rationale for assent. Another characteristic of passive confronting was participants' tendency to self-congratulate, meaning that they called attention to peers' positive feedback, while at the same time ignoring or trivializing less-than-glowing ratings and comments on their teaching.

Defensive confronting represented participants' preoccupation with providing rebuttals to peers' critical or unfavorable feedback to instructional performance. In this case, participants questioned the credibility of their peer-evaluators' feedback, used the limited instructional time as an excuse for not fully executing selected teaching model, or indicated that the lesson would have succeeded with "real students" in field placement classrooms. Overall, participants who demonstrated this pattern of confronting focused on rationalizing their teaching actions. By so doing, they offered excuses instead of admissible reasons for their teaching performance.

Affirmative confronting evidenced participants' proactive agreement with peers' critique of microteaching performance. This pattern of confronting was different from passive confronting because participants demonstrated and communicated understanding of the reasons and rationales underlying their peers' critique of their teaching actions.

Self-critique confronting signified participants' self-identification of omission or less- than favorable performance of specific teaching actions which their peers did not address in the feedback. Participants credited video playback of the

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**Table 2**  
**Corresponding Occurrences of the Themes**  
**of Confronting and Reconstructing Reflectivity**

Participants (N=31)	Confronting Themes — C				Reconstructing Themes – R			Confronting Reflectivity Clusters
	a - passive b - defensive c - affirmative d - self-critique				a - no reconstructing b - implicit reconstructing c - explicit reconstructing			
	C(a)	C(b)	C(c)	C(d)	R(a)	R(b)	R(c)	
1. Kate	X				X			Passive
2. Ken			X			X		Affirmative
3. Tara	X	X			X			Passive-Defensive
4. Jay	X				X			Passive
5. Allen	X					X		Passive
6. Eunice			X				X	Affirmative
7. Erik			X				X	Affirmative
8. Esther			X	X			X	Affirmative-Self-critique
9. Sue		X	X			X		Defensive-Affirmative
10. Joni		X				X		Defensive
11. Amy		X	X			X		Defensive-Affirmative
12. Ricky	X	X			X			Passive-Defensive
13. Garret			X	X			X	Affirmative-Self-critique
14. June		X			X			Defensive
15. Sandy	X	X			X			Passive-Defensive
16. Todd	X	X				X		Passive-Defensive
17. Paul	X				X			Passive
18. Lela	X	X			X			Passive-Defensive
19. Sara		X			X			Defensive
20. Molly			X	X			X	Affirmative-Self-critique
21. Linda	X				X			Passive
22. David	X				X			Passive
23. Margie			X				X	Affirmative
24. Julie	X				X			Passive
25. Sam			X	X			X	Affirmative-Self-critique
26. Heather			X	X			X	Affirmative-Self-critique
27. John	X	X			X			Passive-Defensive
28. April	X				X			Passive
29. Mason	X				X			Passive
30. Alice			X			X		Affirmative
31. Becky			X	X			X	Affirmative-Self-critique
Occurrences	N=15	N=11	N=13	N=6	N=15	N=7	N=9	



microteaching with furnishing them knowledge of these unquestioned areas of needed improvement.

*Research Question 3.* Since reconstructing reflectivity is an offshoot of confronting reflectivity, participants' written self-reflections were clustered along the lines of predominating pattern(s) of confronting. As shown in Table 2, the clusters consisted of (1) passive; (2) defensive; (3) passive and defensive; (4) defensive and affirmative; (5) affirmative; and (6) affirmative and self-critique. Within each cluster, participants' reflective responses to the query — what would I do differently if I were to teach the lesson again? — were reread and analyzed to obtain emergent operative themes for reframing or restructuring their microteaching instructional actions. In other words, as participants confronted the gap between planned and taught lessons through the media of personal perceptions, others' voices in the form of peers' evaluations, and information from video feedback, what alternative actions did they speculate or articulate for reenacting the lesson? The following three themes of reconstructing reflectivity emerged, represented as R(a), R(b), and R(c) in Table 3:

- a. no reconstructing,
- b. implicit reconstructing,
- c. explicit reconstructing.

