

***A Research Agenda:***  
**AN ALTERNATIVE VISION AND**  
**AN "EDUCATIVE" AGENDA**  
**FOR SUPERVISION AS A FIELD OF STUDY**

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I can get to the essence of the perspective I want to develop in this paper with one example:

In the early eighties, American executives, because of joint production deals, were often visiting Japanese [automobile] factories, and they were finding out how good the Japanese were, especially at the basics. One executive who had made that trip and reached that conclusion a decade earlier was Hal Sperlich, then of Ford. Touring a Japanese auto factory in the early seventies, he had noticed that there were no repair bays alongside the [production] line, areas into which defective cars in the process of assembly were pulled for fixing.

"Where do you repair your cars?" Sperlich asked the engineer with him.

"We don't have to repair our cars," the engineer answered.

"Well, then," Sperlich asked, "where are your inspectors?"

"The workers are the inspectors," his guide answered.<sup>1</sup>

I do not mean to suggest that we need to abolish the notion of supervision (which some will no doubt read into what I am saying), but I believe we need to take a closer, more critical look at who has the legitimate right to engage in supervision and for what valued social purpose. This example eloquently shows that those who are closest to the work are best qualified to form judgments about its quality and its worth. The question is, who wields the power? Speaking of schools, classrooms, teaching, and learning, Grundy claims. "The allocation of power is inversely proportional to the amount of teaching engaged in. For example, someone like a bursar exercises considerable power yet has no direct contact with teaching (and may not have had any such experience)."<sup>2</sup> She argues that this inverse relationship holds dire consequences because decisions about the nature of schooling become increasingly distanced from the classroom—especially with supervision.

As Macdonald does in his analysis of where the field of curriculum might be headed, I want to clearly state that I am not joining the fashionable trend

<sup>1</sup>David Halberstam, *The Reckoning* (New York: Avon, 1986), p. 716. I am greatly indebted to my colleague Stephen Kemmis for bringing this example to my notice.

<sup>2</sup>Shirley Grundy, *Curriculum: Product or Praxis?* (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1987), p. 170.

of debunking the field of supervision.<sup>3</sup> I have far too much invested in it personally, and I hold an optimistic view of what is possible.<sup>4</sup> I will not, however, shy away from some difficult, intractable problems that continue to plague supervision as a field of study. If I appear to display a total lack of reverence for the traditional notion of supervision as a topic of study, it is because I passionately believe that we need to challenge and supplant how we think, act, and research in this area. As Sergiovanni notes, if the conceptualization and investigation of supervision is to progress from its current desultory state, then we need to go beyond "the presumed infallibility of present supervisory theories, or indeed of scientism itself, as an adequate intellectual base for professional practice."<sup>5</sup> Sergiovanni is correct in saying that if we continue to search "the same old streets for paths to improvement," then we will continue to ignore the pressing epistemological reasons that we have ended up in our current intellectual cul-de-sac in the first place.<sup>6</sup> If we are to progress from where we are now, we need to go considerably beyond tinkering at the edges of what passes as supervision and move instead into thinking, acting, and researching from totally different frames of reference—ones that amount to developing new "mindscapes."<sup>7</sup> As Sergiovanni says.

Like landscapes and seascapes, mindscapes provide us with replicable intellectual and psychological images of reality. But beyond these images, mindscapes provide the boundaries and parameters of rationality and sense making. They are, in a sense, intellectual security blankets on the one hand, and road maps through our uncertain world on the other. As road maps they provide the rules, assumptions, images and exemplars of practice which define for us what supervision is and how it should unfold. Further, mindscapes program our thinking and belief structure as to what should be excluded in supervision. . . . So complete is the programming of a mindscape that its assumptions and practices are automatically articulated. Thus, when a supervisory mindscape does not fit the world of practice, the problem is assumed to be "in that world." Rarely is the world accepted for what it is and the prevailing mindscapes challenged or indeed abandoned in favor of others.<sup>8</sup>

According to Sergiovanni, to continue to believe that improving supervision means doing "more of the same," albeit better, is to ignore the nature of the problem, which is a fundamentally flawed notion of what engaging in

<sup>3</sup>James Macdonald, "Curriculum, Consciousness, and Social Change," in *Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*, ed. William Pinar (Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scansbrick, 1988), pp. 156–200.

