

## A "CRITICAL" PERSPECTIVE FOR CLINICAL SUPERVISION<sup>1</sup>

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With the passing of time, it seems that the meaning and intentions implicit in Goldhammer<sup>2</sup> and Cogan's<sup>3</sup> original conception of clinical supervision have become twisted and tarnished. In the process of actually doing clinical supervision, it seems to have taken on many of the features of a sinister and sophisticated form of teacher surveillance and inspection. Perhaps we need to acknowledge, as Garman does, that the habit of evaluating teaching and prescribing what the teacher ought to do is a "ritual so deeply embedded in the culture of the school that we have become resigned to the inevitable."<sup>4</sup> She suggests that:

The present day versions of clinical supervision . . . have been widely interpreted by educators for their own situations. For the most part this is a welcome sign. The questionable part comes when educators begin to alter the basic tenets of the practice in order to fit their own rigid timeframes and mindsets. Clinical supervision is not warmed over ritual. It represents a drastically different form of professional development.<sup>5</sup>

Guditus, for example, has distorted the intentions of clinical supervision by denying its empowering possibilities on spurious cost-benefit grounds while actively endorsing its potential as a way of evaluating teachers. In his words:

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<sup>2</sup>Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969).

<sup>3</sup>Morris Cogan, *Clinical Supervision* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973).

<sup>4</sup>Noreen B. Garman, "Clinical Supervision: Quackery or Remedy for Professional Development" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, New York, 1984); see *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 1 (Winter 1986) 148-157.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 3.

Clinical supervision makes a lot of sense from a theoretical standpoint but it is never going to become standard practice in the schools. . . School administrators are already hard pressed for time and . . . they don't need the added time burden of the clinical approach to supervision. . . Without convincing evidence that the procedures used in clinical supervision are worth the time and energy involved, widespread acceptance of the clinical approach is highly unlikely.

There are, however, a number of sound reasons for adopting clinical techniques in instructional supervision. Not the least of these is the potential of the clinical approach for increasing the reliability of teacher performance ratings. The unreliability of these ratings becomes a matter of increased concern as a result of the continuing clamour for greater accountability in education.<sup>6</sup>

Another example is the Hunter<sup>7</sup> "teaching skills" model that uses clinical supervision as a way of evaluating and prescribing teaching, and in so doing strikes at the very heart of what Goldhammer<sup>8</sup> was about in his attempt to invest control over teaching in the hands of teachers. Hunter unwittingly does teachers a disservice when she says:

Conferences designed to improve instruction must be both diagnostic and prescriptive and are more accurately labelled *instructional conferences*. . . The objective of an *evaluative conference* is that a teacher's placement on a continuum from "unsatisfactory" to "outstanding" will be established and the teacher will have the opportunity to examine the evidence used.<sup>9</sup>

And again:

The observer focuses only on those aspects of instruction that were effective and brings those decisions to the conscious awareness of the teacher.<sup>10</sup>

Far from being "self-actualising" as Hunter claims, actions of this kind have far more in common with the factory-derived notions of scientific management from whence they emanate. To quote Frederick Taylor, who is credited with the development of "scientific management" as an idea:

One of the first requirements for a man who is fit to handle pig iron is that he shall be so stupid and so phlegmatic that he more nearly resembles the ox than any other type. . . He must consequently be trained by a man more intelligent than himself.<sup>11</sup>

Let us not be coy here. Even though people like Hunter may not openly espouse such a degrading point of view, they are through their actions implicitly endorsing a way of working that is deeply embedded in Taylor's ideology.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Guditus, "The Pre-observation Conference. Is It Worth the Effort?" *Wingspan Pedagogical Communication* 1 (No. 1, 1982): 7

<sup>7</sup>Madeline Hunter, "Six Types of Supervisory Conferences," *Educational Leadership* 37 (February 1980): 408-412.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision. Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969)

<sup>9</sup>Madeline Hunter, "Six Types of Supervisory Conferences," *Educational Leadership* 37 (February 1980): 408.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 409.

<sup>11</sup>Frederick Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1911), p. 59

The language is different, but the social relationships are the same. Seager<sup>12</sup> summed this up when he asked, "Who is responsible for managing the human, cultural, and material resources in processes like clinical supervision?" Although he saw the simple answer as being in terms of a "supervisor" of the inspectorial type who works with many teachers and who by training and experience is expected to be more competent than they, Saeger was sensitive to a much more complex, qualitative, and responsive answer when he suggested.

The teacher manages the resources for supervision, because any improvement of instruction or teacher development will result from teachers learning. This answer assumes that teachers should manage the resources for their own learning.<sup>13</sup>

It is the power relationships that are unquestioned in the Hunter approach, and giving help of the kind envisaged involves taking power and thereby creating a dependency relationship. Although some of the recent adherents to clinical supervision are unaware of this contradiction, Goldhammer was sensitive to this, as his words indicate:

Ironically, at moments when we feel that the stakes are highest and, consequently, when we want most to achieve our desired effects, we trip upon our individual frailties and wind up with other, less desirable outcomes. . . .

If technical improvement stands as an important objective for clinical supervision, and if the results of improved teaching and supervisory technique should constitute a betterment of everyone's condition, then the means we employ toward that end must incorporate a profound measure of human passion and patience and a great sense of one's own behavior and of its impact upon others. The outcomes we prize are very difficult to achieve and shall be permanently elusive if our feeling of urgency impels us toward immoderate behavior which, by its failure to be compassionate, becomes self-defeating.<sup>14</sup>

The same issue surfaces in other forms as well. It seems that there is a growing tendency to head-off attempts to introduce clinical supervision of the kind Goldhammer and Cogan had in mind by claiming that school environments are hostile and unresponsive to practices of this kind. An example is McFaul and Cooper, who claim that there are numerous mutations of clinical supervision around, and that while it "is highly acclaimed, it seems not to be implemented often."<sup>15</sup> They seem to miss the mark when they argue that:

An issue that has not been adequately addressed is whether the form and spirit of the model "fit" the reality of teaching. . . . What is needed is an environment congruent with sustained professional development.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup>George Bradley Saeger, "Diagnostic Supervision: A Branch of Instructional Supervision" (Paper presented at the national conference of the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision, University of Georgia, Athens, 1979)

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 2

<sup>14</sup>Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision: Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), p. 56.

