



JUDGING THE JUDGES: EXAMINING SUPERVISORS ASSESSMENT OF UNOBSERVABLE SKILLS IN DEVELOPED EFL TEACHING PRACTICE MODEL

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Abstract:

This qualitative descriptive case study reflects the researcher's experience, as a Teaching Practice (TP) Co-ordinator at the Libyan Faculty of Education Tripoli (FET), in developing and examining academic supervisors' implementation of an innovative TP Assessment Model for EFL trainees. Previous assessment lacked accuracy and comprehensiveness and relied solely on assessing behavioural observable skills. The new TPAM incorporates, for the first time at FET, Unobservable Skills Assessment through supporting documents that supervisors use to assess trainees' skills in classroom observation, feedback provision, self-reflection, and reporting on TP experience, all of which comprise a Teaching Practice Portfolio (TPP). The study focuses on a key concern: (1) How to develop existing assessment criteria in an objective and comprehensive manner embracing both observable and unobservable skills. Two operational sub-questions emerged: (2) How would the supervisors' implement the Unobservable Skills Assessment in the TPAM; (3) How would trainees respond to Unobservable Skills Assessment criteria? Data were collected through quantitative analysis of the supporting documents; semi-structured interviews with seven supervisors involved; focus group discussions with trainee teachers. The findings show that while the supervisors were satisfied with the developed assessment criteria, their overall performance in implementing the Unobservable Skills Assessment was poor; besides a lack of immediate feedback provision after school visits, the supporting documents for unobservable skills were not fully executed. Only two supervisors out of seven demonstrated acceptable adherence to the model requirements. Some trainees had reservations regarding the extra workload required in carrying out self-reflections and in writing reports of TP experience; others considered the criterion of professional development outlook inconsequential during initial teacher training.

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1. Introduction

In EFL teacher education, Teaching Practice (TP) is considered one of the most important stages in the preparation of teachers at Faculties of Education. At this stage, trainee teachers (TTs) apply the knowledge and skills they acquired during the theoretical part of their preparation period in the hope to become proficient practicing teachers. A report by the Libyan Organization for Policy and Strategies (2016, p.19), states that there is an urgent need to raise the efficiency of outputs by Faculties of Education ... and to identify the causes of deficiencies in outputs in order to deploy appropriate solutions. As Darling-Hammond (1990) argues, outcomes of pre-service teacher assessment help inform teacher practices and, in turn, reform teacher education programmes.

Accordingly, systems for assessing trainee teachers in TP have received specific attention by educators and researchers alike. In fact, existing TP assessment criteria in Libyan EFL programmes require particular attention for two tangible reasons. First, the recent implementation of the new 21st Century “English for Libya” curriculum in 2018 requires higher standards in teacher training and assessment; second, the weaknesses in language competency of Libyan school leavers call for higher standards in teaching and teacher preparation. Critically assessed newly qualified EFL teachers will undoubtedly contribute to improved levels of future generations of school leavers. Leniency, apathy or subjectivity in implementing assessment criteria by teacher educators undermines the teaching profession and negatively affects learner levels. To that effect, Goldrick (2002, p.8) argues that *“strengthening teacher evaluation... holds promise not only to professionalize teaching, but also to invest educators with greater information, confidence, and ability to improve their instructional practices and to help students achieve their fullest potential.”*

Traditionally, in Libyan teacher education, academic supervisors responsible for assessing trainees’ TP performance have focused on behavioural observable skills e.g. lesson planning, teaching methods, class activities, classroom management, etc. However, an assessment model for EFL trainees should consider both observable and unobservable skills, for the latter are just as critical in assessing potential prospective skills such as reflectiveness, self-assessment/criticality, ability to provide comments, views on professional development.

In a reflective approach to teacher education, Richards and Lockhart (1996) maintain that reflective practice encourages teachers to examine their attitudes and beliefs about teaching practice as basis for critical reflection regarding their own performance. For the purpose of TP assessment, however, unobservable skills exclude what Borg (2003, p.163) describes as *“the unobservable dimension of teaching- teachers’ mental lives”*, e.g. teacher cognition/ knowledge, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes; these are seen as part of the theoretical grounding trainees acquire through lectures during the preparation stage.

2. Literature Review

In carrying out a literature review regarding TP assessment practices in the Libyan EFL context, the researcher considered sources relevant to the Arab world. This approach was thought appropriate in providing a contextualised conceptual framework suited for the present study, particularly because other studies in native speaking countries do not necessarily address criteria of accuracy or fluency.

2.1 Teaching Practice and the role of trainees

Teaching Practice is defined as that program organized by faculties of education for students who are at the final stage before graduation. During TP, EFL trainees enhance their language teaching skills that prepare them for an independent professional career.

As Sharma (2009, p.1) points out, *“teaching practice is an essential aspect of ELT programmes. It integrates classroom theory with practical work experience ... It is based on the premise that learning in the work world can enhance the learning in the classroom. It is geared towards preparation of new teachers into the teaching profession”*.

Moreover, TP provides TTs with opportunities to *“observe teaching techniques and methods, apply and evaluate teaching abilities and knowledge, and recognize and enhance competencies associated with effective teaching”* (Hall, 2017: 2).

