

NURTURING THE REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONER THROUGH INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

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During the last five years, much literature in the fields of teacher education and instructional supervision has focused on the need to help teachers become more reflective about their teaching. Although many would agree that helping teachers to become more reflective is an important goal, little is known about processes that might encourage reflective practice. The purpose of this paper is to draw together the professional literature on reflective practice as applied to teaching and the literature on instructional supervision to begin to identify supervisory practices effective in encouraging reflective practice in teaching.

The first section of the paper contrasts the view of teaching as technical rationality with the view of teaching as reflective practice and examines the purposes of supervision inherent in each of the two perspectives. The second section examines our current understanding of the nature of reflective teaching by giving an overview of the literature on reflection in teaching. Finally, the last section reviews the empirical research on the use of instructional supervision to promote reflective teaching practice and outlines a series of questions for future study and inquiry.

CONTRASTING VIEWS OF TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

Until fairly recently, there was an exclusive preoccupation with the bureaucratic use of instructional supervision as a form of social control over teachers, albeit in the guise of enhancing efficiency. There was a quite deliberate attempt to centrally control and regulate pedagogy, knowledge, and behavior of teachers through elaborate systems of prescription, inspection, and evaluation.¹

The view of instructional supervision described in this statement assumes a view of teaching characterized by technical rationality. When viewed from

¹W. John Smyth, "Toward a 'Critical Consciousness' in the Instructional Supervision of Experienced Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 14 (Winter 1984): 429

this perspective, teaching becomes simply a matter of applying theory and research to achieve already established ends.² The teacher is seen as a technician who applies proven methods to solve classroom problems.

If you deliberately use principles of learning which research indicates are accelerants to student achievement, you will have power to increase your students' motivation to learn, the speed and amount (rate and degree) of their learning and their retention and appropriate transfer of learning to new situations requiring creativity, problem-solving and decision-making.³

Both the problems of practice and the methods that can be used to solve them are considered generalizable across multiple individual contexts. As generalizations are drawn from research on effective teaching, for example, and are applied uncritically to improve student-achievement scores, teachers are employing a technically rational conception of teaching.

Supervision, then, becomes a process of monitoring teachers' application of theory and research to practice and finding ways to help them use research and theory to make their behavior in the classroom more effective and efficient. The aim of supervision is to change teachers' behavior so they use theory and research more appropriately.

Contrasting sharply with the view of teaching as a form of technical rationality is Schön's conception of professional practice as reflection in action. According to Schön, the problems of practice are messy, uncertain, complex situations in which ends and the methods for reaching those ends are intertwined.⁴ This view recognizes that problems of practice do not present themselves in a neat format in which goals or ends are immediately clear and only the methods to be used to achieve those ends are in question. This perspective recognizes that although research may help identify the best method for reaching a specified goal, it does not help sort out which goals are most important. Thus, those who view teaching as professional, reflective activity believe that the practitioner's first task in resolving the context-bound problems of practice involves reframing the problem to identify goals or purposes that will be attended to and those that will be ignored, since all problems of practice call for choices among competing goals. Problem reframing involves mentally experimenting and manipulating contextual factors, generating alternative hypotheses about how the problem might be resolved, and mentally testing the alternative hypotheses. The processes of problem reframing and mental experimentation yield insights and discoveries that lead to actions aimed at resolving the problem and eventually to understanding and appreciating the problem in a new way. Schön terms this process of reframing,

²Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983)

³Madeline Hunter, *Mastery Teaching* (El Segundo, CA: TIP Publications, 1982), p. 6.

⁴Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

experimenting, acting, and reappraising in the midst of the problem situation "reflection in action."

According to Schön, each practitioner has built up through past experience a repertoire of examples, images, and understandings that can be useful when new problems are encountered. This repertoire provides multiple sets of metaphorical lenses that can be used to frame a particular problem as analogous to past problems. By viewing the new problem in terms of familiar metaphors and analogies drawn from past experiences, the reflective practitioner can often find a particular perspective on the new problem that leads to a successful resolution. Thus, the practitioner's skill in successfully using reflection in action hinges on the range and variety of the metaphorical lenses that can be brought to bear on new problems.

From this perspective, then, classroom teaching looks vastly different from the view of teaching as a form of technical rationality. So, too, the supervisor of the reflective practitioner faces a task far different from that of the supervisor who sees teaching as simply the application of research. Changing teacher behavior is not the most important goal of the supervisor who sees teaching as reflective practice. The critical task of the supervisor from the perspective of reflective practice is to help teachers engage in reflective behavior more successfully. Supervision from this perspective requires that the supervisor help teachers enrich the repertoire of images and exemplars that form the basis for reflective practice and help teachers use this repertoire to enhance their understanding of teaching.

Thus, the aims of supervision become (1) engaging the teacher in the process of reflective behavior while (2) fostering critical inquiry into the process of teaching and learning, thereby (3) increasing the teacher's understanding of teaching practice and (4) broadening and deepening the repertoire of images and metaphors the teacher can call on to deal with problems

REFLECTION ON TEACHING: WHAT IS IT?

What is the nature of reflection in teaching? How can it be conceptualized? What is the relationship between supervision and reflection? Can supervision influence teachers to engage in reflective teaching? These and related questions will be addressed within a review of the literature on reflective practice in teaching.

