

Enhancing Mentoring Quality: The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS)

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Abstract

The central role of mentoring in developing and preparing prospective teachers during the clinical experience has been consistently documented in the literature. Screening candidates and selecting the fittest to serve as mentors is an essential process to the successful provision of the necessary professional and personal assistance to the new entrants to the profession. Based on this premise, the present conceptual paper aims to provide a new perspective to the selection process of mentor teachers to support pre-service English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers in the Moroccan context. At the current time, the only formal requirements for becoming a mentor are based on a simple expression of interest and a consideration of the academic qualifications the candidate has. This method of selection proved to be problematic in light of new empirical evidence that showed its inherent limitedness and how it created unnecessary difficulties for trainee teachers during practice teaching. The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS) framework this paper tries to put forward adds more layers to the screening process of mentor teachers and places it in a wider context with more important factors and players to consider. This approach is then hoped to enhance the quality of mentoring during the practicum and circumvent numerous reported problems that pre-service teachers, unnecessarily, have to endure under the current mentor selection process.

Keywords: collaboration, mentoring, mentoring quality, mentor selection, pre-service training

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1. Introduction

An overview of the related literature shows that programs of teacher education differ widely in terms of structure, length, content and even goals. While there are great variations in the ways in which they operate, they all aim at developing teachers who are knowledgeable and well trained to promote student learning and lever up the effectiveness and quality of teaching in schools. The role of school-based mentoring, a common thread that weaves through all the models, is at the heart of the teacher preparation process and of considerable importance to facilitate the transition of teacher trainees into the professional world. The literature indicates that mentoring is crucial in helping trainee teachers balance theory and practice and see the relevance of the connection (Zeichner, 2010).

2. Models of Teacher Preparation Programs

In countries like England, USA, and Australia, for instance, managing mentoring teachers is based on a whole-school commitment in close partnership with a university or a higher education institute (HEI) that usually runs the teacher training program. The HEI takes care of theory grounding about teaching while the partner school is in charge of providing relevant and effective classroom teaching practice. In Morocco, quite a different approach, the university has nothing to do with pre-service teacher training, except that in the case of an undergraduate professional Bachelor of Arts (BA) in education a short-term field placement is organized towards the end of the three-year course of studies - which does not guarantee direct recruitment in the public school. BA holders who want to become teachers join one of the Regional Centers of Education Careers and Training (CRMEFs), higher education institutes in principle but have nothing to do with the university in that they are created and completely managed by the ministry of education to serve as the only route to becoming a teacher at any school level up to high school. In contrast to the higher education-centered teacher training where trainees spend from three to four years of study, pre-service teachers at the CRMEF spend only one year of which 60 % is devoted to the practicum.

The following figure 1 shows roughly the different school-based parties that collaborate to manage the mentoring of teacher trainees during their practice teaching in an HEI-led program.

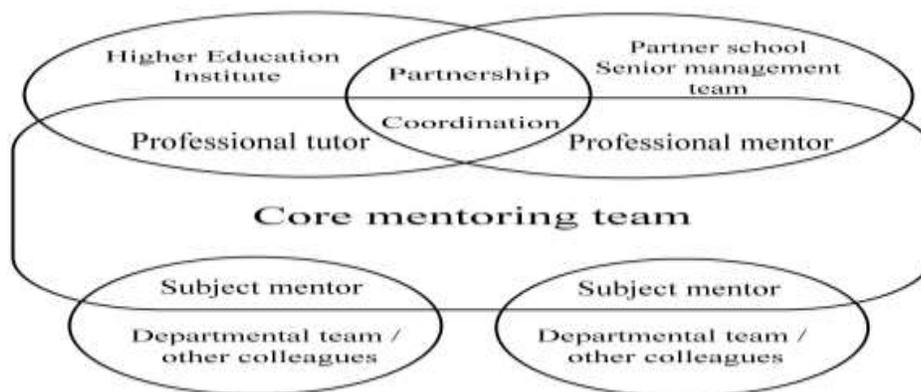


Figure 1 Whole-school Approach to Mentoring (adapted from Brooks & Sikes, 1997)