<sup>4</sup>Roger Simon, "For a Pedagogy of Possibility," *Critical Pedagogy Networker* 1 (No. 1, 1988) 1–4.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas Sergiovanni, "Liberating Supervision in Search of Meaning," *Impact on Instructional Improvement* 19 (No. 1, 1984): 52–71.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>For an example of the kind of reductionist schemes we need to avoid at all costs, see Noreen Garman and Helen Hazi, "Teachers Ask: Is There Life After Madeline Hunter?" *Pbi Delta Kappan* 69 (May 1988): 669–672. See also John Smyth, *Rationale for Teachers' Critical Pedagogy: A Handbook* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1987); John Smyth, "A 'Critical' Perspective for Clinical Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 3 (Winter 1988): 136–156.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Sergiovanni, "Liberating Supervision in Search of Meaning," *Impact on Instructional Improvement* 19 (No. 1, 1984): 55.

supervision means. The model—not how it is enacted—is the problem. Coming from a historical perspective, Bolin arrives at a similar conclusion. She claims that the historical struggles over the search for a definition of supervision have left the field still bearing the "battle marks from the coalitions and compromises—the most significant scar [has been] a loss of identity as a field."<sup>9</sup> As Bolin unwraps the history of how supervision has been buffeted by forces outside of schools bent on controlling teachers' work in increasingly constricted ways, she shows that the continual shift in focus back and forth between teachers and the curriculum has largely contributed to "supervision as a field struggling to find its place [even within its own professional organization]."<sup>10</sup> I argue that more than an inability to resolve a question of definition is involved here—at the heart of the enterprise is a confusion of purpose. Bolin is right to argue that this problem stems directly from an ambivalence and an inability to come to grips with the essence of supervision.

The issue that emerges time and again when questions are asked about the nature and purposes of supervision, and the source of much confusion (much of it mischievous), has been the claim that the purpose of supervision is the "improvement of teaching and learning." Sergiovanni captures the paradox that has plagued supervision. He asks, "Why engage in supervision in the first place?"

Traditional purposes revolve around such management themes as accountability and quality control and emphasize the sorting, measuring, and grading of teachers. Supervision becomes the measurement of teachers and their performance against some standard. One hears claims, nonetheless, that the purpose of supervision is to help teachers improve as persons and professionals. If this is the case, emphasis would expect to shift from measuring, to describing, judging, and interpreting in pursuit of greater understandings and enhanced meanings. We face a contradiction here. On the one hand we speak passionately and gingerly of wanting to help teachers but on the other hand we use evaluation techniques which are measurement oriented and force us to focus on standards.<sup>11</sup>

Bolin shows that the lack of contest over the misuse of the term *improvement* as a euphemism for bureaucratically controlling teachers' work through various forms of inspection exposes supervision for what it is—an arm of administration devoted solely to surveilling teachers' work.<sup>12</sup> The effort to legitimize the process in the 1920s and '30s by recourse to so-called scientific methods exposes even more the real underlying agenda of social control. Bolin's claim about the confusion over definition, therefore, has more to do

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<sup>9</sup>Frances S. Bolin, "On Defining Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Summer 1987): 378.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 369.

<sup>11</sup>Thomas Sergiovanni, "Liberating Supervision in Search of Meaning, *Impact on Instructional Improvement* 19 (No. 1, 1984): 61

<sup>12</sup>Frances S. Bolin, "On Defining Supervision," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Summer 1987): 378

with an inability to sell the idea of supervision-as-improvement to a clientele of teachers who over the years have remained justifiably skeptical about poorly disguised attempts to "improve" their practice.

Put crudely, supervision as a field of study is still a mere pretender because it has never had the moral courage to separate itself from its origins in the mainstream of educational management. Instead of further refining or proliferating the forms of supervision—developmental, scientific, artistic, clinical, or whatever—we need to totally rethink our perspective, including the social, cultural, and pedagogical relationships we believe are important and whatever we believe is indispensable about the nature of teaching and learning. The required rethinking will not merely recalibrate what we already do but will carry us considerably beyond where we are now. At heart, I believe that those who purport to work with teachers in analyzing their work must become active, militant teacher-advocates, involved in assisting teachers to stem the cancerous encroachment of educational systems bent on disenfranchising teachers and students. This "educative" and "empowering" role allows previously silenced voices a legitimate say in the mission of schools, in how schools are conceived, organized, and enacted.<sup>13</sup>

I am not sure that dwelling at length on the moribund nature of past or present supervisory practices would be that helpful. Others have done so, as have I.<sup>14</sup> My purpose here is to adopt a more proactive stance by suggesting what a revamped, more liberating view of supervision might be. I envisage this view as a major shift in perspective—not a change of style or behavior, for they would be too shallow. I have in mind what Macdonald calls a revelation of our "passion," our "values," and our "justifications".

