

Overview

Ron Brandt

Important as it is, staff development has a bad reputation. Fred Wood and Steven Thompson (page 374) call it "the slum of education" and offer guidelines for its reconstruction, including giving participants more control over the "what" and "how" of their training. That seems reasonable enough, but Andrew Hayes and Linda Jones (page 390) add an important caution: teachers may not always recognize their real needs, so don't call a survey a "needs assessment."

We should be able to use research findings to improve in-service and preservice education. The trouble with research is that one study often contradicts another, leaving practitioners wondering which one is right. Bruce Joyce and Beverly Showers (page 379) analyzed over 200 studies investigating effectiveness of training methods. Armed with that kind of data, they present with some authority what they call "working hypotheses" about what it takes to achieve various training purposes.

Staff development and supervision often overlap. A process that combines the best of both, known as *clinical supervision*, is apparently not widely practiced. It requires a collegial relationship between supervisor and teacher; a climate of trust in which the teacher explains objectives for the lesson and helps establish the purpose and focus of classroom observation. Some proponents insist it should not be used in connection with official teacher evaluation because in that situation the supervisor must give priority to institutional rather than individual

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needs. Of course, evaluation is precisely what most observations of teachers are used for, so in that sense, true clinical supervision is practically nonexistent.

People disagree about whether administrators responsible for evaluating teachers can provide supportive supervision. Last year an ASCD sponsored group issued a report saying that consultative supervisors and administrative supervisors play different roles and need different kinds of preparation. In this issue, Mildred Ness (page 404), an elementary principal who was a member of the group, writes a vigorous dissent.

Robert Krajewski and Robert Anderson (page 420) have prepared a new edition of one of the highly regarded books on clinical supervision. The original version was by Robert Goldhammer, who died about the time it was published. The new edition includes an imaginary conversation in which the three of them make the point that teachers and supervisors who understand the concept of clinical supervision should be able to design a process that fits their purposes.

Madeline Hunter (page 408) and her colleagues have identified six different purposes for conducting conferences with teachers. She explains each purpose, the condi-

tions under which that type of conference would be appropriate, and she even includes examples of what the supervisor might say. Thomas McGreal (page 414) adds some helpful suggestions for using goals in the supervision/evaluation process.

Teachers can often learn a great deal about what needs improving by watching themselves on television. One way supervisors can help is simply by arranging for the necessary equipment and staff. An interesting wrinkle on the process is split-screen videotaping which, as William Moritz and JoAnne Martin-Reynolds (page 396) explain, lets viewers see teacher and class simultaneously.

This issue contains a number of other interesting articles, including one by Fred Rosenau, who edits several newsletters reporting on educational research and development activities. You may be impressed by Rosenau's inventory of the many services specifically intended to provide information to educators, and you will probably second his motion for reorganization and consolidation of the whole system.

Because our members sometimes need information and don't know where to find it, ASCD is setting up a research information service. Rather than compete with other agencies by providing information directly, ASCD will try, whenever possible, to put members in touch with existing sources. Inquiries may be sent to Kathy Schaub, Assistant Director of ASCD, at our Alexandria, Virginia office. *EL*

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