As it shows, before a mentor sets to work, there is a hierarchical chain of events that have to precede. First, the HEI co-signs a contractual arrangement with the head of a partner school to provide mentoring service and practical experience to its trainees. Second, the school senior management usually names a senior member of the school staff to serve as a 'professional mentor' to coordinate and supervise the whole school's mentoring and staff development in collaboration with the 'professional tutor' designated by the HEI to oversee the fieldwork of trainees in the school. The professional mentor, on the other hand, forms and leads a team of qualified 'subject mentors' representative of the different departments expected to host HEI trainees. This core mentoring team or 'Mentor Core Team' (Blank & Kershaw, 2009) serves as a communication and collaboration platform a) to keep the team members up-to-date to ensure uniformity, b) to be responsible for the quality assurance of the in-school mentoring practices and c) to design, coordinate, and implement professional development training workshops for the school staff.

In this respect, Glover and Mardle (1996) point out that the accredited partner schools approach their contractual agreement with the university to provide mentoring support to pre-service teachers at three levels of involvement, namely that 1) the school principal is fully responsible for the daily implementation of the HEI-school agreement, or 2) the school principal determines the policy and the professional mentor follows through with it, or 3) the professional mentor assumes total responsibility of the program when it goes into effect.

It is worth noting that various researchers use varied terminology to name the key people who contribute to the setup and implementation of a school-level mentoring program. For instance, the university professional tutor is referred to as a 'university teacher' (Arbon, 1994), a 'link tutor' (Tomlinson, 2001), a 'college tutor' (Corbett & Wright, 1994) and a 'placement coordinator' (Schwille, Nagel & DeBolt, 2000). The professional mentor is referred to as a 'school coordinator', an 'Initial Teacher Training coordinator' (Tomlinson, 2001), a 'mentor's mentor', a 'program coordinator' (Jonson, 2008), a 'senior mentor' (Furlong et al., 1997) or as a 'lead mentor' (Blank & Kershaw, 2009). The subject teacher takes on different labels such as a 'clinical teacher' (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988), 'teacher tutor' (Tomlinson, 2001), 'colleague teacher' (Arbon, 1994) and 'class teacher' (Corbett & Wright, 1993). Though the nomenclature varies considerably in the literature, it can be argued that this difference in designations is only formal in the sense that they perform, more or less, the same core functions of their positions in the team regardless of the nature of the teacher education program in which they are engaged.

Against this backdrop, the school-based mentoring practice of pre-service teachers in Morocco seems 'simplistically straightforward'. As figure 2 displays, a candidate teacher is selected to work as a mentor via the formal administrative channel: 1) the CRMEF sends out a formal advertisement to schools via the provincial directorate to announce the need for mentor teachers, 2) interested candidates send their applications back (through the same channel) detailing their academic qualifications to the respective CRMEF department, and 3) finally departmental trainers select the suitable teachers to host and mentor CRMEF trainee teachers. Supervisors are sometimes called in to help select prospective mentors.

