

# The Regions and Zones of Teacher Behavior

Supervisors can respond to differences in teachers by considering relationships among their personal needs, role expectations, and job behavior.

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Just as the varying needs of children demand individualized instruction, teacher differences require personalized supervisory and staff development efforts.

These efforts should not only take into account the teacher's stage of development (Glickman, 1980), but should recognize the existence of behaviors that overlap different stages and that reflect the relationship between personal needs, job requirements, and role behavior. The "zones" created by such overlaps can exist in any stage of the development process.

In order to individualize, planners of supervisory and staff development activities must diagnose teacher growth needs within defined zones. The model presented in this article offers a framework to support such efforts. Specifically, it (1) focuses on "regions" to be considered in assessing individual teacher needs at any stage in their personal development process; (2) provides a schema for mapping "zones" of overlap and isolation among these regions to determine an improvement course for teachers and supervisors; and (3) suggests specific strategies to meet individual teacher needs to improve classroom performance.

## Regions of Concern

Teachers' behavior on the job is a combination of the interaction between their personal needs and the role expectations of the organization. A review of the literature (Hoy and Miskel, 1978) has again revealed that this is a well-documented generalization; an individual's

needs and the role he or she is expected to perform both influence behavior on the job.

Based on this generalization, three regions of concern serve as a basis for analysis. The first is the *Personal Needs Region*, which represents the specific personal traits or drives that influence behavior, such as the need to be liked by others, the need to achieve status, the need to get personal "warm fuzzies" from students, or the need to be part of a group. Individual teachers may have any of these needs, or others, in varying degrees of intensity.

The second is the *Role Expectations Region*, the sets of behaviors for job performance expected of the teacher by the organization. Role expectations, which vary in nature and specificity, include expectations regarding work hours, lesson plans, teaching methodology, content to be taught, and so on.

The third region is *Job Behavior*, the actual observed behavior of the teacher in the job situation. A description of job behavior for a teacher—quite often a result of classroom observation—may vary from general statements about the teacher or setting to careful agreement on specific statements of instructional technique by teacher and supervisor. Often the method of describing job behavior is set forth in teacher contracts.

The three concepts of Teacher Personal Needs (PN), Role Expectations (RE), and Job Behavior (JB) are illustrated in the top section of Figure 1.

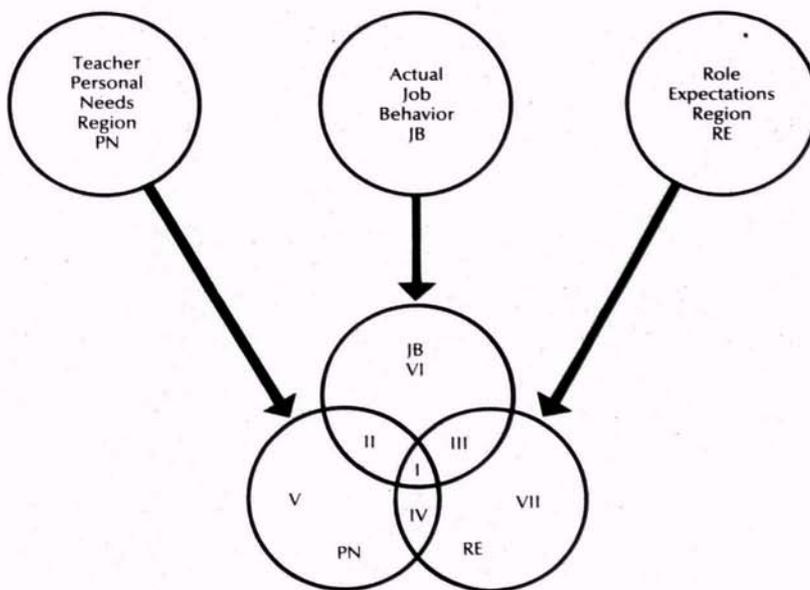
## Convergence of Regions

Figure 1 also shows how these three regions converge. The resulting overlap reveals specific zones labeled I-VII, each representing a relationship between needs, role expectations, and job behavior. These zones are described as follows:

I—*Zone of Congruency* (Convergence of teacher needs, role expectations, and job behavior.) Zone I depicts teacher behavior that is consistent with personal needs and the role expectations placed on the teacher's position. This congruence is highly desirable; behavior in this zone is positively motivated and results in a high degree of job satisfaction. The individual is being asked to do what he or she wants to do and is performing efficiently and effectively. Supervisors need to continually reinforce behavior that falls into the Zone of Congruency and search for development activities to support and increase productive behavior.

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**Figure 1. Regions and Zones of Teacher Behavior.**



- ZONES:
- I. Congruency
  - II. Autonomous Behavior
  - III. Compliance
  - IV. Anticipated Behavior
  - V. Isolated Personal Needs
  - VI. Extraneous Activity
  - VII. Neglected Role Expectations

**Figure 2. Behavior Zones and Supervisory Action.**

Zone	Behavior	Supervisory Action
I. Congruency	Teacher is doing what he or she desires and what is expected.	Reinforce.
II. Autonomous Behavior	Teacher is doing what he or she desires but is not expected to do.	If positive, move to Zone I. If negative, use sanctions or reward to move into Zone V.
III. Compliance	Teacher is doing what is expected but does not want to do it.	Try to support teacher (aide, secretarial help, and so on) or ease impact of tasks.
IV. Anticipated Behavior	Teacher is assigned tasks that will occur later.	Assist in planning, help identify resources.
V. Isolated Personal Needs	Teacher needs are not being met on the job.	Options: a. Try to move to Zone I or II. b. Encourage teacher to seek satisfaction outside of job. c. Encourage teacher to change jobs. d. Counsel teacher to tolerate frustration.
VI. Extraneous Activity	Habitual behavior not meeting either need or role.	Assess appropriateness and either move into Zone III or eliminate.
VII. Neglected Role Expectations	Expected behavior is not being performed.	Options: a. Use rewards or sanctions to move into Zone III. b. Attempt to modify needs. c. Modify or eliminate role expectations. d. Transfer teacher. e. Terminate teacher.

