

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Teaching Practicum Effectiveness: Insights from Prospective Teachers and Supervisors

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Consent forms were distributed and gathered from participants.

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### ABSTRACT

The present study aimed primarily to examine the perceptions of prospective teachers and supervisors regarding a redesigned practicum program developed to address limitations of the existing model. A secondary aim was to explore areas of convergence and divergence between prospective teachers' self-reflections and supervisors' evaluative feedback on a specific practicum teaching session conducted during the final term. Data were collected from six prospective teachers majoring in language teaching and two faculty supervisors through written responses to two structured reflection and evaluation guidelines. The findings indicate that both prospective teachers and supervisors perceived the redesigned practicum program as having notable strengths, particularly in terms of the increased time allocated to classroom practice and feedback sessions. However, participants also identified the concentration of active teaching practice solely in the final year as a significant limitation of the program. Further analysis of the reflective documents revealed that prospective teachers had developed a strong reflective orientation over the course of their education. Nevertheless, discrepancies were observed between prospective teachers' self-reflections and supervisors' feedback, especially with regard to materials use, lesson planning, and instructional methods. The findings offer important implications for the design and implementation of language teacher education programs and for the professional practices of teacher educators.

**Keywords:** Practice teaching, prospective teachers, supervisors, teacher education

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## INTRODUCTION

In light of recent demographic shifts in Turkey, notably an increase in minority students, the preparation of prospective teachers to effectively educate culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms is critical. Both the changing student populations and the prior experiences of prospective teachers necessitate a reconceptualization of teacher education programs, particularly in relation to their field experiences and pedagogical approaches. Research indicates that prospective teachers often enter training with inadequate knowledge regarding multicultural education and the challenges associated with diverse classrooms (Kumar & Lauermann, 2017; Senyshyn & Martinelli, 2020). Moreover, teacher preparation programs frequently lack diversity themselves, highlighting the urgent need to cultivate an inclusive environment that prepares future educators for the realities they will encounter in schools (Kumar & Lauermann, 2017).

Significantly, early field experiences have been shown to enhance the efficacy and confidence of prospective teachers. Studies suggest that prospective teachers who engage in diverse field placements are more attuned to the needs of various student groups and are generally more willing to teach diverse populations (Kapoyannis, 2021; Senyshyn & Martinelli, 2020). Research has demonstrated that early exposure to teaching scenarios boosts personal teaching efficacy and adaptability among prospective teachers (Kapoyannis, 2021). Furthermore, such experiences can diminish biases and enhance intercultural competencies, as noted by Kumar and Lauermann (2017), who emphasized that positive early experiences lead to a greater commitment to multicultural education.

Considering these findings, the redesign of the practice teaching program for prospective teachers in Turkey emerges as a necessary improvement. The previous model, characterized primarily by an applied science approach, limited prospective teachers to mere observation without engaging them deeply in practical teaching experiences. The revamped program integrates apprenticeship, applied science, and inquiry-based approaches, allowing prospective teachers to immerse themselves in the school culture from the start and engage in reflective practices (Andrews et al., 2019). This approach embraces Schön's notion of reflective practice, which argues for the development of teachers as critical inquirers rather than passive recipients of knowledge (Andrews et al., 2019).

The goals of this redesigned program include fostering reflective practice, enhancing cultural competence, and encouraging teachers to take responsibility for their own professional development through strategies like action research (Kapoyannis, 2021; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Levin & Rock, 2003). Furthermore, the incorporation of diverse teaching experiences aligns with findings that demonstrate a direct relationship between reflective practices and improved teacher preparedness and effectiveness in diverse classrooms (Malewski et al., 2012; Desimone et al., 2002). In this context, action research acts as a crucial tool for prospective teachers, allowing them to explore real-world problems, reflect on their experiences, and adapt their teaching approaches to better meet the needs of diverse students (Choi & Ramsey, 2009; Levin & Rock, 2003).