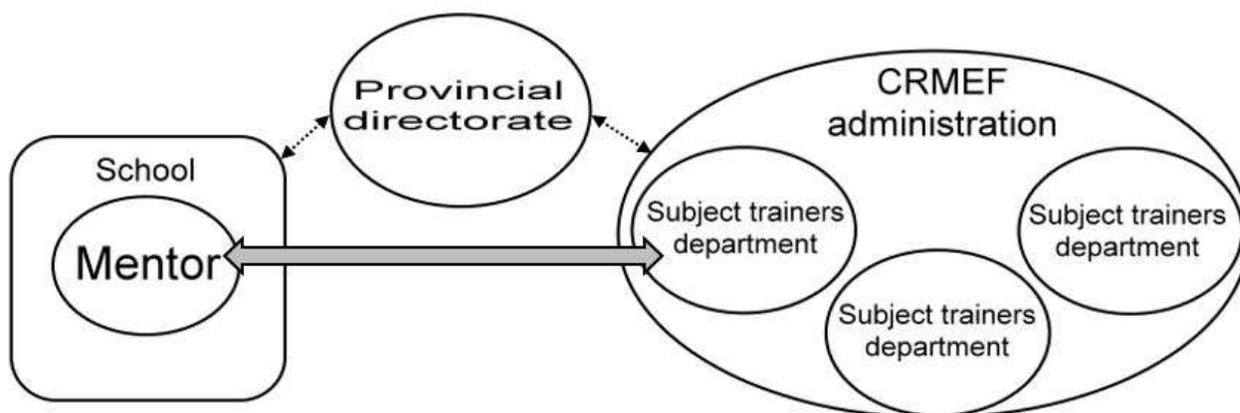


Figure 2 Current Moroccan Practice of Mentor-CRMEF Collaboration

The partner school administration then receives a notification from the provincial directorate that one or more of its teachers are going to serve as mentors and that trainees will be present with them during practicum periods. Afterwards, the mentor becomes the only partner school member to directly communicate and collaborate with the CRMEF subject trainers. The current model of mentor-CRMEF mentoring collaboration rules out a huge number of key features that can take pre-service mentoring to a whole new quality level. As will be discussed in the proposed TEAMS model, only when an effective CRMEF coordination with not only the partner school and the provincial directorate but also with the regional academy can offer new possibilities to elevate the status of mentor teachers, optimize their mentoring practice and rid the trainees' practical experience of several important issues.

3. School and Mentor Selection criteria

3.1 Selection of Partner Schools

When HEIs and schools of education that provide initial teacher preparation programs are accredited by the department of education in advisory consultation with other agencies like, for instance, the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) in UK or The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in the USA, they need in turn to select and form partnerships with schools to plan and manage quality mentoring for their teacher trainees during practice teaching. The main expected contribution of schools is to provide practical experience and access to the knowledge and expertise of their experienced practitioners through a combination of classroom observation, individual and collaborative teaching, planned reflection and feedback and seminars and workshops dealing with specific aspects of teaching and other professional concerns (Brooks & Sikes, 1997).

There are various reasons for a school's participation in an HEI's teacher preparation program. While material remuneration - the payment of a per capita fee for each trainee mentored (Corbett & Wright, 1994), is one main motive to engage in initial teacher training programs, it is argued that participation also brings to the school a host of non-monetary benefits ranging from:

maintaining a strong relationship with an HEI and capitalizing on that in case of need of help with curriculum development, enhancing the school's reputation as involvement is believed to be a reflection of perceived quality, and bringing new ideas and opportunities for school improvement through HEI-offered staff development training (Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Glover & Mardle, 1996). The selected partner schools are usually accredited mostly based on criteria like proximity to the trainee's place of residence for economic and domestic considerations, the suitability of the management style to the practicum course objectives (Corbett & Wright, 1994) and a track record of the school's performance in terms of the quality of teaching, learning and staff professional development (Brooks & Sikes, 1997).

3.2 Selection of Mentor Teachers

Part of the contractual arrangement the partner school needs to make is the selection of the cooperating teachers who will serve as school-based mentors. Based on the literature, mentor teachers are usually designated by either the school senior management, the professional mentor, departmental colleagues, or through a coordination of two or more of the previous parties with the HEI professional tutor (Blank & Kershaw, 2009; Futrell, 1988; Gordan & Maxey, 2000; Mwanza, Moyo & Maphosa, 2015). The strategies for selecting mentors differ from one partner school to another. They, however, seem to range from a personal invitation to a class teacher who possesses the necessary abilities (Brooks & Sikes, 1997), through formal self-nomination based on an internal advertisement of the position and application (Blank & Kershaw, 2009; Schwille et al., 2000) to simply having the role added to a teacher's role or tied to a professional ladder (Mullinix, 2002).