Definitions

In defining reflective practice in teaching, Sykes posits three identifying aspects:

- 1 The distinctive employment of social science knowledge, utilizing arts of the eclectic and the practical, whereby multiple theories may be brought to bear unsystematically upon concrete, practical problems of practice,

2 The use of knowledge sources internal to practice to explore and modify one's actions with students and students' learning being the primary source;

3 The engagement in a process of critical inquiry directed at the interplay of means and ends, at problem frames as well as solutions, at the tacit assumptions and standard operating procedures of practice.⁵

Zeichner and Liston distinguish between reflective action and routine action, focusing on the need for reflective action rather than action guided primarily by tradition, external authority, and circumstance.⁶ In reflective teaching, teachers engage in active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and its consequences. Thus, reflective teachers consistently assess the origins, purposes, and consequences of their work.

Perhaps the most comprehensive, though not exclusive, clarification of terms on reflection in teaching comes from Garman's research and writing. Her description of reflection as "the heart of clinical supervision" captures the essence of its importance in education, recognizing what research has pointed out and what every teacher already knows—the demands and commitments of teachers' daily lives render it difficult, if not impossible, to analyze and reflect on events in spare time. The only alternative is for teachers to improve their ability to monitor and reflect on classroom behavior as it occurs throughout the day. For supervision to significantly affect teaching, it must focus on enhancing this ability.

Garman sees reflection as "a primary process of inquiry within the teacher's practice."⁷ The inquiry is targeted at developing teachers' most critical knowledge bases: inquiry knowledge, mythic knowledge, and craft knowledge.

"Inquiry knowledge" results from the "search" aspect of research and is meaningful so long as there is direct connection to personal reality. Inquiry refers to knowledge generating, and the results are provisional and tenuous, posited in light of new experience and insight. For the adult inquirer a certain process has to be set in motion, a process that involves reliving vicariously what once was originally lived through. It is this uncovering of taken-for-granted thought and action that amounts to a form of demythologizing. Without this we are forced to accept the verities of our mythic and craft sources in the guise of inquiry knowledge.⁸

According to Garman, professional knowledge requires that teachers employ the reflective approach to knowledge—"plan, act, reflect, evaluate"—rather than the traditional application approach—"plan, implement, evaluate."

⁵Gary Sykes, "Teaching as Reflective Practice," in *Critical Perspectives on the Organization and Improvement of Schooling*, ed. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Jeannie Oakes (Boston: Kluwer Nijhoff Publishing, 1986), p. 233.

⁶Kenneth M. Zeichner and Daniel P. Liston, "Teaching Student Teachers to Reflect," *Harvard Educational Review* 57 (February 1987): 23–48.

⁷Noreen B. Garman, "Reflection, the Heart of Clinical Supervision: A Modern Rationale for Professional Practice," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Fall 1986): 2.

⁸Ibid., p. 11.

The application approach to knowledge is based on a conception of life that Young discredits in *The Reflective Universe*:

The older concept of a universe made up of physical particles interacting according to fixed laws is no longer tenable. It is implicit in present findings that "action" rather than matter is basic: action being understood as something essentially undefinable and non-objective, analogous, I would add, to human decision.⁹

Schön, too, in *The Reflective Practitioner*, discredits the traditional "tried, taught, tested" approach.

In real world practice, problems do not present themselves to the practitioner as givens. They must be constructed from the materials or problematic situations that are puzzling, troubling and uncertain. . . . Because each practitioner treats his case as unique, he cannot deal with it by applying standard theories or techniques. He must construct an understanding of the situation as he finds it. And because he finds the situation problematic, he must reframe it.¹⁰

After reframing the problem, the practitioner experiments and analyzes the consequences and implications of both hypothetical and real actions. Finally, reflection in action involves a reflexive interchange between the practitioner and the situation because the situation may have changed during the experiment. The situation talks back, and the listening practitioner reframes the situation again.

In Garman's framework, the people involved are primary, and the concepts of action and reflection become critical as reflective practitioners, faced with many minute-by-minute changes, issues, and questions of the classroom setting, decide courses of action:

Reflection is not a mental reexamination of past events aimed at justifying actions or defending the consequences. Neither is reflection a way of determining what should have been done—a way of replaying the scenario with a slightly different script. Reflection is done carefully, using stable versions (often written) of the experience with more than one round of written interpretations. "Reflection on action" refers to a formal procedure for studying immediate, at-hand events in order to understand them and to develop a construal (or construals) for useful practice. "Reflection through recollection" is used when one does not have available the stable records of immediate events. . . . Reflection through recollection can also be a formal way of introspection—through examination of the sources of one's mythic and craft knowledge as well as one's emotional reactions and dispositions. Both forms of reflection are processes of inquiry which include written interpretations and confirmation from other sources.¹¹

In sum, the reflective practitioner consistently approaches the problems of teaching in a thoughtful, curious manner and believes that one of teaching's main outcomes is a greater understanding of the teaching-learning act. By

⁹Arthur M. Young, *The Reflective Universe* (San Francisco: Delacorte Press, 1976), p. xxiv

¹⁰Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner. How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 40 and 129.

¹¹Noreen B. Garman, "Reflection, the Heart of Clinical Supervision. A Modern Rationale for Professional Practice," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Fall 1986): 15.

questioning continually the origins, purposes, and consequences of teaching behavior, the reflective practitioner develops an ever-deepening repertoire of metaphors, analogies, and exemplars that are useful for resolving and understanding practical problems.

