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Experiential Process Model for Enhancing Classroom Management Skills in Teacher Training through Microteaching

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Abstract

Effective classroom management remains a persistent challenge in teacher education, as prospective teachers often struggle to balance instructional delivery with behavioral interventions. Despite its importance, existing training programs rarely provide structured opportunities for experiential learning in real-time decision-making. This study proposes an Experiential Process Model to systematically cultivate classroom management skills through microteaching. Expanding upon Yoshizaki's (1988) decision-making framework, this model emphasizes behavioral cue recognition, multi-level decision-making, and adaptive rule adjustments. To examine its effectiveness, microteaching sessions were conducted using student behavior image cards (Sakuma et al., 2024), simulating diverse classroom interactions, including disruptive behaviors. Findings indicate that participants in the teacher role improved situational awareness, strategic adaptability, and behavioral management skills. Reflection data further highlighted the complexity of managing unpredictable classroom dynamics while maintaining lesson objectives. The results suggest that the Experiential Process Model offers a structured approach to integrating decision-making training into teacher education, bridging theory and practice. Future research should explore its applicability across different educational contexts.

Keywords: *Experiential Process Model, Classroom management, Microteaching, Teacher education*

1. Introduction

In many countries worldwide, including those in Europe, whole-class instruction remains a common approach to teaching, often supported by standardized curricula designed to improve efficiency. However, such standardized frameworks do not always accommodate the diverse learning needs of individual students; as a result, student disengagement or off-task behavior can arise (Kawamura, 1999, 2016). These challenges are especially pronounced in contexts where class sizes are large or educational reforms stress uniform standards over differentiated instruction.

Within this landscape, teachers are increasingly expected to balance instructional delivery with classroom management—two intertwined responsibilities. Effective teaching involves both managing smooth lesson progression and responding to the varied needs and behaviors of students. Shulman (1986) emphasized the importance of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which integrates subject matter expertise with insights into student learning processes, thereby supporting informed, context-responsive decision-making.

In Japan, for instance, research has delved into teachers' cognitive processes and strategies for addressing disruptive or off-task behavior (Higuchi, 1995; Kishino & Muto, 2005; Yamada & Yamaguchi, 2011). Higuchi (1995) found that teachers often adjust lesson plans based on whether students' unexpected responses fall below or exceed expected levels. Kishino and Muto (2005) explored how educators reintegrate off-task students into the classroom routine, highlighting techniques such as "strategic ignoring" and "constructive dialogue." Further, Yamada and Yamaguchi (2011) demonstrated that responding positively to students' private, off-topic behaviors is often more effective than trying to directly suppress them. Such studies align with the view that classroom management and subject instruction are deeply interdependent (Asada & Sako, 1991).

More recently, Kaihatsu and Asada (2023) have defined classroom management as "actions taken to promote and support the multifaceted growth of students during lessons." Their work underscores the crucial role of order and discipline—particularly in whole-class instruction—but also points to the broader developmental aims of education. To foster these dual aims of managing learning and behavior, microteaching has been widely adopted in teacher education programs (Allen, 1972; Killic, 2010; Fukugasako & Sakata, 2007; Sakuma et al., 2024). By providing simulations of real classroom scenarios, microteaching offers prospective teachers direct experience in orchestrating lessons and practicing responsive classroom management. Zeichner (2010) likewise emphasizes bridging

theoretical coursework with authentic field experiences—an argument that highlights the importance of well-designed microteaching sessions.

Despite these efforts, many existing microteaching practices focus on the experience of managing a classroom but do not sufficiently address the decision-making processes involved. Sakuma et al. (2024), for example, introduced “image cards” to simulate diverse classroom scenarios, yet the underlying decision-making structures remain less explored. Understanding these structures is essential for developing robust microteaching design and assessment frameworks—ones that can be utilized not only in Japan but also in global contexts, including European teacher training programs.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine a new framework—referred to here as the “Experiential Process Model”—which explicitly targets the decision-making dimension and reflective practices of classroom management. By clarifying how prospective teachers process, respond to, and learn from classroom events, the model seeks to advance both the theoretical underpinnings of microteaching and its practical applications in teacher education.