The literature is replete with a host of perspectives with regard to what requirements eligible teachers need to meet to be considered for the mentoring role. In fact, different teacher training programs identify different mentor selection criteria based on their vision of mentoring and practicum goals. Yet, there is a great overlap among the lists of selection criteria reviewed in the literature with little to no difference sometimes. Towards the top of the list, effective mentors are reported to have a genuine interest and willingness to make the necessary time commitment to carry out the entailed mentoring responsibilities and continuously develop their support skills and practice; a commitment to provide both professional and empathetic support to trainee teachers and being sensitive to their needs; a reputational record of successful classroom teaching and management; and finally a teaching experience of no less than three years (Clarke 2001; Schwille et al., 2000). It was found that having and/or being well informed about the mentoring experience is a prerequisite criterion for eligibility to serve as a mentor teacher (Glover & Mardle, 1996). Successful mentors are also believed to possess strong communicative skills and are good listeners along with having the desirable personality traits (e.g. caring; humor; wisdom; nurturing) and the ability to work with and help adult learners to self-assess and develop action plans (Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Corbett & Wright, 1994). Effective mentors are additionally expected to have the ability and readiness to be reflective and critical of their own teaching practices and to share that with their mentees (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988). Along the same line of thought, good mentors refrain from being judgmental of their trainees' approach to teaching and are open-minded with the view that their way of instruction is not the only one nor the most effective (Jonson, 2008).

Finally, prospective mentors are sometimes recruited on the basis of their academic qualifications (Gordan & Maxey, 2000) - a rare occurrence in most lists of selection criteria reviewed.

In contrast, selecting would-be mentors from a pool of eligible candidates under the new model of teacher training in Morocco seems to hinge on two principal conditions, namely an interest to volunteer and assume the role translated into submitting a formal application form and a consideration of the number of academic diplomas and certificates the candidates have. At the current time, there is a need for a new selection approach that extends the 'stripped-down' list to incorporate more important criteria covering not only the various personal, interpersonal and professional skills, but also the school location, the classroom where trainees practice teaching and the support teaching materials available.

While the positive impact of mentoring on trainee teachers' personal and professional development has been extensively documented, several other studies have reported as well the positive effects of mentoring on mentor teachers themselves along with the various benefits they reap out of their service in the capacity. For instance, Gordan and Maxey (2000) and Huling and Resta (2001) have reported that teachers who served as mentors improved their professional knowledge and refined their teaching styles; they grew more self-reflective on their teaching practice; they developed their communication skills and formed new friendships through collaboration and collegiality; and finally their self-confidence and self-esteem increased noticeably as a function of feeling special, professional and publically recognized. For the benefits mentors derive from mentoring are both financial and non-financial. Financially, in most mentoring programs mentors get monetary compensation in return for their service in the form of a stipend paid by the partner school from the money allocated to it by the HEI (Schwille et al., 2000). Mentors also accrue other non-financial benefits such as public formal recognition for their contribution (Mullinix, 2002), increased status and respect (Arbon, 1994), release time, partial discharge from classroom responsibilities to further support their mentees at work (Jonson, 2008) and a substitute teacher cover (Hurling & Resta, 2001). Other reported benefits included earning a college training credit for personal and professional development (Glover & Mardle, 1996), getting more involvement in decision-making, and an increased possibility to be recruited into administrative positions (Zimpher & Rieger, 1988).

Along the same line of thought, based on my experiences as an EFL teacher mentor first for two years and later as a teacher trainer at the CRMEF over a period of four years so far, we have held regular meetings with the different mentors that co-operate with the English department to coordinate and discuss various practicum issues. I can state with confidence that despite the fact that EFL mentor teachers in Morocco assume the implementation of 60 % of the year-long CRMEF teacher training program, they are, regrettably, very much less recompensed for their immense contribution. They get no release time - much-asked-for - to provide appropriate feedback to their mentees, no mentor training to carry out their roles effectively, no school support, etc. All they get are a meager stipend paid always late and an end-of-the-year insufficient recognition for service at the graduation ceremony attended mostly by trainees, trainers and mentors. It is high time that not only a new mentor selection approach was adopted to recruit only the most suitable co-

operating teachers to help with the pre-service practicum component but also a generously fairer system had to be in place to encourage and reward the efforts of mentors.

