

# Human Relations in Instructional Supervision: EFL Trainees' Appraisal of a TEFL Practicum

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## Abstract

Instructional or educational supervision is a valuable training tool that can be used to support pre-service teacher education. When it is well implemented, it helps student teachers develop self-awareness, self-assessment and self-reflection skills. This study explores a group of 18 Beninese EFL trainees' perceptions of instructional supervision and their practicum experiences. It also examines the nature of the relations between them and their supervisors. A mixed method research design is used for the study. The data are collected through three instruments: a questionnaire addressed to the participant EFL trainees, the written records of their practicum experiences, and a follow-up interview to 6 of them who are randomly selected. The findings reveal a lot of discrepancies between the type of supervision they expected and the one they experienced during the practicum. Some useful suggestions are discussed to contribute to a better understanding of the supervisory process and the role of the supervisor in a practicum.

**Keywords:** EFL teacher education, Practicum, Supervisory process, Teacher's perception, Human relations

## 1. Introduction

The practicum is considered as a crucial component of student teachers' preparation in many teacher education programs. Its main purpose, according to Bailey (2006), is to immerse prospective teachers in classroom teaching so that they can experience teaching/learning realities. When this component of teacher education is well structured, it does not simply aim to learning to teach through the acquisition of mere technical skills, but more importantly, it helps student teachers to develop self-assessment, analytical and reflective skills that would enable them to act autonomously in their own classrooms once in service (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Meeting this objective requires that prospective teachers be given opportunities to test the hypotheses they have formulated about classroom teaching and learning, to reconstruct and expand their knowledge through critical reflection on their pedagogical behaviours. During the practicum, prospective teachers are provided with guidance by supervisors. According to Bailey (2009), some supervisors may be senior staff responsible for guiding junior colleagues. Others may be program directors, coordinators, or consultants who do not have concurrent teaching responsibilities. In the specific educational context of the Republic of Benin, the work of supervision is carried out during the practicum by experienced secondary school teachers. Since supervision is involved in the implementation of the practicum component of prospective teachers' preparation, the literature review in the next section provides some clarifications of the concept from previous researchers' perspectives. It also presents the different models of supervision that have been proposed so far, as well as the supervisor's roles associated with these models.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Instructional Supervision

In the field of general education, many definitions of the concept of supervision have been provided. For example, Daresh (2001) defines supervision as "a process of overseeing the ability of people to meet the goals of the organization in which they work" (p. 25). For Kilminster et al. (as cited in Muttar & Mohamed, 2013) supervision is the "provision of guidance and feedback on matters of personal, professional and educational development in the context of trainee's experience taking place" (p. 2). Rahmany, Hasani, & Parhoodeh (2014) consider it as a tool commonly used in education to support understanding and development. In their point of view, it includes "monitoring and analyzing classroom teaching practice and gathering appropriate data according to standards set by the administrator with the aim of providing meaningful feedback and direction to teachers to improve teaching and accordingly learning process" (p. 349). Glanz (2006) considers it as a "process that engages teachers in instructional

dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and learning and promoting student achievement” (p. 55). Writing in the specific area of language teacher education, Gebhard (1990) defines supervision as "an ongoing process of teacher education in which the supervisor observes what goes on in the teacher's classroom with an eye toward the goal of improved instruction" (p. 1). Common to the definitions is the notion of improved pedagogical action and students' learning. Therefore, supervision is considered as a tool that helps promote teacher professional growth, and thereby, enhances teaching and learning.

### 2.2 Models of Supervision

Many approaches to language teacher supervision are outlined in the literature on teacher education. As there exists a variety of approaches, a distinction is often made between supervision for developmental purposes and that for evaluative purposes. While the former adopts reflective and collaborative approaches to supervision, the latter follows prescriptive approaches (Young, 2009). In the field of language teacher education, Wallace (1991) draws a distinction between *general supervision* and *clinical supervision*. While the former focusses on administrative matters, the latter is concerned with formative or training issues in classroom context. In his description of clinical supervision, Wallace makes a further distinction between the *prescriptive approach* and the *collaborative approach* to supervision. While in the prescriptive approach the teacher is in the role of authority who assesses the supervisee's performance, in the second stance, he/she approaches supervision in a non-judgemental way. He/she rather acts as a facilitator who helps the supervisee to develop autonomy, self-assessment and reflection skills with the view to promoting the latter's professional development.

