

CHAPTER 14

e-PRASMO 2.0: A Revolutionised Practicum Assessment Model

Ramiaida Darmi*, Noor Saazai Mat Saad, Nurkhamimi Zainuddin, Norhana Abdullah,
Zarina Ashikin Zakaria, Suraini Mohd Ali, Normazla Ahmad Mahir,
Fariza Puteh-Behak, Haliza Harun & Norhaili Massari

*Faculty of Major Language Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, 78100 Nilai,
Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia*

Abstract

e-PRASMO was created to battle the high cost and excessive time involved in the implementation of teaching practicum where supervisors visit teacher-students (supervisees) in the latter's workplaces (schools). e-PRASMO or electronic Practicum Assessment Model functions as an online platform to allow the traditional supervision to be performed. Created in 2015, e-PRASMO 1.0 consisted of an online learning kit where information was displayed in G.O.A.L.S (Global Open Access Learning System) and the supervisees submitted the recording of their teaching practice on Compact Disk (CD). The online survey conducted showed dissatisfaction felt by supervisors and supervisees as there was little interaction between them. Thus, with improvisation, e-PRASMO 2.0 was introduced in 2016. It still provides all the information in G.O.A.L.S and the revised e-PRASMO also provides avenue for supervision via online forum, which addresses the problem of lack of interaction highlighted earlier. In short, e-PRASMO promotes an effective way of supervising as it is cost-effective, stress-free and flexible as it embraces the cutting-edge technology and the practicality in the assessment of teaching practicum in the 21st century by simultaneously upholding the two main tenets in teaching practicum – support and feedback. The conflation of the characteristics promotes high commercial values to the invention as it can be highly commercialised to be utilised in any kind of practicum aspect in a learning programme that calls for supervision.

Introduction

Teaching practicum is an idiosyncrasy of an education-based degree programme. It is a way to uphold the quality of teachers – may it be for pre-service or in-service teachers. In a traditional manner, teaching practicum involves the supervisor to visit schools where the teacher-student under one's supervision is doing the teaching practice. The supervisor is physically in class observing the supervised teacher-student (supervisee) carrying out the lesson. Then, both supervisor and supervisee sit and have a discussion on the strengths, weaknesses, points of interest and ways to improve the lesson. It is a routine for a supervisor to be physically present at the location once or twice during the duration of the teaching practicum. This routine has caused a lot of money and wasted considerable time. Thus, it is the purpose of this paper to introduce e-PRASMO, a solution to the high consumption of money and time involved in doing supervision.

e-Prasmo 2.0

e-Prasmo stands for electronic teaching practicum assessment model. It is an online platform that contains a standard operational procedure to carry out the teaching practice for the duration of 8 weeks of practicum (4 credit hours). The platform provides an e-workshop, an e-guide book, e-lesson plans, assessment forms and criteria, tips for video recording, steps for uploading on youtube and samples of good lessons. Besides that, there is also avenue for the supervisors to give feedback and supervisees to ask questions. This is in line with the literature on good practices for practicum where support and feedback are important elements (Calderhead & Shorrock, 1997; Marzano et al., 2011). These are done as the supervisee discusses the plans for his/her lesson with the supervisor via an online forum. Then, after uploading the recording of the first lesson, the supervisor gives feedback using the same online forum. Next, he/she will record the second lesson taking into considerations the feedback made earlier.

e-PRASMO 2.0 is an improvisation of e-PRASMO 1.0 which was created in 2015. The latter was improvised to accommodate the need for interaction between the supervisors and supervisees. e-PRASMO has been utilised for two semesters for the in-service teachers undergoing their first degree programme at the Faculty of Major Language Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM).

Detailing e-PRASMO

e-PRASMO operates on an online platform called G.O.A.L.S. The page in G.O.A.L.S shows 8 topics which represent the 8 weeks of teaching practicum. This will be delineated in this section. However, there is a need to first look into G.O.A.L.S.

a. Electronic/Online Platform - G.O.A.L.S.

In terms of the electronic/online platform in managing e-PRASMO, although there are many platforms in the market, it leans towards a 'repository' portal where content related to the practicum is displayed after it is uploaded to the system called G.O.A.L.S (Global Open Access Learning System) developed by USIM. Thus, a

key personnel from G.O.A.L.S has been approached and consulted in the quest of optimising this electronic/online platform. GOALS provides collective construction and interactive tools for educational purposes. The content could be accessed and downloaded by the supervisees. The GOALS' interface allows the users to view all the links to the contents on one page. Fig. 1 captures the welcoming notes and beginning of the first week of practicum.

On the G.O.A.L.S' interface, there are links to among others, the e-guidebook, sample of good lesson plans, and tips on video recording. As for the assessment, there are buttons for submission of the video recordings and lesson plans. On the part of the supervisors/assessors, they can give feedback via the online forum which is in the asynchronous mode. This allows supervisees to make inquiries and further discuss arising matters related to the 8-week practicum.