4. The TEAMS Framework

4.1 Nomenclature and Background

As mentioned earlier, this paper intends to present a new perspective to the current selection process of mentor teachers as the latter has showed its limitedness to set up adequate conditions to optimize the professional placement component for trainee teachers. The assumption is that the present process may be effective to carefully choose ‘academically qualified’ teachers to serve as mentors but experience has equally taught us that half-way through any training year, we, trainers, were faced with frequent contextual problems on multiple occasions that marred trainees’ practicum experience and that, ironically, had little to do with the mentor’s quality profile. It was found that the type of problems that mostly cropped up, for example, related to the distant location of the school, the absence of support materials, the kind of students taught, and the classroom setup nature (Moussaid & Zerhouni, 2017).

It is worth noting that the proposed selection framework draws essentially on research insights from the literature reviewed, the experiences of mentoring in other countries and the context of pre-service teacher training in Morocco. It is based primarily on the existing practice of choosing school-based mentors but re-thought to enhance the quality of mentoring support for trainee teachers in light of recent research data on the most frequent problems of pre-service EFL teachers during the practicum.

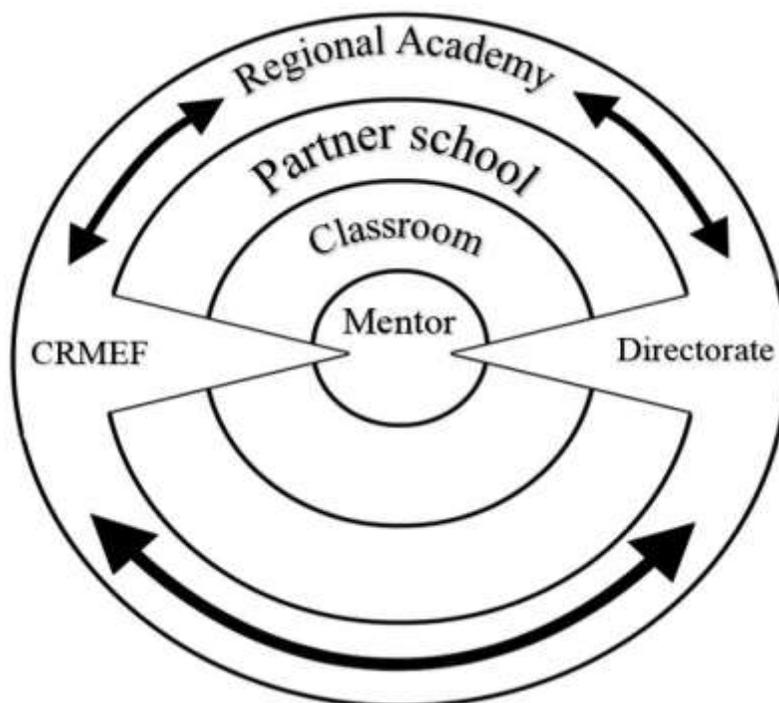


Figure 3 The Tri-spheric Ecological Approach to Mentor Selection (TEAMS) Framework

As Figure 3 displays, the framework's acronym (TEAMS) is not haphazard nor accidental but a well thought-out name to highlight the fact that more than one party has to be involved to form the team that should coordinate, contribute to, and assure the successful implementation of the pre-service practicum component. The term 'ecological' is used here to stress the important effect of the school and classroom environment on trainees' practical experience. As illustrated, the framework is designed in three interactive spheres (regional academy, partner school, and the classroom) to rule out the hierarchical nature that characterizes the current practice of selecting mentors (CRMEF through the provincial directorate to the mentor). It also sports two wedges (CRMEF and directorate) that cut through the three spheres toward the core, namely the mentor who is the target of all the concerted efforts. The CRMEF along with the regional academy, the provincial directorate, and the partner school are conceived to work as a team (either bilaterally or multilaterally at times) to recruit the right school mentors and prepare the optimal conditions for the practicum experience.