As such, providing structured opportunities for prospective teachers to observe varied teaching styles and classroom environments represents a progressive response to the multicultural challenges currently facing education in Turkey. This redesigned practice teaching model, underpinned by comprehensive scholarship, acknowledges the evolving educational landscape while equipping future educators with the necessary skills and awareness to thrive in increasingly diverse learning environments.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The teaching practicum is recognized as one of the most essential elements of teacher education because it gives forthcoming educators a chance to combine theoretical knowledge with real classroom experience. As a result of practicum experiences, prospective educators build up their practical pedagogical expertise, abilities in managing classrooms, their own professional identity, and confidence in teaching under the supervision of skilled teachers and university supervisors (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Zeichner, 2010). Because of this, the structure and conditions of practicum programs became one of the vital research areas in the field of language teacher education.

Increasing importance of quality practicum experiences can be attributed to the growing diversity of modern classrooms. The more diverse the student body becomes in terms of language, culture, and socioeconomic status the more opportunities for contemplation and adaptation prospective teachers should receive. Programs of teacher education should not be limited to theoretical courses as they need to create meaningful teaching experience in educational setting.

Research has shown that traditional models of practicum work have drawbacks since meaningful teaching experiences are typically concentrated exclusively in the last year of the teacher education program. Hence, such models do not offer enough opportunities for prospective teachers to gain necessary pedagogical skills, relate training courses aborning from university with real classroom reality, and build their confidence (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Zeichner, 2010). As a result, a number of teacher education programs have embraced developmental practicum systems in which field experiences are spread out over several years of schooling and move from guided observation to partial teaching duties to ultimately independent teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Research shows that these longitudinal approaches improve professional progress by creating additional opportunities to link theory with practice.

Early field experience represent the primary aspect of modernized practicum systems. Instead of putting off school experience until later in the process of becoming a teacher, early exposure allows future teachers to learn processes, types of students, teaching methods and atmosphere of the school right from the start of their education. Richards and Farrell (2005) make an argument in favor of the observation that structured observation with the use of clearly-defined frameworks makes student teachers pay attention to important features related to pedagogy instead of mere observation of teaching process in classroom. In the same way, continuing practical work in real classroom settings helps in gradual development of professional competence and decrease anxiety related to the first teaching experience.

Reflective practice was considered a significant part of teaching education nowadays. Schön (1983, 1987) defined professional development as an ongoing process during which practitioners analyze their own practice in order to enhance performance in the future. In language teacher training, reflective tasks such as reflection journals, reflective essays, and structured peer discussions provide future teachers with a tool to reflect on their educational choices in terms of strengths and weaknesses and develop a greater pedagogical awareness (Farrell 2012, 2018). Therefore, reflection becomes not simply evaluative but rather a tool for accumulating professional experience during the practicum.

No less important is how good the quality of the feedback is, given by supervisors during the practicum. Supervisors from the universities help future teachers in understanding what they experienced in class, and improving their teaching practices, while connecting theory to practice. Hattie and Timperley (2007) point out that the best feedback must be timely and relevant, and must create a dialogue, thus helping people comprehend their present performance and improvement opportunities. In teacher training, effective feedback has always been associated with better reflective thinking and confidence as teachers, and with improvement of teaching capabilities. Moreover, the provision of peer feedback, and the situation of collaborative discussions help future teachers in their professional learning as collaboration inspires teachers to share experiences and perspectives (Farrell, 2018).

Recent literature turns to redesigning practicums in the context of teacher training. Nowadays models focus on the idea of development, as well as guided observation, continued feedbacks, collaborative reflection, and better relations between universities and practical schools, instead of single practice realized at the conclusion of teacher training (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). The objective of redesigned models is to develop effective educational practices for future teachers, scrapping disadvantages of the conventional practicum.

Even though a lot of research has been done, still some problems have remained. First of all, not so many studies look at programs on designed practicum from the standpoint of various stakeholders, in particular, prospective teachers and supervisors. Thus, it may be noted that little has been done in regard to looking at both reflective practice and the method of assessing supervisor's evaluation, mostly when such things appear to be examined on a separate basis. Finally, not enough qualitative analyses demonstrating similarities and differences between reflectively based accounts and evaluations exist in language teacher training. Filling in these gaps will help to understand better how the design of the practicum may influence the development of the reflective process, the feedbacks received from supervisors, and professional development.