2. Literature Review

Pittman (1985) pioneered research on how teachers select classroom management procedures during lessons to address both instructional and managerial goals. Building on Pittman’s work, Yoshizaki (1988) conceptualized teachers as information processors, proposing a decision-making model to reconcile discrepancies between lesson plans and the realities of classroom dynamics. This model outlines the key steps teachers undergo: they observe student behavior, evaluate it against their instructional objectives, and adjust lesson content or pacing accordingly.

Subsequent research by Asada and Sako (1991) examined teachers’ managerial actions in response to behaviors that disrupt lesson flow, contributing a procedural framework that details how teachers can handle diverse, on-the-spot classroom situations. Although these studies offer rich insights into the cognitive and behavioral facets of classroom management, they do not directly address how prospective teachers acquire these skills through experiential learning—an aspect increasingly emphasized in teacher training.

Indeed, while Yoshizaki’s (1988) model is comprehensive in covering decision-making processes during lessons, it may be too broad for the short, focused nature of microteaching sessions. Microteaching typically emphasizes repeated practice and immediate feedback within tightly structured lessons, and an overly inclusive model can be difficult to implement or evaluate in such a time-constrained environment. Conversely, Asada and Sako’s (1991) procedural strategies, though highly applicable for analyzing in-service teachers’ classroom practices, offer limited guidance for prospective teachers seeking to develop these skills. They provide “what to do” in various scenarios but do not fully explicate the learning process that underpins why or how teachers adapt strategies in situ.

These gaps underscore the need for a systematic framework that highlights decision-making within the context of experiential microteaching. Such a framework must be sufficiently targeted to capture the critical junctures and reflective loops that prospective teachers engage in when confronted with unexpected classroom events. Recognizing these requirements, the present study introduces an Experiential Process Model, designed to enable prospective teachers to acquire and refine classroom management competencies through active decision-making and reflection in microteaching contexts.

3. The Purpose of This Study

This study proposes an "Experiential Process Model," which refines Yoshizaki’s (1988) decision-making model to enable prospective teachers to learn classroom management skills *experientially* through microteaching. In addition, the model will be applied in simulated microteaching sessions to identify the learning outcomes and decision-making characteristics of individuals serving as teacher roles. By doing so, this study aims to provide practical insights into the design of microteaching and, ultimately, to enhance teacher education programs.

4. The Experiential Process Model Proposed in This Study

Emmer and Evertson (2016) emphasized that effective classroom management strategies are essential for creating structured and productive learning environments, thereby laying a foundation for *informed decision-making* in diverse classroom contexts. Building on this premise—and integrating previous research by Yoshizaki (1988)—we propose the Experiential Process Model. This model highlights how teacher roles can learn classroom management through real-time decision-making in

microteaching. As shown in Figure 1, the Experiential Process Model comprises the following components:

4.1. Preliminary Knowledge of the Teacher Role

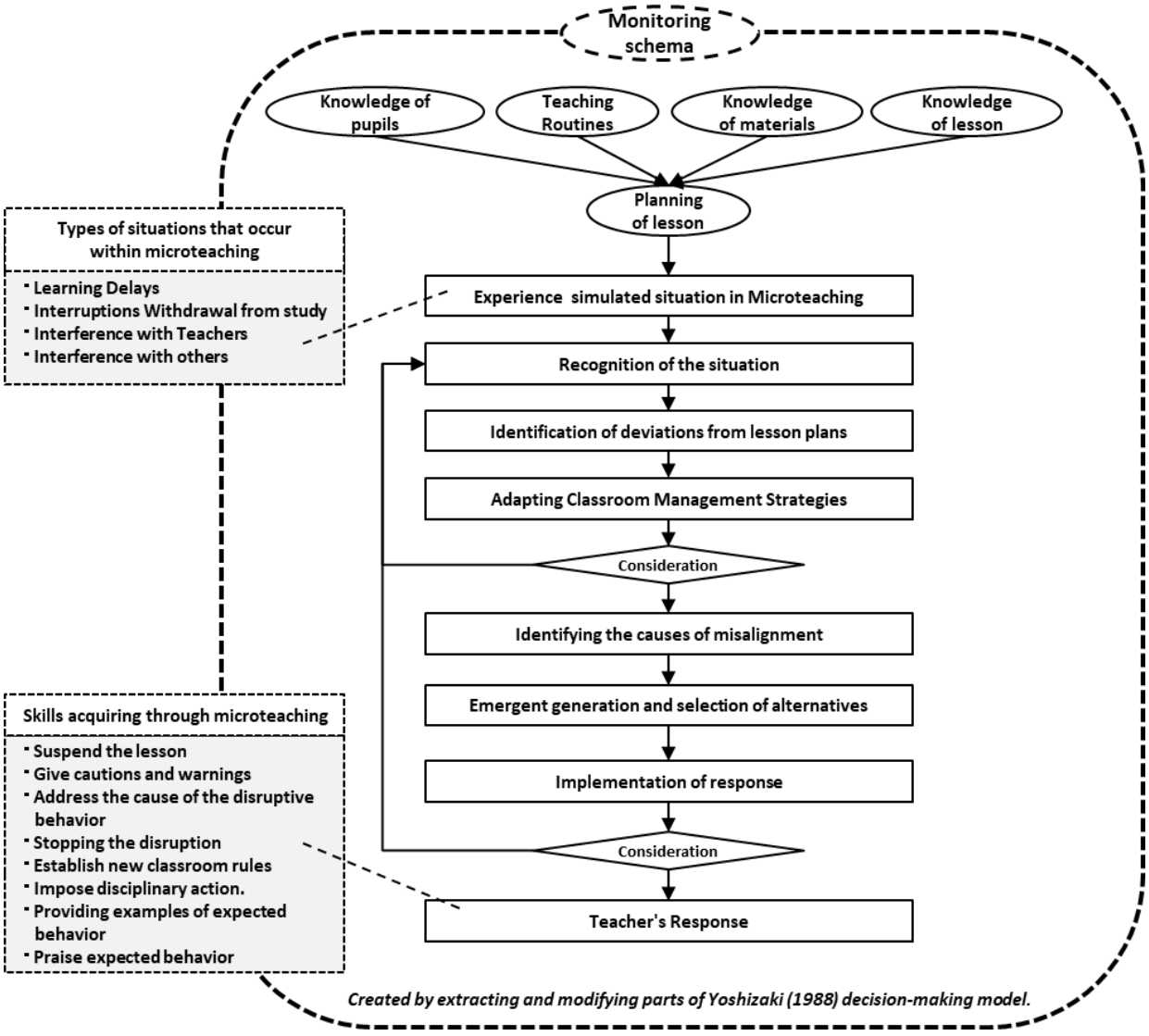

Fig. 1. Structure of the Experiential Process Model

Teachers participating in microteaching construct lesson plans based on:

- Knowledge of student behavior
- Classroom management routines
- Lesson content
- Instructional structure

This foundational knowledge informs situational judgment and decision-making throughout the simulated lesson.

4.2. Types of Situations That Occur During Microteaching

Classroom behaviors observed during lessons can be categorized into:

- Expected behaviors (e.g., providing help to peers, volunteering answers)
- Unexpected behaviors (e.g., delays in learning, disruptions, withdrawal, interference)

4.3. Response Process of the Teacher Role

The model outlines that teachers-in-training proceed through the following steps in response to situations arising during microteaching:

1. **Observation of cues**
   - Observe student roles' attitudes and behaviors.
   - Classify them as expected or unexpected behaviors.
2. **Recognition of discrepancies**
   - Identify gaps between the lesson plan and the classroom reality.