Levels of Reflection

Van Manen conceptualizes three levels of reflectivity in understanding professional practice: technical rationality, interpretive communication, and critical reflection.¹² The first level, *technical rationality*, is concerned with efficiently and reflectively applying educational knowledge to attain ends that are accepted as given, ends that are not viewed as problematic. The practitioner functioning at this level focuses on questions of how to adapt and modify research generalizations to match individual contexts. The level of reflectivity termed *interpretive communication* focuses on the problem of explicating and clarifying the meaning of individual and cultural experiences as well as assumptions and predispositions underlying practical affairs and choices. Every professional experience or action is linked to particular values and competing educational ends. At the third level of reflectivity, *critical reflection*, the practitioner incorporates moral and ethical criteria into the discourse about practical action. The focus of critical reflection is to determine which educational goals, experiences, and activities lead to forms of life mediated by concern for justice, equity, and concrete fulfillment and to determine whether current arrangements serve important human needs and satisfy important human purposes. The ends and means of teaching and the surrounding contexts, at this level of reflectivity, are viewed as value-governed selections from a larger universe of possibilities.¹³

Zimpher and Howey identify four domains of teacher competence, ranging in complexity from technical, to clinical, to personal, to critical.¹⁴ Technical competence involves learning and using specific skills or techniques, such as improving use of wait time.¹⁵ This domain of competence exhibits the lowest level of reflectivity. Achieving clinical competence requires that practitioners examine what they are doing in the classroom and make needed changes based on inquiry and reflection into these actions. Clinical competence by groups of teachers requires action research and practical deliberation among colleagues to solve common problems. The third domain, that of personal

¹²Max Van Manen, "Linking Ways of Knowing with Ways of Being Practical," *Curriculum Inquiry* 6 (No. 3, 1977): 205-228.

¹³Kenneth M. Zeichner and Daniel P. Liston, "Teaching Student Teachers to Reflect," *Harvard Educational Review* 57 (February 1987): 23-48.

¹⁴Nancy L. Zimpher and Kenneth R. Howey, "Adapting Supervisory Practices to Different Orientations of Teaching Competence," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Winter 1987) 101-127

¹⁵Mary Budd Rowe, "Wait Time. Slowing Down May Be a Way of Speeding Up," *Journal of Teacher Education* 37 (January-February 1980): 43-50.

competence, requires "a movement from self-awareness and survival concerns on the part of teachers to using knowledge of adult moral and cognitive development to inform teacher practice . . . fostering an understanding of self in the context of teaching and dealing with survival concerns."¹⁶ In interpersonal activities, personal competence is achieved through feeling a sense of community and collegiality with other teachers, resolving issues of power, authority, and responsibility, and facing moral dilemmas in teaching and evaluating ethical consequences. Achieving critical competence, the fourth domain of professional competence, requires moving from consciousness raising about school practices to collaborative or critical inquiry to reconstruct and transform school and society. Critical competence is also evidenced by teachers who examine the hidden dimensions of schooling, disclose misconceptions, and generate plans to benefit the school and community. The level of reflectivity increases with each domain of competence. According to Zimpher and Howey, reflection can be enhanced by using appropriate supervisory practices within each domain of competence.

Procedures for Enhancing Reflection

Garman also provides a procedural representation for the processes of reflection on action and reflection through recollection. The formal structure of reflection on action follows a procedure similar to Cogan's cycle of supervision:

- Initially, a specific event (or events) from the classroom is selected for the purpose of study.
- Garman stresses the importance of recording "stable data" so that the teacher can return to the data and analyze and interpret it with others—supervisor, peers, students. Verbatim data provided by an observer, audio tapes, or videotapes all afford such data.¹⁷
- The meaning of the data then needs to be discovered, verified, explained, interpreted, and evaluated for patterns and insights. Findings should be recorded—in narrative, notes, or journals—for reference and to enable continued pattern analysis. The use of educational theory and literature becomes important at this stage.
- "The events and meanings are put in an abbreviated, manageable (often conceptual) form for future use. An insight, concept, principle, significant incident, portrait, or conceptual framework are examples of a construal. The essence of reality is 'construed' from one form to another."¹⁸

¹⁶Nancy L. Zimpher and Kenneth R. Howey, "Adapting Supervisory Practices to Different Orientations of Teaching Competence," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Winter 1987) 113

¹⁷Noreen B. Garman, "Stable Data and Clinical Supervision" (paper presented at the annual conference of the Association of Teacher Educators, New Orleans, April 1984)

¹⁸Noreen B. Garman, "Reflection, the Heart of Clinical Supervision: A Modern Rationale for Professional Practice," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Fall 1986). 15

- Finally, the construal must be confirmed by determining whether it has meaning for other practitioners or researchers.

The second structure Garman provides is a procedure for reflection through recollection:

- Initially, the practitioner recalls past events or images. Because recollection provides reflection from a different perspective, accuracy is not the critical issue here that it is in collecting stable data for reflection on action. Rather, the practitioner recognizes that significant details are more likely to be recalled and that recollections will be recalled with emotional attachments.

- The recollection must then be captured, most commonly in journal writing, but possibly in audiotaping or creative modes.

- Having captured the recollection in form, it can now be subjected to further consideration and attempts at discovering construals.

- As with reflection on action, the final step is to confirm discoveries or constructs to determine what information or research from other practitioners can reveal or clarify about the construal.

Although Garman believes the practitioner must be familiar with the procedures of reflection on action—acting, recording, writing, interpreting, construing, and confirming—the procedures for reflection through recollection are not as clear-cut. In both cases, the sequence is not as important as the knowledge obtained; thus, the possibility of self-understanding and professional competence increases.