<sup>15</sup>Shirley McFaul and James Cooper, "Peer Clinical Supervision Theory vs. Reality," *Educational Leadership* 41 (April 1984): 8

<sup>16</sup>Ibid

Goldsberry rightly responds that we do not need "another wailing that conditions in our schools . . . are so bad that they will overcome the best of our efforts."<sup>17</sup> He dismisses the notion that the pre-condition of clinical supervision is a "congruent environment" by arguing that we need to work instead at changing the institutional and structural constraints that prevent full-blown notions of professional development coming to fruition in schools. I would argue that rather than the enabling conditions coming first, it is only through struggle and concerted action by teachers for their rightful claim to autonomous processes like clinical supervision that any change in the environment becomes feasible or possible. Indeed, it could be argued that administrators have a vested interest in maintaining control over forms of teacher surveillance and evaluation. I share Goldhammer's concern as a member of the teaching profession:

I have worried about the archaic dependencies we manifest upon authority for initiation of intellectual tasks and lines of productive inquiry. I have worried . . . about our self-ignorance, our uncertainties, and our paucity of methods for systematic self-examination. I am troubled by what seems to be the common absence of intellectual autonomy and the common prevalence of docility and anti-intellectualism among us.<sup>18</sup>

We depend heavily on other people's evaluations of our behavior. Lacking strong incentives for self-evaluation and being unequipped with skills for systematic self-examination, we are largely at the mercy of other people's perceptions which, in most cases, are based upon minimal or distorted data and refer to evaluation criteria that are inappropriate or ambiguous, even to the people who employ them.<sup>19</sup>

What is really at stake here, then, is whether clinical supervision is a way of controlling, disenfranchising, and pushing teachers around, or whether it is an emancipatory process through which teachers are able to assist each other to gain control over their own professional lives and destinies. At issue is whether clinical supervision should be construed in instrumental terms as a way of fine-tuning teaching, or whether it is a way for teachers to transcend and transform their teaching and the social and cultural circumstances in which they do it.

It is my contention that if we continue to endorse a technicist view of clinical supervision, then we will be perpetuating the status quo and relegating clinical supervision to that of a conservative activity.<sup>20</sup> There may be a notion of change implicit in this, but only within the framework of existing practices and structures. The limitations of this approach were noted by Zeichner and Teitelbaum:

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<sup>17</sup>Lee Goldsberry, "Reality—Really? A Response to McFaul and Cooper," *Educational Leadership* 41 (April 1984): 11

<sup>18</sup>Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision. Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), p. 49.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>20</sup>John Smyth, "Toward a 'Critical Consciousness' in the Instructional Supervision of Experienced Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 14 (Winter 1984): 425–436

The dominant concern is with the technical application of educational knowledge for the purpose of attaining given ends. The ends themselves are not questioned but are taken as worthy pursuits. Inquiry about practical action is defined solely according to the technical criteria of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.<sup>21</sup>

Sergiovanni put it in terms of aiding teachers to do better than which they were *already doing*; trying *harder* to apply established techniques and rationales, and asserting even more *intensely* the same basic assumptions and practices.<sup>22</sup> What remains uncontested are the ends of teaching. Such a means-oriented view fails to take account of the purposes to which teaching is directed and of the moral, ethical, and philosophical questions that plague teachers' lives.

While Goldhammer certainly had in mind the clinical supervision model as promoting "improvements" in teaching, it has been his more recent enthusiasts that have put the restrictive interpretation on this as meaning *only* the improvement of teaching technique. Goldhammer himself had a more robust and open-ended view as to what this might entail when he said.

Clinical supervision is begun, but not nearly completed. Its final form will differ substantially from its present ones, and I would be gratified for this writing to guide its transfiguration.<sup>23</sup>

None of this is to suggest that Goldhammer's approach is without its drawbacks and limitations. For example, the impression gained from reading his work is that he endorses an individualistic way of learning about teaching. What is lacking is any reference to socially construed ways in which teachers learn as a consequence of developing critical learning communities of professionals within their schools. There is an absence of reference in Goldhammer's work to the part teachers can play in building and developing supportive institutional structures of shared meanings and understandings. We find no reference, for example, to the ways in which teachers engaged in the exploration of their own and each others' teaching might collectively share their reflections and learnings about what is possible through the lived experiences of clinical supervision. It is interesting to speculate as to the reason for this. Could it be that Goldhammer did not envisage clinical supervision as a process to be used voluntarily among teachers? He is certainly ambivalent as to who *should* enact the supervisory role. Although he falls short of actually stating that clinical supervision be done in hierarchical ways *by* a superordinate *on* a subordinate, the implication exists. While he does talk about role reversal

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<sup>21</sup>Kenneth Zeichner and Kenneth Teitelbaum, "Personalized and Inquiry-Oriented Teacher Education. An Analysis of Two Approaches to the Development of Curriculum for Field-Based Experiences," *Journal of Education for Teaching* 8 (May 1982), 103.

<sup>22</sup>Thomas Sergiovanni, "Landscapes, Mindscapes, and Reflective Practice in Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 1 (Fall 1985), 5-17.

<sup>23</sup>Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision. Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), p. ix.

(the process of each partner having his or her actions examined by the other), he raises this in a way that suggests a certain unnaturalness—a posture that would be more likely where there were status differences than where there were not. In his words:

If what's good for the goose is inadequate for the gander, in this field, then something is the matter, for it is all but impossible to imagine a rational double standard that could free supervisors from the necessity of being supervised themselves.<sup>24</sup>

And again:

Unless there are important contraindications, I am especially enthusiastic about the idea of having the teacher who is being supervised fill the role of the supervisor's supervisor at propitious moments. . . . I am becoming progressively more convinced that one measure to relieve some of the old status anxieties of supervision, to cut across its real and imaginary hierarchies, to enhance a teacher's feeling of dignity in the supervisory relationship, to enable a teacher to gain higher degrees of objective distance on his own work, and to keep the supervisor fully aware of the taste of his own medicine, is to create precisely such role reversals on a regular and dependable basis.<sup>25</sup>

This sounds more like an adversary relationship than one based upon mutually shared understandings. The nature of what was being proposed reflects as much about the context in which clinical supervision was being developed as it does about the philosophy and history of Goldhammer himself. Regardless of how it arose, the notion as expounded by Goldhammer has vestiges of the "expert" tending to the "inexpert." Where the possibilities for genuinely unconstrained communication are limited because of hierarchical relationships, it is not difficult to see how more democratic forms of learning can be thwarted. It is the undemocratic nature of the relationship and the social dimension of learning that was omitted from Goldhammer's discussion that I want to turn to in the next section.