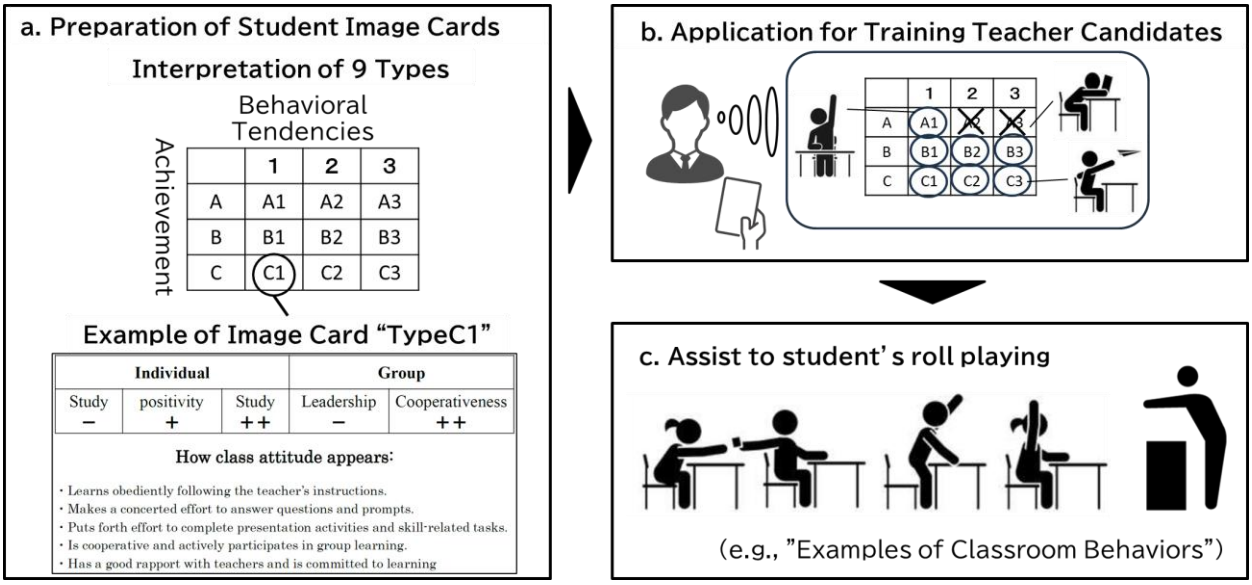

Fig. 2. Example of Student Image Cards

3. **Adjustment of lesson rules**
   - Decide whether to add or modify lesson rules based on recognized behaviors.
4. **Identification of individual causes of discrepancies**
   - Analyze potential causes of these discrepancies.
   - Consider ways to address them.
5. **Retrieval or creation of alternative individual responses**
   - Apply pre-established management routines.
   - Devise new alternative strategies if needed.
6. **Selection of satisfactory alternative responses**
   - Choose and implement the most appropriate alternative response.

4.4. Revisions to Yoshizaki's (1988) Decision-Making Model

The Experiential Process Model incorporates three key revisions to Yoshizaki's (1988) original framework:

1. **Focused observation of cues**
   - Student-role behaviors are explicitly categorized into expected and unexpected actions.
2. **Separation of two decision-making phases: classroom-level and individual-level**
   - Overarching classroom management decisions occur first.
   - Targeted responses to individual students follow.
3. **Inclusion of decision-making activities for lesson rules**
   - Based on observed behaviors, the model adds a step for modifying lesson rules to adapt to ongoing classroom conditions.

4.5. Application and Evaluation

To examine the utility of this Experiential Process Model, we designed a microteaching scenario and evaluated whether the teacher roles could effectively engage in *real-time decision-making* as outlined in the model.

4.5.1. Application Context

This study utilized "image cards" (Sakuma et al., 2024) to guide student roles in portraying various behaviors, thus eliciting classroom management actions from the teacher roles (Figure 2). The microteaching sessions were devised to replicate both expected and unexpected classroom behaviors, enabling prospective teachers to practice the decision-making process in realistic, *time-constrained* lessons.