TEAMS Implementation

4.1.1 Current Issues

The current pre-service practicum implementation has been found fraught with several problems relative to the partner school, the mentor's classroom where trainees practice teaching, and the mentors themselves (Moussaid & Zerhouni, 2017). It has also been found that a fair number of these problems stemmed principally from factors that were not considered during the selection process of mentor teachers. Hence, practicum issues will be presented first based on our research data (1511 post-lesson written reflections, 337 end-of-each-practicum reports, and 1624 mentor feedback comments) collected from a cohort of 60 EFL pre-service teachers and 12 mentors and then a discussion follows of the roles of the regional academy, the partner school, the CRMEF and the provincial directorate (wedges) and how they could interconnect and collectively contribute to the solution of several reported practicum problems.

Based on our research findings, trainees reported that the remote location of three partner schools from their places of residence triggered psychological and financial concerns. Some trainees had to spend a three-hour stressful commute on busses and taxis back and forth, which affected their teaching preparation and performance. A trainee typically described this issue as follows:

The main problems I and my colleagues faced in this TP [Teaching Practice] were transportation and the remoteness of the high school which was situated at around 10 minutes after getting off the taxi. I take two busses and I spend at least one hour and a half in order to reach the school. We had to wait for long time for the taxi to depart; otherwise, we sometimes had to pay the other places so as to reach the school on time. This affected the preparation time of the lesson of the upcoming day as we always arrived home late. It was hard for me to manage as I got definitely exhausted.

Apart from the time wasted on trips to their assigned practice schools, the economic expense of commuting was a heavy burden for the majority, if not all, given the meager scholarship they often

get delayed. In the event of insufficient funds, trainees' performance inside the classroom is therefore affected. The following is a typical reflection that portrays how lack of enough financial support can considerably affect trainees' well-being and performance during the practicum. A trainee wrote that:

Today's class was the worst one ever! I relied on technology because I didn't have money to make photocopies for students. Actually, I wasn't in my mood while I was teaching. How can you teach while you're thinking about how to get back home because you're broke? The delay of our scholarship is really affecting my performance in this TP [teaching practice]. I wish they would give it to us as soon as possible so I can work hard and find money for the material I'm going to use.

In fact, putting trainees in such a pathetic situation is unacceptable and, regardless of the main reasons leading to the chronic delay of the scholarship, this practice does not serve the greater purpose of the new reform in teacher education.

Classroom-wise, the number one complaint was about the non-availability of a data projector at the school, which militated against their efforts to integrate ICT materials in their teaching. They also complained about the lack of loudspeakers, classroom tables, color chalk, an eraser, an in-school printing facility and the absence of electricity power outlet for the data projector in some of the classrooms where they worked. They even talked about how 'dirty' and 'dusty' some classrooms and blackboards were. On the lack of the video projector and electricity a trainee wrote regrettably that:

Another problem that exists in most Moroccan high schools is the absence of all kinds of ICT tools, including CD player and data projector. Hopefully this school, as opposed to [name of school], has electric plugs. ICT would have saved me both time and effort if it were available. For example, I would not need to use the blackboard which takes time - besides I wouldn't be obliged to xerox one copy for each student in a class of forty pupils. In fact, not having access to the data projector made life difficult for me.

The dire need for a data projector around also shows the financial concerns of trainees on practicum in that this trainee would not have been obliged to make copies for students - whose cost eats away from the already limited scholarship. Besides the classroom's poor equipment, trainees reported what may be termed as the 'syndrome' of classroom instability, an issue created by the school's ill management of the classrooms distribution. While the norm is typically a classroom shared by at least two teachers who work in alternation (morning and afternoon), it is not uncommon in some schools that this alternation is somehow broken and the teacher works as a traveler from one classroom to another with each class period. As a result, time is wasted as the teacher changes rooms and has to begin all over again. One typically inclusive reflection about this and other classroom-related issues was provided by a trainee through the following statement:

As for the difficulties we faced in this TP, they are of two types: high school and students noise. I had to deal with overcrowded classes in classrooms which sometimes lacked the bare necessities of teaching like boards, tables, electricity sockets and eraser. The classrooms were dirty and dusty. We taught in laboratories on Wednesdays and Fridays. Actually, we taught in four classrooms, and sometimes we had to change the classroom for each class. As in the previous TP, the lack of data projector and above all the lack of electricity forced us to do away with ICT.

