

# New Conceptions of Supervision

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**Leslee J. Bishop and Gerald R. Firth**

An accurate perspective on instructional supervision requires examination of impending as well as contemporary events. Such a view alleviates the concern for the survival of instructional supervision as unnecessary and inappropriate. Apprehension regarding its significance stems from the tendency to associate instructional supervision with the maintenance of programs soon to be phased out. If instructional supervision is to flourish rather than merely exist, it must be associated with the development of programs soon to be phased in. Often subsumed under different guises, roles, and titles, supervisory missions are in fact increasing. The future will require expanded services from individuals familiar with new skills, tasks, and technologies. Those who can anticipate the emerging opportunities hold the key to success for supervision as a professional endeavor. They can change the tone from pessimism to optimism by their enlarged perception of the field.

This change in the conception of supervision is a multiphase process. It demands attention to the impending arenas that must be confronted, recognition of the critical element(s) that offer the greatest challenge to schools, selection of the su-

pervisory missions that need to be addressed, and the application of strategies assumed to possess appropriate impact.

The American public is destined to face challenges in many arenas. The accompanying chart, Figure 1, lists only eight. These are representative of those arenas in which decisions must be made. Schools already are involved in several of them and will be drawn inexorably into many others. For each arena, a single critical element has been identified. To address each critical element, a mission has been specified that calls for action by practitioners of instructional supervision. Finally, a strategy has been proposed to provide local impact.

1. *Governance and control*—The struggle for power through unions, strikes, collective negotiations, and contractual agreements is a common phenomenon in education. The use of power by teachers through professional associations to exert pressure on local administrators, boards of education, and state legislatures requires that supervisors seek to achieve balance among contending forces by mediating in a manner that also considers the best interests of students, parents, and programs.

2. *Financial support*—Problems of poverty, recession, inflation, automation, and conflicting ideologies threaten traditional economic policies for schools. These problems are accompanied by

the public demand for accountability and for institutional stewardship of a more precise nature. Needed are new outcome standards and procedures with supervisors performing the *monitoring* function.

3. *Population distribution*—Density, different cultural norms, mass living, mobility, and land use are prominent among the problems in this arena. Each development creates its own demand for response. One aspect of redistribution of population is the increased proportion of older adults to youth and children. Such circumstances

Figure 1. A Strategy To Provide Local Impact

<i>Impending Area</i>	<i>Critical Element</i>	<i>Supervisory Mission</i>	<i>Impact Strategy</i>
1. Governance and control	Concentration of teacher power	To achieve balance among contending forces	Mediating
2. Financial support	Demand for public accountability	To establish procedures and standards	Monitoring
3. Population distribution	Changes in proportion of age groups	To design appropriate programs	Planning
4. Occupational flux	Emergence of new careers	To change personnel competencies	Renewing
5. Institutionalized education	Necessity for diffused settings	To structure feasible alternatives	Orchestrating
6. Varied life styles	Acceptance of diverse manifestations	To generate improved understanding	Valuing
7. Environmental overload	Reconciliation of expectations with eco-system	To communicate critical relationships	Translating
8. Health maintenance	Emphasis on preventive measures	To incorporate health concepts	Implementing

call for supervisors to design appropriate programs to serve new clienteles through *planning*.

4. *Occupational flux*—Growth of professional, technical, and service jobs; careers for women; city revamping; mass transportation; computer analysis; and increased leisure time have caused occupational shifts. The emergence of new careers demands related changes in the competencies of school personnel, with supervisors in charge of programs for *renewing*.

5. *Institutionalized education*—Programs offered by government and service agencies, insti-



Different cultural norms; growth of professional, technical, and service jobs; and environmental overload are only a few of current challenges to schools and supervisors.

## *Educational Leadership Announces Themes for 1977-1978*

Manuscripts and/or photographs relevant to the proposed themes for the 1977-1978 issues of *Educational Leadership* are requested. Topics and deadlines for receipt of manuscripts are as follows:

*October:* "New Challenges to Instructional Curricular Leadership" (July 1, 1977)

*November:* "Competencies as the Aim of Education" (August 1, 1977)

*December:* "Near Futures Imperatives—If . . . Then" (September 1, 1977)

*January:* "Curriculum Evaluation: Uses, Misuses, Nonuses" (October 1, 1977)

*February:* "State/Federal Role in Curriculum Development" (November 1, 1977)

*March:* "Education of Judgment and Action: Personal and Civic" (December 1, 1977)

*April:* "Youth Cultures: What Can We Learn?" (January 1, 1978)

*May:* Non-theme issue (February 1, 1978)

Length of manuscripts should be approximately 1800 words typed, double-spaced (about six pages). General style should conform to that of the journal. More detailed information on the technical requirements of manuscripts is available upon request from the editorial office.