#### A "CRITICAL" PERSPECTIVE FOR CLINICAL SUPERVISION

If clinical supervision is to be a way of "empowering" teachers, which is to say, "helping [them] to take charge of their lives, people who have been restrained by social or political forces, from assuming such control,"<sup>26</sup> and not construed as a "delivery of services" to targeted audiences of teachers deemed to be inexperienced, inefficient, incompetent, or in need of re-skilling, then it is imperative that we adopt a "critical" view.<sup>27</sup> Being critical

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 273.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 279.

<sup>26</sup>Robby Fried, *Empowerment Versus Delivery of Services* (Concord, NH: New Hampshire Department of Education, 1980), p. 8.

<sup>27</sup>John Smyth, "Towards a Collaborative, Reflective, and Critical Mode of Clinical Supervision," in *Learning about Teaching Through Clinical Supervision*, ed. John Smyth (London: Croom Helm, 1986), pp. 59–84.

does not mean being negative but refers rather to the stance of enabling teachers to see their classroom actions in relation to the historical, social, and cultural context in which their teaching is actually embedded. This means creating conditions under which teachers, both individually and collectively, can develop for themselves the capacity to view teaching historically; to treat the contemporary events, practices, and structures of teaching problematically (and not to take them for granted); and to examine the surface realities of institutionalised schooling in a search for explanations of its forms and thereby to clarify for themselves alternative courses of educational action that are open to them. Acting critically, therefore, refers to "collaboration in marshalling intellectual capacity so as to focus upon analysing, reflecting on, and engaging in discourse about the nature and effects of practical aspects of teaching and how they might be altered."<sup>28</sup>

Apple summed it up when he said of the socially critical perspective:

It requires a painful process of radically examining our current positions and asking pointed questions about the relationship that exists between these positions and the social structure from which they arise. It also necessitates a serious in-depth search for alternatives to these almost unconscious lenses we employ and an ability to cope with an ambiguous situation for which answers can now be only dimly seen and will not be easy to come by.<sup>29</sup>

The interests being served are those that relate to "the emancipation of individuals from lawlike rules and patterns of action . . . so that they can reflect and act on the dialectical process of creating and recreating themselves and their institutions."<sup>30</sup>

Becoming critical and acting reflexively involves developing a realisation that "persons are both the products and the creators of their own history"<sup>31</sup> In practical terms, this means teachers engaging themselves in systematic individual and social forms of investigation that examine the origins and consequences of everyday teaching behaviour so they come to see those factors that represent impediments to change. The intent is through collective action to overcome the fatalistic view that change in teaching is "impossible for me," and seeing that circumstances *can be* different from what they are. It means moving from a "passive . . . , dependent, [and] adaptive"<sup>32</sup> view of themselves and their potentialities to one in which teachers are able to "analyse and expose the hiatus between the actual and the possible, between

<sup>28</sup>John Smyth, "Developing a Critical Practice of Clinical Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 17 (January-March 1985): 9.

<sup>29</sup>Michael W Apple, "Scientific Interests and the Nature of Educational Institutions," in *Curriculum Theorizing*, ed. William Pinar (Berkeley, Calif.: McCutchan, 1975), p. 127.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>31</sup>Ann Berlak and Harold Berlak, *Dilemmas of Schooling: Teaching and Social Change* (London: Methuen, 1981), p. 230

<sup>32</sup>Brian Fay, "How People Change Themselves: The Relationship Between Critical Theory and Its Audience," in *Political Theory and Practice. New Perspectives*, ed. Terrence Ball (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 220

the existing order of contradictions and a potential future state."<sup>33</sup> In short, it involves teachers becoming oriented to the development of an enhanced "consciousness" of their own circumstances and a political involvement in working towards actively changing the frustrating and debilitating conditions that characterise their work lives. Comstock summarised it when he said:

The function of a critical social science is to increase the awareness of social actors of the contradictory conditions of action which are distorted or hidden by everyday understandings. It is founded on the principle that all men and women are potentially active agents in the construction of their social world and their personal lives: that they can be the subjects, rather than the objects, of socio-historical processes. Its aim is self-conscious practice which liberates humans from ideologically frozen conceptions of the actual and the possible.<sup>34</sup>

Placing aside momentarily the rhetoric of "critical theory," the issue to be addressed now is what clinical supervision with its commitment to collegiality and collaboration might look like "on the ground" if it were to be transformed in the way being suggested. This will involve canvassing some of the notions from within critical social theory and suggesting how they may be used to better inform and transform an already existing way of working with teachers.

As a starting point in understanding our teaching actions and those of others, we may need to consider the nature of our "speech acts"<sup>35</sup> and the way these ordinary actions have subtle communicative effects that are often characterised by mistrust and distortion. As Forester put it:

Such distortions of pretense, misrepresentation, dependency-creation, and ideology are communicative influences with immobilizing, depoliticizing, and subtly but effectively disabling consequences. To isolate and reveal the debilitating power of such systematically distorted communications, Habermas seeks to contrast these with ordinary, common sense communication of mutual understanding and consensus which makes any shared knowledge possible in the first place.<sup>36</sup>

What is essentially at stake here is enabling teachers to move beyond being ignorant of the traditions of their own teaching to a position in which they are able to understand how communicative structures of schooling are systematically but hierarchically distorted. To use Forester's words again:

They are able to see how existing social and political-economic relations actually operate as distorted communications, obscuring issues, manipulating trust and consent, twisting fact and possibility.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>33</sup>David Held, *An Introduction to Critical Theory* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p. 22

<sup>34</sup>Donald Comstock, "A Method for Critical Research," in *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, ed. Eric Bredo and Walter Feinberg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 371.