Prior to Wallace, other researchers considered clinical supervision in their works and suggested various ways of approaching it. For example, Freeman (1982) suggests three approaches to teacher supervision depending on the role of the supervisor: 1) the supervisor as authority, 2) the supervisor as a provider of alternative perspectives, 3) the supervisor as non-directive figure. Elaborating on his previous work, Freeman (1990) comes up with the concept of "intervention" when referring to supervision in his three models (directive, alternative, and non-directive forms of intervention), assuming that teacher educators provide prospective teachers with input they can learn from through their feedback during the post-observation conferences. Gebhard (1984), on his side, suggests five models of teacher supervision: 1) directive, 2) alternative, 3) collaborative, 4) non-directive, and 5) creative. Each model is associated with a specific role carried out by the supervisor during the supervisory process. In the first model, the supervisor directs, models, and evaluates teaching behaviours. In the second model, he/she widens the student teacher's repertoire of actions by suggesting a variety of alternatives. With the third model, the supervisor works actively with the student teacher in a sharing climate. In the fourth model, the supervisor listens nonjudgementally to the student teacher's description of his/her work and to his/her reflections on it. In the fifth model the supervisor can combine different models or supervisory behaviours, or can switch roles during the supervision process when the need arises. Further work by Gebhard in 1990 results in the proposition of another categorisation of clinical supervision which consists of three models outlined as *collaborative supervision*, *creative supervision* and *self-help-explorative supervision*. In the first model, the supervisor and the teacher work collaboratively in a sharing atmosphere to identify teaching and learning problems. The creative supervision model is a combination of the other four models (directive, nondirective, alternative, and collaborative). The self-help-explorative model is presented as an extension of the creative supervision model. It enables the supervisor and the supervisee to gain self-awareness through observation and exploration, as they both "explore teaching through observation of their own and others' teaching in order to gain an awareness of teaching behaviors and their consequences, as well as to generate alternative ways to teach" (Gebhard, 1990, p. 163).

### 2.3 Supervisors' Roles: Research Considerations

Wallace (1991) defines the supervisor as "anyone who has ... the duty of monitoring and improving the quality of teaching done by other colleagues in an educational situation" (p.107). In most teacher education programs, the practicum is often considered as a relevant context for observing trainees' pedagogical behaviours, analysing them and promoting their reflections on their actions. In that framework, instructional supervision plays a crucial role in helping student teachers to identify the problems with their teaching, to reflect on them and to think about ways of improving their practices. The main role of supervisors, according to Bailey (2006), is to encourage supervisees to develop the skill of self-inquiry. In the supervisory process, especially during the observation of teaching/learning events, the supervisor often completes a checklist of descriptions of competencies outlined on an observation form that the student teacher is expected to demonstrate during his/her performance. After the lesson observation, there is generally a post observation conference that enables the supervisor to discuss aspects of the teaching/learning event with the supervisee in order to help the latter to think about how to improve his/her practice.

The various supervision models proposed in the language teacher education literature and discussed previously suggest different roles supervisors might play during the supervision process, different ways in which they might structure their supervision work, especially the post-observation discussions. These roles determine the type of human relations between them and their supervisees. For example, Gebhard (1990), in his description of the different roles supervisors may play during the supervision process, points out that the latter may direct teachers' teaching, offer suggestions, model teaching, advise teachers, and evaluate teachers' teaching.

No matter the aim of the supervision, a typical part of the supervisor's role is to observe student teachers' pedagogical behaviours and to meet with them for post-observation discussions in order to provide them with feedback. Observing and providing constructive feedback are two crucial skills supervisors should receive adequate training for in order to carry out the work efficiently. Unfortunately, in many teacher education contexts, supervisors carry out the work of supervision without any prior formal professional preparation. They are assigned this work because of their experience in teaching. Moreover, research in the area of supervisors' professional training is scarce.

