CS holds more promise as a coaching system than an inspection system.

CLINICAL SUPERVISION IN THE 1980s

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In the past five years the burgeoning interest in clinical supervision (CS) on the part of scholars and practitioners has resulted in a profusion of books and articles on the subject. Not only are there more CS action labs and workshops available but school districts are also seeking CS consultants in greater numbers.

Perceptions in the 1980s about the skill needs of teachers could shape clinical supervision (CS) into little more than a refined teacher inspection technology unless educators embrace a comprehensive teacher development system. If we perceive, I think erroneously, that teachers already have most of the basic knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate student mastery of certain competencies, then CS (through observation and data collection) could be expected to evolve into a sophisticated inspection system for ensuring appropriate instruction.

Most districts today are examining teacher performance closely and setting tough performance evaluation criteria. Preoccupation with evaluation forms and methods suggests that many districts will be lured into stringent patterns of "inspection supervision" and thereby lose sight of the emerging development role needs of staff.

If, on the other hand, we perceive that most teachers are not yet highly proficient in personalized kinds of instruction, CS could emerge less as an evaluation tool and more as a coaching system to assist teachers in acquiring proficiency in facilitation of student mastery of knowledge and skills.

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By definition, CS, an important branch of general supervision, focuses on helping teachers improve their performance through the analysis and feedback of observed events in the classroom. It emerged during the human relations era of management, during which time school people came to understand the contribution of a healthy climate to learning results. A general lack of definition for instruction and learning, however, may have prevented CS from progressing much beyond the "climate" focus (Sullivan, 1980, p. 27).

Until recently, CS has made little observable impact on learning directly, and consequently on the field of supervision. Practitioners, however, are providing the kind of accountability context today for linking a healthy learning climate with tentative definitions of instruction and with learning results.

A Performance Linkage System

The purpose is to present a CS model for the 1980s that addresses both healthy climates and tougher performance standards for both adults and students. The CS Linkage System shown in Figure 1 provides a conceptual model for linking performance standards and goals with continuous on-the-job coaching and with subsequent evaluation. Phase I (Planning) combines standards of performance with planning processes to determine the emphasis for a teacher's performance within a given year. Phase II (Developing) supplies one kind of growth opportunity: CS, a system for enabling teachers to achieve their expected levels of proficiency. Phase III (Assessing) analyzes teacher achievements as they relate both to the standards and to stated growth priorities. Within this systems context, CS becomes a legiti-

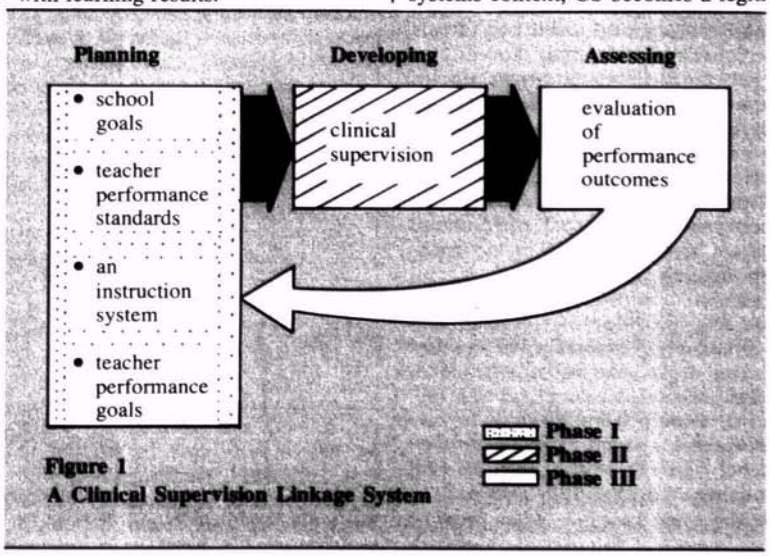


Figure 1
A Clinical Supervision Linkage System

mate helping technology, enabling professionals to develop requisite skills for fostering the kinds of learning expected in the 1980s.

Phase I: Planning

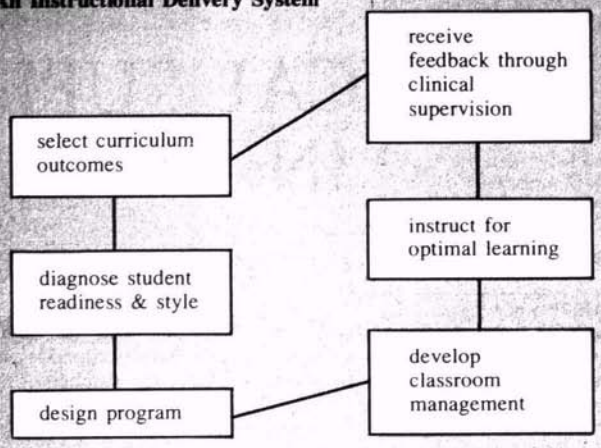
School Goals. The performance of teachers occurs within the context of a school's social system, which has its established norms and priorities. In order to survive, a school today needs to become aware of its own ecology and to define its growth priorities each year. Strong school leadership, a healthy climate, and flexible organization all seem to affect teaching significantly and thus affect learning. Consequently, school improvement priorities each year need to reflect more than the deficiencies of the curriculum or of individual teachers, and to relate to all the areas of school life which affect instruction.

