

THE DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO SUPERVISION

SUPERVISORS SHOULD RECOGNIZE STAGES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TREAT TEACHERS AS INDIVIDUALS.

Jean Sorrell is a third-year teacher at Highton School. She is young and enthusiastic, constantly involved with her students, providing activities and materials, and asking other teachers for ideas.

Regina Norton has begun her eighth year at Highton. Students, parents, and faculty see her as a stalwart, committed, and exceptional teacher. Other teachers come to her often for advice, and she goes out of her way to help others.

George Halsom is also a third-year teacher at Highton. He often appears confused about how to manage and organize the classroom to avoid disruption. He is quiet and stays to himself. Rarely does he initiate conversations with other staff members. At the end of the day he quickly gathers his materials and leaves for home.

Wednesday morning, the supervisor announces to the staff that their third inservice session on new arithmetic materials will be held after school. All of the teachers know they are to attend but their reactions to the workshop are varied. Jean Sorrell shrugs her shoulders and thinks, "I hope that I can learn some new activities." George Halsom frowns and thinks "another wasted afternoon." Regina Norton thinks "I already know the material to be explained; my time could be better spent working on the school curriculum or helping Judy with her new science center."

CARL D. GLICKMAN

Teachers within the same school have different perceptions of what is useful to them. A supervisor's plan for instructional improvement might be a delight to one teacher and a bore to another. Most supervisors can readily concur that their staff is not of one mind.

Considerable professional research has been undertaken to prove and chart what people have known for centuries: that human beings do not think alike. But *how* people think and the development of thinking processes has become a field of study in its own right. Piaget,¹ Bruner,² Smilansky,³ Kohlberg,⁴ and others document developmental stage changes from infancy to adolescence. There is a wealth of research on social, moral, cognitive, language, and emotional development. Researchers have found that as young people mature, they move at varying rates through a predictable sequence of stages. Studies on growth and development of the two hemispheres of the brain⁵ provide further neurophysiological support for the gradual transition from thought that is egocentric, intuitive, and subjective to thought that is more social, rational, and objective. Attention to development has recently expanded to the adult years. Works such as *Passages*,⁶ *The Seven Ages of Man*,⁷ and *Life History and the Historical Moment*⁸ suggest that people encounter common experiences at various stages of adult life.

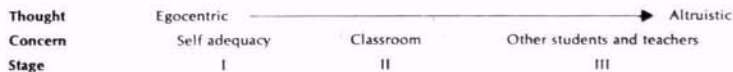
The need to consider maturational levels of school personnel has been recognized in the situational leadership literature,⁹ but research is just emerging on career-specific stages of teacher development.¹⁰ The pilot work of Francis Fuller,¹¹ who studied beginning teachers and successful, experienced teachers, has contributed to the idea that the child development progression from egocentric to altruistic thinking recapitulates itself when adults enter a new career. Beginning stages of teaching are characterized by teacher concerns for their own adequacy. The question is largely, "Will I make it till tomorrow?" The teacher wants to be shown

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"a bag of tricks" for survival. Later, as the teacher becomes more secure, concern moves from one's self to one's students. The question then becomes, "Now that I can survive, how can I contribute more to the welfare of my students?" The teacher desires to seek out resources, share ideas, and become involved in tasks that will refine and expand educational opportunities for students. The logical conclusion of this sequence is the outstanding teacher who eventually moves away from self-concerns to concerns for improving one's classroom to concern with one's school and profession as a whole. The teacher clearly knows his or her competencies, knows where to seek resources and feedback, and desires to help other teachers and students improve education for the collective group. This simplified notion of teacher development is shown in Figure 1.

Let's return to the vignettes. Viewed in a developmental context, Jean Sorrell is largely in Stage II, George Halsom in Stage I, and Regina Norton in Stage III. Naturally, stages are not all-inclusive and there is overlap from one to the next, as well as the possibility of regression when obstacles become too great. But using this simple framework for discussing Jean, George, and Regina, we find three individuals with contrasting concerns within the same school. In order for a supervisor to work effectively with each teacher, the supervisor needs to be knowledgeable about differing approaches to instructional supervision.

Figure 1. Simplified Stages of Teacher Development



Models of Supervision

The various approaches to supervision can be grouped in three somewhat simplified models, categorized as nondirective, collaborative, and directive.¹² Nondirective models advocate that the supervisor be a listener, nonjudgmental clarifier, and encourager of teacher decisions. Collaborative models advocate that the supervisor be equal with the teacher, presenting, interacting, and contracting on mutually planned changes. Directive models propose that the supervisor be the determiner and enforcer of standards of teacher behaviors by modeling, directing, and measuring proficiency levels.

Matching Models of Supervision to Stages of Teacher Growth

With an understanding of models and simplified stages of teacher growth, some broad matches can be made. Teachers in Stage I, concerned with self-survival, might profit most from the directive model. Teachers in Stage II, who are concerned with improving the learning environment for their students, might be approached using the collaborative model. Teachers in Stage III, who are concerned with helping other students and teachers, may need only the minimal influence of the nondirective model.

In describing how our three teachers might be treated in accordance

with the models, the focus will be on instructional improvement and inservice education, but the same application could be made for classroom evaluation, curriculum development, organization for staffing, or other supervisory functions.

Teacher George Halsom is barely "hanging on." Students are continually frustrating him and discipline problems are keeping him from the job of teaching. The supervisor needs to be concerned with George's survival. George needs explicit, detailed help. It would be proper for the supervisor to demonstrate or model for George how discipline might be enforced. He might actually take over the class for awhile and have George observe, or he might arrange for George to sit in on another teacher's class where discipline is well controlled. The supervisor could then detail for George the type of changes that need to be made by going over classroom rules, enforcement policies, reward and punishment consequences, and verbal and nonverbal teaching behaviors. The supervisor could also set up a two-week performance period during which George might focus on one factor (for instance, clearly explained and enforced rules) and keep records of the number of disturbances encountered. A 25 percent decrease in "acting out behaviors" might be set as the goal for those two weeks.