Goldsberry and Nolan's definition of the reflective conference clarifies the supervisor's role in nurturing the reflective practitioner. "a face-to-face meeting between supervisor and teacher in which the supervisor guides the teacher through a process of analyzing teaching behaviors and their impact on learners."¹⁹ The reflective conference is characterized by (1) a foundation built on the teacher's "platform of aims"²⁰ or "espoused platform,"²¹ (2) a focus on learner outcomes or student behaviors as the appropriate measure of teaching behavior, (3) shared control of the conference, (4) reflection guided by the supervisor who functions as guide while the teacher functions as decision maker, and (5) a spirit of experimentation from which to test understandings and predictions. "To act reflectively about teaching," as Smyth explains, "is to pursue actively the possibility that existing practices may effectively be changed and, in light of evidence about their efficacy, replaced by alternatives."²²

¹⁹Lee Goldsberry and James F. Nolan, "Reflective Supervisory Conference" (unpublished manuscript, The Pennsylvania State University, 1982), p. 1.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Toward a Theory of Clinical Supervision," *Journal of Research on Development in Education* 9 (Winter 1976): 20-29.

²²W. John T. Smyth, ed., *Case Studies in Clinical Supervision* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984), p. 69.

Impediments to Reflection

The supervisor who wishes to employ these procedures to enhance reflective practice faces a formidable task. Sykes identifies four impediments to achieving the reality of the reflective practitioner:

1. Facing complex tasks and making decisions under uncertainty, the press to act in the classroom setting typically precludes the opportunity to reflect. . . . Teachers, like most people, frequently resort to action rather than analysis to solve problems

2. Teachers regularly confront the unique and idiosyncratic in their students, exercise imperfect control over the contingencies of learning and sense the ambiguities surrounding competence. . . . Teachers do not regard their interactions with students as exhibiting stable patterns which warrant systematic inquiry.

3. Teaching is one of the few professions which people have already experienced in their life time. Teachers have already spent more than a dozen years of their lives "in" education. Teachers tend to teach as they were taught, and little in their experience suggests what might be problematic in their approach.

4. Teachers work in isolation; trial and error and learning by doing are the most prevalent forms of learning on the job, with the imperative for control of behavior dominating instruction.²³

Despite these formidable barriers to reflective practice, Smyth remains optimistic about the potential of clinical supervision to transform teaching practice:

Teaching need no longer remain an impulsive, routine or technical activity. . . . Once teachers see the utility of data collected about their teaching, they become more deliberately reflective about their own and each other's teaching. They move from an analysis of their own teaching based on impressions, to a situation where reflection becomes a much more integral part of teaching itself.²⁴

Can Smyth's prediction about the power of instructional supervision become a reality? Can we overcome the impediments to reflective practice identified by Sykes? To answer these perplexing questions, we must shift our attention from theoretical prescriptions for empowering teachers through instructional supervision to empirical evidence of the efficacy of instructional supervision for promoting reflective teaching.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ON DEVELOPING REFLECTIVE TEACHING BEHAVIOR

Empirical evidence on developing reflective teaching has focused on five interrelated questions:

²³Gary Sykes, "Teaching as Reflective Practice," in *Critical Perspectives on the Organization and Improvement of Schooling*, ed. Kenneth A. Sirotnik and Jeannie Oakes (Boston: Kluwer Nijhoff Publishing, 1986), pp. 236-238.

²⁴W. John Smyth, "Teaching as Learning: Some Lessons from Clinical Supervision" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education, Brisbane, Australia, November 1982), pp. 3-4

- How can reflective behavior be identified?
- Can teachers become more reflective?
- What specifically can teachers do to become more reflective?
- What specific supervisory behaviors encourage reflection?
- What are the effects of increased reflective behavior?

Almost all the studies reviewed here are case histories of the supervisory process, specifically the clinical supervision process. The case study is the most appropriate method for inquiry into the clinical supervision process. The philosophical underpinnings of clinical supervision provide for a teacher-directed supervision process that focuses on expressed teacher concerns, therefore, experimental or quasi-experimental studies in which the researcher chooses the variables of interest before entry into the setting are not appropriate. The variables of interest cannot be specified before entry into the research situation; they are specified by the teacher and supervisor during the clinical supervision process. Therefore, accumulating evidence from individual case studies is the appropriate method for aggregating research findings on the effects of clinical supervision on teachers and supervisors.

How Can Reflective Behavior Be Identified?

The identification of reflective behavior has focused exclusively on analyzing dialogue during supervisor-teacher conferences to identify teacher reflection. Zeichner and Liston, as well as MacKinnon, have developed systematic techniques for identifying reflective teacher behavior during supervisory conferences. MacKinnon, working with preservice elementary teachers, has combined Schön's problem-setting and Fuller and Bown's developmental conception of teacher concerns to develop a three-phase cycle of reflective problem solving, reframing, and resolving. They use a clue structure for detecting reflective activity in the supervisory conference. The clue structure establishes a framework for specifically identifying the preservice teacher's reflective activity:

Clue 1: Can the phases of the reflective cycle be "seen" in the dialogue? Is there a period of reframing activity?

Clue 2: Is there evidence of a change in the perspective from which the classroom phenomenon is viewed? Specifically, does the teacher make a shift from using teacher-centered to using student-centered interpretations of the classroom event?

Clue 3: Does reframing result in a change in the conclusions about the problematic phenomenon or in the implications that are derived for practice? That is, is there a change in the "I should have's"?

Clue 4: In the course of reframing, does the teacher draw from his or her personal experience as a student to make sense of the pupil's position?²⁵

²⁵Allan M. MacKinnon, 'Detecting Reflection-in-Action in Preservice Elementary Science Teachers' (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1986), p. 11.

MacKinnon concludes (1) that preservice teachers can reflect if placed in a clinically supervised process fostering reflection and (2) that the clue structure formulated is effective in detecting reflection in action.

