



# The effects of teachers' homework follow-up practices on students' EFL performance: a randomized-group design

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This study analyzed the effects of five types of homework follow-up practices (i.e., checking homework completion; answering questions about homework; checking homework orally; checking homework on the board; and collecting and grading homework) used in class by 26 teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) using a randomized-group design. Once a week, for 6 weeks, the EFL teachers used a particular type of homework follow-up practice they had previously been assigned to. At the end of the 6 weeks students completed an EFL exam as an outcome measure. The results showed that three types of homework follow-up practices (i.e., checking homework orally; checking homework on the board; and collecting and grading homework) had a positive impact on students' performance, thus highlighting the role of EFL teachers in the homework process. The effect of EFL teachers' homework follow-up practices on students' performance was affected by students' prior knowledge, but not by the number of homework follow-up sessions.

**Keywords:** types of homework follow-up, academic performance, English as a Foreign Language (EFL), homework, teachers' practices

## INTRODUCTION

Homework is defined as a set of school tasks assigned by teachers to be completed by students out of school (Cooper, 2001). Several studies have showed the positive impact of this instructional tool to enhance students' school performance and develop study skills, self-regulation, school engagement, discipline, and responsibility (e.g., Cooper et al., 2006; Rosário et al., 2009, 2011; Buijs and Admiraal, 2013; Hagger et al., 2015).

In the homework process teachers have two major tasks: designing and setting activities (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2001, 2012; Trautwein et al., 2009a), and checking and/or providing homework feedback to students (Trautwein et al., 2006b; Núñez et al., 2014). Cooper (1989) called the later "classroom follow-up" (p. 87). Classroom follow-up includes feedback provided by the teacher (e.g., written comments, marking homework, and incentives; Cooper, 1989, 2001). Hattie and Timperley (2007) defined feedback as the information provided by an educational agent or the student (self) on aspects of the performance. Feedback is an important source of information for checking answers (Narciss, 2004) and improving academic performance