<sup>35</sup>Jurgen Habermas, *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979)

<sup>36</sup>John Forester, "Critical Theory and Planning Practice," *American Planning Association Journal* 46 (July 1980): 276

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 277

To have the kind of mutual understanding, trust, and co-operation necessary for teachers to genuinely share each others' frameworks of meaning about teaching, those of us using clinical supervision need to acknowledge Habermas's four norms of "universal pragmatics."<sup>38</sup>

1. To speak *comprehensively* so that other teachers can understand what is happening to them and the circumstances in which they work;
2. To speak *sincerely* so that statements are made in good faith with a genuine expression of the speaker's intentions, and without the listeners being manipulated or misled;
3. To speak *legitimately* so that others are able to see that unfair advantage is not being taken of positions or statuses;
4. To speak the *truth*, which amounts to asking whether communications are believable, whether the evidence supports them, or whether other accounts fit better.

If it were possible for notions of this kind to inform our practices in clinical supervision, then teachers might be able to experience genuine liberation from the forces that currently constrain the nature of the relationships they enter.

The major problem with extant views of clinical supervision is that they lack this kind of a critical dimension, they are inherently conservative. While their espoused concern is for teacher autonomy, dignity, and worth and with seeking to release teachers from the passive consumerism and domination by outside experts, clinical supervision operates on the basis of an individualistic view of what it means to engage in self-evaluation. There is opportunity for dialogue, but it is severely constrained by the working requirement of teachers to form dyad arrangements as the basis for the collaborative alliances they use to examine their own and each others' teaching. There is no provision for *extended* discourse about the ends of teaching, nor about the social purposes of schooling, nor the nature of this form of inquiry. In short, clinical supervision celebrates a view of change that is limited to working within existing institutional structures and frameworks. While the means of teaching may be subjected to questioning, the ends are not. Herein lies its major drawback. Arguably the most serious issues confronting teachers are not matters of teaching technique but impediments that exist because of power relationships and organisational inertia towards the status quo. As a community of scholars and practitioners, we have not yet begun to embrace, let alone practice, how to move clinical supervision outside of itself. As Sergiovanni expressed it:

Clinical supervision at present is too closely associated with a workflow—a pattern of action, and not associated enough with a set of concepts from which a variety of

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<sup>38</sup>Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1978)

patterns could be generated. The intellectual capital inherent in clinical supervision is ... more important than its workflow as articulated into steps, strategies, and procedures.<sup>39</sup>

We need to reduce our concern with the process and procedural aspects and deepen our commitment to tackling the broader issue of how clinical supervision might assist teachers to achieve forms of teaching that contribute to ways of learning that are more realistic, practical, and just for our students.<sup>40</sup>

As I have argued elsewhere,<sup>41</sup> none of this is to suggest that the technical aspects of teaching are unimportant or should be ignored; rather, I am entering a plea to restore them to their rightful status, not as ends in themselves, but as important means to valued social purposes. As long as we have an excessive concern in clinical supervision with the instrumental and technical aspects of teaching, then these get in the way of asking questions about how schooling perpetuates injustices and inequalities in our society and actually "prevents the more consequential questions from being asked."<sup>42</sup>

An example taken from the area of curriculum improvement may serve to illustrate my point. In a recent Australian study,<sup>43</sup> a group of staff developers embarked on a three-year program aimed at bringing about educational change through assisting a school and its community to develop and implement an alternative elementary school mathematics curriculum. The aim was to refocus the school's mathematics curriculum and to help individual teachers to change their orientations. To all intents, the facilitators appeared to have the interests of teachers, children, and the local community very much in mind as they carefully negotiated all aspects of what was involved. Substantial changes did in fact occur.

At the conclusion of their work, the facilitators reflected on what had been achieved. While they had got the technicalities of curriculum development and improvement right, they considered themselves to have failed dismally to have changed any of the social relationships in the school. They put it in these words:

At the beginning of a project, an incident was observed that was very important to one of the authors' motivation to become involved. While supervising student practice at a preschool next to the project school, he observed a "bright-eyed" five-year-old girl, who seemed to exhibit an eagerness for learning, perform mathematically above her peers. It was winter. The preschool was not well heated. The young girl was poorly

<sup>39</sup>Thomas Sergiovanni, "Towards a Theory of Clinical Supervision," *Journal of Research and Development in Education* 9 (Winter 1976): 21–22.

<sup>40</sup>John Smyth, "Toward a Critical Consciousness in the Instructional Supervision of Experienced Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 14 (Winter 1984): 425–436

<sup>41</sup>John Smyth, "Clinical Supervision: Technocratic Mindedness, or Emancipatory Learning," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 1 (Summer 1986): 331–340

<sup>42</sup>Max Van Manen, "Linking Ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical," *Curriculum Inquiry* 6 (Fall 1977): 209.

<sup>43</sup>Tom Cooper and Robert Meyenn, "A School-Based Project and Educational Change" (Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Perth, 1984)

and very lightly dressed. She was shivering. The teachers said she came irregularly and was often "blue" with cold when she arrived. She seemed to come from an environment which, to the teachers, appeared quite deprived. The whole meaning of the project was encapsulated for this author in doing something to the school so children like this could, if they wished, use the school to improve their life chances.

When the project ended over two years later, one of the last classes observed contained this child. She was still poorly dressed and still appeared as eager to learn and please as before. The teacher of this class had changed his approach to mathematics over the years of the project. He now used more materials and tried to get children actively involved. The class sat in a circle and discussed measurement. Children were selected for tasks. But not all. Time passed. This child, so eager, was left doing nothing but watching others. The class broke up in disarray as others, who had also been left out, began to wander and play. The teacher was too involved with those who were on tasks to supervise. This child did not join with the others. She waited to be noticed, quietly, where she had been told to stay. In the end she started, for something to do, to stack material left out in neat piles. She had been given no mathematics that would widen her life chances but had been given another lesson on her place in the world. How much longer could her eagerness remain?