What we must ask ourselves then is to really profess, to reveal and justify from our own viewpoints what we believe and value. We are asking persons to transcend the limitations and restrictions of their social conditioning and common sense and to venture beyond by seeing and choosing new possibilities.<sup>15</sup>

I believe we need to challenge extant views of supervision for four cogent reasons:<sup>16</sup>

- Current practices lock us into technical rationality that demands we instrumentally separate our thinking about the "means" of supervision from

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<sup>13</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), pp. 200–233; Brian Fay, *Critical Social Science: Liberation and Its Limits* (Oxford, England: Polity Press, 1987); Robby Fried, *Empowerment vs. Delivery of Services* (Concord: New Hampshire Department of Education, 1980)

<sup>14</sup>John Smyth, "Cinderella Syndrome: A Philosophical View of Supervision as a Field of Study," *Teachers College Record* 88 (Summer 1987): 567–588

<sup>15</sup>James Macdonald, "Curriculum, Consciousness, and Social Change," in *Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*, ed. William Pinar (Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, 1988), p. 163

<sup>16</sup>Based on James Macdonald, "Curriculum, Consciousness, and Social Change," in *Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*, ed. William Pinar (Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, 1988), p. 163

the ethical, moral, and political dimensions whose "ends" supervision is supposed to serve—the effect is a narrow concentration on how-to questions rather than on *what* and *why* questions.

- *Bureaucratically* and hierarchically construed structures separating those who "know about" teaching (supervisors) from those who do teaching (teachers) are a form of institutionalization of technical rationality, these structures develop their own unquestioned ends.

- These approaches do not have centrally built in to them a concern about the rightness of action and how we treat others—as Macdonald says, we seem to park the Bill of Rights at the front door when we enter school<sup>17</sup>

- Finally, supervision's current concern with pragmatic aspects of teaching technique does not encourage or even permit questions to be asked about structure, for example, our schools are organized and run in ways that closely approximate a factory model, and this model has profound implications for what is learned, how it is learned, and how knowledge itself is treated

These are not mere omissions or oversights from current forms of supervision—they come about because the social relationships that exist in traditional forms of supervision militate against these views surfacing as issues.

#### SUPERVISION FOR LIBERATION

To shift supervision from its current managerial preoccupation with accountability, quality control, efficiency, effectiveness, and sanction-ridden forms of surveillance, we must begin to embrace more robust possibilities that question the presumed supremacy of the technocratic mindedness of what now passes as supervision in our schools. We need, for example, to raise the issue about whether "competent practice" is sufficient on its own to drive discussions about teaching and supervision.<sup>18</sup> Following Greene, we need to be better prepared to ask moral and ethical questions about what valued social purposes teaching is directed toward and why prevailing practices actually exist.<sup>19</sup>

By continuing to pursue our current reductionist conceptions of supervision in which teaching is broken down into smaller and smaller observable and measurable fragments of behavior, we are unwittingly endorsing a view that says a person can develop "intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal ability in much the same way as one develops muscle."<sup>20</sup> Hargreaves claims

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, p. 166

<sup>18</sup>Maxine Greene, "Reflection and Passion in Teaching," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Fall 1986): 68–81

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>For the 121 separate behaviors a supervisor is required to search for under the Florida Performance Measurement System, see Florida Coalition for the Development of a Performance Measurement System, *Domains Knowledge Base of the Florida Performance Measurement System* (Tallahassee, FL: Office of Teacher Education and In-Service Staff Development, 1983). See also Robin Barrow, "Skill Talk," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 21 (No. 2, 1987) 195

that teachers "are not just bundles of skill, competence, and technique. they are creators of meaning, interpreters of the world and all it asks of them."<sup>21</sup> Because teachers interact with the world around them and make sense of it, adapt, and refocus what they do, we can no longer defend defining teaching solely in terms of competence in prescribed skills, pedagogical or otherwise. As Hargreaves says, asking why teachers fail "to do X" does not advance matters much—in his view, asking why teachers "do Y" and how on their terms they "cope," "adapt," and "reconstruct their circumstances" is more revealing.<sup>22</sup> To continue to see teacher quality from a deficit point of view, presupposing that poor-quality teaching "results from deficiencies in personality, gaps in learning, or weak matching of competencies to tasks," is to continue to ignore the fundamental point that "teacher quality (or its absence) actually results from processes of a social nature, from teachers actively interpreting, making sense of, and adjusting to, the demands and requirements their conditions of work place upon them."<sup>23</sup> Of course, the proposition that teachers be "respected as active and rational interpreters" of their own work has its own policy implications for those who "manage" educational systems.<sup>24</sup>