Accordingly, a trainee teacher, as Nasr (2003) stresses, is the cornerstone of teacher education processes; if education is recognized, in essence, as human engineering concerned with building the minds, then the teacher becomes the human engineer who builds those minds. Therefore, a trainee teacher must be well prepared and assessed for this vital task ahead. TP is then considered a critical stage in language teacher education, where educational principles, specialized knowledge and teaching methodology, skills and techniques gained throughout the theoretical preparation stage are employed and practised in teacher training schools (Al-Zamli, 1990).

In addition, the endeavour to comprehensively prepare TTs encompasses sustainable professional development, where the teacher is not limited to a specific set of knowledge or skills acquired during the preparation stage, but rather, as To'ma (2014: 81) emphasizes, *“the teacher becomes a person who is forever learning and striving to master his/her profession. He reflects on practice and self-evaluation in order to improve his performance”*. Thus, a successful teacher keeps up with all that is new in his/her field of specialization using all possible means and resources available and puts them into practice independently and in partnership with fellow teachers (Elmabruk, 2014).

2.2 Assessment of EFL Trainees

In EFL teacher education, it is a key requirement for assessors to have an adequate understanding of the principles of sound assessment and an understanding of how to apply such principles is a fundamental professional requirement (DeLuca, LaPointe-McEwan, & Luhanga, 2016).

TP programmes often combine two types of assessment; formative assessment during training in addition to evaluative assessment at the end of training. Formative assessment occupies greater importance because it repetitively accompanies training processes in school visits and provides trainees with several opportunities to reinforce strengths and improve weaknesses. Formative assessment involves a set of criteria implemented by faculty supervisors where the extent of mastering different teaching skills is assessed against such criteria (Mahfoud, 2016).

Formative assessment methods include regular observation of trainees, performance measures, interviews and achievement portfolios (Al-Rantisi, 2010). Ryan & Kuhs (1993) emphasise that trainee portfolios integrate several forms of assessment comprising a compiled record of documented activities that trainees carry out, e.g. classroom observation, supervisor feedback, self-reflection on teaching performance, self-assessment and lesson plans.

Baserah (2015, p.113) highlights the importance of "*preparing pre-service teachers in general and English language teachers in particular so that they can perform their language teaching roles in the most adequate manner*"; therefore, enhanced assessment of trainees' competencies and skills bears significant consequences on their TP performance. As Zamel (2013, p.7) argues, the quality of assessment contributes to the quality of performance evaluation of trainee teachers, and to a reliable diagnosis of their strengths and weaknesses.

2.3 Unobservable Skills Assessment

Although there has been emphasis in the literature on behavioural observable skills in TP assessment, implicit mention of unobservable skills is noted, e.g. Al-Rantisi (2010), Ryan & Kuhs (1993), Baserah (2015), ESOL Practicum Handbook (2017).

Unobservable skills are assessed not through explicit behaviour but through a combination of assessment tools, e.g. interviews, written reports, reflection, self-assessment or completed checklists. Such unobservable skills highlight trainees awareness on certain skill and draws attention to developing own practices.

In reference to summative assessment, The ESOL Practicum Handbook (2017) for instance, refers to competencies that are "*not directly observed*" i.e., observed in an indirect way, or unobservable, as the research chose to label them; the assessment of which is carried out through other means than those for observed competencies, thus

"...any competency listed that was not observed directly in the classroom must be assessed through a face-to-face conversation with the candidate. This can be accomplished through questions that require the candidate to explain how their practice will demonstrate mastery of the standard" (p.24).

To describe those indirectly observed skills being assessed, ESOL Practicum Handbook (2017) uses the word "*demonstrate*" to reflect "*unobservability*", e.g. in measuring standards of self-reflection: "*demonstrate ability to reflect on instruction*", or

professional development: “*demonstrate involvement in professional growth opportunities and apply knowledge gained to impact teaching and learning*”. Regular self-reflection is hence a significant means of tracking professional growth.

In Guttentag (2016), student teachers are encouraged to keep a journal in which they self-reflect. Student teachers keep a journal in which they reflect, at least on a weekly basis if not more often, on their growth as professionals, questions that their observations and experiences have raised, and their on-going goals (p.9).

In addition to regular self-reflection, a report on overall TP experience is used as tool to assess the unobservable skills of reporting, summarising and reflecting on experience. Bright (n.d) from the Graduate School of Education, Portland State University states a list of requirements for such a report:

- *What were some of the positives that you experienced during your practicum?*
- *What were some of your challenges during practicum? How did you deal with them?*
- *What will you change in your teaching skills and techniques as a result of your practicum experience?*
- *What did you learn from your practicum experience? (p.4).*

3. Material and Methods

3.1 Research problem

The research problem lies in previous ineffective TP assessment criteria (Appendix 1) for EFL Libyan trainees, which had been used at the FET since autumn 2013. The assessment is not only limited to observable behavioural skills but also neglects unobservable skills that are thought decisive in TP assessment. Accordingly, there was a need to develop a more efficient, objective and comprehensive assessment model that accounts for unobservable skills.