The author was devastated. After hours of talking, planning, and acting, there could, it seemed, be no more savage indictment of the project's failure to come to grips with what was supposed to be its central aim.<sup>44</sup>

And so, too, with processes like clinical supervision. We need to sharpen our focus on the significant and avoid what Murray describes as "getting permanently lost in the Pedagogical Provinces while the Province itself flounders."<sup>45</sup>

Through his discussion of a "method for critical research," Comstock provides some "pointers" as to how we might reconstrue clinical supervision so that the unexamined and taken-for-granted become a prime focus. The critical approach begins, he says, with the "life problems of . . . individuals, groups, or classes that are oppressed by and alienated from the social processes they maintain or create but do not control."<sup>46</sup> Given the long history of various forms of inspection, teacher evaluation, and quality control that have gone under the guise of school improvement, it is not difficult to cast teachers in the oppressive role Comstock envisages. For example, effective control of curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation have long resided in and been orchestrated beyond the classroom door.<sup>47</sup>

Working critically with teachers requires a "facilitator" or "critical friend" aiding them in uncovering the understandings they hold about the social dynamics of their own settings and how these came about historically. This involves, first, developing a dialogue through and by which teachers are able

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>45</sup>M. Murray, *Modern Critical Theory: A Phenomenological Introduction* (The Hague: Martinus-Nijhoff, 1975), p. 8.

<sup>46</sup>Donald Comstock, "A Method for Critical Research," in *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, ed. Eric Bredo and Walter Feinberg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 378.

<sup>47</sup>John Smyth, *A Rationale for Teachers' Critical Pedagogy: A Handbook* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1987).

to see contemporary events that constrain them, but to view them against the historical legacy that spawned them. Although Comstock had in mind an "outsider" enacting this facilitating role, what I am suggesting here is that by using teaching colleagues, "insiders" can use forms like clinical supervision to effectively challenge and change the status quo. Second, it involves enabling teachers to see themselves as potentially active agents who have a stake in altering the oppressive circumstances in which they are technicians implementing somebody else's curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation. The following sections identify several stages in this process.

### *Enabling Teachers to See the Nature of Ideological Domination*

Strategically, this involves teachers in helping other teachers to render an account of their contemporary situation as a basis for an ideological critique of the views they hold. The agenda, in Comstock's words, is to provide a dialectic by which "micro-analyses of particular struggles will serve to modify and elaborate macro-theories. Critical micro- and macro-analysis thus proceed in dialectical tension and unity."<sup>48</sup> For clinical supervision in particular, this means developing and fostering extensive group-based dialogue well before the commencement of the four-stage cycle of clinical supervision itself. A broader question to be focused upon would be the contemporary and historical place of teachers in controlling the evaluation of their own practices. For example, teachers might begin to collectively reflect upon why it is that bureaucratized educational systems have been able to so successfully control the lives and work of teachers, effectively keeping them in their institutional places. They may speculate on how this form of control has had practical consequences for what transpires within schools and how this orchestration has affected students. Teachers might also examine the extent to which they are originators of their own actions versus pawns in working through somebody else's agendas. Connections need to be made between the local scene in which teachers are embedded and actions occurring at regional and national levels that have the effect of keeping teachers in their places.

### *Uncovering the Interpretive Understandings Teachers Hold of Their World*

How teachers account for their own actions and how they condone and rationalise the actions of others, such as administrators, is central to what Comstock labels the search for "differentiated meaning." The attempt for teachers is to ascertain through dialogue with other teachers now and in what ways their meanings are differentiated among themselves and how these can provide a basis for pointing up contradictions and ideologically distorted self-

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<sup>48</sup>Donald Comstock, "A Method for Critical Research," in *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, ed. Eric Bredo and Walter Feinberg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 379

understandings. It is through beginning to engage in dialogue with colleagues about the intersubjective meanings they hold about the nature of teaching and learning that teachers come to see the structural basis of the meanings, values, and motives they hold. They come to see the essentially historical nature of human action and of how those actions "take place within a context pre-conditioned by the sedimentations of the past."<sup>49</sup> The kinds of questions that might be included here are. What does it mean to be a teacher? What is the nature of knowledge about teaching, who creates it, who holds it, and whose interests does it serve? In what ways can self-evaluation of the clinical supervision kind uncover myths about teaching and contradictions between intent and action? How can teaching result in changing the life chances of children?

#### *Historical Conditions That Constrain and Shape Teachers' Understandings*

It is important that teachers be assisted to see through investigation and analysis that control over the generation of knowledge about teaching has in the past been vested in the hands of non-teachers. For example, there has been a deliberate and thinly veiled policy in educational systems, aided and abetted by universities and educational research and development agencies, that teachers be kept in positions of subservience. This has been reinforced by the bureaucratic ways in which schools are organized so as to perpetuate the myth of accountability to outside constituencies and result in further oppression of teachers by degrading processes of supervision, evaluation, and rating.

Teachers need to be encouraged to undertake investigations that allow them to see clearly for themselves how these circumstances came to be in their own particular context. Teachers have to be able to see how conditions are not the "consequences of immutable laws, but . . . structures and processes constructed by elites with specific interests and intentions"<sup>50</sup>

These investigative undertakings need to be sufficiently plausible for teachers to be able to see in the accounts they uncover events, issues, and processes that will enable them to readily identify areas to be targeted for change.

#### *Linking Historical Conditions with the Contemporary Forces That Maintain Them*

Having considered and described the social processes and structures that caused particular circumstances to come about in the first place, teachers

<sup>49</sup>Paul Piccone, "Phenomenological Marxism," in *Towards New Marxism*, ed B Grahl and Paul Piccone (St. Louis: Telos Press, 1973), p. 141

<sup>50</sup>Donald Comstock, *A Method for Critical Research*, in *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, ed Eric Bredo and Walter Feinberg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 382.

need to be able to see how contemporary practices serve to reinforce and maintain the legitimacy of those conditions. It is, after all, only by engaging teachers in a dialectic between "their historically created conditions"<sup>51</sup> and their current situations that it becomes possible to see present relationships for what they are.