Participants categorized as evidencing no reconstructing reflectivity did not speculate or articulate any alternative teaching actions aimed at reenacting their microteaching. These participants expressed complete satisfaction with their microteaching performance.

The reconstructing reflectivity of the participants in the implicit reconstructing category was characterized by speculative and somewhat indistinct teaching actions for reenacting their microteaching performance. These participants addressed the elements of their microteaching that needed to be reconstructed, but offered pedantic alternative instructional actions.

Explicit reconstructing, on the other hand, was characterized by participants' articulation of specific, pedagogically accurate alternative actions for reenacting the microteaching performance. Also, these participants portrayed the characteristic of viewing their microteaching as real teaching, not mock or pretend teaching; therefore, the reconstructing changes they submitted mirrored practicable instructional principles.

Data analysis resulted in the identification of four recurring themes of describing reflectivity, four themes of informing reflectivity, four patterns of confronting and three patterns of reconstructing reflectivity among the participants in the study.

## **Results**

The analysis of participants' pre and post microteaching sequencing of teaching actions yielded four themes of describing and informing reflectivity. As

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shown in Table 1, there were 18 (a), 25 (b), 9 (c), and 10 (d) occurrences of the themes associated with describing (D) reflectivity. All participants, with the exception of Ricky (12), David, (22), and Margie, (23) incorporated at least one of the four themes of describing reflectivity in their pre-microteaching sequencing of teaching actions. Only six participants recollected more than two themes of describing reflectivity. Within this group, two participants' (Erik 7 & Heather 26) pre-microteaching sequencing of teaching action captured all four themes, as Erik illustrates below:

I think the major goal I had for this lesson was to make sure each student understood how to solve a punnett square (b). Since I didn't have one biology major in the class, I knew it would be a successful lesson if each student could solve a punnett square on their own (c). . . . I wanted to go over some key definitions that would lay the foundations for the task analysis. With regards to the definitions, I wanted to make sure that they were easy to understand (d). I wanted the steps in the task analysis to be easy to understand (a).

Analysis of the reflectivity associated with participants' post microteaching sequencing of teaching action generated four themes of informing reflectivity (I). As shown in Table 1, there were 31 occurrences of theme (a), 24 of theme (b), 7 of theme (c) and 21 of theme (d). All participants' reflections subsumed two or three out of the four themes of informing reflectivity. The following are representations of participants' associated reflectivity for informing themes I(a) – I(d):

I started off the class by saying it was time for class to start. . . . I pointed to the warm up and read it to the class. They had to define totalitarianism. . . . I asked the students what they came up with for totalitarianism. At first, no one said anything. Then, one person said that it was something to do with government. Someone else said it was a dictatorship. Since no one else had anything else to say, I gave the actual definition. . . . I went over each of the three critical attributes, explaining each one to the students. . . . Two students came up with examples. . . . Then, I gave the closure. . . . (Esther #8)

Overall, I was happy with my performance. I looked and felt confident. I think I made good use of time and the materials. I think I had everyone on track. (June #14)

After teaching my twenty-minute microteach lesson on Tuesday, I left the room unsatisfied. I went home to watch the video of myself, which only confirmed my feelings. I realized there were a few areas of my lesson that need to be improved upon. . . . Overall, I would say I was proficient. (Joni #10)

The longer time allotted for the second microteaching experience was very helpful. Unlike my first lesson, I did not have to rush through the information I wanted to present to the class. . . . I also discovered that we had extra time to discuss the lesson in a group setting. (Becky #31)