Observable TP skills are easily measured and include visible activities such as lesson plans, classroom management, engaging pupils, questioning techniques, etc. On the other hand, unobservable skills are just as significant -if not more- and take account of trainees’ reflective practices, self-assessment and self-reporting, the ability to offer and accept feedback, and personal perspectives on professional development. The use of a Teaching Practice Portfolio (TPP) here can be viewed as a collection of TTs documented evidence of such tasks and activities, which provide a multi-dimensional interpretation of teaching practices and professional development (Shannon, 1994).

3.2 Participants

The research participants consisted of seven academic supervisors (six females and one male) who were allocated to eleven local TP schools during the spring of 2018. Out of 53 registered trainees, eight volunteered to participate in a focus group discussion. The allocation of supervisors (S1-S7) to trainees in assigned TP schools is shown in Table 1.

3.3 Document samples

The documents used as samples for data analyses consist of three categories:

- 1) The old Teaching Practice Assessment Form (Appendix 1);
- 2) The developed Academic Supervisor's Assessment Form (Appendix 2)
- 3) Assessment Support Documents (for details, see Appendices in the TP Guide by Elmabruk (2018). These were designed to help the supervisors in assessing unobservable TP skills. Along with the completed Academic Supervisor's Assessment Form, altogether these constituted a Trainee Assessment Portfolio (TPP), as follows:
 - Academic supervisor's feedback form;
 - Classroom observation forms with commentary (focus on class teacher/ pupils, peer comments);
 - Report on classroom observation week
 - Self-reflection and assessment record;
 - Summary of TP experience (written report);
 - Perception and outlook of the trainee as a future independent teacher with respect to own professional development (written report).

3.4 Research questions

Based on the stated problem, the study focuses on a major research question:

- 1) How can TP assessment of EFL trainees by academic supervisors be developed so that it is more objective, comprehensive and accounts for unobservable skills? Three further questions emerged:
 - 2) What are the supervisors' views regarding the developed assessment model and the integration of unobservable skills?
 - 3) To what degree of efficacy would the supervisors implement unobservable skills assessment in the developed model?
 - 4) How do the EFL trainee teachers' feel concerning the unobservable skills criteria?

3.5 Methods

To provide satisfactory answers to the set research questions, a descriptive qualitative case-study approach was adopted in which in-depth detailed data was gathered with respect to implementing the developed Unobservable Skills Assessment. The following instruments were used:

- 1) **Document analyses:** The analysed documents included the old supervisor's assessment form and the assessment support documents as listed above in Document samples.
- 2) **Supervisors' semi-structured interviews:** These were held with six academic supervisors (one was not available for interviewing) and revealed supervisors' reaction towards Unobservable Skills Assessment and the developed model.
- 3) **Trainees' focus group discussions:** Eight trainees (out of 53) volunteered to participate in a focus group discussion at the end of TP. The main theme for

discussion was trainees' feedback comments on the Unobservable Skills Assessment criteria and requirements.

4. Results and Discussion

Previously, the supervisor's assessment at FET consisted of a single form (Appendix 1) based on five observable competency skills:

- 1) "Lesson plan" with two criteria: organization of notebook and lesson objectives;
- 2) "Lesson presentation" which has six criteria: clear introduction / warming-up, logical sequence of lesson / time management, adequate illustrative examples, activities and exercises, clarity of voice, assessment and homework;
- 3) "Language proficiency" including five criteria: grammar, pronunciation, fluency, spelling, clarity of instructions and communication;
- 4) "Classroom management" having three criteria: seating arrangement (pair/ group work), pupil participation, dealing with different levels;
- 5) "Teaching aids" with four criteria: effective use of blackboard, audio aids, visual aids, and use of technology (projector).

4.1 Criticising previous assessment

Criticism concerning this model includes:

- 1) Absence of administrative data, e.g. training school, class teacher, classes taught.
- 2) No distribution of marks. Rather, the maximum score (40) was distributed equally across criteria.
- 3) Competencies having only one criterion e.g. lesson planning and classroom environment, which, for validity of assessment, is insufficient.
- 4) The linguistic skill competency equates pronunciation proficiency with grammar, which is more important and should have higher rating.
- 5) A combined criterion is insufficient to assess lesson planning and is invalid because it assesses two skills at once.
- 6) Skills competencies can be assessed with increased validity though additional criteria.
- 7) The assessment form ignores unobservable skills, such as reflective practice, self-assessment, perceptions of development, ability to accept and offer feedback etc.

4.2 Developing a new model

Before embarking upon the development process, the researcher consulted several sources for existing assessment criteria with respect to EFL practicum, e.g. Thornbbury and Watkins (2007); Genc and Buyukkarci (2013); Sopheakdei (2014); Hall, P. (2017); ESOL Practicum Handbook (2017).

The researcher went through two drafts before arriving at a satisfactory set of assessment criteria. At each stage, three experienced EFL teacher educators were consulted and their recommendations were implemented. Appendix 2 shows the final

Academic Supervisor Assessment Form. Assessment Support Documents used as evidence for unobservable skills can be accessed online in Elmabruk (2018).