Areas of school improvement might include communications systems, learning practices, instructional patterns, program development, planning systems, and student involvement. If a school decides, for example, to develop a personalized reading program for all students which includes a reading skills lab along with an individual reading program, then teacher performance goals, clinical supervision, and evaluation would focus on improving instructional effectiveness to match the desired reading program results.

Teacher Performance Standards. General job descriptions for teachers are now giving way to more comprehensive categorical definitions of role performance outcomes. Satisfactory teaching performance grows out of several different activities: instructing students, developing programs and materials, and being supervised in order to improve teaching skills. To illustrate the shift in procedures and emphasis, a categorical performance system, developed in 1979 for teachers in a Texas elementary school, identified performance expectations and also provided the focus for supervision and evaluation in the following areas: classroom instruction, classroom organization and management, student learning, program development, content expertise, professional growth, and interpersonal collaboration.

Teacher Performance Plans. To ensure that school goals are achieved and that performance standards actually guide practice, personal goal setting and planning is essential. We no longer can expect teachers merely to "get in gear," for example, for teaching the gifted. Teachers need a mechanism to assist them in developing specific skills, and equally important, for keeping them focused on their goals.

Figure 2
An Instructional Delivery System



Studies of performance systems in business and industry continue to rate Management by Objectives (MBO) systems as being far superior to the more familiar rating and ranking systems (Cummings and Schwab, 1973, p. 97). The key to MBO's success lies in its involvement of workers in defining personal as well as organizational priorities, and in defining the focus for their professional contributions and growth and subsequent evaluation. Abundant evidence from organization studies suggests that goals are an important determinant of performance.

The guessing games that plague so many evaluation systems are eliminated through planning as the professional is brought into the decision-making process. In the aforementioned Texas school's MBO system, each teacher participated in determining growth priorities for the entire school, and subsequently, each set his or her goals in relation to those priorities, meshing them with the performance standards categories. For example, a teacher's goal might be to develop a management system for implementing the school's new reading program in the middle grades. This goal then becomes one of the goals of supervisory coaching for the year, and eventually a focus for teacher evaluation.

An Instructional Delivery System. As noted earlier, one of the criticisms lodged against CS is its lack of instructional definition. The instruction system shown in Figure 2 provides a specific guide for teachers and supervisors to use as they seek to improve instructional skills.

LINK 1: The district *curriculum* must define those learning outcomes expected for all students, which form the standard for measuring school success.

LINK 2: Teachers must *diagnose* each child's entry characteristics. Bloom (1976, p. 169) has observed from his studies that the diagnosis of learning needs represents 65 percent of the variation in school achievement—an alarming finding given the small amount of attention now usually given to diagnosis. Further, learning style preferences and cognitive processes also play an important role in learning and therefore must be anticipated.

LINK 3: Following a selection of curriculum outcomes and based on a diagnosis of learning needs, interests, and styles, a *program for learning* must be designed to define specific outcomes, activities, groupings, expectations, and so on.

Tips On Getting Started In Clinical Observation

Select exemplary teachers for initial practice in data collection.

Select a few exemplary teachers on whom to practice the five stages of the observation cycle.

Include volunteer teachers as observers in initial observation cycles.

Videotape observation cycle stages and critique your effectiveness.

Select only a few observation items for initial practice (such as time on task).

Learn from your teachers those techniques which facilitate learning.

Build a bank of data collection instruments.

Build a bank of effective instructional practices.

Build a bank of helpful conference feedback techniques.

When you feel confident in the observation cycle techniques, plan a CS program for your staff as defined in the CS linkage system.

LINK 4: Next, decisions need to be made regarding appropriate *organization and management* of such things as instructional space, materials, personnel, time, and records.

LINK 5: Time spent in actual *learning and instruction* follows comprehensive and continuous needs assessment and planning. Bloom (1976, p. 115) has identified four instructional variables that appear to link directly to student achievement, providing teachers and supervisors with a sound base for planning instruction. These include: (a) teacher cues and directives (procedures and expectations); (b) student participation (planning, time on task); (c) teacher reinforcement of expected performance; and (d) teacher feedback and correctives regarding effective progress and results.

LINK 6: CS forms the final link in the instruction chain by providing a supervisory feedback and corrective mechanism for instruction and learning, and also for the effectiveness of diagnosis, program design, and the management plan. Teachers and supervisors can use the instruction system for initial planning and also for guiding problem solving and coaching.