The supervisor would behave quite differently with Jean Sorrell. Recognizing that Jean wants to continually improve learning activities for students, the supervisor would approach her as a colleague. They would come together to set future directions for improvement. The supervisor would first observe what activities were currently used and how students were responding to them. After the observations were reported, the supervisor would discuss with Jean whether her observations were similar to those of the supervisor. Based on the sharing of observations, a common direction for improvement would emerge (for instance, the need for fewer reading materials in the science enrichment center). Together they would write

Figure 2. Supervisory Behavior Continuum

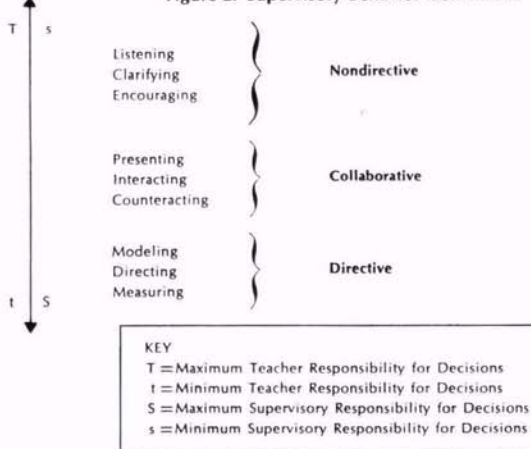


Figure 3. Matching Models with Teacher Stages

Teacher Stage	Self Adequacy	Classroom	Other Students and Teachers
Supervisory Model	Directive	Collaborative	Nondirective
Predominant Supervisory Behaviors	Modeling Directing Measuring	Presenting Interacting Contracting	Listening Clarifying Encouraging

out a contract that described classroom changes to be made by Jean, resources to be gathered by the supervisor, and future assessment to be made by both.

The supervisor must take still another direction in working with Regina Norton. She must acknowledge that Regina has superior teaching skills that at least match the supervisor's own teaching abilities. Regina mainly needs support in determining her own growth. The supervisor might listen to Regina discuss the perceived needs of students, teachers, and herself. Her thinking could be extended by asking questions for clarification. Finally, the supervisor might encourage her to put thinking into action. For example, Regina might believe that her students and most other students do not have enough reading materials at home to supplement reading in school. The supervisor would ask her to elaborate and she might describe how, on home visits, she sees almost no reading materials; children spend most of their time in front of the television. The supervisor would encourage her to consider what might be done. If Regina thought a home lending library might be a possibility, the supervisor would encourage her to discuss this proposal with other teachers in the school.

It is apparent that a supervisor might better serve his or her staff by responding to individual needs instead of using a single, uniform approach. Spending time directing and guiding Halsom toward classroom management improvement, collaborating with Sorrell on changing instructional materials, and allowing Norton to pursue a home lending library is ultimately more productive than having them all attend an after-school meeting that is useful to only a few. At times a staff will have common needs and can be approached as one group. In most cases, however,

the professional supervisor should use varying approaches to treat teachers as individuals. ■

¹ Jean Piaget, *The Language and Thought of the Child* (New York: Meridian, 1973).

² Jerome Bruner and others, *Studies in Cognitive Growth* (New York: John Wiley, 1966).

³ Sara Smilansky, *The Effects of Socio-Dramatic Play on Disadvantaged Pre-School Children* (New York: John Wiley, 1968).

⁴ Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stage and Sequence: The Cognitive-Developmental Approach to Socialization" in *Handbook of Socialization Theory and Research*, ed. D. Goslin (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969).

⁵ M. C. Wittrock, "Education and the Cognitive Process of the Brain," in *Education and the Brain*, 77th NSSE Yearbook, Part II (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1978).

⁶ Gail Sheehy, *Passages* (New York: Dutton, 1976).

⁷ Robert R. Sears and Shirley S. Feldman, eds., *The Seven Ages of Man* (Los Altos, Calif.: William Kaufman, 1973).

⁸ Erik H. Erikson, *Life History and the Historical Moment* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975).

⁹ See Phillip E. Gates, Kenneth H. Blanchard, and Paul Hersey, "Diagnosing Educational Leadership Problems: A Situational Approach," *Educational Leadership* 33 (February 1976): 348-354; and Gordon Cawelti, "Selecting Appropriate Leadership Styles for Instructional Improvement" (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1976). (Vid-eotape).

¹⁰ For examples, see Anthony F. Gregorc, "Developing Plans for Professional Growth," *NAESP Bulletin* 57 (December 1973): 1-8; Thomas A. Petrie and Inez A. Petrie, "The Preparation of Administrators: Some Observations from the Firing Line" (University of Nebraska-Omaha, January 1977); Katherine K. Newman, "Middle-Aged Experienced Teachers' Perceptions of Their Career Development," paper presented at the American Educational Research Association in San

Francisco, 9 April 1979; and Gene E. Hall and Susan Loucks, "Teacher Concerns as a Basis for Facilitating and Personalizing Staff Development," *Teachers College Record* 80 (September 1978): 36-53.

¹¹ Francis F. Fuller, "Concerns of Teachers: A Developmental Conceptualization," *American Educational Research Journal* 6 (March 1979): 207-226.

¹² See Carl D. Glickman and James P. Esposito, *Leadership Guide for Elementary School Improvement* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979); and Carl D. Glickman, *Developmental Supervision*, (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, in press).

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