### Significance and Objectives of the Study

The teaching practicum has long been recognized as a central component of teacher education programs, particularly in language teacher education, where opportunities to integrate pedagogical knowledge with classroom practice are essential. Previous research has extensively examined prospective teachers' perceptions of practicum experiences, focusing on issues such as mentoring quality, school-university partnerships, reflective practice, and professional identity development. Similarly, a growing body of literature has explored supervisors' roles and evaluative practices during practicum placements.

However, several gaps remain in the existing literature. First, while many studies investigate practicum effectiveness, relatively few focus on redesigned or alternative practicum models aimed at addressing the structural limitations of traditional programs, particularly those that concentrate teaching practice predominantly in the final year of study. Empirical evidence evaluating such redesigned models from multiple stakeholder perspectives remains limited.

Second, although reflective practice is widely promoted in teacher education, prior research has tended to examine prospective teachers' reflections or supervisors' evaluations in isolation. There is a noticeable lack of studies that systematically compare prospective teachers' self-reflections with supervisors' evaluative feedback on the *same teaching event*, particularly within language teaching contexts. As a result, limited attention has been paid to areas of convergence and divergence between these two perspectives.

Finally, small-scale, qualitative, and document-based analyses that capture the depth and nuance of reflective and evaluative discourse are underrepresented in the literature, especially in contexts where practicum programs are undergoing reform. Addressing these gaps can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how practicum design influences reflective development and professional feedback processes.

This study is significant for several reasons. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature on practicum and reflective practice by offering empirical insights into how a redesigned practicum program is perceived by both prospective teachers and supervisors. By juxtaposing self-reflective accounts with supervisory evaluations, the study advances understanding of reflective alignment and misalignment in teacher education.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of structured reflective and evaluative guidelines as tools for eliciting comparable data from different stakeholders. The document-based qualitative approach provides a detailed and contextualized account of teaching performance and professional judgment that complements larger-scale survey research.

Practically, the findings have important implications for the design and sequencing of practicum components in language teacher education programs. Identifying both the strengths and limitations of concentrating active teaching practice in the final year can inform curriculum revisions aimed at distributing practicum experiences more effectively across the program. Additionally, highlighting discrepancies between prospective teachers' reflections and supervisors' feedback can support teacher educators in developing clearer assessment criteria, more dialogic feedback practices, and targeted support for areas such as materials use, lesson planning, and instructional methods.

The present study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine prospective teachers' and supervisors' perceptions of a redesigned practicum program in a language teacher education context.
2. To identify perceived strengths and limitations of the redesigned practicum model, particularly in relation to the timing and intensity of teaching practice.
3. To explore the nature of prospective teachers' reflective orientations as demonstrated in their written self-reflections.
4. To analyze areas of convergence and divergence between prospective teachers' self-reflections and supervisors' evaluative feedback on a specific practicum teaching session.
5. To derive implications for the improvement of practicum design and supervisory practices in language teacher education programs.

In line with these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do prospective teachers and supervisors perceive the strengths and limitations of the redesigned practicum program?
2. How do prospective teachers reflect on their teaching practices during the final-term practicum?
3. To what extent do prospective teachers' self-reflections align with or diverge from supervisors' evaluative feedback regarding a specific teaching session?

4. In which areas of teaching practice (e.g., materials use, lesson planning, instructional methods) do convergence and divergence most frequently occur?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore prospective teachers' and supervisors' perceptions of a redesigned practicum program and to examine areas of convergence and divergence between prospective teachers' self-reflections and supervisors' evaluative feedback. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study and its focus on understanding participants' experiences, interpretations, and reflective judgments in depth rather than producing generalizable findings.

The case under investigation was a redesigned final-term practicum program implemented within a language teacher education department at a university. The program was treated as a bounded system, defined by a specific institutional context, a limited number of participants, and a single practicum teaching session that served as the focal point for reflection and evaluation. This design allowed for an in-depth examination of how the practicum was experienced and interpreted by different stakeholders.

