DEAR EDITOR: To some teachers, supervision still has a connotation of “snoopervision.” Many persons view the “curriculum worker,” the “field assistant,” the “assistant teacher,” etc., as the supervisor by another name who smells just as sweet. All too often teachers are quite correct in this estimate, for ratings, merits, tenures and salary increments in many systems even today may rest upon the blessings of the person carrying the black notebook filled with comments to be placed upon the administrator’s desk. One traditional supervisory technique is classroom visitation. It is of this situation that I write and of the survival techniques which teachers have developed in fending off such observation.

Teachers learn survival rapidly—survival of “body and soul”—and it is in tribute to them that I describe what I have observed and faithfully recorded as “Six Ways To Avoid a Supervisor.”

- Number I—The Did-You-Want-To-See-Me? Technique.

This technique can best be used by the teacher who has had some years of experience with the “eyeball” control of her class. It is also helpful if she is able to lift one eyebrow singly. (This technique should not be practiced by anyone having a small or weak voice since the entire effect upon the supervisor must be one of immediate and frightening power.)

As the supervisor enters the room, the teacher should then apply simultaneously the three elements: (a) eyeball bluff, (b) raised eyebrow (one), and (c) the full-voiced statement, “DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME?” If well executed, this should stop the advance of all types of supervisors, each of whom will retreat with a remark appropriate to his or her type, such as, “I’ll see you later,” “nothing important—just dropped in,” “needed your help,” etc.

- Number II—The We-Were-Just-Going-Out-for-Games Technique.

As a method of escaping the supervisor, this is helpful for the teacher because it does not require the definite physical talents and, for many, will have a much smoother feel about it. It involves merely the statement as the supervisor enters the room that it is now game time and the herding of the children out of the room. It will prove too over a period of time to have charmingly devastating results on the supervisor. An empty classroom has such a lonely feel about it. (This is not recommended to be used with the principal, however, for he MAY remember the class schedule.)

- Number III—The We-Were-Just-Going-To-Hear-a-Story Technique.

This is an approved technique to be used by the teacher who reads well and who can hold the attention of her class with no fears that discipline problems
will arise. It is important to know whose attention span is the longer—the
supervisor's or the children's. This technique consists of grabbing a large
volume and reading.

In most cases the class will not prove as impatient as the supervisor who, as
a rule, will tip-toe out at the end of approximately twenty minutes. A gra-
cious note here is for the teacher to smile and nod at the out-going guest.
(Caution: do not stop the flow of reading, for he or she might come back!)
- Number IV—The We-Want-You-To-
Know-What-We-Are-Doing Technique.

In many respects this has the char-
acteristics of the above-mentioned in
that it is based on the lack of staying-
power and attention span of the super-
visor. It does require two things: (a)
an interesting activity in line with the
interests of the supervisor and (b) a
capable child (or children) who with
the teacher's aid, prompting and addi-
tions, can, as in Method Number II,
outlast the supervisor without interfer-
ing with the teaching.

As this technique operates the teach-
er asks the children to explain to Mr.
X or Miss Z what the mural, the books,
the clay work, etc., are all about—ad
infinitum.
- Number V—The Won't-You-Help-
Johnny? Technique.

This method has great merit, particu-
larly in handling the supervisor who
is concerned with individual differences
and is also effective if the hall, library
or principal's office is sufficiently free
for the teacher to suggest that the su-
ervisor and the child work THERE.
(Note: the farther away, the better!)
- Number VI—The Won't-You-Take-
Over-the-Class? Technique.

This is to be used at any time and
requires no special props, such as a
long book, a trained child or a free
room. When the supervisor opens the
door, the teacher should beam first,
come close to the supervisor, and then
in a stage whisper so that all the class
can hear, invite her or him to teach
the lesson. Experience seems to show
that he or she will do one of three
things but with only one outcome: (a)
she will decline to teach, scrape up
some reason for seeing the teacher, and
retreat, (b) she will teach the lesson to
the amusement of you and the class, or
(c) she will insist that "you go ahead."
In any event, the suggestion, the gra-
ciousness of the teacher to "share" and
the eyes of the children will protect the
teacher from evaluation. This tech-
nique is particularly helpful in future
conferences of the teacher with the prin-
cipal because the situation can be cited
as evidence of the teacher's wanting to
know how to do the lesson correctly.

These methods employed by teachers
are not restricted to any one school sys-
tem or section of our country. They are
methods that are well-nigh universal,
tried and tested. Any similarity between
these techniques and those used by
teachers living or dead is not coinci-
dental—but certainly human. — Jane
Sherrod, consultant in elementary edu-
cation, J. C. Winston Company, Pas-
dena, California.