Zeichner and Liston developed the Reflective Teaching Index, a four category system to identify preservice teachers, reflective behavior during conferences with their supervisors. The observer classifies teacher statements into one of four categories to determine the percentage of discourse at each level of reflection. The four categories constitute a hierarchy of reflective behavior, with categories 3 and 4 representing the highest levels of reflection:

1. *Factual*—statements referring to events that occurred during the lesson or are planned to occur during the lesson
2. *Prudential*—statements evaluating the effectiveness of actions that occurred or provide suggestions for alternative actions
3. *Justificatory*—statements focusing on the reasons that particular actions occurred or why alternative actions would be suitable
4. *Critical*—statements referring to the values, beliefs, and assumptions underlying the reasons given to support a course of action or potential course of action⁴⁶

The systematic techniques developed by MacKinnon and by Zeichner and Liston for identifying reflective behavior seem useful and appropriate. Further research should determine their applicability to conferences with inservice teachers. Also, we need to develop methods for identifying reflective teaching that occurs outside the supervisory conference

Can Teachers Become More Reflective?

Wildman and Niles asked teachers to provide a reconstructed description of classroom events from narratives, tapes, and personal recollection and found that teachers encountered some difficulties in trying to be reflective. Initially, the teachers could not distinguish between descriptive statements and judgmental statements lacking objective evidence. The teachers' talk also indicated that their understanding of the classroom was more utilitarian than analytical. Wildman and Niles credit this finding to the lack of time for reflection, as well as to the biased and truncated data collection when teachers were not trained in collecting and examining evidence. The researchers conclude that at least 20 to 30 hours of instruction is needed to train teachers in the skills required of the reflective practitioner. As the teachers experienced the empowerment of reflexive practice, they assumed even more control of the areas of reflection as the reflective skills generated new skills.

Wildman and Niles also focus on the difference between teacher control and supervisor control of the reflective process. Traditional models of educational reform and supervision have foisted change on the teacher, most

⁴⁶Kenneth M. Zeichner and Daniel P. Liston, "Teaching Student Teachers to Reflect," *Harvard Educational Review* 57 (February 1987): 23-48

often resulting in only temporary change, if any, in reflexive practice, however, the teacher controls the process and determines the areas of focus. Similarly, the reflective practitioner asking "How is what I'm doing affecting my students?" contrasts sharply with the product-centered teacher stressing the "what" and "how" of teaching, typically the goal of training programs and professional development programs. Because of their concern for students, teachers in the Wildman and Niles project faced a conflict in assuming the "nonteaching" duties of reflection that infringed on traditional "teaching" time.

For teachers to become reflective practitioners, Wildman and Niles identify seven needs:

- observational description of classroom events to reflect on
- the skills to obtain and express classroom descriptions
- control of the reflexive process
- administrative support
- a "safe" environment for disclosing one's beliefs
- time for reflection
- collegial support and respect for teachers' knowledge²⁷

Building on Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner*, Russell and Spafford explore clinical supervision from the perspective of fostering reflective practice by teachers; they reject the earlier finding of McFaul and Cooper claiming that sustained professional development is not possible in today's school environment. Russell and Spafford define the ultimate goal of clinical supervision. "A teacher who is more aware of the nature and impact of personal teaching actions and a teacher who has more deliberate control over those actions."²⁸ Reviewing Spafford's five years of experience in clinically supervised settings, they conclude that the real potential of clinical supervision is its peer supervision aspect. Spafford says that in discussing and sharing her ideas on teaching, she boosted her self-confidence and achieved a feeling of greater significance through her collegial relationship

In a case study, Potash focuses on initiating the clinical supervision process with a veteran teacher. He has shown the significant effect clinical supervision can have on facilitating even an experienced teacher's reflective practice and the positive effect on identifying and remedying classroom problems. As a principal charged with supervisory duties, Potash initiated a clinical supervision process with a veteran teacher of 15 years. The concern the teacher identified for data collection and analysis was his first period's unresponsive

²⁷Terry M. Wildman and Jerome A. Niles, "Reflective Teachers: Tensions Between Abstractions and Realities," *Journal of Teacher Education* 38 (July–August 1987), 25–31.

²⁸Thomas Russell and Carol Spafford, "Teachers as Reflective Practitioners in Peer Clinical Supervision" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1986), p. 3.

ness and presumed inhibition. Discussing the problem, the teacher and his supervisor were able to project several hypotheses and several experiments to discover effective methods for involving students more in the class and for improving the quality of student learning. The teacher recorded: "It has been my experience that the teaching/learning transaction is so complicated that attempts to describe and analyze it often become mired in vague generalities or meaningless details. Our conferences were most helpful in clarifying our goals, defining terms, and agreeing on specific objectives."²⁹ Over a five-week cycle, both supervisor and teacher recognized an increase in student participation supported by the data collected by the supervisor.

In analyzing the process, the teacher noted that at one point he felt they had focused prematurely and, therefore, perhaps incorrectly on the technique employed to reach the intended goal. The observation indicates the need for constant reflection and reframing in the collegial relationship. In a summary assessment of the process, the teacher wrote:

The process was stimulating and helpful. It was a pleasant change to have an administrator initiate and take an active and constructive role in helping to improve instruction. This program demonstrated that a supervisor need not be an expert in a particular subject area to be able to facilitate positive change and professional growth. It clearly demonstrated to me that my teaching behaviors are harder to change than I had thought they were and reminded me of the complexity of the teaching role. It has stimulated me to ask even more questions about my teaching and to continue to struggle with what it means to become an effective teacher.³⁰

McCoombe reaches similar findings from his reflective journal on the clinical supervision process he experienced. He notes that he became more aware of his teaching when being observed and realized "what could be achieved with a little extra thought and effort."³¹

These four studies indicate that with the appropriate conditions veteran teachers can indeed become more reflective about their teaching. Furthermore, teachers' personal accounts indicate that increased reflectivity powerfully affects their beliefs about teaching.