To introduce a wide range of behaviors, the image cards were classified according to two criteria:

- Levels of learning achievement: High (A), Medium (B), Low (C).

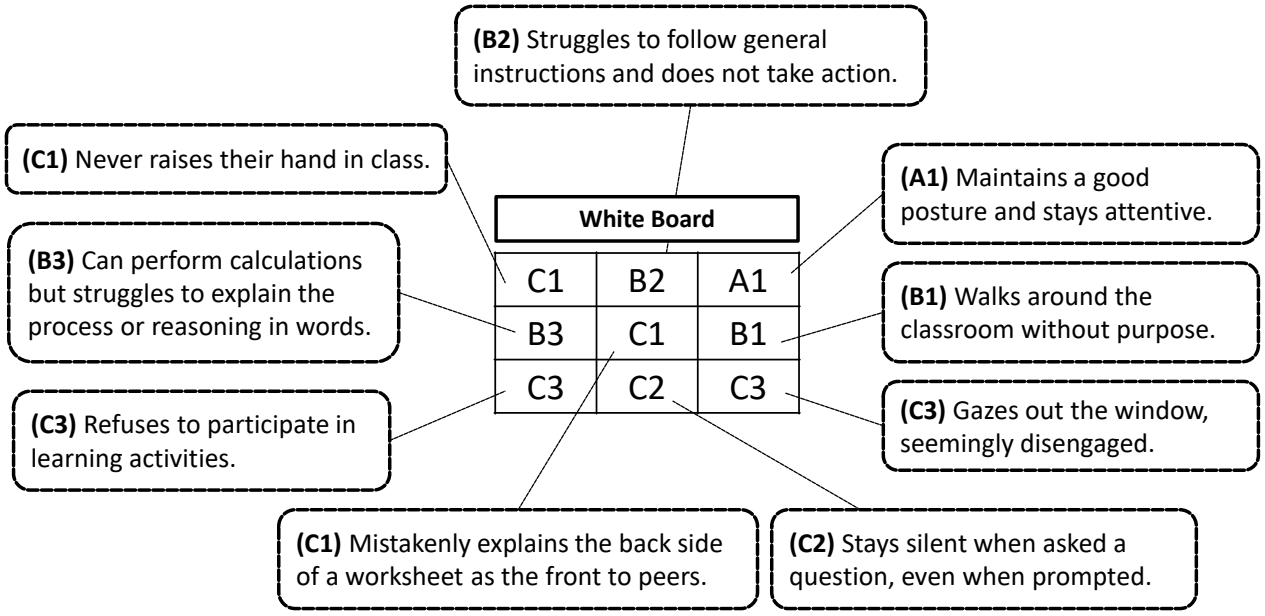

Fig. 3. Classroom Layout in Microteaching and Types of Student Disruptive Behaviors

Table.1. Corresponding Teacher Responses

No.	Student's Disruptive Behavior	Teacher's Response
1	A student attempts to leave the classroom	Stops them before they exit and instructs them to go to the principal's office.
2	A student not writing in their notebook	Points to the notebook and tells them, "This is where we're working."
3	A student loses focus during the lesson	Introduces the next task to re-engage them.

- Ease of instruction adherence: Easy (1), Moderate (2), Difficult (3).

These yielded nine types of image cards (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2, C3). To simulate a collapsed classroom environment (Sakuma et al., 2024), we intentionally assigned more than half of the student roles to categories C1–C3, which included off-task or disruptive behaviors.

One teacher role and nine student roles participated in each session, lasting approximately 35 minutes. The learning content revolved around a third-grade mathematics topic on *estimations*, with the general objective “To understand how to add and subtract decimals to the first decimal place and perform these calculations.” The typical lesson sequence was:

1. Confirm the method for calculating the total volume of 0.5L + 0.3L.
2. Have students individually consider how to compute 0.5 + 0.3.
3. Share ideas and explore better methods collaboratively.
4. Apply learned strategies to other examples (e.g., 0.8 + 0.2, 0.4 + 0.7).