The kind of alternative vision that I, and people like Hargreaves, have in mind insists on teaching with an *empowering* agenda—one that enables teachers, as well as students, to "become different, to think critically and creatively, to pursue meanings, to make increasing sense of their actually lived worlds."<sup>25</sup> As Greene points out, this deliberate, mindful, and action-oriented process involves "provoking persons to get up from their seats . . . [and] say something in their own voices, against their own biographies and in terms of what they cherish in their shared lives, what they authentically hold dear."<sup>26</sup> Greene argues for a form of freedom, not so much from physical or psychological oppression, but from "complacency" and "taken-for-grantedness" that produce palpable forms of paralysis. Overcoming the uncritical, passive acceptance of the world means that as teachers and supervisors we have to consciously work toward a state of "disequilibrium" in which we can see through the apathy and indifference of the natural and the taken-for-granted. Greene argues against knowledge about teaching that is regarded as "privileged" (in the sense that supervisors prescribe research, lesson plans, objectives, and curriculum guides) and against teaching that amounts solely to a form of technical literacy for students.

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<sup>21</sup>Andy Hargreaves, "Teacher Quality: A Sociological Analysis," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 20 (May–June 1988): 216

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 211

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 216

<sup>25</sup>Maxine Greene, "Reflection and Passion in Teaching," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 2 (Fall 1986): 72

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

To speak about supervision in empowering terms is to endorse a view of supervision that amounts to "reflection in action" in which the agenda is not one of standardization and homogenization of pedagogy against some artificially constructed standards but rather one of deliberate attempts to situate teaching in its theoretical, historical, and political context that will enable those participating in it to share in a particular lived reality.<sup>27</sup> Of course, this view means departing dramatically from the posture that somehow supervision is a nonpolitical, neutral, value-free activity. Supervision of the kind I am suggesting here is, therefore, much more person-, context-, and situation-specific; its agenda is to help teachers and students in the sense-making process. Supervisors in this scenario are not engaged in rating teachers' performance against external standards or indicators, nor are supervisors in the business of enforcing schemes of external compliance. In this alternative, the sole reason for supervisors' existence (as distinct from teachers') is to ensure that the necessary resources are available to help teachers make sense of their pedagogy. This enabling function amounts to cultivating ways of working that increasingly allow teachers to understand their own personal and collective histories and to work collaboratively at unravelling the culture of their own teaching. In this context, "teachers-as-workers" can indeed be their own inspectors.<sup>28</sup> At a more practical level, supervision has several dimensions:

- We need less measurement against standards of performance and more activity of an ethnographic, biographical, and autobiographical kind that allows (even demands) that teachers connect with their students' personal and social lives.
- We need better ways of helping teachers to recognize and to counteract the bureaucratic intrusions into their classrooms and their lives that have no educational foundations.<sup>29</sup>
- We need ways of helping teachers to see how their voices are being progressively silenced in the debates about school reform and how the media hype about accountability is being used as a device for legitimating anti-educational forms of managerialism.<sup>30</sup>
- We need ways of arming teachers so they can describe and analyze the pedagogical imperatives of their work to expose and ultimately to transform the authoritarian hierarchical structures that have come to captivate their professional lives and those of their students.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>27</sup>Donald Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

<sup>28</sup>David Halberstam, *The Reckoning* (New York: Avon, 1986)

<sup>29</sup>Frank Smith, *Insult to Intelligence: The Bureaucratic Invasion of Our Classrooms* (New York: Arbor House, 1986)

<sup>30</sup>Michelle Fine, "Silencing in Public Schools," *Language Arts* 64 (February 1987): 157-174

<sup>31</sup>John Smyth, *Clinical Supervision—Collaborative Learning About Teaching: A Handbook* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984); John Smyth, *Learning About Teaching Through Clinical Supervision* (London: Croom Helm, 1986)

- We need ways of helping teachers to counteract "negative pedagogy" and the kind of cultural illiteracy fostered by mindless measurement-oriented forms of teaching.<sup>32</sup>

- We need ways of helping teachers to judge the "political correctness" of what they do, case by case, not according to the neatness-of-fit with some long-range goals or nebulous national priorities.<sup>33</sup>

- We need better ways of helping teachers to celebrate what they do in their teaching as a means of developing robust self-images of themselves.<sup>34</sup>