What Specific Teacher Activities Promote Reflection?

Besides the studies by Wildman and Niles and by Potash reviewed earlier, Elliott has provided empirical evidence on specific activities that promote reflective teaching. His account of the Ford Teaching Project provides key findings about teachers' reflection, even though the project itself was not directed at reflection. The project was an attempt to involve teachers in a

²⁹Larry Potash, "A Case Study in Clinical Supervision" (unpublished manuscript, The Pennsylvania State University, 1987), p. 3.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Murray McCoombe, "Clinical Supervision from the Inside," in *Case Studies in Clinical Supervision*, ed. W. John Smyth (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984), p. 49.

program of action research on the problems of carrying out inquiry-discovery approaches in the classroom. Developed out of the curriculum-reform movement, the inquiry-discovery innovation seemed to be failing at the implementation level:

The theories one consciously subscribes to are not necessarily those that unconsciously guide practice. The fundamental problem of curriculum reform lies in the clash between the theories of the reformers and those implicit, often unconsciously, in the practice of teachers. Reformers fail to realize that fundamental changes in classroom practice can be brought about only if teachers become conscious of the latter theories and are able to reflect critically about them.³²

The project thus aimed at working collaboratively with teachers to discover practical, not theoretical, theories in action research. Specifically, the tasks were to identify and diagnose problems with carrying out the inquiry-discovery approaches, to explore how far these approaches were generalizable, to test practical hypotheses, and "to clarify the aims, values, and principles implicit in inquiry-discovery approaches by reflecting about the values implicit in the problems identified."³³ Data collection for the project included teachers' reflective field notes, pupil diaries, teacher-student discussion, tape recordings of classroom events, and case-study reports by the teachers. An intriguing feature of this project was the inclusion of students in the reflective process.

But even the implementation of this innovation ran into trouble as teachers reported they did not have time for reflective teaching. Elliott notes: "Such skepticism is often well founded. Schools have not on the whole institutionalized support for reflective teaching. Teachers embark on innovations without the time and opportunity required for resolving the classroom problems they pose."³⁴

The focus of the study moved to facilitating reflective or self-monitoring teachers. The method of triangulation—gathering accounts of classroom events from teachers', students', and participant-observers' perspectives—was employed. To develop self-monitoring potential, Elliott suggested that teachers work through the following sequence of activities:

1. Listening to or viewing recordings of their teaching situation.
2. Listening to or viewing recordings and then systematically noting salient patterns in their classroom behavior.
3. 2, plus dialogue with participant observer.
4. 3, plus dialogue with students about pedagogic values.
5. Triangulation controlled by participant observer.
6. Triangulation controlled by the teacher.³⁵

³²John Elliott, "Development Hypotheses About Classrooms From Teachers' Practical Constructs. An Account of the Work of the Ford Teaching Project," *Interchange* 7 (No. 2, 1976-77): 2.

³³*Ibid.*, p. 4.

³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 14.

At the end of this process, teachers should be able to act as participant-observers in each other's classrooms.

By incorporating students' reflections with their own reflections and considering the stable data provided by the participant-observer, teachers were able to better understand classroom events. As one teacher responded, "Indeed the value of this research to us may lie in the analysis the teachers make of their methods and their whole approach to teaching."³⁶

What Specific Supervisory Behaviors Encourage Reflective Teaching?

A case study of the clinical supervision process by Turner-Muecke, Russell, and Bowyer built on Schön's foundation but focuses on a supervisor's reflection on her own professional behavior supervising a student teacher during two months of conferences. An outcome of the study was the premise that the supervisor's reflection in action was as important as the reflection being encouraged for the teacher.

Initially, the supervisor did not perceive that the student teacher was working at developing a collegial relationship in collecting and analyzing data, nor did the student teacher seem to share the supervisor's philosophy of teaching. The student teacher received the first verbatim transcripts with few comments and no signs of self-inquiry. This finding substantiates earlier conceptions of teacher concerns, which held that beginning teachers rely on personal experiences as students themselves and find it difficult to move beyond a self-centered perspective to a pupil-centered perspective. As the student teacher's supervisor noted, "I realized that her 'teacher-directed' orientation was very different from my own style."³⁷

Concerned that her teacher was not demonstrating reflection or reflection in action and was not maintaining a reflective journal, the supervisor decided to reassess the collaborative clinical supervision arrangement. The supervisor cited this as the turning point in the collegial relationship. The student teacher's reactions and writings on the assessment indicated she had reached a stage of "inner personal concern and reflection on her progress as a teacher."³⁸ The supervisor herself cited the value of reflection in action as an important check on her development as a supervisor:

In an interpersonal activity such as supervision, in which the data for discussion are obtained by one party observing the other, it is only too easy for the supervisor, trying to reframe and resolve a puzzle, to connect items in a causal sequence and be wrong. Sequences of observations and conferences, coupled with reflection by both parties, seem to be one good way to approach some kind of "truthful reality." Can we

³⁶Donald Cooper and Dave Ebbutt, "Participation in Action Research as an Inservice Experience," *Cambridge Journal of Education* 4 (No. 2, 1974), 69.

³⁷Lee A. Turner-Muecke, Tom Russell, and Jane Bowyer, "Reflection in Action: Case Study of a Clinical Supervisor," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Fall 1986) 46.