The developed criteria in the new Teaching Practice Assessment Model comprise the following added features:

- 1) Fields for administrative information, e.g. name of training school, class teacher, and the period of TP.
- 2) Numbered competencies and criteria to facilitate discussion.
- 3) Increased final assessment mark to 50 instead of 40.
- 4) Clarity of scores for each assessment criterion and redistributed weightings in accordance with expected performance. For example, the Linguistic Competence was given a relatively high weighting (32) six marks to each of 'language accuracy' and 'fluently with good pronunciation, intonation and stress'.
- 5) Increased assessed visits (from three to four) to allow trainees further opportunities to perfect their practice according to supervisor feedback. See Table 2 for supervisor visits and roles.
- 6) Removal of the dual double-barrelled measure (notebook organization / lesson aims) in Lesson Planning.
- 7) Lesson Delivery assessment improved by including criteria such as: presents material well in various techniques; displays self-confidence; checks students' understanding.
- 8) Linguistic Competence assessment modified by adding four criteria: good range of vocabulary; knowledge of material content; using appropriate error correction techniques; minimising use of L1. Accuracy and fluency assessment measures were given higher weighting of five marks each.
- 9) Classroom Management included four closely related criteria: using body language and eye contact; movement around classroom; maintaining student attention; controlling undesirable behaviour; giving appropriate reinforcement.
- 10) Regarding Teaching Aids, the combined criteria for audio and visual aids were split out to allow for availability of aids. A criterion regarding the use other technologies e.g. projector or Internet was introduced.
- 11) Assessment of unobservable skills was introduced with eight criteria: practices observation skills well; offers useful feedback comments to peers; accepts and acts upon feedback; reports well on observation week; regular self-reflection on own teaching; summary of TP experience; awareness of supportive resources; awareness of professional development, which enhances awareness of its impact on trainees' future independent as independent teaches.
- 12) Writing a summary of TP experience elicited trainees' perceptions of what they had learnt from the real teaching experience, how that might affect their decision to take up teaching seriously, and how they view themselves as active independent teachers of English in the future.
- 13) An explanation for calculating the final grade is given.

- 14) Besides developing the Academic Supervisor Assessment Form as outlined above, the researcher designed a set of Assessment Support Documents that serve as documental evidence to assist unobservable skills assessment (reflection, self-assessment, observing, commenting, reporting, and expressing attitudes and perceptions).

4.3 Analysing Assessment Support Documents

To assist the process of analysing the implementation of unobserved skills, a survey of the submitted Assessment Support Documents was taken as shown in Table 3. The measurement criteria facilitated by the analysed documents are:

- a. Classroom observation sheets (teacher/ learner focus/ combined focus/ peer comments);
- b. Reports on observation week;
- c. Supervisor's feedback forms;
- d. Self-reflection and self-assessment sheets;
- e. Summary of TP experience (written report);
- f. Perception/ outlook on professional development (written report);

A. Trainees' classroom observation

Classroom observation was carried out in two graded stages. First, class teachers are observed with graded foci; teacher focus then learner focus. Second, they observed peers focusing on peer as well as learners, and giving peer comments.

The number of classroom observations per trainee was not rigidly fixed due to varying teaching loads and schedules across schools. However, minimally trainees should carry out three class teacher observations with separate teacher foci and learner foci, after which they observe two of their peers with focus on both peer and learners. Feedback comments on peer observation are required to encourage trainees to practice giving and accepting feedback.

As shown in Table 3, there was a lack of follow up by supervisors in implementing trainee observation tasks during the observation week. Overall, observations of class teachers, TF and LF, were accomplished at below average rates- 47% and 45% consecutively. Per observation rates were higher than average at 66%, but peer comments were inconsistently lower at only 30%, i.e. less than half peer observations were carried out without peer feedback comments.

Based on a random sample of observations submitted by the seven supervisors, many criteria were left blank while others had no comments substantiating the grade given. This also indicates supervisors' failure to stress observation requirements and to check the forms received.

B. Reports on observation week

Only one supervisor (S7) submitted reports on observation week, though by a single trainee out of nine resulting in a poor average of 5%. The other supervisors blamed their

trainees for not preparing or handing in the reports. Yet, it is the supervisors' responsibility to ensure trainees comply with assessment requirements.

C. Supervisor written feedback

On each assessed visit, the supervisors were required to provide immediate written feedback and invite trainees to photograph it with their smart phones. This immediate feedback technique facilitates instant feedback and enables trainees to act upon supervisor comments in time for the next visit. When time allows, it is even more effective when supervisor and trainee hold face-to-face post-observation meetings.

Moreover, the supervisors were supposed to hand-in to the researcher (as TP coordinator) their feedback forms along with portfolios of individual TTs whom they had assessed during the six-weeks of TP.

In examining supervisors' observation feedback (Table 3), the researcher was surprised to find that only two supervisors (S4 and S7) had provided feedback comments. When questioned about this, the supervisors claimed they gave oral feedback instead. One supervisor (S5) showed the researcher feedback on scrap paper, but did not supply copies despite request. A poor performance rate by supervisors in providing trainee feedback resulted (14%).

a. Supervisor 4 feedback

The number of observation feedback comments by S4 was thirteen, which is 'outstanding' relative to absolute non-response by five other supervisors. However, according to allocated trainees (6), the number of scheduled assessed visits was supposed to be 24 resulting in 54% feedback achievement rate.