Data were generated through written reflective and evaluative documents collected using two structured guidelines: one designed to elicit prospective teachers' self-reflections on their practicum teaching session, and the other to capture supervisors' evaluative feedback on the same session. The use of parallel, structured instruments enabled systematic comparison across data sources and facilitated the identification of convergent and divergent themes.

The research design incorporated a within-case comparative analysis, in which prospective teachers' reflections were analyzed alongside supervisors' evaluations for each teaching session. This approach supported a detailed examination of alignment and mismatch in perceptions related to key aspects of teaching practice, including lesson planning, instructional methods, classroom interaction, and materials use.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, multiple strategies were employed. Data source triangulation was achieved by comparing prospective teachers' and supervisors' written accounts. The use of structured guidelines ensured consistency in data collection, while iterative coding and theme development allowed patterns to emerge inductively from the data. Analytic memos were used throughout the analysis to document emerging interpretations and to support reflexivity.

Overall, this research design enabled a nuanced exploration of practicum experiences within a redesigned program and provided a robust framework for understanding reflective practice and supervisory feedback in language teacher education.

### Development of the Redesigned Practicum Program

The redesigned practicum program was developed in response to several pedagogical and structural weaknesses identified in the existing practice teaching model, both through institutional evaluation and insights drawn from the literature on language teacher education. Traditional practicum models have frequently been criticized for postponing meaningful teaching practice until the final year, limiting opportunities for sustained reflection, feedback, and

professional growth (Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Zeichner, 2010). In the existing program, prospective teachers primarily engaged in passive observation during the early years of study and were required to demonstrate teaching competence only in the final year. This structure was found to constrain the gradual development of pedagogical skills and to intensify performance anxiety during the terminal practicum period.

To address these limitations, the redesigned practicum adopted a developmental and longitudinal approach, integrating school-based experiences across all four years of the teacher education program. Rather than confining practice teaching to the final year, the new model introduced a phased progression from guided observation to partial teaching responsibilities and, finally, full classroom instruction. This approach aligns with research emphasizing the importance of distributed practice and sustained engagement with teaching contexts for effective professional learning (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

One of the central weaknesses of the existing model was the lack of structured support during early school observations. Prospective teachers often reported uncertainty regarding what to observe and how to interpret classroom events, leading to superficial engagement with practice. In response, the redesigned practicum incorporated guided observation frameworks in the first and second years. These frameworks included observation checklists, guiding questions, and focused reflection prompts, enabling prospective teachers to connect observed practices with pedagogical theory. This design choice was informed by studies suggesting that guided observation enhances noticing skills and supports reflective development (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Another major shortcoming of the original practicum concerned inconsistent and limited feedback, particularly from cooperating teachers. Feedback was often informal, brief, and unsystematic, reducing its developmental value. To address this issue, the redesigned program emphasized continuous feedback cycles, led primarily by university supervisors. Structured feedback sessions were scheduled following each observation and teaching episode, incorporating self-reflection, peer feedback, and supervisor input. This multilayered feedback structure reflects recommendations in the literature that emphasize dialogic and formative feedback as essential to teacher learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

The existing practicum also suffered from weak school-university collaboration, with limited communication between university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and school administrators. This disconnect often resulted in misaligned expectations and reduced mentoring support for prospective teachers. In response, the redesigned program sought to clarify roles and responsibilities through formalized communication channels and shared documentation. Although institutional constraints limited full integration, the redesigned model aimed to strengthen collaboration by aligning observation criteria and feedback priorities across stakeholders.

Another identified weakness of the traditional model was the limited opportunity for collective reflection and professional dialogue. Reflection tended to be an individual activity, often confined to written reports. To overcome this limitation, the redesigned practicum incorporated regular in-class discussion sessions at the university, where prospective teachers could share experiences, analyze classroom events, and engage in peer-supported reflection. These sessions were designed to foster collaborative learning and to normalize challenges encountered during practicum, as advocated in sociocultural perspectives on teacher development (Johnson, 2009).