Pointing to the function of language teacher supervision, Bailey (2006) argues that it can have a developmental purpose and be used as a tool for monitoring teacher professional development or an evaluative purpose and serve as a means of evaluating teaching. Therefore, the supervisor can serve as a mere evaluator or as a guide. With regard to this reality and to the meaning of the term "supervisor" which implies an expert-novice relationship, Sewall (2009) suggests a collaborative-reflective approach to instructional supervision. Other researchers share Sewall's perspective on instructional supervision by pointing to the fact that effective supervision is one that establishes and nurtures positive human relations between supervisor and supervisee, emphasises collaborative discussions and fosters teacher development (e.g. Cheng and Cheng, 2013; Kayaoglu, 2012; Wallace, 1991; Young, 2009)

#### *2.4 Teachers' Perceptions of Supervision*

The main purpose of supervision is to help teachers to improve their instructional practices and thereby their students' learning. The attainment of this goal is dependent upon the human relations in supervision and the resulting teacher attitude towards it. Research has shown that while some teachers show a positive attitude toward supervision (e.g. Cogan, 1973; Gordon, 1990; Kutsyuruba, 2003), others have a negative view about it (e.g. Acheson & Gall, 1997; Kayaoglu, 2012). Some studies that examined teachers' attitudes toward supervision pointed to an improvement of teaching and learning when teachers hold positive attitudes towards instructional supervision and consider it as a crucial variable of their professional development. These studies also indicated that instructional supervision is likely to reach its expected goal when the relations between supervisors and teachers are collegial and teachers have the opportunity to discuss aspects of their teaching with supervisors during the post-observation conferences in a secure and nurturing climate (e.g. Cogan, 1973; Wiles and Lovell, 1975).

### **3. The Study Methodology**

The teacher education program under consideration in this study includes a practicum component that is implemented in the course of the last year of training. The student teachers are assigned to experienced EFL teachers who supervise them in the selected secondary schools over a four-month period. It is important to note that the supervisors in the selected secondary schools have received no formal training in supervision, but they have developed their skill from their experiences in the teaching profession. The practicum is sanctioned by an inspection carried out by a team composed of a faculty member of the teacher education college, a secondary school inspector, and a supervisor other than the one who supervised the student teacher during the practicum. Since most of the supervision work that took place during the practicum was carried out basing on individual supervisors' experiences and perspectives on supervision, it is assumed in this study that the participant student teachers' hold different opinions about the implementation of this rubric of their practicum and how it could be improved. The purpose of the study is, therefore, to explore these EFL student teachers' opinions about supervision and its implementation in the secondary schools. It also examines the nature of the relations between supervisor and supervisee from their perspectives. To reach the research purpose, the following questions have been considered in the study :

- How do the participant EFL student teachers perceive supervision in practicum?
- What do they think about the implementation of supervision during their practicum?

A mixed research method is used to collect data in order to answer the two research questions. The participants in the study are 18 EFL student teachers (14 male and 4 female) who are in their third year of the training program during the academic year 2015-2016. Pseudonyms are used in this report to refer to them in order to keep anonymity. In an attempt to explore their perceptions of supervision in practicum, a questionnaire is addressed to them. The questionnaire presents a series of statements about supervision that they are asked to mark using a scale presenting

three response options: *I agree, no idea, I disagree*. To inquire into their opinions about the way supervision is implemented during the practicum in their respective secondary schools, they are asked to keep individual journals in which they are required to report their experiences during the practicum in terms of what happened, their feelings, and reflections. In addition, interview data were gathered from six of them who were randomly selected in order to get in-depth data about the implementation of practicum in the secondary schools. The data from the questionnaire are analysed in terms of percentages. As for the data from the student teachers' individual journals and interviews, they are analysed thematically to identify the themes that emerge from them, and that represent their opinions about the way the supervision is implemented in the secondary schools where they carried out the practicum.

#### 4. Results

##### 4.1 The Participant EFL Trainees' Perceptions of Instructional Supervision

To gain insight into the EFL student teachers' perceptions of instructional supervision, the data collected from their responses to the questionnaire addressed to them were studied on four categories: the value of instructional supervision, the role and function of instructional supervision, the nature of human relations in instructional supervision, and the impact of instructional supervision.