Despite the missed visits, S4's feedback was objective, and actionable. It offered comments on both positive and negative performance as in these verbatim extracts:

"You speak fluently, and you spell correctly. You communicate clearly and correctly. You have a good rapport with learners. You listen to them carefully" (smiley face).

"This [lesson] appeared challenging today. You should move around the class. You only stand at the front. You should pay attention to weak students. You asked only the students who rise their hands (sad face)".

Another extract illustrates sensitivity areas and appreciation for improvement:

"You started to improve. This time you reduced teacher talk time and gave pupils an opportunity to guess the answer."

Expressing understanding of a personal problem and suggesting ways to get round it; offering words of support are feedback skills demonstrated by S4:

"I understand that this [confidence] was low today as you were worried about not working of your computer and data show, also about the class teacher who was moving around you, and about me. But your lack of focus affected your organisation which in turn affected your confidence...It is only the first session in your TP. The next session will be better insha Allah (smiley face)."

b. Supervisor 7 feedback

Supervisor 7 also achieved a relatively high rate of feedback provision at 42%. However, instead of the forms provided, she used post-it notes and placed them on the trainees' lesson plan notebooks. It is noted that her initial comments during the 1st and 2nd visits, which help trainees to adjust their teaching practice, were too general and un-actionable, e.g. *"well done, nice activities"; "this is not a personal aim"; "teaching methods are not tools. White board, markers, flash cards, etc. are teaching aids"*.

On the other hand, more constructive comments were given later during the 3rd and 4th visits, e.g. *"communicating clearly and easily; motivating students to participate and have students to students interactions; nice activity, competition between two groups was amazing; the idea of using pictures for revision worked very effectively"*. Although negative comments were given to draw attention to deficiencies e.g., *"use more positive reinforcements; better control on students behaviour; taking more than students"*, some were not specific enough to identify corrective action required, *"mistakes in grammar (s-v agreement and forming question); some mistakes in pronunciation; these are not personal aims (in lesson plan)"*.

D. Trainees' self-reflection

The number of self-reflection forms filled in by trainees depended on the number of weekly classes allocated, which is usually eight, but can go up to ten classes per week. Given that TP takes five weeks, excluding the first observation week, this gives a maximum range of 40 to 50 self-reflections per trainee. However, as a minimum, it is expected that a trainee should accomplish half this quantity, i.e. between 20 and 25 reflections. Based on this estimate, an expected (E) and an actual (A) number of self-reflections are shown in Table 3. As the percentages of received self-reflections show, S6 had the lowest submissions at 18% whereas 60% was the highest by S7. This averages a supervisors' accomplishment rate of a low 33%, which demonstrates inattention to pressure trainees to self-reflect regularly.

E. Summary of TP experience

Only Supervisors 2, 3, 5 and 7 collected summaries of trainees' TP experience. Compared to the number of trainees per supervisor, the actual summaries collected were too few as shown by the percentages of actual summaries received (27%).

F. Outlooks on professional development

The submission rate of trainees' outlook or perception on professional development was the worst of all assessment support documents. Only one supervisor (S7) collected and submitted these (two out of nine expected submissions) at 22%, with a very poor 3% average.

4.3.1 Supervisor's implementation of Unobservable Skills Assessment

Table 4 summarises the extent to which the participant EFT supervisors implemented the assessment of trainees' unobservable skills.

As Figure 1 demonstrates, supervisors' execution of trainees' teacher observation was below average at 46%. That is, during the first week of TP (classroom observation), the supervisors did not encourage trainees strongly enough to fulfil the required number of teacher observations. On the other hand, peer observation was carried out at a relatively higher rate (66%) indicating that trainees were more inclined to observe their peers than to observe class teachers, but the rate of peer comments (30%) did not correlate with the number of peers observed.

Again, much of this poor performance could have been sorted by the supervisors during the observation week by checking on accomplished observation targets. What's more, implementing the criterion of trainees' reports on observation week was even lower at 5%.

Figure 2 illustrates supervisors' Unobservable Skills Assessment other than those of classroom observation tasks shown in Figure 1. Supervisors' task implementation of self-reflection/ self-assessment (33%) is evidently poor and below average. The execution of the summary of TP experience task is also below average (27%). Executing the task of Perceptions of PD is very poor at 3%.

4.3.2 Supervisors' reaction to the developed criteria

The developed assessment model was praised by the academic supervisors without exception. They considered the model as a shift in TP assessment at FET. One supervisor said that these assessment criteria are comprehensive and in line with international standards. The six academic supervisors interviewed unanimously agreed that the developed criteria were characterised by objectivity, accuracy, and fulfils the assessment of observable as well as unobservable skills.

Among the comments made by the supervisors concerned the lack of commitment by trainees to complete the assessment support documents for unobservable criteria. As claimed by the supervisors, a lack of commitment by trainees affects their assessment and that supervisors cannot force them to do so. Such argument by supervisors is incongruous with the pass marks given to trainees in section F of the supervisors' assessment form (observation, self-reflection and development) which falsely imply that the required assessment criteria had been accomplished.