This classroom instability even worsened with having trainees teach in science laboratories that usually lacked enough seats for students, who had to make noisy trips to nearby classrooms in search for spare chairs. Teaching in science labs was always associated with the issues of class control and coverage. While overcrowdedness is generally a widespread phenomenon, trainees reported unanimously that some specific schools were far more notorious for overcrowdedness and for their students' misbehavior, unpunctuality, and failure to bring their textbooks regularly than the rest. These findings suggest that when the mentor's classroom is under-equipped and/or unstable, trainees' practice teaching is seriously affected even when the mentor is doing a good job.

The findings of the study also showed that mentor teachers did a great job with their teams of trainees and the latter's reflective accounts are overly replete with highly positive feedback about the support and efforts mentors provided them with during the entire practicum. The findings revealed, however, that there were several cases of dissatisfaction with few mentors on a variety of issues, namely a) limited or absence of model teaching, b) overly negative, limited, judgmental, or only oral/written feedback, c) occasional absenteeism, d) lack of full collaboration and lesson planning with the mentor, and finally e) mentors' differential treatment of trainees. It is significant to mention that the mentors involved in the study did not get any training on mentoring. They all seemed to enact the role according to their personal convictions and past experiences. Many of the reported problems could have been forestalled had the mentors been well selected or, at least, got some training on how to carry out their job effectively.

4.1.2 *The New Perspective*

It is true that a given mentor may be fairly qualified for the job but a non-optimal classroom environment for practice teaching can have a negative influence on the trainees' perception of, and attitude towards the teaching profession. Some might argue that trainees have to adapt themselves to the conditions of the schools they do practice in since, as future teachers, they will most probably work in similar conditions, if not worse. This is partly true but it is a risky adventure in the sense that the 'harsh' reality may override the motivation to teach, corrode the determination to change conditions, and end up producing teachers who are doomed to adapt to the status quo and reproduce problems rather than lift the challenge to reform it from within. If the intention is to prepare and produce agents of change who are well prepared to help improve the quality of teaching and student learning, there is an urgent need to provide trainees with the best training conditions so they develop a sense of good working conditions and try to change theirs when they are entrusted the job.

There is strong evidence from the study that the way mentors are chosen needs to shift from a full focus on the candidate's academic qualifications to the adoption of a more comprehensive ecological approach that considers not only the candidate mentor but also value both the classroom environment where trainees will practice teaching and the location of the school. In fact, placing trainees under the mentorship of a mentor teacher whose workplace is either far away or notorious for discipline problems, where classes are overcrowded, and classrooms are poorly equipped and/or unstable, tends to add unnecessary difficulties for trainees. The TEAMS framework provides a workable solution to counteract these collateral difficulties. One way this can be done is through inviting candidates to provide, along with their application, a description of their classrooms, grades taught, timetables, availability of classroom equipment (enough seats, a data projector, a screen, power outlets, loudspeakers, chalk, etc.), accessibility to the school location (round trip fare, time, and distance vis-à-vis the training center). The framework will also allow CRMEF teacher trainers to glean more feedback about the exact working conditions of each candidate mentor and be able to recruit only the ones whose application meets the selection criteria about the optimal environmental context of practice teaching. This alone is, however, not enough unless both the provincial directorate and the school administration are also involved in the process to facilitate the job of mentor teachers once recruited. They can make sure that the concerned teachers have stable, well equipped classrooms, non-overcrowded classes and reduced timetables to spend more time with trainees on planning lessons and providing feedback. Not the least, these parties along with the CRMEF, unlike what is done now, need to ensure that mentors are well recognized for the key role they play and appropriately remunerated for their service.