As far as the first category is concerned, the respondents' answers to statements 1 and 10 indicate that although a few of them (33.33%) think that instructional supervision is an administrative formality, they all perceive it to be useful for the student teacher. Concerning the second category, their responses to statements 2, 6, 7, and 8 reveal their perceptions of the role of supervision in their practical training. As a proof of their awareness of the usefulness of instructional supervision, all of them (100%) acknowledged its contribution to student teachers' growth through the increase of their knowledge about the profession and an improvement of their teaching skills. Moreover, the large majority considers that instructional supervision is an awareness raising tool (94.44%) and that it raises motivation as well (83.33%). As for human relations in instructional supervision, the trainees' responses to statements 5, 11, and 12 are considered. The results show that more than two thirds of them think that supervision should be collaborative (72.22%), supportive (77.77%), and participatory (94.44%).

Concerning their perceptions of the impact of instructional supervision, their responses to statements 3, 4, and 9 in the questionnaire indicate that more than half of them (61.11%) consider it as an aspect of the practicum that puts trainees under pressure. In addition, a few of them think that it increases trainees' anxiety. The table below presents detailed information about the respondents' choices.

Table 1. The participant EFL trainees' perceptions of instructional supervision

Categories	Statements	I agree	No idea	I disagree
Value of instructional supervision	Instructional supervision is useful for the student-teacher	18 (100%)	00 (0%)	00 (0%)
	Instructional supervision is an administrative formality	06 (33.33%)	05 (27.77%)	07 (38.88%)
Role and function of instructional supervision	Instructional supervision increases knowledge about teaching	18 (100%)	00 (0%)	00 (0%)
	Instructional supervision helps improve teaching	18 (100%)	00 (0%)	00 (0%)
	Instructional supervision helps discover one's strengths and weaknesses in teaching	17 (94.44%)	01 (05.55%)	00 (0%)
	Instructional supervision increases motivation to teach	15 (83.33%)	02 (11.11%)	01 (05.55%)
Human relations in instructional supervision	Instructional supervision should be collaborative	13 (72.22%)	03 (16.66%)	02 (11.11%)
	Instructional supervision should be supportive	14 (77.77%)	02 (11.11%)	02 (11.11%)
	Instructional supervision should involve participation and mutual sharing between supervisor and supervisee	17 (94.44%)	00 (0%)	01 (05.55%)
Impact of instructional supervision	Instructional supervision creates anxiety	06 (33.33%)	04 (22.22%)	08 (44.44%)
	Instructional supervision destroys self-confidence	02 (11.11%)	06 (33.33%)	10 (55.55%)
	Instructional supervision puts trainees under pressure	11 (61.11%)	02 (11.11%)	05 (27.77%)

Note. N= 18

#### 4.2 The Participant EFL Trainees' Opinions about the Implementation of Supervision during Their Practicum

To answer the second research question, data were collected from the EFL trainees' accounts of their practicum experiences. They were asked to keep a journal in which they were required to record the events they experienced in terms of what happened, their feelings and reflections. A theme analysis was carried out on the collected data in order to identify the participant EFL trainees' views on their practicum experiences, and also to determine the nature of the relations between supervisor and supervisee in the framework of their practicum. The major themes that emerged from this analysis are as follows: (1) a prescriptive supervision, (2) supervisors' negative feedback, (3) trainees' loneliness, (4) sharing and collegiality during the teachers' workshops (5) a supportive school climate.

A large majority (16) of the participant EFL trainees experienced a directive and authoritarian model of supervision in which the supervisors used a prescriptive approach to supervision. The latter assessed and judged the supervisees' performances and provide a post-observation feedback in terms of what the supervisees did wrong and what they should do to improve their teaching. Only two of them had the chance to receive suggestions from the supervisors about other alternatives they might choose from in future teaching. They said what follows:

*"After the teaching, he told me what I did wrong. He told me how to manage the class." (Bob)*

*"The supervisor asked me to implement a lesson. At the end, he reminds me that the date should be written on the board by the learners." (Anita)*

*"At the end of the lesson, I was very worried. He pointed to the aspects that need to be improved and told me that I should have the students read the comprehension questions before the text." (Fred)*

A second theme that emerged from the data relates to the focus of the supervisor's feedback during the post-observation conferences. Most of the feedback that the EFL trainees' received focused on the weak aspects of their teaching. Some of them contend about this aspect as follows:

*"That was my first performance. At the end, the supervisor made me know my flaws." (Bill)*

*"I did the teaching and the students didn't react. At the end, she told me the mistakes I made." (Alan)*