4.3.3 Trainees' comments on the developed criteria

Through the focus group discussion with trainees, a combination of positive and negative responses emerged. Since students in general always look for the easiest way to accomplish success, it was not surprising that some trainees complained of the multiplicity of TP assessment criteria, which they had not been used to. Most said that fulfilling the criteria requires more time and effort not only in filling the assessment forms, but also in a satisfactory manner.

- a) In particular, the trainees grumbled about the criterion of self-reflection, which they thought requires constant attention to lesson activities. However, they agreed that such reflection helped them think of ways to improve their performance in upcoming classes.
- b) Some of the trainees thought that writing a summary of TP was demanding and involved consideration of all kinds of experiences they went through and the extent of benefit gained. It was acknowledged that this helps to enhance trainees' self-confidence.
- c) All trainees were not happy with the criterion pertaining to perceptions of professional development. They saw this as unnecessary and unimportant for them at the TP stage, as it is not related to their current performance. Moreover, they complained that their supervisors did not help them to identify or relate to aspects of professional development.
- d) It was disturbing to hear that some trainees did not receive immediate feedback from their supervisors at the end of assessed visit. This failure resulted in the recurrence of undesirable practices that could have been avoided.

5. Recommendations

The research makes a number of recommendations to further improve TP assessment in EFL education programs:

- 1) TP supervisors in EFL programmes must be selected based on professional experience and proven record of accomplishment not merely because they are fluent in English or express a desire to supervise.
- 2) Emphasis must be placed on stronger commitment to assessed visits by supervisors and the enforcement of penalties on non-compliance.
- 3) Trainees' TP Portfolio should be strictly adopted for holistic assessment. Portfolios should contain the following documents:
 - A TP schedule showing the beginning and end of training and total hours taught;
 - Full classroom observation including teacher and peer observations with comments;
 - Report on classroom observation week;
 - Lesson plan book marked and dated at supervisor visits;
 - Immediate written feedback by supervisors after each visit;

- Required set of self-reflection;
 - Summary of TP experience;
 - Perception on professional development as future independent teacher.
 - Any other documents deemed representative of a trainee's creativity, e.g. teaching aids, recordings or photos of special activities, which will create an atmosphere of competition and innovation among trainees.
- 4) Supervisors must use a checklist to ensure trainees submit all required documentation for unobservable assessment.
 - 5) The researcher recommends creating a special web page by faculties of education to guide supervisors and trainees on TP procedures, assessment requirements and deadlines. The TP Guide (Elmabruk, 2018) authored by the researcher can be considered as an example.

5.1 Recommendations for further research

The researcher recommends implementing the developed assessment model in departments of English at other faculties of education noting any problems or obstacles facing the supervisors or trainees.

A study on the effective role of the mentor or cooperating teacher in English language programmes is valuable since such role is almost neglected in local TP schools.

6. Conclusion

The research culminates in designing a relatively innovative model for the assessment of EFL teacher candidates in TP. The innovation in the assessment model is that it incorporates, for the first time in FET and in Libyan teacher education as far as the researcher is aware, the assessment of indirect unobservable competencies.

By judging the judges, the study also concludes in assessing FET supervisors' implementation of the new assessment model with respect to the unobservable skills. Overall, the developed model consists of 44 criteria spread over six competencies, the unobservable ones of which comprise seven skills under Observation, self-reflection and professional development (Section F) carrying 14 marks.

In spite of the supervisors' approval of the developed model, their implementation with respect to assessing the unobservable skills was poor and inefficient. Moreover, given the fact that corresponding pass marks were given to trainees for incompetent work e.g. number of observations, per feedback comments, report on observation week, self-reflection records, summary of TP, and outlook on professional development, such conduct may be viewed as unethical. In addition, the poor supervisor's performance with respect to providing immediate written feedback reflects supervisors' careless unprofessional attitudes.

The trainees attending TP voiced complaints regarding time and effort required in complying with the unobservable criteria, i.e. regular self-reflection, report writing and

reflecting on the practicum experience. Some trainees thought that the criterion for professional development is redundant at the teaching practice stage.