II—*Zone of Autonomous Behavior* (Convergence of teacher needs and job behavior.) Zone II represents teacher behavior that fulfills his or her personal needs, but is not part of the organization's role expectations. This autonomous behavior could be positive and accommodated easily by the organization; or it could be negative, self-serving behavior that should be checked by the organization. An example of the former would be the teacher who genuinely enjoys informal interaction with youngsters (personal need) and consequently spends "duty free" lunch periods working with students on special projects. Or, to illustrate negative behavior, a teacher may tend to sleep late (personal need) and consequently be habitually late for school. This behavior would need to be eliminated from the "behavior" region. Supervisory strategies in the first example would be to support and encourage the activities; in the second, a strict behavior change plan must intervene.

III—*Zone of Compliance* (Convergence between role expectations and job behavior.) Zone III represents behavior that is part of the role expectation, but does not fulfill the teacher's needs. This behavior reflects activity the teacher performs solely because the role demands it. For example, a teacher may be compelled to hand in lesson plans (role expectation), but would prefer to be more spontaneous in planning lessons (personal need). The teacher performs the task, but without enthusiasm.

Residing in Zone III is behavior that contributes to teacher burnout, described in the literature as activities that interfere with what teachers want to do, that is, teach. Examples include excessive recordkeeping, developing Individual Education Programs, excessive curricular revision activities, and increased roles as disciplinarians (Bardo, 1979; Walsh, 1979). The supervisor in this situation should find motivational activities to increase teachers' mental "wellness" while they perform these necessary functions. In addition, the supervisor should also search for support (teacher aides, secretarial help) to help lift trivial burdens from teachers.

IV—*Zone of Anticipated Behavior* (Convergence of Role Expectation and Personal Needs.) Zone IV is a potentially positive area in which role expectations merge with personal needs. The missing element is actual job behavior

which, if implemented, will move items from this zone into the Zone of Congruency. An example would be a teacher with a love of the outdoors who has a field trip planned later in the school term. Professional development activities for this anticipated behavior might include support and counseling.

V—*Zone of Isolated Personal Needs* (Teacher needs alone.) Zone V refers to personal needs that are not expressed in job activities, but which may be fulfilled outside the job situation. Often outside satisfaction of personal needs helps teachers cope with the rigors of the job. This could include a hobby such as sewing, flyfishing, skiing, or collecting. Creative planning of professional development activities could help teachers find a way to productively use their outside interests on the job.

Sometimes these isolated needs directly affect job behavior in negative ways. For instance, a teacher with a high upward mobility drive may see teaching as a dead end, or a teacher who enjoys physical exercise might find teaching too sedentary. The supervisor faced with Zone V has several options:

1. Attempt to move the need into Zone II by creating an outlet for the needs in the job behavior; for example, by helping the physically active teacher organize a staff and student jogging program.

2. Attempt to move into Zone I by having role changed to accommodate need; for example, by creating a team leader role for the upwardly mobile teacher or encouraging him or her to pursue an administrative career.

3. Encourage the teacher to continue to seek satisfaction from activities outside of the job.

VI—*Zone of Extraneous Activity* (Job behavior alone.) Zone VI represents behaviors that are not part of the role expectation and do not satisfy any personal need of the teacher. These activities may be positive and important and perhaps should be included in role expectations in the future. Alternatively, this zone may reflect an activity that is unnecessary and could be omitted.

An example would be the teacher who habitually submits detailed daily reports of collected lunch money in a mistaken belief that the reports are expected. Analyses of situations like this would determine if the behavior really is necessary and should become part of the

job expectation, or whether it is unnecessary and should be discontinued.

VII—*Zone of Neglected Role Expectations* (Role expectations alone.) Zone VII refers to role expectations that are outside the behavior area and are not being performed. This "zone of neglected role expectations" might take the form of an unfulfilled role expectation to follow the approved curriculum guide in social science, or failing to hand in detailed lesson plans.

The school supervisor faced with Zone VII neglect may consider the following options:

1. Place appropriate rewards or sanctions on the teacher to move behavior into Zone III—compliance.

2. Attempt to modify the teacher's "needs."

3. Modify or eliminate the role expectation if it is not important.

4. Transfer the teacher to an assignment where the role expectation can be modified or eliminated.

5. Consider terminating the teacher if the neglected behavior is important enough and nothing else works.

### Supervisory Action

Each of the zones has specific characteristics that suggest supervisory and teacher action. Figure 2 presents a capsulized view of the seven zones and suggestions for personalized supervisory actions.

### Conclusions

Our model builds on recent work that emphasizes the need to consider teacher growth in terms of personal needs and stages of development. The interaction of the regions of personal needs, role requirements, and job behavior has yielded zones of analysis for understanding and individualizing supervisory and staff development activities. As such, these concepts have value to the teacher and supervisor as a means of assessing performance and personal problems and identifying interrelationships. □

### References

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