Photographs and other illustrative materials, whether directly related to an article or not, are especially requested.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate and materials to be returned must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope adequate to return material. Decisions on materials will be made as promptly as possible.

Materials should be addressed to Robert R. Leeper, Editor, *Educational Leadership*, Suite 1100, 1701 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006. Phone: (202) 467-6480.

tutions, businesses, and industries throughout the community provide a variety of educational opportunities that extends beyond the schoolhouse walls. The necessity for tapping such programs in diffused settings requires *orchestrating* by supervisors to delineate and deliver feasible alternatives.

6. *Varied life styles*—Communes, divorce, single parents, multiple marriages, and liberated homosexuals exemplify patterns of living quite different from previous eras. Acceptance of such diverse manifestations of social/personal units calls for supervisors to generate improved understanding through programs focused on *valuing*.

7. *Environmental overload*—Noise and material pollution, waste disposal, energy shortage, and soil depletion threaten to destroy an environment already extremely abused in the name of progress. The reconciliation of expectations with the eco-system presents a mission to communicate critical relationships with the supervisor *translating* them.

8. *Health maintenance*—Challenges to schools in this most recent arena arise from such innovations in the delivery of health care as corporate practice, widespread use of clinics instead of hospitals, and emphasis on prevention rather than treatment. Improvements in protecting health, preventing illness, reducing risk, and reversing poor habits of millions require the reorganization of health concepts by supervisors *implementing* revised programs.

## **New Sources—New Possibilities for Leadership**

Supervisory functions and roles often arise from other than major developments. Supervisors also must examine the actual operations in school districts and in education-related activities. They then will be able to identify the inherent possibilities for leadership arising from at least five potential sources.

The first source is that of primary-level interactions of faculty and leaders in attempting to solve specific operational and logistical problems. These require such competencies as observing, assessing, diagnosing, consulting, communicating, and training. Another source is the tasks and responsibilities related to a particular project, program, or entity conducted by the supervisor. These

require capabilities in directing, controlling, managing, evaluating, researching, and deciding.

A third source is offered by related techniques and technologies derived from many professions and occupations. These require competencies such as categorizing, explicating, recording, auditing, and verifying. Still another source is the exigencies of the local education situation. These require possession of capabilities to utilize operational style, demographic context, cultural idiosyncrasies, system size, and organizational structures.

The fifth source is the introduction of new, relevant, and/or interdisciplinary curricula such as metrication, career education, consumer studies, death education, law and human rights, moral education, and multicultural and ethnic studies. Such programmatic changes require capabilities to determine and sequence content, devise effective teaching and learning modes, select or create resources and evaluative measures, and build these elements into programs for student learning and for staff development.

New supervisory missions will continue to emerge. If existing supervisors are alert to the new arenas, they can recognize the critical element(s) and prepare to apply appropriate impact strategies. If such opportunities are not antici-

pated by those in the supervision family, substitutes from within and entrepreneurs from without, armed with innovative practices, will step forward to serve the missions. For, by whatever name, the role that demonstrates the capability of adapting to the needs of schools at a particular time and place will be the role that survives—and that supervises.

Instructional supervision as a concept is not in jeopardy; it remains absolutely essential to schools as they respond to continuous social change.



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*Instructional supervisors would like to evaluate teachers for instructional improvement and not for tenure purposes. This continuing problem must be solved if the function of supervision is to become a more productive endeavor.*

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### Mattie R. Crossley

The needs of teachers and students have often determined the course of instructional supervision from its inception to the present. Although teachers did not necessarily welcome the type of "inspecting and reporting" that was commonly carried out by the earlier supervisor, teachers, like students, did need and want some assessment of their work. Many of the best teachers were identified by this method. The modern supervisor and today's teachers and students are more attuned to one another's needs.



With an emphasis on opportunity, integrity, and performance, the modern supervisor utilizes democratic supervisory practices. Such practices are perceived as offering more freedom for teachers and supervisors, freedom that symbolizes greater personal responsibility for taking advantage of opportunities, for exemplifying integrity, and for performing the job.

In essence, the function of the modern supervisor is one of teaching and learning. The teaching-learning process, for the supervisor as well as for the teacher, implies working with

is likely to be regarded by the teacher as "lip-service."

In instances where the teaching-learning process is at work, teachers are more open to using cooperatively agreed upon techniques and perceive both the supervisor and themselves as teacher-learner. In less conducive situations, teachers are likely to yell for "peer" supervision.