It appears from what precedes that trainees are not given the opportunity for self-assessment of their own performance, neither are they encouraged through questions to discover the weaknesses in their teaching and to think about other alternatives. The opportunity to engage them in self-inquiry and reflection on their own teaching is not offered by supervisors during the post-observation conference. The latter rather carry out a diagnosis of the observed performance, identify the problems, point to them and prescribe solutions that supervisees are invited to take into account to improve their future performance. In this framework, the supervisor acts as an authority and the trainee listens to the prescribed alternatives, takes notes of the comments in order to integrate them. Here is what two of them had to say about this issue:

*".....She pointed to the aspects that I should improve; all weak points of my teaching. I wrote down all of them." (Mathew)*

*"My supervisor told me what I must do to improve my teaching." (Cathy)*

No chance is given to the supervisees for a collaborative partnership that would take place through interaction in a sharing atmosphere during the post-observation feedback session in order to enable the EFL trainees to develop self-awareness, skills of reflection, self-discovery, and problem-solving.

Thirdly, the data gathered from the trainees' written journals reveal that most of them experienced loneliness in the classrooms due to their supervisor's absence. With regard to this situation, some of them were frustrated when left alone with the challenges of classroom realities. Here is what they said about this aspect:

*"The supervisor missed the class without informing me. I was so frustrated " (Ben)*

*"I was alone in the classroom. He did not arrive. I tried to keep the students busy. I didn't like that because he didn't tell me that he wouldn't come." (Karl)*

*"My supervisor and I were supposed to have class at 7 o'clock, but he didn't come until the end of the session. " (Marcus)*

*"My supervisor didn't come. I was in charge of taking care of the class." (Bill)*

The fourth theme that emerged for the data and that warrants attention relates to the trainees' opinions about the school context, more specifically the friendly climate that prevails among teachers during the weekly teacher development workshops. All the participant EFL trainees had the opportunity to attend the workshops in their respective schools. Most of them alluded to these teachers' meeting in terms of a medium of information,

socialisation and collaboration among teachers. They contend as follows:

*"I attended the teachers' workshop for the first time. I like the warm welcome of the other teachers."* (Clara)

*"I participated in the teachers' workshop. We discussed about the instructions given to students in test papers. I like it too much. We created a friendship."* (Alan)

*"At the teachers' workshop, the teachers asked me to put questions; I asked questions about things I would like to have more information about. They answered me and gave me more explanations."* (Cathy)

Finally, they found the administrative staff in their respective schools friendly and supportive. They expressed positive feelings about the staff in the following words:

*"Upon my arrival in the school with my colleagues, the school principal and some members of the administration came to greet us. I was very touched by the way we were welcomed."* (Ben)

*"The administration of the school is very kind. They welcomed all trainees. They gave us some advice to help us succeed our training."* (Alice)

The data from the participant EFL trainees' written records reveal a discrepancy between their perceptions of supervision as expressed in their responses to the questionnaire addressed to them and the reality they experienced during the practicum. In their responses to the questionnaire, they perceive educational supervision as an instrument that would help them improve their teaching through self-awareness, self-discovery, and collaboration in a sharing atmosphere, which is contrary to what they experienced in the classrooms. During the practicum, the supervisors rather adopted a prescriptive approach to supervision. They assessed and judged the supervisees' performances, they pointed to aspects that did not work, and they told the latter what they must do in future performances. In this approach to supervision, the supervisor acts as an authority, which inhibits interaction between both partners. This makes discussion and reflection non-existent during the post-observation conferences. In this framework, the supervisee finds him/herself in the role of listener and note-taker.

Besides, the participant EFL trainees' opinions about the implementation of supervision, as stated through the interview data elicited from six of them, corroborate the written accounts given of the practicum experiences. Four major themes emerged from the analysis of these interview data: misunderstanding, gap between theory and practice, prescriptive post-observation feedback, dissatisfaction.