A controversial example may serve to make the point. In recent times, we have seen a flurry of rhetoric on school improvement and effective schools aimed at requiring schools to "lift their game" and remedy the alleged failure of schools to meet the technical and scientific needs of industry. This is in effect a human capitalist view of schooling that has its wider origins in the relationship between labour and capital. Shapiro put it this way:

While improvements in scientific and technical training are high on the list of educational proposals as the means to improve productivity, it is possible to detect slightly more old fashioned means to increase industrial output. While it is clear that such suggestions concern only the behavior of adolescents in schools, not adult workers, it is probably not too fantastic to believe that there is in these recommendations some implicit statement concerning the need to ensure a less lackadaisical, more disciplined work force, better prepared to accept long hours of labor and less prone to tardiness and absenteeism. Thus, there are . . . frequent statements of the need to lengthen the school day and the school year; the need to implement attendance policies with "clear sanctions as incentives" to reduce absenteeism and tardiness, the need for increased homework assignments and a more rigorous regimen of testing. For both teachers and students there is a common message—one which in the name of higher productivity insists on the increased scrutiny of individual performances a more thorough system of monitoring skill levels, and a more pervasive use of ranking in order to maximize output. While there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between what happens in schools and in industry, the accelerating obsession with output, performance, and productivity in both places is surely part of the accelerating zeitgeist of our time.<sup>52</sup>

Shapiro's thesis is that the rush of reports on schooling that portray the United States as a nation at risk amount to no more than "business as usual." What is being proposed is nothing profoundly new but rather a reaffirmation of what already exists, all in the interests of exhorting schooling to meet industrial needs, to pursue scientific preparation to counter the Soviets, and for forms of socialisation within schools that guarantee discipline in the work place. In similar vein, Braverman portrays contemporary economic conditions with jobs becoming increasingly fragmented and subdivided so as to cause a growing gulf between those who conceptualise tasks and those who execute them.<sup>53</sup> Whereas this used to be restricted to factory-type occupations, this fragmentation is coming increasingly to characterise white-collar and office jobs as work become "measured, monitored for cost-effectiveness, and min-

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., p 383

<sup>52</sup>Svi Shapiro, "Choosing Our Educational Legacy: Disempowerment or Emancipation," *Issues in Education* 2 (Summer 1984): 12.

<sup>53</sup>Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975)

utely regulated."<sup>54</sup> The reality is that people are becoming "locked into situations of intellectual and spiritual starvation, condemned to hierarchical settings in which workers' responsibilities are minutely circumscribed, capacities restricted and narrowly defined, and ability to make judgments replaced by authoritarian control."<sup>55</sup> Little wonder that schools have come to reflect the emptiness and alienation of society generally. To quote Shapiro again.

The ability to penetrate, critically analyse and apprehend the false and distorting messages of the dominant ideology leave us helpless in a world where human experience is so often misrepresented or mystified by those who provide us with the shared meanings of our culture.<sup>56</sup>

The dialectic between the macro and micro becomes evident enough when we observe how the struggles are actually played out in the school setting. Cooper and Meyenn took mathematics as their example.

It became clear that there was a considerable "hidden curriculum" and that mathematics was used as a convenient vehicle to inculcate attitudes and values seen as appropriate by the social structure. For most children, mathematics is boring, poorly understood, usually pointless and very repetitive. Children who receive high marks for mathematics can be considered to have proved to the world, and to prospective employers, that they can put up with boring work (and even find some satisfaction in it) and that they can get on with tasks they do not really understand or see any relevance for. It is easy to argue (as do Bowles and Gintis, 1976) that these are the types of people, rather than those who challenge and question, that society wants schools to produce.<sup>57</sup>

Assisted forms of self-evaluation like clinical supervision enable teachers to collect the evidence necessary to analyse their contexts and to reveal how organizational practices and structures reproduce and reinforce the status quo.

### *Isolating the Contradictions in Current Actions*

So much of what teachers do in schools appears to be habituated and originate from social conditions over which they are effectively prevented from exercising deliberate control. Because they are embedded in their actions, while they are enacting them, teachers are often blinded to the kaleidoscope of events and issues and may become unaware of many of the unintended consequences that arise from these ideological distortions. It is in uncovering the fundamental contradictions within their practice that it becomes possible for teachers to see how their intentions are thwarted and unrealisable.

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<sup>54</sup>Svi Shapiro, "Choosing Our Educational Legacy: Disempowerment or Emancipation," *Issues in Education* 2 (Summer 1984): 14

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>57</sup>Tom Cooper and Robert Meyenn, "A School-Based Project and Educational Change" (Paper presented at the annual conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Perth, 1984)

Berlak and Berlak cite the example of Mr. Scott, a grade 4 elementary teacher in a British school, as an instance of how teachers live with incoherence and contradiction not of their own making and of how they seek to cope. Mr. Scott has a particular point of view that endorses the importance of mathematics for elementary students. On a particular day, from his vantage point in the middle of the room, Mr. Scott scans the classroom, his eyes resting upon individuals, pairs and trios, some of whom are working, while others are engaged in extraneous conversations. On this occasion, his eyes rest momentarily longer on Steven and Bruce, who are sitting together, yesterday they had been on opposite sides of the room. They are intently examining football cards and deep in conversation, their mathematics exercises cast aside. Mr. Scott chooses to ignore the activity of Steven and Bruce and goes to assist Mary, who has her hand raised. Mr. Scott's action of ignoring Steven rests somewhat uneasily with his subsequent indication to Steven that he must correctly solve a minimum number of mathematics problems or be deprived of a sporting privilege.

Snippets of conversations with Mr. Scott on these events are insightful

Steven is a very creative boy, and he can't settle down to work, he's got to be left alone before he produces his best work. . . .

I separated the football fanatics, and they became miserable, so I let them sit together again. I don't want them to be miserable. . . .