Finally, the redesigned practicum addressed the fragmented nature of reflective practice in the existing program. While reflection was encouraged, it was not systematically embedded across practicum components. The new model

positioned reflection as a core organizing principle, integrating reflective writing, discussion, and feedback throughout the program. Reflective tasks were aligned with prospective teachers' developmental stages, moving from descriptive reflection in early years to more critical and analytical reflection in later stages (Schön, 1983; Farrell, 2012).

In sum, the redesigned practicum program was developed as a response to the limitations of the existing model by adopting a longitudinal structure, enhancing guided support, strengthening feedback mechanisms, and embedding reflection as a continuous and collaborative process. By addressing these weaknesses, the redesigned model aimed to promote more coherent, supportive, and developmentally appropriate practicum experiences in language teacher education.

### Settings and Participants

This research was conducted in the English Language Teaching (ELT) department of a foundation university located in the southeastern region of Turkey. As noted earlier, the learner profile in this region comprises students from diverse minority backgrounds, a contextual characteristic that requires academics to take this diversity into account when designing and implementing components of the language teacher education program. At the time of the study, the department enrolled 156 students, 23 of whom were senior-level students participating in the redesigned practicum program in its entirety.

From this group, six prospective teachers (two male and four female) and two university supervisors volunteered to participate in the study after completing their practice teaching. The participating supervisors were directly responsible for supervising the practicum experiences of the participating prospective teachers, ensuring close alignment between reflective and evaluative data sources.

### Data Collection and Analysis

The trainee teachers and the readers took the chance of filling out 2 forms regarding structured note-taking in the last week of the practice program lasting for four years. The first form addressed the view of the participants regarding the revised practice program. The second suggested that both groups write reflections concerning the final teaching practice. The trainee teachers evaluated their own teaching performance while the readers evaluated the work of the trainee teachers under their observation. The questionnaires were filled out electronically and processed as one qualitative data set.

The data were processed according to the inductive thematic analysis according to the principles of open coded coding set by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The research was conducted in several steps to follow the process of turning the primary textual text into the high-order themes.

What was carried out in the first instance was the repeated rereading of all the reflective essays to get acquainted with the data set to understand the experience of participants better. At the current step, preliminary analytical memos were written to record the first impressions and the initial patterns.

Secondly, the process of open coding was performed line by line not by 1 researcher, but by two of them. Rather than using the categories which were fixed in advance, the useful units of text were given some descriptive codes reflecting the ideas of the participants as presented in the words used in the data. Some initial codes were as follows: early experience of school, guided observation, quality of feedback from the readers, timing of the feedback, support



from peers, heavy burden of reflective writing, confidence in lesson planning.

The process of comparison of codes began in the third step. The newly created codes were compiled into the broad categories. For example, the codes which were related to feedback from the reader, feedback from peers, and feedback of the cooperating teacher were collected into one category of feedback practices. Thus, the organization of codes into groups made it possible to build up the relationship among the codes and to identify repeated patterns among the subjects.

In the fourth step, the received categories were turned into the common themes which were related to the questions of the research. During this stage, the themes were checked against the original reflective essays so that the participants' works would be well reflected in the themes. The process of the study presupposed the constant movements back and forth from one point of the analysis to another until the correct thematic apparatus was developed and applied.

To gain the reliability of the findings, 2 researchers coded the data separately before comparing their analysis and the final inter-coder agreement reached 93%. In case of the difference of the perspective, the researchers discussed the results until reaching a consensus.

RESULTS

Qualitative analysis of the reflective essays written by the university supervisors and prospective teachers was conducted to examine their views on the redesigned practice teaching program as a whole, thereby addressing the first objective of the study. In the following table common codes are provided (see table 1). As can be seen, both supervisors and prospective teachers agreed on some weaknesses (i.e. practicing teaching only in the last year, quality of feedback received from cooperating teachers), and strengths (time allocated to practice teaching, guided observations, class discussions, continuous feedback sessions and peer feedback) of this redesigned program. On the other hand, each party mentioned some other strengths and weaknesses. The findings also revealed several areas of divergence between the views of university supervisors and prospective teachers. For example, while supervisors regarded the reflective essays written by prospective teachers as a major strength of the redesigned practice teaching program, prospective teachers expressed less favorable opinions about this component. Similarly, although both groups acknowledged the importance of peer feedback, prospective teachers raised concerns about the quality of the feedback they received. Comparable concerns were expressed regarding the feedback provided by cooperating teachers. Additional weaknesses were identified by both stakeholder groups. University supervisors emphasized limited communication with cooperating teachers and school administrators, as well as the extensive documentation procedures required by the program, as significant challenges. In contrast, prospective teachers identified the timing of feedback, the limited provision of oral feedback, and the quality of feedback from cooperating teachers as the primary weaknesses of the redesigned practice teaching program.