In their description of their practicum experiences, five out of the six informants confessed that they experienced a lot of frustration during the practicum because of the misunderstanding between them and their supervisors. As for the sixth participant, though it was not her case, she pointed to the same feeling when alluding to her fellow trainees' experiences. Such a feeling relates mainly to the nature of the relationship between them and the supervisors. According to them, it was a relationship characterised by an inhibiting authority that hinders collaboration, discussion, and the supervisees' attempts to make suggestions during the post-observation feedback sessions. They pointed out that they could not get along with their supervisors. Here is what they said about this issue:

*"What shocked me was my supervisor's behavior. I was marginalised by him. There was a lot of misunderstanding between us. I was so frustrated."* (Mathew).

*"Almost the majority of trainees have problems with their supervisors. They could not get on well with them because they do not admit that supervisees make suggestions to them during the feedback session. This situation is frustrating. We learnt about theories of teaching at the training college and it can happen that we think about things to suggest."* (Anita).

The second theme that warrants attention in their stated opinions about the supervisory process relates to the gap between the theoretical notions they were exposed to in their TEFL courses and their supervisors' pedagogical practices. All of them acknowledged this discrepancy by pointing to the fact that they dared not argue with the supervisors on aspects of their teaching practices that were not congruent with theory. Some of them contended in the following words:

*"He would almost scold me about items in my lesson plans, and he would make suggestions that were in contradiction with what we were taught in the courses at the training college."* (Thom)

*"When I was getting prepared for my practice exam, I submitted my lesson plan to him, but he refused to give his opinions on it as I didn't follow his procedure."* (Fred)

*"I noticed that she doesn't follow at all what we learnt in theory. During the feedback session, she asks me if I have any questions, but I am not bold enough to ask her questions on her way of doing things."* (Alan)

*"At some point during the practicum, I could not get on with him. We didn't agree with each other simply because I*

*learnt about a certain way of doing things in my courses, but on the field, the procedure is totally different. If you argue with them, they will simply ignore your presence in the classroom."* (Ben)

The third major theme that emerged from their stated opinions relates to the nature of the feedback they receive from the supervisors during the post-observation conferences. All six informants confessed that they rather received a prescriptive feedback, which constitutes a hindrance to genuine dialogue between them and the supervisors. When asked the following question *"What happened during the feedback sessions ? "*, here is what they confessed:

*"He often invites me to sit in front of him; then he tells me what did not work and things that I should do to improve."* (Mathew)

*"At the end of my teaching, she tells me about the wrong aspects and what I should do in the future."* (Anita)

*"During the feedback session, she sometimes asks me if I have any question, but I dare not ask for fear she might be upset. One day, I pointed to the difference between the procedure she wants me to use and what we are taught in college in our TEFL methods courses. Her answer was that what we are taught is what should be done, but the context determines choices."* (Anita)

The fourth theme that emerged from their opinions about the supervision process relates to the feeling of dissatisfaction expressed by all informants with regards to their expectations which were not met during the practicum as far as human relations are concerned. They all expected to be involved in a collaborative type of supervision where they will work in a sharing climate with their supervisor to identify teaching and learning problems. Unfortunately, it was not the case. They also expected a friendly relationship between them and the supervisors. Here is what they said about the type of supervisor they expected:

*"I was expecting a friendly and courteous supervisor."* (Mathew)

*"It was rather a vertical relationship. He tells me what I should do and how I should do things. I have to follow."* (Alan)

*"It was not as I expected. Sometimes, I felt like giving my opinions on some aspects of his lessons, this was during the observation phase, but I dared not. Even during the feedback session after my teaching, there are some of his points of view that I do not share, but I could not contradict him. There is a report that the supervisor should write and sign and send to the college. I don't want him to write bad things in it about me."* (Fred)

The data gathered through the interview also reveal that contrary to their expectations, the participant EFL trainees did not experience any type of supervision that would promote their development through self-awareness and reflection on aspects of their performances during the practicum. Such development is likely to take place if trainees are given the opportunity to discuss aspects of their teaching in a secure climate.

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study show that the majority of the participant EFL trainees are aware of the value of instructional supervision. They consider it as a useful tool that contributes to their learning and growth. They also appreciate the school culture, especially the collegiality among teachers and the support of the school administration. However, an aspect of the findings that warrants attention here is the dissatisfaction expressed by all of them as regards the model of supervision they were given exposure to by their supervisors, the authority and power exercised by the latter, and the evaluative and directive feedback they received from them during the post-observation conferences. Indeed, the feedback provided by the supervisors was mostly focused on the wrong aspects of the trainees' teaching and on what they do should in future performances. No room is left for fruitful dialogue and real collaboration.