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Elements

a. Figures and Tables

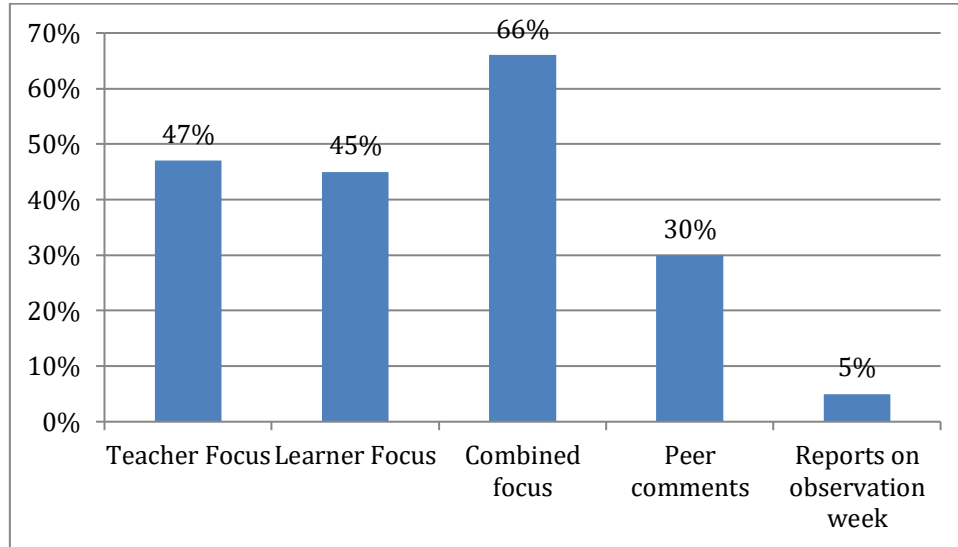


Figure 1: Classroom observation tasks

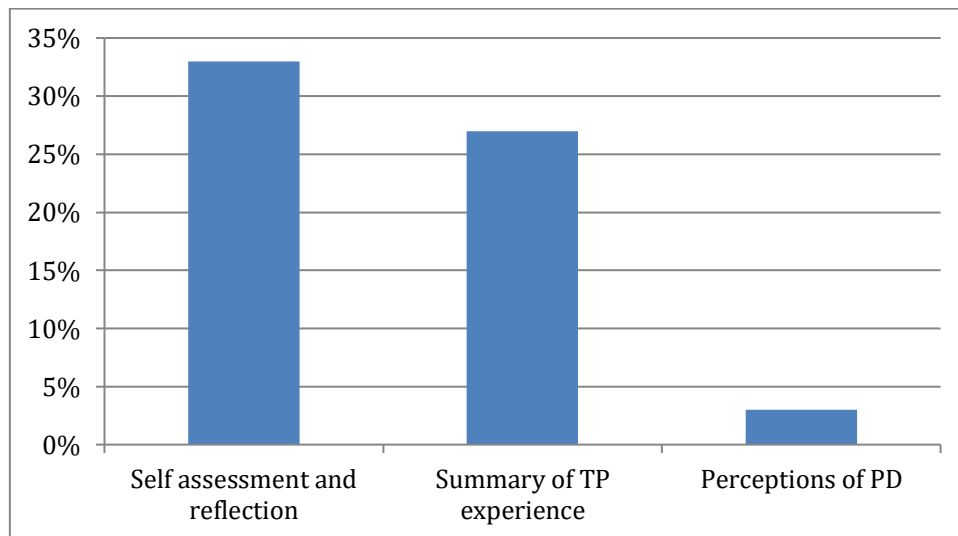


Figure 2: Other unobservable skills assessment

Table 1: Allocation of supervisors

Supervisor	Gender	Allocated schools and trainees				Trainees per supervisor
		Preparatory		Secondary		
S1	F	Preparatory	5	Secondary	3	8
S2	F	Preparatory	6	Primary	2	8
S3	F	Preparatory	7	-	-	7
S4	F	Primary	3	Secondary	3	6
S5	F	Secondary	8	-	-	8
S6	M	Secondary	7	-	-	7
S7	F	Preparatory	4	Secondary	5	9
Total trainees						53

Table 2: Schedule for supervisor visits and roles

Week	Visit	Nature of visit
Week 1	Visit 1 (admin)	Meet head; agree teaching timetable; meet/inform trainees; contact Class Teachers (CTs); explain/ negotiate mentoring role.
Week 2	Visit 2	Check observation process and comments; CT and peers.
Week 3	Visit 3	Un-assessed observation and feedback; collect observation forms.
Week 4	Visit 4	First assessed observation visit and feedback.
Week 5	Visit 5	Second assessed observation visit and feedback.
Week 6	Visit 6	Third assessed observation visit and feedback.
Week 7	Visit 7	Fourth and last assessed observation visit and feedback.

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Table 3: Supervisors' performance in implementing the TP Assessment Support Model

Supervisor	Number of trainees per supervisor	Supervisor assessed visits (four per trainee)	Trainees' classroom observation				Report on observation week	Supervisor written feedback	Self-reflection sheets	Summary of TP experience	Outlook on PD
			Teacher		Peer						
			TF	LF	PO	PC					
S1	8	32	5/24 21%	3/24 13%	6/16 38%	1/16 6%	- 0%	- 0%	38/160 24%	- 0%	- 0%
S2	8	32	11/24 46%	7/24 29%	16/16 100%	7/16 44%	- 0%	- 0%	30/160 19%	2 25%	- 0%
S3	7	28	2/21 10%	2/21 10%	4/14 29%	-/14 0%	- 0%	- 0%	38/140 27%	4 50%	- 0%
S4	6	24	14/18 78%	13/18 72%	9/12 75%	8/12 67%	- 0%	13 54%	65/120 54%	- 0%	- 0%
S5	8	32	13/24 54%	13/24 54%	8/16 50%	6/16 38%	- 0%	- 0%	44/160 28%	5 63%	- 0%
S6	7	24	20/21 95%	21/21 100%	14/14 100%	6/14 43%	- 0%	- 0%	25/140 18%	- 0%	- 0%
S7	9	36	12/27 44%	10/27 37%	12/18 67%	9/18 50%	3 33%	15 42%	108/180 60%	4 50%	2 22%
Average	-	-	47%	45%	66%	30%	5%	14%	33%	27%	3%

Key: TF= Teacher Focus; LF= Learner Focus; PO= Peer Observation; PC= Peer Comments; PD= Professional Development. Where there three figures, the first is the expected, the second is the actual and the third is percentage.