Table 1. Codes regarding Practice Teaching Program

|           | Supervisors | Prospective Teachers |            |
|-----------|-------------|----------------------|------------|
| Strengths | Weaknesses  | Strengths            | Weaknesses |

| Early Start                                                              | Practicing teaching only in the last year | Early Start (N=6)                        | Practicing teaching officially only in the last year(N=3)    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Guided Observation                                                       |                                           | Guided observation (N=4)                 | Oral feedback from supervisors (N=5)                         |
| Class Discussions                                                        |                                           | Class discussions (N=4)                  | Number of class discussion hours (N=6)                       |
| Continuous Feedback Sessions                                             |                                           | Continuous feedback sessions (N=6)       | Timing of feedback                                           |
| Feedback from cooperating teachers                                       |                                           | Feedback from cooperating teachers (N=6) | Quality of feedback received from cooperating teachers (N=6) |
| Peer Feedback                                                            |                                           | Peer feedback (N=6)                      | Quality of peer feedback (N=4)                               |
| Lack of conversation with cooperating teachers and school administrators |                                           |                                          |                                                              |
| Documentation Procedures                                                 |                                           |                                          |                                                              |
|                                                                          |                                           | Time spent in schools (N=6)              |                                                              |
| Writing Reflective Essays                                                |                                           |                                          | Writing reflective essays                                    |

As shown in Table 1, both university supervisors and prospective teachers identified several common strengths of the redesigned practicum program. These included the early introduction of practice teaching, guided classroom observations during the first two years of the program, post-practicum reflective discussions with university supervisors, ongoing feedback sessions, opportunities for peer feedback, and the use of reflective essay writing to support professional learning.

With regard to early exposure to teaching practice, both groups emphasized the value of gaining experience from the beginning of the program. One supervisor highlighted the importance of early engagement by stating:

"I always believe that teaching requires intensive experience. So the earlier, the better." (Supervisor A)

Similarly, a prospective teacher reflected:

"I feel lucky because we can start gaining experience from the very beginning. We do not need to wait till the last year as the students in other faculties." (PT 4)

Guided observation was also regarded as a significant strength, particularly in supporting novice prospective teachers during their initial encounters with classroom environments.

"Since they start observations in the first year without receiving adequate theory, we need to provide guidance. This helps them understand what to do." (Supervisor B)

"When I was a first-year student, I was not very aware of what to focus on. The guiding notes and questions supported me a lot." (PT 2)

Another shared strength was the opportunity for in-class discussions following school-based practice. Supervisors emphasized the developmental value of these discussions, while prospective teachers highlighted their role in sharing experiences and interpreting observed teaching practices.

"Coming to class with experience and examples allowed them to discuss and share ideas. I believe this contributes greatly to their development." (Supervisor A)

"Class discussions are the only time we can openly share and reflect on what we observe. Their effect is especially valuable in the final year." (PT 2)

Both groups also identified continuous feedback sessions as a core strength of the program.

"We support our students with individual or group feedback after every session, and this is highly appreciated." (Supervisor A)

"Without feedback sessions, this program would be incomplete. It is the most important piece of this puzzle." (PT 5)

Similarly, peer feedback was viewed positively by both supervisors and prospective teachers.

"Peers can act as a mirror. Constructive criticism leads to development." (Supervisor B)

"We feel more comfortable giving and receiving feedback from peers than from supervisors." (PT 6)

One strength that emerged only from prospective teachers' reflections was the amount of time spent in schools throughout the program.