Phase II: Developing

Clinical Supervision. Many development opportunities are available to teachers. Inservice training, college courses, and personal readings can provide new knowledge and skills. Similarly, organizational activities, such as participating in curriculum development, provide additional kinds of learning experiences. The process of organizing teaching and learning activities generates its own kind of personal knowledge and skill. CS, another development mechanism, provides teachers with useful feedback and correctives on instruction.

Until now, CS has been equated with the specific methodology of the observation cycle, which was developed in the 1960s. To meet the developmental instruction-related needs of teachers in the 1980s, CS can provide a philosophical as well as methodological framework for teachers and supervisors to use as they work together to raise norms of student mastery. What is needed today is a way of thinking about supervisory coaching in which the observation cycle methodology serves as a flexible technology.

Anderson and Krajewski (Goldhammer and others, 1980, pp. 1-11) in their recent revision of Goldhammer's landmark work on CS, have observed that preoccupation with CS methodology (the several stages of the classic observation cycle) is now giving way to a larger concern for underlying concepts. CS is conceptualized by them as:

—a technology for improving instruction

—a deliberate intervention into instructional processes

—goal-oriented, combining school and personal growth needs

—a working relationship between teachers and supervisors

—requiring mutual trust

—a systematic process that requires a flexible methodology

—an approach that generates a productive tension

—assuming that the supervisor knows more about instruction and learning than teachers

—a system that requires training (pp. 26-27).

These nine concepts are the foundation for effective clinical supervision today. The concepts enable us not only to understand and practice observation processes more effectively, but, perhaps more important, to develop a mindset or belief system about a goal approach to coaching teachers.

Given the conceptual framework noted earlier, the specific CS methodology known as the observation cycle becomes a useful guide for supervisory practice. Briefly stated, the classic observation cycle includes the following five stages:

1. *Pre-observation conference:* a contract between a teacher and observer regarding the purpose of the specific observation.

2. *Observation:* Actual data collection of events in the classroom as it relates to the contract mentioned above.

3. *Analysis and Strategy session:* Review and interpretation of collected data as they relate to the contract and to pedagogical theory and research.

4. *Conference:* Feedback to the teacher on the observed teaching/learning segment; preparation for "next steps."

5. *Post-observation critique:* Joint analysis of the usefulness of the foregoing observation cycle activities.

Each cycle should be viewed as one of many successive events, all geared to both long-range and short-range goals and all inter-connecting in a developmental process.

Phase III: Assessing

Performance Evaluation. Bloom (1976, pp. 215-216) concluded from his studies on school learning that 95

percent of all students can learn everything schools expect of them if the learning conditions are right. Extrapolating this concept, let us hypothesize that 95 percent of all teachers can also perform successfully if the conditions for their development are right. The CS Linkage System described here assumes that the "right conditions" will include the following school activities for teachers: (1) an analysis of improvement needs (for the school and individual teachers); (2) determination of specific growth goals; and (3) selection of appropriate learning opportunities. If under these conditions virtually all teachers are potentially capable of succeeding and of contributing to the school's success, then it follows that most of the available supervisory energy should focus on coaching activities.

In this model, evaluation is based on progress made toward agreed-upon goals. Evaluation results not from one or two inspection visits a year, but rather, from a comprehensive and extensive process involving supervisory feedback, correctives, and replanning. Performance evaluation is a summary of what has already occurred; the stated goals, evidence of progress and of supervisory involvement.

If a teacher is unsuccessful, there may be one of three possible explanations: (1) the goals and/or the supervision were inappropriate; (2) the teacher for some reason decided not to accomplish the agreed-upon goals; or (3) the teacher belongs in another profession. In the case of 1, a revised supervisory plan may foster success. In cases 2 and 3, the teacher needs either to be placed on probation or counseled into another job.

Probation decisions, which are problematic for most administrators, require a different kind of supervision from that described here. Some are now referring to such efforts as "due-process supervision." In such cases the administrator develops a plan of "musts" to be achieved within a given time frame, along with a plan for supervision, monitoring, and evaluation. The burden is placed on the teacher either to produce certain results or to leave. It should be noted here that dismissal activities never convert into growth for the school, they merely rid the school of a negative force. If schools are to reach beyond their current performance norms, priority supervisory energy must be devoted to developing professional excellence through on-the-job coaching, not through dismissal preparation.

Summary

CS can be used primarily as part of an inspection system, designed to reinforce and maintain traditional practices in which teachers are presumed to be adequately trained. When so used, it becomes less a helping technology and more an evaluation technology. However, CS offers far more promise when viewed as part of a comprehensive teacher development system that aims at more ambitious goals (especially for learners) and that assumes teachers have need for continuous extension and refinement of their skills in goal setting, diagnosis, program design, organization and management, instruction, and responding to supervisory assistance.

CS has the potential for enabling teachers and administrators to break out of isolated and outdated practices and to achieve new performance norms. Perhaps, one day, teacher evaluation will resemble a convocation or celebration of the achievement of the summa cum laudes, the magnas, and the cum laudes. CS, used as a coaching system, has the potential for catapulting schools into a new set of standards for excellence. ■

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