Table 4: Implementation of Unobservable Skills Assessment

Unobservable Assessment Criteria			Mean Performance
Classroom observation	Teacher observation	Teacher Focus	47%
		Learner Focus	45%
	Peer Observation	Combined Focus	66%
		Peer comments	30%
	Report on observation week		
Self-reflection and self-assessment			33%
Summary of TP experience			27%
Perceptions of PD			3%

b. Supplementary Files

Appendix 1: The old TP assessment form

Tripoli University Faculty of Education /English Department Teaching Practice Assessment Form Fall (2013)		
Trainee's Name:		I.D NO.....
Students level.....		Subjects.....
Evaluation Criteria	Evaluated Points	Marks 80
<i>Lesson Plan</i>	Note book organization/ lesson aims	
<i>Lesson Presentation</i>	Clear introduction/ Warming up	
	Lesson's logical sequence/ Time management	
	Sufficient and illustrative examples	
	Activities and Exercises	
	Clear Voice	
	Assesment/Homework	
<i>Language Competence</i>	Grammar	
	Pronunciation	
	Fluency	
	Spelling	
	Clear instructions and communication	
<i>Classroom Management</i>	Seating arrangement (pair/group work)	
	Students participation	
	Teacher's catering for different levels	
<i>Classroom Atmosphere</i>	Warm and lively atmosphere	
<i>Use of Teaching Aids</i>	Effective use of the white board	
	Audio Materials	
	Visual Materials (Pictures/flashcards)	
	Technology (Data show)	
Total		
The head of the Dep.....		Inspector's name.....
Signature.....		Signature

Appendix 2: The Developed Academic Supervisor's Assessment Form

Trainee		ID		Semester	
Training School		Teacher Mentor		Classes taught	
Supervisor		Start date		End date	
Hours/week		TP weeks		Total hours	

Area of assessment	Assessment criteria		Max mark	1st visit	2nd visit	3rd visit	4th visit
(A) Lesson Planning [12 marks]	1	Prepares clear and organized lesson plan	2				
	2	Has clear lesson aims and objectives	2				
	3	Aware of teaching methods/techniques	2				
	4	Appropriate and timed lesson procedure	2				
	5	Prepares model illustrative examples	2				
	6	Prepares appropriate activities	2				
Lesson planning subtotal			12				
(B) Lesson Delivery [18 marks]	7	Gives appropriate warm-up	2				
	8	Has clear voice	2				
	9	Manages class time effectively	2				
	10	Presents material in various techniques	2				
	11	Illustrates with sufficient examples	2				
	12	Gives enough activities and exercises	2				
	13	Displays self-confidence	2				
	14	Checks students' understanding	2				
15	Gives and checks homework	2					
Lesson delivery subtotal			18				
(C) Linguistic Competence [30 marks]	16	Uses language accurately (grammar)	5				
	17	Fluency, pronunciation and intonation	5				
	18	Spells correctly	2				
	19	Displays good range of vocabulary	3				
	20	Gives clear instructions	3				
	22	Communicates clearly and easily	3				
	23	Displays knowledge of material content	3				
	24	Uses appropriate error correction	3				
25	Minimises use of L1	3					
Linguistic competence subtotal			30				
(D) Classroom Management [18 marks]	26	Uses body language and eye contact	2				
	27	Moves around class	2				
	28	Maintains students' attention throughout	2				
	29	Organises pair or group work as needed	2				
	30	Controls undesirable behaviour e.g. noise	2				
	31	Gives positive reinforcement	2				
	32	Motivates students to participate/interact	2				
	33	Encourages students to ask questions	2				
34	Pays attention to weak students	2					
Classroom management subtotal			18				
(E)	35	Uses whiteboard effectively	2				

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Teaching Aids [6 marks]	36	Effective use of AVAs as necessary	2				
	37	Uses of technology e.g., Internet	2				
Teaching aids subtotal			6				
(F) Classroom observation, self-reflection and professional development [16 marks]	38	Practices observation skill well	2				
	39	Offers useful feedback to peers	2				
	40	Accepts and acts upon feedback	2				
	41	Self-reflects regularly on own teaching	2				
	42	Reports well on observation week	2				
	43	Summarizes TP experience	2				
	44	Aware of supportive teaching resources	2				
	45	Understands how to achieve CPD	2				
Observation, self-reflection and development subtotal			16				
Total assessment mark for each visit			100				
Total mark for four visits = + + + = Average mark = ÷ 4 =							
Final mark (out of 50) = Average mark ÷ 2 = In words							

Note: The final mark is given out of 50 to which 40 marks are added by the educational supervisor and another 10 marks by the school headmaster, thus giving a total of 100 marks.

Key: L1= First language; AVA= Audio Visual Aids; CPD= Continuous Professional Development

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