In the same vein, it is ironic that the new model of teacher training in Morocco puts a high premium on pre-service teachers' school-based experience (60 % of the whole training); yet, as mentioned earlier, mentor teachers, when recruited, have no guidance or training on how to fulfil their new responsibilities. Given their intimate knowledge of and work with teacher trainees (and in collaboration with the regional academy and the provincial directorate), CRMEF teacher trainers are best suited to design and deliver a suitable training module for mentor teachers about the skills, strategies, and ways of providing support and feedback to trainees. Such training will make a world of difference for would-be and/or practicing mentors and enable them to have a good understanding of their role expectations and become aware of the frequent problems and needs of trainees throughout the different stages of the field experience. It will also help standardize the mentoring practice and serve as a forum for experiences exchange and enrichment.

Accordingly, the following table lays down some of the roles in the TEAMS framework, and highlights the major tasks each party can carry out to ameliorate the process of selecting mentors and partner schools, through the provision of ongoing mentor training and support to the appropriate recognition, and encouraging compensation of mentors' national service to the preparation of future generations of teachers. It should be noted that this is a tentative framework to improve the experiences of mentoring practice and pre-service practicum and it can, in light of new research findings, be further improved to include more ideas, parties, tasks, and roles.

Table 1: *The TEAMS Framework for the Roles and Tasks of the CRMEF, Regional Academy, Provincial Directorate, and the Partner School*

	CRMEF	Regional Academy	Directorate	Partner School
Selection of mentors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announces need for mentors. • Collaborates with coordinator and provincial supervisors. • Selects partner schools. • Recruits mentors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinator supervisor communicates the need to the provincial supervisor. • Helps with selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sends out announcement to schools. • Notifies selected mentor teachers. • Provides substitution cover in case of shortage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies interested teachers. • Notifies selected mentor teachers.
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designs and implements the mentor training package. • Organizes workshops/study days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to the training: supervisors organize / attend workshops to give guidance on mentoring strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provincial supervisor and school principal recommend eligible candidates and help with selection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies and allows mentors to attend.
Equipment/materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify / provide support materials (data projector, printing facility, etc.) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides classroom stability and equipment. • Facilitates trainees' non-teaching activities.
Timetabling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides weekly time envelope needed for practicum. • Trainers pay mentoring visits to trainees on practicum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directorate assures substitution cover. • Coordinator and/or provincial supervisor (s) pay (s) mentoring visits to trainees on practicum. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides reduced timetable for practicing mentors. • Coordinates visits to trainees.
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give formal recognition and incentives: certificates / letters of appreciation / awards / etc. • Pay for related conferences and professional development workshops. 			

Remuneration	•Pays regular stipends.	•Provides budget.	•Notifies schools of payment time.	•Notifies mentors.
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It is significant to state that in some areas like training, equipment, recognition, the tasks mentioned in the table can be done by either one of the parties or all of them altogether. Close coordination is very important to allow the parties to see what they can do individually and what can be done in collaboration

For a better implementation of the TEAMS framework, it is imperative that mentors be selected prior to the school and training year so they can get some training before they assume their new role. This will allow the school administration to plan and allocate a stable, well-equipped classroom along with a light work timetable for its mentors. The school will also have enough time to seek substitution cover from the provincial directorate for the mentors' left classes of mentors early enough to avoid any problems of teacher shortage in the following school year.

5. Conclusion

Given the central role that teacher mentors play in practicum settings, the present paper has tried to present a new team-based perspective to the recruitment process of these support people with a view to enhance the quality of their service and neutralize several of the collateral problems that beset the clinical experience of Moroccan EFL pre-service teachers. Besides our recent research on the most frequent practicum problems and needs of EFL trainee teachers, the TEAMS framework is largely informed by insights from the literature and relevant national and international experiences. The new mentor selection approach necessitates a strong cooperation across the CRMEF, regional academy, directorate and partner schools. It also lays down the basic roles, tasks, and possible collaboration pathways for each party involved in the implementation of the professional practicum component and the selection and preparation of mentors. In effect, a comprehensive approach to the practicum component is thus urgently needed to provide trainees with not only effective mentors but also a training-friendly environment for practice.

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