I have yet to come to grips with myself about what a child should do in, for instance, mathematics. Certainly I feel that children should as far as possible follow their own interests and not be dictated to all the time, but then again . . . I feel pressure from . . . I don't really know how to explain it, but there's something inside you that you've developed over the years which says that children should do this. . . . I still feel that I've somehow got to press them on with their mathematics.<sup>58</sup>

Berlak and Berlak seek to analyse critically the contradictions that appear to be implicit in what Mr. Scott has done in the contemporary circumstances and how past events live on into the present:

Mr. Scott this morning walks past Steven rather than telling him to get back to work. One could view this as a non-event since Mr. Scott did not do anything to Steven. However, this "non-event" stands out for several reasons—because he treats Steven somewhat differently than the others and differently than he did yesterday. It also stands out because Steven isn't doing his math, and Mr. Scott, in word and deed, considers math an especially important part of the work of the school. How can we make sense of this non-event? . . . As Mr. Scott tells us about Steven's "creativity," about the misery of the football fanatics when they were separated from one another, about the pressure he feels to get the "fourth years" to progress, as he tells us what in his view lies behind what he did, we discern his response to Steven as part of a pattern. This pattern includes both his bypassing of Steven and his later confrontation of him. . . .

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<sup>58</sup>Ann Berlak and Harold Berlak, *Dilemmas of Schooling. Teaching and Social Change* (London: Methuen, 1981), pp. 126–127.

As Mr Scott talks to us and as we watch him teach, it becomes apparent that he is responding with some degree of awareness to a wide range of contradictory social experiences and social forces, past and contemporary, both in his classroom, his school and beyond him in the wider community. He has internalised these contradictions, and they are now "within" him...<sup>59</sup>

Implicit in Mr. Scott's responses over the course of any period of time are alternatives he perceives that have arisen from previous social experience with others, encounters with his wife, children, friends, former teachers, parents, his present colleagues and superiors, children in his classes now and over the years, and indirect encounters—watching and/or listening to people via the media, or reading fiction, biography, and the daily press. The past that is in the present situation includes... Mr. Scott's reconsideration of Steven's talents and weaknesses only yesterday when he for a moment recalled one of his own painful school experiences....

As Mr Scott directs Steven back to his mathematics work, what we observe may be the manifestation of a continuous tension within him that includes both "beliefs" and values, for example, he may believe that if Steven (and boys like him) do not "buckle down" they are destined for second-class citizenship... or that if... the Head sees the boys messing about with trading cards during math, he will lower his estimation of Mr Scott's professional competence—hence influence the recommendation he receives when he applies for a headship to which he aspires. The dialectic may be said to include what are commonly termed "values"—his unexamined and frequently expressed commitment to the "work ethic," the importance of making it in a society which he believes rewards mathematics competence... The dialectic cannot be said to be a process that is either engaged in freely or shaped entirely by outside circumstances; it is both. Both Mr. Scott's "beliefs" and "values" have been shaped by social, political, and economic circumstances....

Although Mr. Scott's perspective on "getting ahead" may have been profoundly shaped by his history, it may also have been influenced by his reflections upon history, by his self-conscious observations that the competitive and individualistic culture has shaped his teaching but in ways he does not presently approve and will attempt to alter....

As he goes about teaching at any given moment, Mr. Scott is pulled and pushed towards numbers of alternative and apparently contradictory behaviors. One set of alternatives is whether to allow Steven to discuss the football cards—or to chastise the child, or in one way or another remind him that he must complete his math—but at any given moment Mr. Scott cannot both remind and overlook.

In this instance, one pair of conflicting tendencies underlying the observable behavior is, on the one hand, towards allowing Steven to enjoy the present, and on the other, insisting he forego the pleasure of the present in order to be prepared for the future.<sup>60</sup>

In circumstances such as those portrayed about Mr Scott, the attempt is not to enable teachers to see how it is impracticable to reclaim the past, but how a knowledge of the past points to breaks and discontinuities that have caused ideological distortions and contradictions in the present. What remains, now, is the issue of how to work with teachers like Mr. Scott in educative ways that enable him to develop strategies for change. This is not to suggest offering teachers "the means to freedom in the sense of lifting them out of the causal

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp 127–128.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp 129–131

realm altogether, thereby making their feelings and actions in some sense uncaused.<sup>61</sup> Rather, what is being suggested is the notion of allowing teachers to become autonomous agents capable of reflecting on and acting upon their work settings.

When not construed as a way of tinkering with the technical skills of teaching, clinical supervision has the potential to enable teachers to collect and analyse revealing data about equity, gender, class, and race issues in their teaching and to challenge and supplant many of their taken-for-granted assumptions about these issues. Teachers can collaboratively move beyond the “surface” curriculum to search out and begin to alter the “hidden” curriculum. An illustration may serve to make the point:

A physical education teacher was concerned about her feelings that she held quite different standards and expectations for boys and girls. When she had her colleague conference with her, collect information on a particular lesson, and analyse it afterwards, the situation was as she had suspected. Her directions to students revealed a different set of expectations based on sex stereotypes. What puzzled teacher and colleague was what ‘caused’ her to be the way she was. Discussion and reflection on the issue led them to conclude that there were strong historical, rather than personal, forces at work. The teacher’s action was, in a sense, shaped by the cultural expectation that boys are stronger, more agile, and display greater physical aggressiveness than girls, this was a cultural image that was powerfully reinforced by the media. Having attained this kind of consciousness about her own actions, the teacher was able to begin operating in different ways.<sup>62</sup>

### *Using Educative and Empowering Forms of Action*

Fay speaks of the critical perspective in the “educative” sense as enabling teachers to problematise (i.e. problem posing rather than problem solving) the settings in which they work so as to remove the blinkers that have blinded them from seeing and acting in alternate ways. In his words:

The point . . . is to free people from causal mechanisms that had heretofore determined their existence in some important way, by revealing both the existence and the precise nature of these mechanisms and thereby depriving them of their power. This is what is meant by aid[ing] people who are objects in the world in transforming themselves into active subjects who are self-determining.<sup>63</sup>

For Fay, the first step in this educative process of teachers altering the patterns of interaction that characterise and inhibit their social relationships

<sup>61</sup>Brian Fay, “How People Change Themselves: The Relationship Between Critical Theory and Its Audience,” in *Political Theory and Praxis: New Perspectives*, ed Terrence Ball (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977)

<sup>62</sup>Adapted for an example in Berlak and Berlak, and cited in John Smyth, *Reflection-in-Action* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1986), p. 28.

