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.”

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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.

Models of Supervision
The various approaches to supervision can be grouped in three somewhat simplified models, categorized as nondirective, collaborative, and directive. 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 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 in-service 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 1. Simplified Stages of Teacher Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Concern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egocentric</td>
<td>Self adequacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other students and teachers</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2. Supervisory Behavior Continuum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T</th>
<th>S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Clarifying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>Non-directive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>Interacting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counteracting</td>
<td>Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>Directing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring</td>
<td>Directive</td>
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**KEY**

T = Maximum Teacher Responsibility for Decisions
S = Minimum Teacher Responsibility for Decisions
T = Minimum Teacher Responsibility for Decisions
S = Maximum Supervisory Responsibility for Decisions

*Figure 2.* Supervisory Behavior Continuum
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.