The instructional supervisor seeks to apply what research has tested and what experience has proven to be effective. So does the teacher, along with the student.

In order to implement ideas, however, the supervisor must have available human and other resources. An essential resource is that of time; time to plan, to study, to interact with other professionals, to read, and to think. A second resource is that of access to growth-facilitating experiences such as workshops, conferences, travel-study seminars, and participation in the teaching experience. Proximity to the classroom, the teachers, the students, the administration, and the parents represents a third essential resource.

The most successful continuous learning environments make available the above-named resources to teachers and supervisors.

Administrators have recently begun an effort to provide these resources. Teachers are given on-site instructional assistance by supervisors who are assigned to the school and are located within the school. No matter what title the on-site supervisor is given, whether curriculum director, instructional consultant, resource teacher, or assistant principal, the function is to provide instructional leadership which, in addition to its other meanings, connotes supervision.

While such assignments indicate progress for instructional supervisors,



people, and that includes students. It means that the supervisor not only observes the classroom setting and confers with the teacher before and after that observation, but it also means coping with the same problems that face the teacher in the classroom.

The modern supervisor demonstrates his or her expertise and willingness to be subjected to the same situation as the teacher. The teacher who is experiencing "unmanageable" classroom problems expects concrete help in resolving these difficulties. The enlightened supervisor responds to the need and is not threatened by active participation in the process. Any less assistance rendered by the supervisor

the frustrating question of evaluation of teachers for tenure purposes is still at issue among supervisors and administrators. When the supervisory function is performed by principals, most supervisors then would agree, that evaluation for tenure purposes should properly be the responsibility of the principal. Nevertheless, some administrators and the courts do not share this view. The courts in particular seem to rely heavily on the instructional supervisor for confirmation or refutation in tenure cases.

Instructional supervisors would like to evaluate teachers for instructional improvement, preferring not to evaluate teachers for tenure purposes. That feeling compounds when the supervisor has little or no authority to "enforce" the use of suggestions and recommendations, although these may have been agreeable to both the supervisor and the teacher. When the teacher fails, the supervisor also experiences failure. The time to assist teachers has passed when that teacher faces a tenure hearing.

If we are to continue to progress toward making the supervisory function a more productive endeavor, then some resolution of this problem must be reached.

Professional associations for those who function in supervisory capacities are springing up throughout the country. The prospects are promising. For the discussion and



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resolution of mutual problems, these associations can provide a supportive environment.

Teachers need supervisors and students need teachers, but it is only when the teaching-learning process is an integral part of the relationships that their needs can be met.

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*Reactions to a questionnaire indicate the supervisors feel that their roles are becoming more advisory and less threatening and authoritative.*

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### **Jan McClain**

A review of articles written about the identification of the role of supervisor in the past decade reveals concerns very similar to those expressed by a sample of Texas supervisors. In order to formulate some generalizations for publication, this author surveyed 100 professional colleagues in Texas whose educational responsibilities were known to include supervision. An interesting related observation was that the Texas Public School Directory listed less than half of these educators with the title, "Supervisor." Titles that implied supervision included assistant superintendent, director, coordinator, and consultant.

In 1966, Turney observed:

One result of this multifunctional conception of supervision and the accompanying diffusion of role has been the reduction of the supervisor's position to that of a sort of educational infielder whose responsibilities are likely to shift from time to time depending on the nature of current emergencies or the need of superiors to unload some time-consuming and unrewarding task that has drifted their way. . . . As a way out of this miasma of conflicting, overlapping, and intertwining responsibilities, it is proposed that supervision be redefined as including those services that contribute directly to the improvement of classroom instruction.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David Turney. "Beyond the Status Quo: A Re-appraisal of Instructional Supervision." In: *Supervision: Emerging Profession*. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1969. p. 219. Note: Article taken from *Educational Leadership* 23(8): 664-69, May 1966.

## ADELPHI UNIVERSITY 1977 Summer Workshop

### *Education for Dialogue— A New Approach to Humanism*

An intensive two week workshop for school administrators and change agents interested in promoting humanistic educational changes within their school systems.

The aim of the workshop is to show that our relationship to others, nature and knowledge can be brought into harmony with our inner experiences. Therefore, knowledge will be sought through artistic apprehension as well as scientific and analytical comprehension.

The budget for this non-credit conference, which has been funded by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, includes tuition and some expense provisions for a selected group of administrators coming from districts across the country.

For more information and application materials please contact Dr. Jay Smith or George Benner, Adelphi University, Department of Education, Garden City, N.Y. 11530.