- We need ways of engaging teachers in the "study of the academic culture of teaching" to shift teachers from being "passive, manipulated, and silent" to being able to provide an active, informed commentary on one another's teaching.<sup>35</sup>

Broadly speaking, Hult captures the essence of these points when he speaks about "pedagogical caring."<sup>36</sup> For him, caring amounts to a "concern and appreciation for the special uniqueness and circumstances of the person" that involves "overcoming obstacles and difficulties."<sup>37</sup> At the same time, however, it involves more than a concern for the individual:

That which is cared for may be an idea as well as a person or a plurality of ideas or persons. . . Pedagogical caring refers to the careful manner or style by which a teacher operates. In doing his professional job with due care, the teacher demonstrates serious attention, concern, and regard for all his duties. And what is especially ingredient to pedagogical caring is the teacher's commitment to develop and maintain his style throughout his or her professional career, even under conditions of adversity.<sup>38</sup>

Traver summarizes this metaphorical tilting of the world on its head when he speaks about the glaring omission from the scholarly wisdom of what we think we know about teaching:

What we think we know about teachers results from concepts and methods that are not primarily authored and owned by teachers. To the extent that we believe that understanding people requires first that they speak with their own words, we must admit that we know very little. We must, therefore, think about ways to make it possible to listen to teachers, to respect their intelligence, ethic, and emotion, to ask them to

<sup>32</sup>Barbara Johnson, "Teaching Ignorance L'ecole des Femmes," *Yale French Studies* (No. 63, 1982), 165–182. For examples, see E. D. Hirsch, Jr., *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987); Alan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987).

<sup>33</sup>James MacDonald, "Curriculum, Consciousness, and Social Change," in *Contemporary Curriculum Discourses*, ed. William Pinar (Scottsdale, AZ: Gorsuch Scarisbrick, 1988), p. 163.

<sup>34</sup>Garth Boomer, "A Celebration of Teaching," *The Australian Teacher* 11 (February 1985) 13–20.

<sup>35</sup>Rob Traver, "Autobiography, Feminism, and the Study of Teaching," *Teachers College Record* 88 (No. 3, 1987): 443–452.

<sup>36</sup>Richard E. Hult, "On Pedagogical Caring," *Educational Theory* 29 (Summer 1979) 237–243.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 238–239.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 243.

keep journals and memoirs, to share classes and meals, and to help them to write and speak. What this means is that we must seek teacher empowerment within the academic culture of the study of teaching.<sup>39</sup>

This situation is certainly no less true for the research and practice of supervision. We must have parallel ways of working amounting to a "new consciousness about the intelligence, ethic, and emotion of teaching" that respect and acknowledge the worth of teachers' knowledge about their work.<sup>40</sup> This view is not, unfortunately, widely shared in the field of supervision now.

Typical notions of supervision encased in a patriarchal, managerial view of how schools and teachers should be organized need to be supplanted and informed instead by the ideas of feminist writers, who not only understand the gendered nature of teaching but can articulate what a feminist pedagogy might look like within an educative agenda for schooling.<sup>41</sup> This alternative perspective—which has a lot to do with an "ethic of caring" and the development of distinctive relationships characterized by "reciprocity"—is so novel to the field of supervision that it creates an entirely different moral attitude toward supervision.<sup>42</sup> Noddings speaks about the need to develop "fidelity in teaching"—a simultaneous concern about a faithfulness to ideas and ideals, alongside the concern for a high degree of exactitude and accuracy. As Noddings says, we have a high degree of faithfulness.

... when we know to what or whom we are faithful, when we have reflected on the reasons and emotions involved in our faithfulness, and when we are committed to fresh affirmations of faithfulness at ever finer and truer levels. ... Fidelity to persons does not imply that academic excellence, the acquisition of skills, or the needs of contemporary society should be of no concern.<sup>43</sup>

Noddings notes the ultimate tragedy:

This way of thinking and speaking has almost disappeared from formal educational discourse. It occurs on the fringes of the educational research community, in almost embarrassed whispers. While there is a growing reaction against single-minded calls for excellence and technical proficiency, it is a disgruntled response cast largely in the language of liberal ideology.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup>Rob Traver, "Autobiography, Feminism, and the Study of Teaching," *Teachers College Record* 88 (Summer 1987) 436.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 434

<sup>41</sup>Nel Noddings, "Fidelity in Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research for Teaching," *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (November 1986): 496–510; Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Valerie Walkerdine, "Progressive Pedagogy and Political Struggle," *Screen* 27 (September–October 1986): 54–60; Patti Lather, "Critical Theory, Curricular Transformation, and Feminist Mainstreaming," *Journal of Education* 166 (March 1984) 49–62; Patti Lather, "The Absent Presence. Patriarchy, Capitalism, and the Nature of Teacher Work" (paper presented at the Bergamo Curriculum Theorizing Conference, Dayton, OH, October 1985); Judith Williamson, "How Does Girl Number 20 Understand Ideology?" *Screen Education* 40 (Autumn–Winter 1981/1982): 80–87

<sup>42</sup>Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982)

<sup>43</sup>Nel Noddings, "Fidelity in Teaching, Teacher Education, and Research for Teaching," *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (November 1986): 496–498.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 499.