This design successfully recreated diverse classroom situations, allowing the teacher roles to encounter and address unexpected behaviors while maintaining instructional flow.

4.5.2. Teacher Role's Actions and Decision-Making

To determine whether the teacher role recognized the student roles' various attitudes and behaviors—and attempted to address them in real time—we collected free-form responses from both the teacher and student roles.
Key findings are summarized in Figure 3 and Table 1.

- Figure 3 illustrates the spectrum of behaviors displayed by student roles.
- Table 1 shows how the teacher role responded, such as removing distracting items, assigning new tasks to reorient unfocused students, or verbally clarifying instructions when confusion arose.

Mapped onto the proposed process model, these observations suggest that teacher roles demonstrated *experiential* decision-making, honing real-time management skills through repeated, immediate responses to student behavior.

4.5.3. Reflection by the Teacher Role

Immediately after each simulated lesson, teacher roles were asked to reflect on their experiences. Below is an excerpt from one teacher role's reflection (captured via audio recording):
[Teacher Role]:
"Figuring out when to switch from just observing to actually scolding was tough. I was debating that while dealing with students who kept moving around. Also, a lot of students weren't writing anything—far more than I expected—so I had to decide whether to pace the lesson for those who were participating, like the A1 roles, or adjust for those who weren't writing, which ended up being the majority.
When reviewing the previous lesson, I realized many of them didn't remember it well. Almost no one was raising a hand, so I started calling on people directly. I also felt the individual work was too challenging for them, so I switched to group work. Looking back, I feel like I messed up some things, like the board layout and instructions. That's about it."
This self-reflection indicates that the teacher role actively monitored classroom cues, recognized discrepancies between the *planned* lesson and *real* student readiness, and adapted instructional strategies (e.g., switching from individual to group work). Video recordings confirmed that the teacher role formed larger groups than initially planned and specifically approached a C3 student to check their progress before moving on to guide another group.

4.5.4. Additional Observations

Through this experience, the teacher role appeared to strengthen their capacity to manage individual off-task behaviors, *prioritize* multiple concurrent issues, and execute sequential decision-making steps. The teacher role also refined their ability to classify, respond to, and follow up on various student behaviors, which aligns with the framework of the Experiential Process Model.
These findings suggest that this model can be an effective tool in designing *other* microteaching or simulation-based experiences, and it shows promise for evaluating the classroom management skills that prospective teachers develop.

5. Discussion and Future Directions

This study proposed the Experiential Process Model, an extension and refinement of Yoshizaki's (1988) decision-making framework, designed to facilitate experiential learning of classroom management skills through microteaching. The application of this model in simulated lesson contexts revealed that teacher roles were able to engage in real-time decision-making, adjusting to unexpected classroom situations while maintaining instructional flow. Through this process, teacher roles demonstrated improvements in their ability to:

- Classify student behaviors quickly and select appropriate responses.
- Balance instructional pacing with individualized interventions.
- Adjust lesson plans dynamically to accommodate shifting classroom conditions.

These findings highlight the effectiveness of experiential learning in developing classroom management skills. However, the refinement of instructional decision-making requires not only

repeated practice but also a structured approach to post-lesson reflection. While immediate, intuitive reflection is valuable in teacher development, a systematic reflection process allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of how decisions impact classroom interactions and student engagement.
The results of this study indicate that a structured framework for post-lesson reflection is essential in microteaching. To address this need, we conceptualized a systematic reflection model, such as the one illustrated in Figure 4. This model is designed to organize the reflection process into key components, allowing prospective teachers to analyze their instructional decisions in a structured and evidence-based manner.
By adopting a systematic reflection model, prospective teachers can:

- Compare intended and actual instructional decisions to identify discrepancies.
- Analyze student responses to instructional strategies and classroom interventions.
- Develop targeted improvements for future microteaching sessions.