³⁸*Ibid*

afford this kind of investment in our training process? Can we afford the results of a lesser kind of investment?³⁹

In his report of a case study of clinical supervision with a first-year teacher, Kilbourn cites the importance of autonomy, evidence, and continuity in the clinical supervision process. He attests to the importance of the teacher's selecting patterns for observation and reflection, noting that "improvement" occurred only when the teacher took an active role in the pattern analysis. After analyzing patterns in her teaching through the clinical supervision cycle, the teacher made a vital discovery: "So I guess it's my fault all along, really—my technique. I was thinking they, the students, were incapable, and here I was holding them back myself. It's really ironic."⁴⁰

Robinson, in his case study of clinical supervision with a third-year teacher, views the failure of much of clinical and traditional supervision ironically because of the supervisor's inability to focus on the data instead of evaluating and judging the teacher. Robinson found that when the supervisor initiated suggestions for change, the teacher changed or modified the behavior only when the supervisor was in the room. But when the teacher noted patterns or findings in the data of things she wanted to change, the difference was measurable. As the data collected pointed to an approximation of her goals—longer wait time, more student involvement, increased volunteer involvement—her feeling of progress increased, encouraging her to take more control of the classroom. Noting that it was an impressionistic rather than quantifiable evaluation, Robinson cites this enhanced professional self-image as one of the major benefits of reflective practice.⁴¹

In sum, five supervisory behaviors are most important in encouraging reflective behavior. (1) reflecting in action by the supervisor, (2) encouraging teacher autonomy, (3) using data as evidence for salient teaching patterns, (4) observing and conferring over time, and (5) helping teachers develop the skills to interpret the data collected on their teaching and allowing them to play a major role in interpreting the data.

What Are the Effects of Increased Reflectivity?

Increased reflection by teachers positively affects their beliefs about teaching (McCoombe and Potash), as well as their self-esteem (Robinson). Increased reflection by teachers also has other benefits: greater interest in self-improvement, greater interest in data on their teaching behavior, and greater attempts at encouraging reflection and critical thinking by students.

³⁹Ibid., p. 48

⁴⁰Brent Kilbourn, "Linda: A Case Study in Clinical Supervision," in *Case Studies in Clinical Supervision*, ed. W. John Smyth (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984), p. 79

⁴¹Jeffrey Robinson, "A Second Pair of Eyes: A Case Study of a Supervisor's View of Clinical Supervision," in *Case Studies in Clinical Supervision*, ed. W. John Smyth (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984), pp. 5-42.

Cruickshank and Applegate report several findings from their "Reflective Teaching" program developed at Ohio State University:

"Reflective Teaching" gives teachers time to think carefully about their own teaching behaviors and opportunity to view other experienced professionals in action. Teachers find themselves engaged in a meaningful process of inquiry which leads them toward renewed self-esteem and interest in teaching. As a result, teachers become more reflective about teaching and more interested in self-improvement. "Reflective Teaching" is an opportunity for meaningful teacher growth.⁴²

Holly developed a reflection-through-recollection program with public school teachers using diaries and forum sessions. Because of this approach to reflection, Holly did not supply the teachers with the stable data she collected during her observations. The teachers' reflections in their writings and in their discussions were based solely on their own recollections. A positive outcome of the program, as Holly notes, was that teachers began to ask for her data to provide themselves with different perspectives of their teaching.⁴³

A subsidiary benefit of the Wildman and Niles study of teacher reflection was their disclosure of the ramifications of systematic teacher reflection: "Teachers may be more able or willing to lead their students in systematic reflection."⁴⁴ One teacher participating in the training shared a taping of her classroom with her students in a group problem-solving process. She was spurred on by her own reflection: "I had no idea. . . . We had never stopped to think about it."⁴⁵ She used the tape with her students to "stop and think about" what was going on in the classroom.

Examining the barrage of recent literary reports, Greene applies inquiry knowledge to understanding student achievement. She argues that the knowledge many of today's students possess may be of the nonreflective, noncritical, consumerist sort instead of being self-reflective and critical. Greene contends that students' knowledge, like measured knowledge, may be either "reflectively gained" or "passively absorbed."⁴⁶ Students, like their teachers, learn more when knowledge develops through reflection.

CONCLUSION

This review of empirical research on nurturing reflective teaching leads to three main conclusions: (1) several important requirements must be in

⁴²Donald R. Cruickshank and Jane H. Applegate, "Reflective Teaching as a Strategy for Teacher Growth," *Educational Leadership* 38 (April 1981): 554

⁴³Mary Louise Holly, "Teacher Reflection on Classroom Life: Collaboration and Professional Development," *Australian Administrator* 4 (January 1983): 1-6

⁴⁴Terry M. Wildman and Jerome A. Niles, "Reflective Teachers: Tensions Between Abstractions and Realities," *Journal of Teacher Education* 38 (July-August 1987): 28.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Maxine Greene, "Toward Possibility: Expanding the Range of Literacy," *English Education* 18 (December 1986): 231-243.

place to encourage reflection in teaching; (2) definite benefits result from helping teachers to be more reflective; and (3) future research on this topic is needed. Seven requirements are most important:

- a descriptive record of actual classroom events
- a collegial relationship in which the teacher feels safe, supported, and respected
- teacher control over the supervisory process
- continuity in the supervisory process over time
- constant problem reframing and reflection by both teacher and supervisor as the heart of the supervisory process
- time and support for collegial interaction
- time to develop the skills needed for reflection

These requirements convincingly affirm the potential of clinical supervision that Cogan and Goldhammer envisioned for nurturing reflective practice. Numerous texts and articles have emerged since the inaugural Harvard-Newton Summer Program of 1962–63 and Goldhammer's landmark 1969 edition of *Clinical Supervision*. Still, although many educators involved in supervision can recite Goldhammer's five-stage sequence or Cogan's eight-phase cycle, or some variation on the theme, equally as many have yet to discover the vital component of clinical supervision that separates it from other forms of supervision.⁴⁷ Sergiovanni states: "I believe that clinical supervision at present is too closely associated with a workflow. . . . The intellectual capital inherent in clinical supervision is in my view more important than its workflow as articulated steps, strategies and procedures."⁴⁸ The intellectual capital overlooked is teachers' nurturing of reflective practice.