AN "EDUCATIVE" VIEW OF SUPERVISION<sup>45</sup>

The American social philosopher Brian Fay is important in this discussion because his altered conception of the relationship between theory and practice serves as a corrective to present dominant (i.e., instrumentalist) views.<sup>46</sup> The essence of Fay's argument is that instead of one group or class being subservient to or beholden to another because of status or position, relationships prevail in which all members can arrive at new self understanding that empowers them to "reduce their suffering by creating another way of life that is more fulfilling."<sup>47</sup> What Fay proposes is an agenda of how those who have been excluded for whatever structural reasons from a say in determining their own professional destinies can arrive at new levels of collective self understanding as a basis for action. His argument, when applied to supervision, is about abolishing privileged, elitist forms of supervision and replacing them with forms that stimulate dialogue about teaching and learning in schools, the discourse contrasts the pedagogic with the managerial schools

This notion of supervision is, therefore, fundamentally to do with teachers ability to acquire an understanding of how the social and institutional circumstances of their school lives causes them frustration and how the anxiety detracts from their self-fulfillment. This educative (or "transformative") perspective rests on the assumption that by assisting teachers to understand themselves and their world, we make it possible for them to engage in the radical changes necessary for them to overcome the oppressive conditions that characterize work patterns and social relationships. Knowledge becomes a means for teachers to arrive at self-understanding and self-awareness of disabling conditions—not a means for those in dominant positions to acquire power and exert control. Knowledge about pedagogy is no longer, therefore, a set of procedures construed as something to be "applied" to teachers and students. Rather, knowledge becomes their means for jointly identifying their social and institutional constraints and working for change. To the extent that ideas and knowledge emerge from and help to sustain certain social conditions, those ideas can now take on a dialectical relationship contributing toward changing the social structure that spawned them in the first place.

More inclusive forms of supervision, therefore, involve teachers (as well as students) in coming to see how, through their own actions, they are "unwitting

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<sup>45</sup>Some of the ideas presented in this section appear in John Smyth, "A Pedagogical and Educative View of Leadership," in *Critical Perspectives on Educational Leadership*, ed John Smyth (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989).

<sup>46</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), pp. 200-233, Brian Fay, *Critical Social Science Liberation and Its Limits* (Oxford, England: Polity Press, 1987)

<sup>47</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. 204.

accomplices" in perpetuating "self-destructive patterns of interactions that characterize their social relationships."<sup>48</sup> All social practices, including those in schools, are created and sustained by certain interests, and when participants unknowingly collude with those who hold power, they frustrate even their own interests. If supervisors in school settings have any legitimacy at all, then they must reduce how teachers are systematically unclear about what they do and how and why teachers continue to have unfulfilled ambitions and aspirations in working with students. Helping students, teachers, and members of the wider community unveil or unmask the self-understanding that conceals how they unwittingly collude or "participate in their own misfortune" is what the sine qua non of supervision should primarily be about.<sup>49</sup> A supervisor, therefore, "sparks [teachers] into changing the way they live and react to others."<sup>50</sup>

Noticeable by its absence from this conception of supervision is any mention of the imperative to define schools and what they do in terms of attaining and maintaining standards, or pursuing ill-defined systemwide or nationwide goals. Calls to instrumentally and unquestioningly follow the objectives laid down by others (even if the goals happen to be in the "national interest") is to acquiesce to a thinly disguised attempt to manipulate schools to satisfy narrow sectional economic interests. To continue to allow prevailing corporate models of supervision to masquerade under the ruse of attempting to improve teaching is to do nothing more than "evacuate politics from the agenda" by having school participants believe that schools should be left in the trusted hands of a disinterested civil servant class operating according to value-free managerial principles of accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness.<sup>51</sup> These procedures in these hands are far from disinterested. The undisclosed and conservative politics is to maintain existing power relationships in the rigidly defined limits of the status quo.