The examination of participants' review of their teaching performance based on peers' feedback and videotape playback of their microteaching generated six

clusters of confronting reflectivity: (1) passive, (2) defensive, (3) passive and defensive, (4) defensive and affirmative, (5) affirmative, and (6) affirmative and self-critique. The clusters represented overlapping extrapolations of the four predominant patterns of confronting reflectivity: passive, defensive, affirmative, and self-critique. As shown in Table 2, there were 15 occurrences of the themes of passive confronting. Kate, participant #1, demonstrated the epitome of the self-congratulatory passive confronting:

I went in knowing what I wanted to accomplish at the end of the lesson. The whole class participated enthusiastically and that helped too. When I received my critiques. . . . Tara (pseudonym) also let me know that my teaching was 'much better than last time' which made me appreciate the time and effort I put in this lesson.

While this participant's written peer evaluations supported the claim of superior teaching performance, one of the four peer evaluators had commented, "You did an excellent job. The only thing I would recommend is looking up more at the students than your paper." This less-than-glowing second part of the feedback was disregarded by the participant.

The defensive theme occurred 11 times. Three rationalizations characterized participants' defensive confronting: (1) questioning the credibility of peers' evaluation, (2) time constraints, and (3) teaching college students instead of "real students" in natural classrooms. Representative examples include:

. . . I thought overall my lesson went well and the information got across to the students. I know they learned something new, even though my evaluations by my peers do not reflect the way I felt I did. (Sara, 19)

I could also have spent more time on the directions of the lab, but was limited to a twenty-minute class. (Sandy, 15)

During my presentation, I felt there was so much that I was leaving out. I know that some of that feeling comes from presenting to people that I know do not have the same history background that I am coming from. I did this lesson plan at the same time that I was covering the information in my internship, at that time it made sense. (June, 14)

Overall, there were 13 occurrences of affirmative confronting reflectivity. As shown in Table 2, these were clustered as defensive-affirmative confronting (2 instances), affirmative confronting (6 instances), affirmative-self-critique confronting (5 instances) respectively. Eunice (6) exemplifies affirmative confronting as illustrated in the following statement:

Some of the things that I would do differently are my anticipatory set and discuss student's thinking process. My anticipatory set was there, but the students are right, it was pretty dull and would not have excited any students to want to learn about similes. (Eunice, 6)

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The self-critique confronting theme is portrayed in this narrative:

I also noticed when watching the tape that there were a couple of things I could have done differently that no one mentioned. When I was writing the chart on the board, I just wrote it, I did not say anything. . . . It was just an awkward moment of silence. These students were well behaved but high school students might have used this opportunity to talk or do something else disruptive. (Esther, 8)

Data analysis for reconstructing reflectivity produced two interrelated results. First, as shown in Table 2, there were 15 occurrences of the theme of no reconstructing reflectivity R(a), 7 occurrences of the theme of implicit reconstructing R (b), and 9 occurrences of explicit reconstructing R (c) in participants' responses to the reflective question, "What would I do differently if I were to teach the lesson again?" Ricky (12) depicted no reconstructing reflectivity in the following excerpt:

I know that I am far from perfect. . . . One of the things that my peers suggested was to show more enthusiasm. . . . Others suggested me (sic) to involve students more, but in twenty minutes, it is hard to include more examples and modeling. . . . I am sure I am not the best of the presenters, but I am very happy with my improvement.

This participant did not offer any reconstructing thoughts to three out of four peers' constructive feedback that stressed the need to "involve students more," "show more enthusiasm," and "have someone come up to the board."

Alice (31) exemplified one form of implicit reconstructing reflectivity where the participant acknowledged areas that needed to be improved without suggesting alternative teaching actions that might work:

In retrospect, I definitely need to make sure I have enough time to allow for mechanical errors. I also definitely need to allow myself sufficient time to review and practice my lesson prior to giving the lesson. And most importantly, I need to work on closures and pulling the lesson together. Do you have any advice you can give me for that?