The workshop dates are July 10-July 22, 1977 so applications should be mailed no later than June 1, 1977.

are becoming more suspicious of authority and want to know just what line/staff position the supervisor occupies. The questioning position of teachers regarding supervisory competencies and administrative power was cited as a factor in the changing role of the supervisor.

### Use of Time

Reviewing new instructional materials consumed the most time of those supervisors responding. The second most time-consuming task was clerical. It was reported that "paperwork" had increased considerably with efforts toward accountability in all areas, especially federal programs.

Human relationships and personal counseling were mentioned by more than half of the practicing supervisors. They perceived themselves as filling the need for a nonpunitive but effective sounding board for both principals and teachers. Other tasks mentioned included attending and conducting workshops and related staff development activities.

### Most Interesting Aspects of Supervision

Generally positive statements prevailed in the responses to this question. It was obvious that the role of supervisor is much more readily accepted when that person serves as *advisor* and *consultant*, and this seemed to be preferred by the practitioners. The supervisor should demonstrate competencies in practical application of educational theories in the classroom. Improved supervisory training models, more appropriate job descriptions, and more subject-area coordinators in grades K-12 were promising aspects of supervision. More training for principals in curriculum and instruction also was requested.

### Greatest Frustrations

The following is a list of items cited most frequently as a source of frustration for respondents:

- Lack of time to supervise instruction because of paper work;
- Responsibility without authority;

The questionnaire used to gather opinions contained six questions regarding conceptions of supervision. In most cases, narratives have been used to summarize answers that represent consensus.

### Role Change in Recent Years

Most supervisors felt that though clerical tasks had increased, the expectation prevailed that supervisors should be more directly involved with people—teachers, students, administrators, and the public. The change in role was identified as the move from a more authoritative to a more democratic leadership style. Supervisors were quick to note, however, the continuing need for supervision to retain enough administrative strength for effective staff evaluation. This was particularly true of respondents from smaller school districts where fewer supervisory positions existed in a single district.

Supervisors also mentioned that there is now less "snoopervision" and a more cooperative team spirit exists among teachers and administrators. Several listed as a concern, however, that teachers

- Resistance to new programs, materials, and strategies;
- Too little time available for in-service training;
- Teachers who are subject-centered and not student-centered;
- Lack of effective programmatic continuity in K-12;
- Job description inappropriate for performance expectations;
- Feeling "caught in the middle" among teachers, principals, and superintendents.

### Most Rewarding Experiences

There was greater consensus on the responses to this question than to any of the others. The most rewarding experiences in rank order were:

- Seeing teachers experience and express success;
- Helping principals feel more successful;
- Seeing programs successfully implemented;
- Hearing good public reaction to education;
- Being sought out for assistance by teachers and principals.

### Significant Trends and Issues

The following is a list of trends and issues noted by responding supervisors:

- More emphasis on humanism and relevancy in curriculum planning;
- An inclination toward multiple and diverse methods of accountability;
- Better training for supervisors in humanistic processes for working with professionals;
  - More effective individualization of instruction for all students;
  - Need for more area specialists;
  - Smooth coordination of many specializations within the curriculum (career, drug, and vocational education; programs for gifted, handicapped);
  - Societal demands of the schools;
  - The role of the supervisor in teacher evaluation and professional negotiations.

Sergiovanni observed that:

Supervision is a neglected art in need of revival. . . . The evidence is mounting that significant changes in school effectiveness will not come about as a result of increasing salaries of teachers, decreasing class size, introducing new materials, beefing up the academic training or certification credentials of teachers, reducing the work load, introducing clerical assistance, using performance contracts and the like. . . . *The highly motivated teacher must become a high priority concern of supervisors.*<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion, a clearer role definition for the supervisor in relation to teachers and administrators was perceived, in this study, as an effective tool for clarifying supervisory responsibilities. Particular concerns were expressed regarding the role of the supervisor in professional negotiations.

Many supervisors saw as their most rewarding professional experiences, success demonstrated by students, teachers, and principals as a direct or indirect result of intervention or assistance by the supervisor.

Since human relationships and personal counseling consumed most of their time, supervisors expressed a need for more effective training in humanistic processes. An increased clerical load was a source of frustration for the supervisors because it limited the time for direct involvement with teachers and the educational process.

Reactions to the questionnaire indicated that supervisors feel that their roles are becoming more advisory and less threatening and authoritative. They seem to see the effective educational "team" emerging, and indications are that both teachers and supervisors see this as an improvement over autocratic domination. 

<sup>2</sup> Thomas J. Sergiovanni, editor. *Professional Supervision for Professional Teachers*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1975. pp. 1, 7.



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