Reflection is the driving force behind successful clinical supervision programs—the programs that make a difference in the lives and instruction of the teachers who participate in them, as well as in the lives of the students they teach.

In reality, the task of the supervisor is to make sense of messy situations by increasing understanding and discovering and communicating meaning. Since situations of practice are characterized by unique events, uniform answers to problems are not likely to be helpful. Since teachers, supervisors, and students bring to the classroom beliefs, assumptions, values, opinions, preferences, and predispositions, objective and

⁴⁷Morris Cogan, *Clinical Supervision* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1973); Robert Goldhammer, Robert H. Anderson, and Robert J. Krajewski, *Clinical Supervision* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1980); Cheryl Granade Sullivan, *Clinical Supervision. A State-of-the-Art Review* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1980); Noreen Garman, "The Clinical Approach to Supervision," in *Supervision of Teaching*, ed. Thomas J. Sergiovanni (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1982); Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Landscapes, Mindscapes, and Reflective Practice in Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 1 (Fall 1985): 5–17.

⁴⁸Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Toward a Theory of Clinical Supervision," *Journal of Research and Development in Education* 9 (Winter 1976): 20

value-free supervisory strategies are not likely to address issues of importance. Since uncertainty and complexity are normal aspects in the process of teaching, intuition becomes necessary to fill in between the gaps of what can be specified as known. Since reality in practice does not exist separate from persons involved in the process of teaching and supervising, knowing cannot be separated from what is to be known.⁴⁹

"Clinical supervision is a more robust conceptualization of what it might mean for teachers to become actively involved in the reflexive process of analyzing and theorizing about their own teaching, its social antecedents, and possible consequences."⁵⁰ Smyth posits that only through this reflexive process will teachers transform their teaching and will supervision achieve any significant effect.

The review of the literature on reflection also leads to the conclusion that when the requirements identified above are put in place, important benefits result:

- Teachers become more aware of and better observers of their own classroom behavior.
- Teachers see themselves as having greater control over their own practice—they are empowered.
- As they begin to experience the process of reflection, teachers tend to become even more and more reflective.
- When they seek to encourage reflective teaching, supervisors tend to become more reflective about their supervisory behavior.
- As teachers become more reflective, they seek to promote greater reflection by their students.
- As teachers become more reflective, they begin to believe that they do have the power to influence student learning significantly.

The literature review leads to one final undeniable conclusion: The need for empirical inquiry that looks at the process of supervision more directly from the reflective practitioner's perspective is great. Case studies and research programs are needed that delve more deeply into the process of nurturing reflective teaching through instructional supervision. So far, case studies of the supervision process have generally attempted to link supervision to specific changes in teacher behavior, but that focus must change. Case studies are needed that link supervision to teacher reflection in both short- and long-range time frames. Nine specific questions should be addressed:

- How can supervision be used to engender teachers' reflection on action?

⁴⁹Thomas J. Sergiovanni, "Landscapes, Mindscales, and Reflective Practice in Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 1 (Fall 1985), 11–12.

⁵⁰W. John Smyth, "Toward a 'Critical Consciousness' in the Instructional Supervision of Experienced Teachers," *Curriculum Inquiry* 14 (Winter 1984), 426.

- How can supervision be used to foster teachers' reflection through recollection?
- What are the short- and long-term effects of reflection on action and reflection through recollection?
- What is the relationship between teacher reflection and teacher behavior?
- What supervisory behaviors help engender reflection at the three different levels identified by Van Manen?
- How can the impediments to reflection identified by Sykes and by Wildman and Niles be overcome?
- What is the relationship between reflective teacher behavior and student behavior?
- Do other models of supervision (i.e., other than Cogan's and Goldhammer's) result in more reflective teaching practice?
- What procedures can be used to identify reflective teacher behavior occurring outside the supervisory conference?

Only by inquiry into questions such as these can we adequately understand and appraise the power of instructional supervision for promoting teachers' reflective practice.

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Wideen, Marvin F., and Ian Andrews, eds. *Staff Development for School Improvement. A Focus on the Teacher* Philadelphia Falmer Press, 1987. 233 pp \$38.00/\$19.00.

Chapters by Griffin, Doyle, Stake, Kemmis, Hopkins, Rudduck, Rubin, Bradley, Shapson, Russell, Fullan, and the editors make this book one of the most diverse, comprehensive treatments of staff development now available. Eight approaches to staff development are offered, along with rich contextual, policy, and implementation analyses.

Maeroff, Gene I. *The Empowerment of Teachers: Overcoming the Crisis of Confidence*. New York: Teachers College Press, 1988. 133 pp. \$11.95.

Statements from teachers and others involved in the Rockefeller Foundation's Collaboratives for Humanities and Arts Teaching projects in urban secondary schools are linked together under topics affecting teacher empowerment—status, teacher knowledge, partnerships, access to power, and the projects themselves. This book has important implications for supervision and for restructuring teachers' work environments.

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