Sue (9) expressed the other kind of implicit reconstructing reflectivity where the participant proffered an indistinct teaching action to correct a specified teaching problem:

My anticipatory set was weak. I need to come up with something that will grab my students' attention. I think something visual with triangles like a picture, some artwork, or a computer simulation would work great in the future.

The occurrence of explicit reconstructing reflectivity entailed a diagnostic reflection on teaching action as the following participant's statement illustrates:

I also experienced a little confusion about what a patent is. I needed to teach them the definition first instead of assuming that they knew what I was talking about when I made reference to the U.S. Patent Office. . . . At the end of the lesson I could

have asked the students to help me sum up the main attributes of an invention to wrap up the lesson. (Garret, 13)

The positive relationship between confronting and reconstructing reflectivity was confirmed in the present study. As also shown in Table 2, the comparison of the occurrences of the themes of confronting with corresponding themes of reconstructing reflectivity showed the following patterns: passive, and/or defensive confronting reflectivity generated predominantly corresponding no reconstructing or implicit reconstructing reflectivity, while affirmative and/or affirmative-self-critique yielded zero instances of no reconstructing reflectivity, a few occurrences of implicit reconstructing reflectivity and a predominant number of occurrences of explicit reconstructing reflectivity. The question then becomes, do the components of describing and informing reflectivity predict the directions of confronting reflectivity which ultimately impinged on reconstructing reflectivity? In other words, were participants' patterns of pre and post-microteaching sequencing of teaching actions telling of their confronting of those actions?

## **Discussion**

The reflective content, "What did I intend to do in this lesson?" produced two or more themes of describing reflectivity from most of the participants. Four participants, Ricky (12), June (14), David (22), and Margie (23) skipped the pre-microteaching sequencing of teaching actions reflectivity altogether and moved on to reflect on the aftermath of the microteaching. Only one of these participants (Margie) exemplified the desired affirmative confronting reflectivity on teaching actions. On the other hand, five out of the six participants that produced three or four themes of describing reflectivity maintained affirmative and/or affirmative-self-critique patterns of confronting reflectivity. The effect of describing reflectivity on the quality of confronting reflectivity becomes even more instructive given that this group of five constituted almost half of the total instances of affirmative/self-critique patterns of confronting reflectivity that emanated from the study.

Although the total omission of the themes of describing reflectivity characterized only four out of thirty-one participants, this oversight raises further questions about preservice teachers' and even inservice teachers' attentiveness to the reflective process that gives rise to decision making about what to teach and how to teach it in order to attain specified objectives. Does the fact that four participants in the study did not pay any attention to a reflective content that prompted them to reflect first on a lesson as conceived before reflecting on the lesson as executed connote a passable omission? Does this omission point to a pattern among preservice and even more experienced teachers to focus reflectivity on observable teaching actions while muting the thought processes that led to the actions themselves? These questions should drive further inquiry on patterns of preservice teachers' preinstructional reflectivity.

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The reflective content "What did I do?" generated at least two informing reflectivity themes from all participants. In addition to the obvious themes that featured the sequence of teaching actions and expression of positive or mixed perceptions of teaching performance, an unprompted informing theme emerged: there were 21 references to the previous microteaching exercise. A great proportion of participants thought outside the reflective prompt to extricate a comparison between their teaching performances in the first and second microteaching experiences even though the events were seven weeks apart. This characteristic supports the notion that preservice teachers consider microteaching to be a beneficial learning experience (Benton-Kupper, 2001; Mills, 1991; Metcalf, 1993). Furthermore, the fact that the informing reflectivity repertoire of five out of the six participants that fully accomplished describing reflectivity, mentioned above, included this informing reflectivity component underscores the symbiotic relatedness of reflection-for-action and reflection-on-action (Schön, 1987).

