
Crucial to the supervisor's effectiveness is a realization that implementing change requires more than simply facilitating individual growth. Sometimes the system has to be changed if such behaviors are to be adopted.

The Supervisor vs. Institutional Constraints on Professional Growth

RONALD E. COMFORT*
LARRY S. BOWEN

WHETHER one is dealing with the conception of preservice or in-service programs, the key concern is the *facilitation of professional growth*. This concern is typically translated into a plan for helping professionals learn those skills, ideas, facts, and attitudes that are deemed necessary for successful curricular, instructional, and administrative functioning in formal educational settings. The logic of this perspective is that given sufficient growth of professional capacities on the part of individuals, organizational or system-wide improvement will be a logical consequence.

Although certainly important, this perspective is inherently narrow and insufficient to explain both the relative state of stability seen in institutionalized schooling as well as the slow progress in bringing about significant systemic change. A more complete explanation of such phenomena is a function of recognizing that the very nature of particular cultural sets of institutions place constraints on the actual and potential impact of individual growth efforts.

Institutions, such as schools, are charac-

terized by role definitions, expectations, and interrelationships. These parameters are maintained by a system of rules, rewards, and sanctions which serve to encourage or inhibit certain behaviors on the part of those holding various roles. Both parameters and maintenance of role are vital to the existence of an organization, for they regularize or make relatively predictable the organization's relationships and its integrity as a dynamic system.

Given a particular institutional role and role maintenance system, implementing change requires more than facilitating individual growth. What *must* be dictated by change proposals are alterations in the role parameters of the system. This is especially true if a discrepancy exists between a desired alteration of role behaviors and the maintenance system which militates against the adoption of such behaviors. In short, to effect significant educational change, one ought to

* Ronald E. Comfort and Larry S. Bowen; both Assistant Professor of Education, University of Virginia, Charlottesville

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be speaking of system-change in terms of *ensuring the congruence of behavioral expectations and the maintenance system*. That system by its very nature can serve to enhance or retard the operationalizing of particular role behaviors.

To illustrate in general terms, consider the role of the instructional supervisor in schools. The most recent body of research and conceptualization relative to the supervisory role explicitly views the appropriate function/focus as one of facilitating curricular and instructional improvement. Supported by the research on human relations and change, emphasis is given to the idea of working *with* teachers in conceiving, implementing, and evaluating changes in instructional practices.

The supervisory role is thus seen as a catalyzing rather than a directing one. Prerequisite to achieving this function/focus, certain human relationship characteristics must exist between teachers and supervisors including a climate of coequality and mutual

trust. The supervisor is to be viewed by the teachers as non-threatening, open to their needs and ideas, providing information when requested, and as identifying with the teachers. In addition, sufficient resources are required to establish and maintain a continuing and intensive relationship.

What Factors Affect Supervision?

Although highly abbreviated, the above factors provide a framework for determining some of the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes which would be required of an individual to satisfy the role requirements of supervisor. Beyond the consideration of needed individual capacities, however, the factors suggest the kinds of role definition/expectations and supporting reward and sanctioning mechanisms which would encourage the utilization of individual capacities in the achievement of the proposed function of supervision. These suggestions might best be dealt with through attempts to answer several questions:

1. In what ways do teachers have authority in the selection of those who will serve as supervisors? There is a relationship between choice and commitment. Just as there is a need for mutual trust, so there is the need for significant teacher-input in the selection of supervisors. Both serve the establishment of coequality.

2. Relative to *maintaining* that relationship, in what ways are the lines of supervisory behavioral accountability tied to the instructional personnel? Such ties of accountability tend to encourage the instructional-supervisory co-relationship, especially if the instructional staff has viable positive and negative reward mechanisms by which to support these ties.

3. In terms of role tasks, in what ways are supervisors encouraged by organizational factors to focus on facilitation of instructional improvement with teachers?

To what degree, conversely, do supervisors' defined tasks include (a) the judging of teacher performance, (b) the communica-

tion of performance judgments to the administrative staff, and (c) the enforcement of administrative policy? The latter three task dimensions have a propensity for *undermining* the achievement of the proposed focus of supervision. The same is true if the prescribed activities include extensive record-keeping, report-making, and other desk duties which serve to reduce the amount of time and energy that can be expended on ideal supervisory tasks. In addition, to what degree does the teacher-supervisor ratio reflect a realistic assessment of what can be meaningfully accomplished relative to establishing and maintaining instructional improvement efforts with teachers? A high ratio likely militates against intensive and substantive interactive efforts.

In summary, if there is commitment to facilitation of instructional improvement through the use of supervisors, as conceptualized in the recent literature on supervision, that priority must be demonstrated by utilizing particular processes by which sufficient numbers of supervisors with appropriate professional capacities are selected. Also, it is important to determine and implement role definitions/expectations and organizational support mechanisms which will enhance the likelihood of actualizing this approach to instructional improvement.

The implication of the authors' conceptual framework, as generally illustrated in the supervisory example, is in terms of a strategy of organizational diagnosis and sub-

sequent determination of needed system or structural alteration. With a proposal of change there first needs to be an examination of the role behaviors which would be prerequisite to actualizing the substance of the proposal. Second, an assessment is needed of the rewards, sanctions, or rules by which the role behaviors would most likely be encouraged and maintained. Third, determination is needed of discrepancies which may exist between present role behaviors/maintenance elements and those needed to actualize the proposed change. Such an analytical process should result in guidelines relative to both the nature of appropriate staff development programs and the systemic changes needed.

To continue to conclude that the problem of limited educational change or effectiveness is but a function of the deficiencies or inadequacies of the individual members of constituent institutions merely reinforces individual frustrations and debilitates organizational change efforts. While it is important to foster individual growth through pre- and in-service programs, it is equally important to attend to the perspective of the role of organizational elements or characteristics which serve to encourage or inhibit the actualizing of professional capacities or proposals for educational change. It is the mechanism of organizational assessment and alteration of systemic elements in terms of that assessment that is most likely to result in effective implementations of educational change propositions.

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