<sup>63</sup>Brian Fay, “How People Change Themselves. The Relationship Between Critical Theory and Its Audience,” in *Political Theory and Praxis: New Perspectives*, ed Terrence Ball (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 210

is changing their understandings of themselves. By this, he means from one of dependence to one of autonomy and responsibility. Through dialogue among themselves, teachers can problematise issues they want to work upon in their own practice. Having grasped a historical understanding of how their frustrating conditions came about in the first place, the teachers are able to initiate and sustain a collaborative process of planning, acting, collecting data, reflecting, and re-formulating plans for further action. Having initiated this process for themselves, teachers might seek the aid of an outside "facilitator" only when they feel it might be helpful. For example, they may see it as useful for an outsider to assist as they struggle to generate accounts of their actions that reflect the problematising process and its concomitant dialogue and collaborative reflection.

It is at this stage that the cycle of clinical supervision becomes indispensable as a method of providing teachers with a way of conferring, problematising, acting, collecting data, and reflecting on actions prior to re-formulating plans. Using clinical supervision in this way, teachers become active as distinct from passive agents, not just in changing the technicalities of their teaching, but in transforming the conditions, structures, and practices that frustrate their teaching. What is significant about clinical supervision used in this way is that it is not an instrumental way of solving problems. It is part of a much wider generative process of examining teaching, uncovering issues, and working to re-construct them in fundamentally different ways. Viewed thus, clinical supervision is not something "tacked on" at the end, but rather part of a "continuous cycle of critical analysis, education, and action."<sup>64</sup>

For processes like clinical supervision to work in ways that foster genuine collegiality and enable teachers to take charge of their individual and joint practices, we need to think and act in terms of social structures of schooling that permit this to happen. While blueprints are not readily available on how this might happen, the Boston Women's Teachers' Group made some insightful comments when reporting on work they undertook into contradictions within their own practices. They concluded:

Teachers frequently expressed a general sense of efficacy in their classrooms, amply documented by anecdotes . . . that was lacking or allowed to go unnoticed in the area beyond the classroom. . . . It was in their attempt to extend the discussion into the areas outside the classroom walls that teachers experienced the greatest resistance—whether this referred to community meetings with parents, whole-school discussions of school climate, or attempts to link one teacher's issues with another's. Pressure from outside support groups, and federal and state programs mandating teacher

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<sup>64</sup>Donald Comstock, "A Method for Critical Research," in *Knowledge and Values in Social and Educational Research*, ed. Eric Bredo and Walter Feinberg (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982), p. 387

involvement, afforded the few possibilities for leverage teachers experienced in confronting systemwide reforms.<sup>65</sup>

What Freedman and colleagues were arguing for was a sense of being a professional that meant a lot more than "facing the issues alone"—a situation that frequently culminates in the unrewarding consequences of "bitter self-recrimination or alienation from teachers, parents, and students."<sup>66</sup> They were concerned about moving beyond the bankrupt solution of blaming the victim, namely, disaffected teachers. Rather, they saw the problem as one of working on the contradictory demands made on teachers and the institutional structures that create and prevent their resolution. In their words,

Teachers must now begin to turn the investigation of schools away from scapegoating individual teachers, students, parents, and administrators towards a systemwide approach. Teachers must recognize how the structure of schools controls their work and deeply affects their relationships with fellow teachers, their students, and their students' families. Teachers must feel free to express these insights and publicly voice their concerns.<sup>67</sup>

### CONCLUSION

I started this paper by alluding to how clinical supervision arose in response to the need to find better ways of working with teachers that were directed towards enabling them to control their own professional development. In that it had a democratic intent, clinical supervision was seen to be dramatically different from hierarchical, managerial, and manipulative forms of supervision which rely on inspection, quality control, and administrative sanction. Historically, these oppressive forms of supervision were necessary as a way of restricting entry into the teaching force, but they came to be forms of endorsement for particular views of teaching. These managerial forms with their primary emphasis on standardisation, efficiency, and control came to be ways of legitimating a form of social engineering that was linked to a meritocratically organised social and economic class system.

Goldhammer's attempt, therefore, to free supervision from its "watchdog origins" was far more than an attempt to move it into the fashionable "human relations era." What he had in mind was a systematic data-based way of teachers working with other teachers that dispensed with judgmental pre-conceptions and emphasised the personal empowerment of teachers to understand the wider social contexts of teaching and learning through collaborative and collegial alliances.

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<sup>65</sup>Sara Freedman, Jane Jackson, and Katherine Boles, "Teaching. An Imperilled Profession," in *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, ed. Lee Shalman and Gary Sykes (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 297

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 298.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

As with so many good ideas in teaching, the well-intentioned notion of clinical supervision has become distorted through the process of re-definition as vested interests have worked to re-construe clinical supervision in the image of the inspectorial mode. While these moves have been malevolent in some cases and amounted to openly espousing the use of clinical supervision to evaluate and rate teachers, on other occasions the effect has been far more subtle but no less devastating. Those who propose clinical supervision as an instrumental form of fine-tuning teaching so teachers become better at doing more of the same are pushing a conservative line that effectively forces teachers to think about the means of teaching, rather than focussing on the more important ends.

What I am suggesting is that clinical supervision, as originally conceived, is a process that enables teachers to question taken-for-granted assumptions about their own teaching and that furthermore it has the potential to allow them to challenge the structures and constraints within which that teaching occurs. Viewed in this way, teachers can become enamoured with a way of reforming teaching, not just with a technique to remedy perceived deficiencies.

My thesis is that through collaboration and non-evaluative dialogue, teachers can employ clinical supervision as an educative way of uncovering the historical antecedents of actions that live on in the present as contemporary contradictions that impede and frustrate change. Teachers need to be able to see how the particular struggles in which they are involved are not isolated aberrations but inextricably linked to processes that have deeper social origins. In order to succeed in bringing about reforms that have any chance of making schooling more practical, realistic, and just, teachers also need to see how existing practices reinforce and legitimate those conditions. By isolating these kind of tensions and seeing them for what they are, teachers are not only able to see the discrepancies that exist between the actual and the possible, but they are able to work towards the kind of collaborative involvement necessary to change that state of affairs.<sup>68</sup>

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