Overall, there were 26 occurrences of passive and defensive confronting reflectivity themes compared with only 11 occurrences of affirmative or affirmative self-critique confronting themes. Why did a preponderance of participants choose to be passive about or respond defensively to peers' corrective feedback to their microteaching? One conclusion that could be drawn from this outcome is that passive and defensive reflectivity patterns were warranted because of peer evaluators' poor judgment of accurate implementation of expected teaching skills. However, all participants in the study received instruction and practiced writing lesson plans on the instructional models featured in the microteaching. Peer evaluators were furnished checklists containing model-specific instructional indicators to guide microteaching evaluation. Moreover, the microteaching activity was graded on a pass-fail basis, with nonparticipation as the reason for receiving a failing grade.

Given that microteaching was implemented as a developmental, formative process without the added pressure of competitive grading, one would expect participants to risk vulnerability and thereby record a higher number of occurrences of affirmative or even the self-critique confronting. The fact that this outcome did not happen in the study could be related to a phenomenon that Stanley (1998) described as "personal issues of self-esteem" that inhibit one's ability "to put one's teaching to scrutiny" (p.586). Stanley further explained that some teachers may be resistant to reflection because the experience is "too painful" for them. For this reason, she suggested that the literature on reflection should look into the "reality" that some of the inhibitors to a teacher's engagement with reflection "are beyond the scope of the field of teacher education" (p.586).

When the number of the occurrences of the themes of confronting reflectivity was matched with those for the themes of reconstructing reflectivity, the ensuing outcome was as to be expected. Passive and defensive confronting reflectivity, individually or combined, gave rise to no reconstructing or at the most, implicit

reconstructing. On the other hand, affirmative confronting (except in one instance) and self-critique confronting reflectivity produced explicit reconstructing. This goes to show that the focusing of reflectivity on rationalizing teaching actions, playing up the highs and ignoring the lows, or making excuses does not produce the sound examination of teaching that is considered to be the needed precursor to self-improvement.

## **Conclusion**

In this study, 31 preservice teachers' preinstructional and postinstructional reflections on their microteaching were examined to identify the patterns of reflectivity that ensued. Three conclusions were drawn from the study. First, microteaching is an activity that is considered favorably as a meaningful learning experience by preservice teachers. This assertion was supported by participants' recurring recollection and comparison of their first and second microteaching experiences, even though the experiences were several weeks apart and the reflective query for the second microteaching focused only on the teaching actions for that experience. Second, there is no guarantee that preservice teachers will risk vulnerability and hold up their teaching actions to scrutiny, even in an on-campus clinical experience that is structured to provide a pressure-free environment for them to plan, teach and reflect on their teaching. Finally, when they do, as it happened in the example of the occurrences of affirmative and self-critique confronting reflectivity in the study, such scrutiny has the potential of helping preservice self-correct specific elements in their emerging teaching skills. This desired outcome of the microteaching activity was only realized on a limited basis in the present study.

Owning up to miscues in teaching — whether identified by self or knowledgeable others — and mulling over them with the mindset that a critique of teaching action is not a critique of the person of the teacher, is the critical first step toward making the kind of explicit reconstructing that leads to growth and improvement in teaching. This is where the dual goals of preparing effective and reflective teachers meet. This may be why on-campus microteaching experiences have been so popularly embraced by teacher educators and preservice teachers: they offer an opportunity for preservice teachers to practice effective teaching skills, and they provide a safe environment for neophytes to make mistakes and through reflection learn from those mistakes and grow in their teaching capability. In fact, on campus clinical activities should lay the foundation for the career-long cyclical pattern of teaching and reflectivity that should define the professional apparatus of a future educator. But first, we (teacher educators) need to capture the nuances of preservice teachers' reflectivity on teaching actions in on-campus and natural classroom settings. Second, we need to use what we know about their patterns of reflectivity to help them attain desirable reflectivity patterns: i.e., complete sequencing of pre-

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teaching actions that drive affirmative/self-critique confronting of teaching, which in turn produces explicit reconstructing of teaching actions. This is the essence of high-order reflective teaching.

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