"We spend nearly 450 hours in schools, which is quite a lot. This gives us a serious advantage compared to students in other faculties." (PT 4)

In contrast, writing reflective essays revealed a divergence in perceptions. Supervisors viewed reflection writing as essential to professional development, whereas prospective teachers perceived it as burdensome when overused.

"Reflection is a fundamental skill we aim to develop." (Supervisor A)

"Reflection is important, but when we are forced to write too much, it loses its value." (PT 1)

Despite these strengths, both groups agreed on a key weakness: official teaching practice being concentrated only in

the final year. Beyond this shared concern, supervisors identified additional weaknesses related to limited feedback from cooperating teachers, insufficient communication with school administrators, and extensive documentation requirements imposed by the Ministry of Education.

"Cooperating teachers often give very limited feedback without explanations or suggestions." (Supervisor A)

"Documentation takes too much time, which we would prefer to spend on feedback." (Supervisor B)

Prospective teachers, on the other hand, emphasized weaknesses related to the type, timing, and quality of feedback provided by supervisors, cooperating teachers, and peers, as well as the limited duration of in-class discussion sessions.

"Written feedback would be more permanent than oral feedback." (PT 4)

"If feedback is delayed, important details are forgotten." (PT 1)

"Class discussions are valuable, but two hours is not enough for everyone to contribute." (PT 2)

### Views on the Final Practice Teaching Session

In line with the second objective of the study, prospective teachers reflected on their final practicum teaching session, and supervisors provided written evaluations of the same sessions. Analysis of these documents revealed both convergent and divergent perceptions (see Table 2).

Both groups identified lesson planning, classroom management, and communication with students as key strengths.

"Preparing a well-organized lesson plan requires experience, and I am glad they managed to do so." (Supervisor A)

"When I followed my plan and everything went smoothly, I felt confident and relaxed." (PT 5)

Classroom management and rapport with students were also highlighted as areas of competence.

"The classroom atmosphere was stress-free, largely due to good student-teacher relationships." (Supervisor A)

"I gained confidence through experience and now know how to respond when problems occur." (PT 2)

However, a notable divergence emerged regarding adherence to lesson plans. While supervisors viewed following the plan as a strength, prospective teachers perceived strict adherence as limiting.

"Novice teachers should follow their plans until they gain enough experience." (Supervisor A)

"Because I was being graded, I could not adapt the lesson as I wanted, which caused frustration." (PT 1)

Supervisors also identified weaknesses related to pronunciation and giving clear directions, whereas prospective teachers emphasized difficulty in controlling emotions, particularly due to evaluation anxiety.

"Pronunciation sometimes caused communication breakdowns." (Supervisor B)

"Being graded made me nervous and affected my emotional control." (PT 3)

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore supervisors' and prospective teachers' perceptions of a redesigned practicum program

and to examine points of convergence and divergence in their evaluations of a final practicum teaching session. Using reflective essays, the study revealed that early exposure to practice, guided observation, structured reflection, and continuous feedback were perceived as major strengths of the program. At the same time, the concentration of official teaching practice in the final year and discrepancies in feedback practices emerged as persistent challenges. The findings highlight the importance of balanced practicum design, dialogic feedback mechanisms, and greater coordination between universities and cooperating schools in language teacher education.

One of the most salient findings was the shared recognition of early exposure to teaching practice as a major strength of the program. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the importance of introducing school-based experiences early in teacher education to support the gradual development of professional knowledge and identity (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Zeichner, 2010). Early engagement in observation and practice allows prospective teachers to contextualize theoretical knowledge and reduces the gap between coursework and classroom realities. The positive perceptions expressed by both supervisors and prospective teachers indicate that the redesigned practicum successfully addresses criticisms of traditional models that postpone meaningful practice until the final year.

Similarly, guided observation during the initial years of the program was perceived as highly beneficial. This finding supports earlier studies suggesting that unguided observation may remain superficial unless prospective teachers are provided with structured frameworks that direct their attention to pedagogically relevant aspects of teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Guided observation appears to have functioned as a form of cognitive apprenticeship, scaffolding prospective teachers' noticing skills and supporting their transition from passive observers to reflective practitioners.