We need to take care, however, in espousing an alternative that an educative view of supervision in schools is not seen as merely involving those who have previously been uninvolved in school matters. To have involvement or participation per se as the agenda is to miss the point of how school structures themselves are systematically distorted, sustained, and textured by the misunderstandings school people hold. As Fay says, structures and beliefs are dialectically related:

Ideas are a function of social conditions, but . . . they [in turn] play a causal role in creating and sustaining particular social structures. [The educative model] tries to see the relation of conditions and ideas as a dialectical one.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., pp. 204–205.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 206.

<sup>51</sup>Ian Hextall, "Rendering Accounts: A Critical Analysis of the Assessment Performance Unit," in *Selection, Certification and Control: Social Issues in Educational Assessment*, ed. Patricia Broadfoot (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1984).

<sup>52</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. 205.

The educative view shows school participants the nature and extent of their misunderstanding and that their ignorance was not accidental, as well as its roots deep in the layered, stratified, and supposedly objectified social order of schools. Once school participants can begin to see the interpenetration of structures and beliefs, they can challenge and question the constructed and taken-for-granted way schools are portrayed. This approach is essentially optimistic and empowering, not moribund and pessimistic. It also elevates school people, so they are seen (and see themselves) as having the capacity to understand how their schools as institutions came to be the way they are. According to Fay, the educative model takes seriously the need to change "people's basic understanding of themselves and their world [as] a first step in their radically altering the self-destructive patterns of interaction that characterize their social relations."<sup>53</sup>

Change in an educative model of supervision requires that teachers (as well as students and parents) have an opportunity to decide for themselves "on the basis of lucid, critical self-awareness, the manner in which [they] wish to live."<sup>54</sup> In Kant's terms, they emerge from a state of immaturity that involves accepting someone else's authority to a situation that calls for using reason. This model implies a view of autonomy in which participants' rational thinking becomes the major source of what happens inside schools, rather than the dictates of those who operate at a (physical or psychological) distance from classrooms.

The point of departure for the educative approach lies in the different view it espouses of teachers. Instead of regarding teachers as untrustworthy and in need of tight bureaucratic control, an educative view of supervision starts from the presumption that teachers are "conscious of themselves as active deciding beings, bearing responsibility for their choices and able to explain them by referring to their own purposes, ideals, and beliefs."<sup>55</sup>

Reclaiming control through reflection based on rationally informed discourse is the major difference between the educative and corporate models of supervision. Acting rationally, according to Fay, amounts to groups and individuals changing their self-understanding on the strength of "the force of the argument and not [because] some extraneous factor . . . leads [them] to adopt a new viewpoint."<sup>56</sup> In this scheme, "persuasion, argumentation, debate, criticism, [and] analysis . . . are [at] the heart of the educative model."<sup>57</sup> To that extent, it does not involve replacing one form of dogma with another, rather, change is rejected on the basis of reason.

The educative model of supervision is, therefore, primarily concerned with power, with how self-knowledge can enable people to see how the

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 204

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 207

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid

<sup>57</sup>Ibid

conditions that constrain them are created and sustained by elites. However, knowledge made possible through the educative model will not, in itself, lift people out of situations that caused them to be constrained in the first place. Rather, the intent is to develop a capacity for critical self-reflection that reveals to those relegated to subservient roles how they came to be deprived of the power of self-determination. People who were previously objects in the world are transformed into active, self-determining subjects.

#### WHAT EDUCATIVE SUPERVISION MIGHT LOOK LIKE

Surprisingly, there is no shortage of evidence of teachers' experiences of working in more collaborative and critical ways. Describing several projects of the North Dakota Study Group, Perrone cites a monograph, "Speaking Out Teachers and Teaching," that captures what teachers themselves think about the merits of thinking and talking together about their work:

This monograph is about our teaching practice—what it is and what it could be. It is about teachers—what we do and how we think and learn from what is done. It is an exploration of a set of ideas about teaching—ideas which have a long history—which are made particular by our current, lived experience. Finally, and most importantly, it is about having a voice in what we do.

Having a voice is critical and political. We create, share, and change our world with and through language. Recognizing that day-to-day experience is a powerful source of understanding and knowledge which, when articulated, can be fed back into the quality of work is critical for teachers in gaining a voice. Recognizing knowledge and voicing it is basic to changing the ways teaching is thought about and enacted.