This structured reflection process complements the Experiential Process Model, reinforcing the iterative learning cycle of Practice → Reflection → Refinement. While this study primarily focused on real-time decision-making during microteaching, our findings suggest that systematic reflection is crucial for consolidating and deepening learning outcomes.
Building on these insights, future research should further explore how systematic reflection can be effectively integrated into teacher education programs.

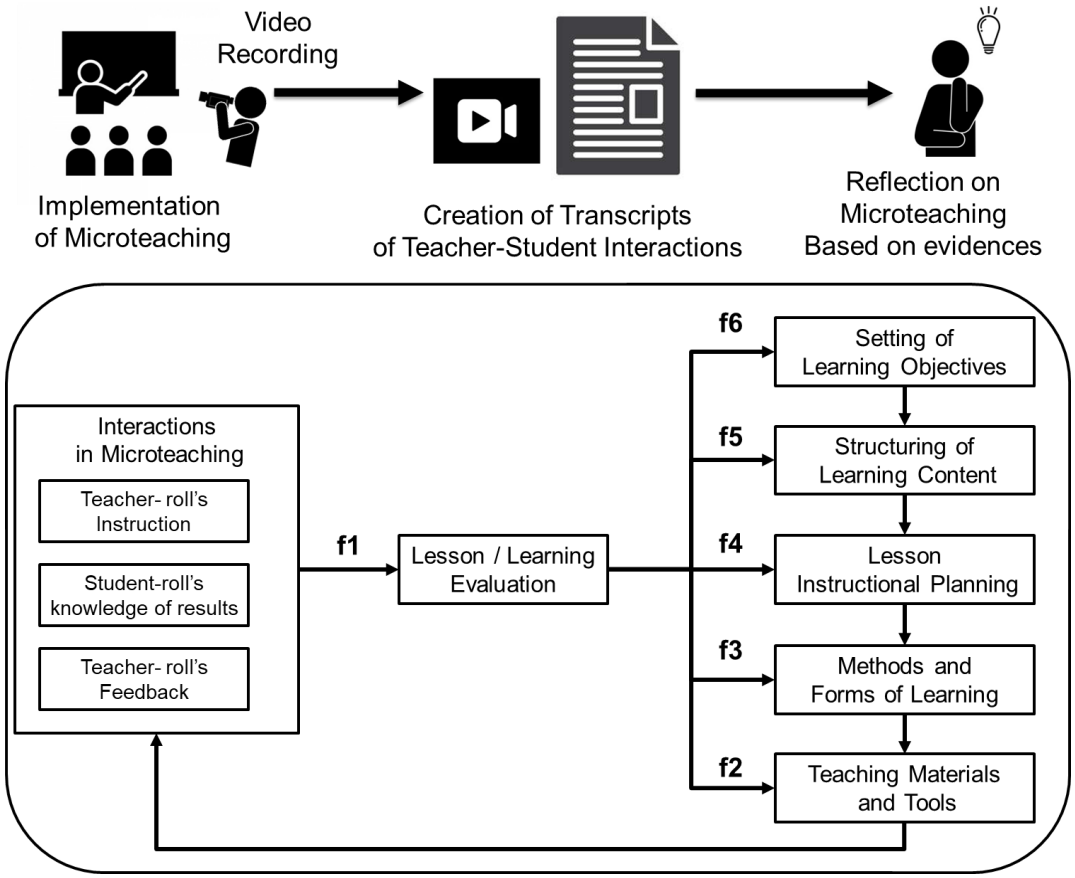

Fig. 4. Structured Reflection Model for Evaluating Teacher-Student Interactions in Microteaching

Author's Note

This work utilized OpenAI's ChatGPT for initial drafting, which was thoroughly reviewed, edited, and supplemented by the authors. We therefore assume full responsibility for the final content of this publication.

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