Fig. 1: GOALS' Interface

b. The 8-week Input/Content and Online Forum

Week 1 welcomes the supervisees with a welcoming note (Fig. 1) together with the course outline, namelist of supervisors and supervisees and announcements. It also has the most important input - video on how to upload the recording of their teaching lesson on youtube. *Week 2* continues with an e-workshop for teaching practicum where there is a video by the Programme Head explaining the steps in going through the teaching practicum, the important dates, the roles of supervisors/assessors and students/supervisees and others. In the same week, a forum for consultation for the recording of the first teaching lesson is set.

The following week (*Week 3*) sees that there is a template for e-lesson plan and some examples of good lesson plans. There is also a forum for submission. Supervisees submit the youtube link of their teaching recording here - it requires only the link as to allow the storage of the video to be shouldered by youtube. This

lessens the burden for G.O.A.L.S. The feedback is also given by supervisors via this forum.

Week 4 has two important features - the assessment form for the supervisees' reference and also a forum for both supervisors and supervisees to discuss the possible innovation or innovative practices to be used in the second lesson. *Week 5* has some interesting examples of innovation for teaching. It also provides tips for recording. *Weeks 6 and 7* provide more youtube links to videos on innovation and innovative practices. Lastly, *week 8* has a forum in which the supervisees submit the youtube links of their second recording. The supervisors also utilise this forum to give feedback on their supervisees' lesson.

To encapsulate, 'support and feedback' is delivered via the content, consultation and feedback sessions on the practicum requirements, assessments, references and other guides. Website links, glossaries, powerpoint slides, texts are provided for students to access more resources such as videos and reading articles. In short, e-PRASMO promotes an effective way of supervising as it is cost-effective and practical; it embraces the cutting-edge technology, yet simultaneously upholds the two main tenets in teaching practicum – support and feedback.

Properties of e-Prasmo 2.0

e-PRASMO 2.0 is designed to create a cost-effective, stress-free and flexible assessment scheme for the practicum; benefitting management, supervisors and supervisees. This method of practicum process and assessment is deemed essential because of its cost-saving benefits as well as reflecting the traditional practicum by including avenue for feedback and discussion or reflexivity. The faculty saves on money and time spent on the site visits. e-PRASMO enables saving up to more than 50% of the cost for the running of teaching practicum in the traditional mode. It is also stress-free as supervisees are able to perform their teaching in a low-anxiety environment and supervisors are able to evaluate their supervisees' performance at any time that is conducive for grading purposes, ensuring both accuracy and professionalism in their grading.

It is also flexible as supervisees are able to manage their video selections and supervisors are able to revisit their reviews. Furthermore, the accessibility of information on the standard operational procedure of the teaching practicum is just a click away. In short, this online platform is definitely cost-effective, stress-free and flexible as it addresses the current needs of being technologically enhanced and having the practicality in the assessment of teaching practicum in the 21st century. To add, the easy accessibility of information, the inclusion of reflexivity and the enhancement in technology among the users are also properties of e-Prasmo. Hence, it is best illustrated as seen in Fig. 2.



Fig. 2: The Properties of e-PRASMO

The Research

e-PRASMO has revolutionised as it has undergone continuous quality improvement through the research conducted. In the first phase after one semester of its utilisation (semester 1, 2014/15), an online survey was conducted to get feedback from both the supervisors and supervisees. The first phase e-PRASMO or e-PRASMO 1.0 was an online platform where there was just information and some links to samples of lessons and lesson plans. Furthermore, supervisees were just required to submit two recorded lessons at the end of week eight of the practicum. The two main findings of the survey administered on both parties were firstly, e-Prasmo did not provide much information to assist their (supervisees') practicum, and secondly, it did not provide any avenue for interaction (both supervisors and supervisees). Thus, considering these findings and the literature on good practices for practicum, a new feature – reflexivity (refer to Fig. 2) which promotes interaction between both parties, has been added in for the second phase e-PRASMO or e-PRASMO besides including more guidance and examples for the supervisees to excel in their teaching practicum.

The Future for e-Prasmo

Being an electronic/online platform that manages supervision in an easy and cost-effective manner, e-Prasmo has the potential of being commercialised. Over time, e-Prasmo could be extended for use in Industrial Training, Industrial Attachment, Work Experience for Learning, Industry Engaged Learning, Programme Internship and any

kind of practicum aspect in a learning programme that calls for supervision. Supervision is the guidance and support students'/supervisees' needs while on placement to ensure the learning experience is optimised and that they have the overall most positive experience possible. The supervisor fulfils various roles including teacher, counsellor, mediator and consultant. Thus, it is important to have a medium like e-Prasmo to support the running of a practicum.

Conclusion

e-PRASMO 2.0 has been revolutionised from its earlier version, e-PRASMO 1.0. It was created initially to alleviate the cost and time utilised for the traditional assessment of teaching practicum. The revolution came about based on the findings of an online survey administered to the supervisors and supervisees of the earlier batch. Although e-PRASMO 2.0 serves the same purpose that is to reduce the cost of going for observations, the content has been enriched and the main addition is reflexivity. It entails the interaction between the two parties in terms of consultation and discussion on feedback. e-PRASMO 2.0 embodies properties like cost-effectiveness, accessibility, and flexibility that are of high value for commercialisation in the any kind of practicum aspect in a learning programme that calls for supervision.

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