Another key strength identified in the findings was the role of post-practicum class discussions and continuous feedback sessions. The literature consistently emphasizes feedback as a central mechanism for professional learning during practicum (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). In line with previous research, the present study shows that regular, dialogic feedback enhances reflective thinking and supports instructional improvement. However, the divergence between supervisors' and prospective teachers' views on the form and timing of feedback suggests that feedback practices may need further refinement. While supervisors tended to favor oral feedback, prospective teachers expressed a preference for written and timely feedback, echoing findings by Hyland and Hyland (2006), who argue that feedback effectiveness depends not only on content but also on mode and delivery.

The findings also highlight the value of peer feedback, which both groups viewed as supportive and less threatening than supervisor feedback. This aligns with research indicating that peer interaction fosters collaborative reflection and professional dialogue, particularly in low-stakes environments (Farrell, 2018). Nevertheless, concerns regarding the quality of peer feedback suggest a need for explicit training in feedback literacy to ensure that peer comments are constructive and pedagogically grounded.

Despite these strengths, both supervisors and prospective teachers identified the concentration of official teaching practice in the final year as a significant limitation. This concern resonates with long-standing critiques of practicum models that emphasize observation in early years and reserve active teaching for the end of the program (Feiman-Nemser, 2001). Although early observation was appreciated, participants suggested that earlier opportunities for controlled teaching practice could further enhance professional readiness.

A notable divergence emerged in perceptions of reflective writing. Supervisors viewed reflective essays as essential for developing reflective competence, consistent with Schön's (1983) concept of reflection-on-action and Farrell's (2012) work on reflective language teaching. Prospective teachers, however, perceived excessive reflective writing as burdensome, which supports previous findings that reflection can become ritualistic if overused or insufficiently scaffolded (Akbari, 2007). This suggests that the quality and purpose of reflective tasks may be more important than their frequency.

Analysis of reflections on the final practicum teaching session revealed convergence in perceived strengths related to lesson planning, classroom management, and communication with students. These competencies are often associated with novice teachers' growing pedagogical confidence and are widely reported in practicum research (Richards, 1998). However, divergences regarding strict adherence to lesson plans point to a tension between evaluative expectations and adaptive teaching. While supervisors emphasized fidelity to planning as a safeguard for novice teachers, prospective teachers experienced this expectation as restrictive, particularly under assessment pressure. This finding reflects earlier research highlighting the emotional dimension of practicum and the impact of assessment anxiety on instructional decision-making (Tang, 2003).

Finally, supervisors' concerns about pronunciation and instructional clarity contrast with prospective teachers' emphasis on emotional regulation, suggesting that supervisors prioritize observable pedagogical competencies, whereas prospective teachers are more attuned to affective challenges. This discrepancy underscores the need for practicum models that address both technical teaching skills and the emotional demands of teaching, as advocated in holistic teacher development frameworks (Day & Gu, 2007).

This study investigated prospective teachers' and supervisors' perceptions of a redesigned practicum program and examined alignment and mismatch in their reflections on a final practicum teaching session. The findings demonstrate that the redesigned model successfully incorporates several features emphasized in the teacher education literature, including early exposure to practice, guided observation, structured reflection, and continuous feedback. At the same time, persistent challenges related to the timing of teaching practice, feedback quality, school-university collaboration, and emotional demands of assessment were identified.

The study contributes to the literature by providing a comparative analysis of prospective teachers' self-reflections and supervisors' evaluative feedback, highlighting areas where professional expectations align and diverge. These insights have practical implications for the design of practicum programs in language teacher education. Specifically, the findings suggest the need to distribute active teaching opportunities more evenly across the program, to diversify feedback modes, to strengthen collaboration with cooperating teachers, and to recalibrate reflective tasks to ensure meaningful engagement rather than procedural compliance.

Given its qualitative and context-specific nature, the study does not aim for generalizability. However, the insights gained may inform similar teacher education contexts, particularly those undergoing practicum reform. Future research could extend this work by incorporating classroom observations, longitudinal designs, or student teacher interviews to further explore the dynamic interplay between reflection, feedback, and professional development.

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