For supervision to be effective, the type of feedback provided by supervisors on trainees' performance should be constructive, and the supervision process should emphasise collegiality, sharing, and collaborative decision-making. It should aim trainees' empowerment, the development of self-assessment, critical thinking, and self-reflection skills in them. Within such a framework, the supervisor is in the role of guide and facilitator. The rationale for adopting a collaborative and collegial approach to supervision relates to the positive impact it has on the relation between supervisor and supervisee. The findings indicate that most of the participant EFL trainees expressed feelings of frustration as regards the relation with their supervisors and pointed out that this type of relation did not meet their expectations. Using a collegial and collaborative approach to supervision helps to reduce the power distance between supervisor and supervisee and to establish an egalitarian type of human relation between them (Beach & Reinhartz, 2000).

Another aspect of the findings that should be discussed relates to the participant EFL trainees' worries about getting bad grades for the practicum. In the teacher education under consideration in the study, supervisors are required to

grade their supervisees' behavior at the end of the practicum and to report the grades to the teacher training college. It is worth pointing out that those supervisors continue to use a traditional approach to supervision, an approach that reflects the behaviouristic view of learning. They consider themselves as models to be imitated by the supervisees. These supervisees dare not question their supervisors' practices for fear of challenging their knowledge and "expertise in the craft of teaching" (Wallace, 1991, p. 6), which might be detrimental to the grades they get from them for the practicum. The goal of supervision is not habit formation in supervisees. It should rather enable the latter to explore their own teaching performance, to see how the theory they have been exposed to in their TEFL courses fits in the practice they experience in the secondary school classrooms, and enrich their understanding of language teaching and learning. This goal cannot be reached if supervisees are compelled to follow imitative models provided by supervisors, ignorant of the rationale underlying these models of classroom practices.

Finally, an important issue that the findings of this study raise pertains to the professional preparation of supervisors. In the context under consideration, supervisors have received no prior formal training for the purpose. They are experienced EFL teachers who rely on their teaching experiences to carry out the supervision work. There exists no clearly defined set of competencies that could serve as criteria for their promotion to supervisor positions. The only criterion considered to date is their seniority in the teaching profession. With regard to this issue, Kayaoglu (2012) has pointed to the fact that teachers' promotion to supervision positions remains a mystery in most contexts as little is known about their leadership qualities and their effectiveness as good role models. Previous to Kayaoglu, other researchers alluded to the same issue of supervisors' preparation in terms of scarcity of adequate literature that would serve as theoretical base for their formal training and to the non-existence of a clearly defined set of professional skills for the job of instructional supervision (Alfonso, Firth, & Neville, 1984). As a consequence, in most settings, supervisors continue to hold the traditional view of supervision and carry out their work from that stance. This situation constitutes a hindrance to mutual sharing, constructive dialogue, respect, and trust between supervisor and supervisee.

Given that supervision is an important part of the practicum, it plays a crucial role in student teachers' preparation. In order for it to be effective, it should foster critical thinking and reflective practice (Burns & Richards, 2009; Hiebert, Morris, Berk, and Jansen, 2007). It should take place in a secure climate where supervisees have the opportunity to develop decision-making and problem solving skills as well as the sense of autonomy and responsibility.

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## Appendix

### Questionnaire to EFL teacher trainees

This questionnaire is addressed to you to collect your opinions about instructional supervision. Please take time to complete and return it to the researcher. For each statement, put a cross in the column corresponding to your selected response. Thanks for your contribution.

Statements	I agree	No idea	I disagree
1- Instructional supervision is useful for the student teacher.			
2- Instructional supervision increases knowledge about teaching.			
3- Instructional supervision creates anxiety.			
4- Instructional supervision destroys self-confidence			
5- Instructional supervision should be collaborative			
6- Instructional supervision helps improve teaching			
7- Instructional supervision helps discover one's strengths and weaknesses in teaching			
8- Instructional supervision increases motivation to teach			
9- Instructional supervision puts trainees under pressure			
10- Instructional supervision is an administrative formality			
11- Instructional supervision should be supportive			
12- Instructional supervision should involve participation and mutual sharing between supervisor and supervisee			