Voices, of course, need to be cultivated and supported. About 15 years ago, groups of teachers across the country started creating varying opportunities to lend each other the kinds of support needed to make themselves heard. For teachers participating in this project, collegial groups . . . have been particularly important. They allowed teachers to talk about their practice and the children they teach, to describe both in some detail, and to help each other find the patterns and relationships, and thus meaning, within the wealth of detail of their teaching lives. These groups created space and time within which teachers could do this important thinking.<sup>58</sup>

In the contemporary climate of paranoia about the importance of technique, the actual reflective procedures used by these teachers emerged as much less important than what they gained from the process of dialogue.

Acting as a "critical friend," McDonald describes the story of a group of high school teachers (of which he was a part) who met regularly (mostly outside of school hours) to reflect on their practical knowledge as teachers and of the insights, uncertainties, and paradoxes that emerged from these discussions.<sup>59</sup> Given the power to determine their own agenda and to explore the role of

<sup>58</sup>Vito Perrone, "Teachers and Schools" (paper presented at the Summer Institute, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1988)

<sup>59</sup>Joseph McDonald, "Raising the Teacher's Voice and the Ironic Role of Theory," *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (November 1986) 355–378

academic theory in their teaching lives, these teachers found that they were able to stay in charge of the knowledge-creation process instead of being subjugated by the others' ideas. From an initial concern about how to work as a group (or "collegiality for collegiality's sake"), McDonald reports teachers' increasing interest in gaining policy power over their teaching, culminating in an increased confidence and realization that they can claim that power based on the knowledge generated about their own teaching.

Duckworth's experience of working with teachers in "sense-making" ways also points to the particular importance of how teachers think about the ways they work with their students. Her experience suggests that if understanding practice is the intent, "then the way to gain insight is to watch [what students] do . . . and try to make sense of what happens."<sup>60</sup> First, teachers engage with the phenomena of teaching by closely observing what happens in their own teaching. Second, students "explain what they mean" so they can make things clearer for one another and to determine what they want to understand and thus depend more on their own judgments while taking one another's ideas seriously.<sup>61</sup>

Arguably the most insightful accounts of what teachers can achieve through discussions and support groups have come out of the writings and activities of the Boston Women's Teachers' Group. Their accounts perceptively analyze how teaching affects teachers' personal and professional lives. The group's focus on the need to locate discussions about teaching within wider considerations of institutional structures amounts to a much-needed radical shift in the nature of teacher initiated discourse about schooling.<sup>62</sup> Deflecting the spotlight away from the alleged deficiencies in schooling that attach to individual teachers' presumed inadequacies permits and requires a different set of questions—ones that have more to do with the oppressive way schools are organized and administered. This move away from the victim-blaming rhetoric opens up the debate that has largely been stifled by educational reformers and policymakers who presume to know about teaching.<sup>63</sup>

Emerging from the kind of writings of the Boston Women's Teachers' Group are the beginnings of what Kanpol identifies as crucial in identifying forms of "group solidarity"—the metaphorical equivalent for teachers of the "macho militancy" portrayed by Willis's "lads" in *Learning to Labour*.<sup>64</sup> We need to know

<sup>60</sup>Eleanor Duckworth, "Teaching as Research," *Harvard Educational Review* 56 (November 1986): 490.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Sara Freedman, Jane Jackson, and Katherine Boles (The Boston Women's Teachers' Group), *The Effect of Teaching on Teachers*, North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation (Grand Forks Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, 1986)

<sup>63</sup>William Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (New York: Pantheon, 1971).

<sup>64</sup>Sara Freedman, Jane Jackson, and Katherine Boles (The Boston Women's Teachers' Group), "The Other End of the Corridor: The Effect of Teaching on Teachers," *The Radical Teacher* 23 (No. 3, 1983): 2–23, Sara Freedman, Jane Jackson, and Katherine Boles (The Boston Women's Teachers' Group), "Teaching: An Imperilled 'Profession,'" in *Handbook of Teaching and Policy*, ed. Lee Shulman and Gary Sykes (New York: Longman, 1983), pp 261–299, Paul Willis, *Learning to Labour How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs* (Westmead, England: Gower, 1977)

more about how teachers develop collaborative and counter hegemonic alliances based on dialogue. While Kanpol's critical ethnography of a group of 8th-grade middle school teachers is an important start in that direction, we need more accounts documented by teachers themselves of how the process occurs.<sup>65</sup> Further examples of teacher dialogue that constitutes the basis for a departure from the narrow accountability ethos can be found in the work of various writers. Strieb, Raphael, Goswami and Stillman, Ayres, McTaggart et al., Nixon, Hustler et al., Grundy, and Gitlin and Smyth.<sup>66</sup>

## CONCLUSION

After starting on a pessimistic note, I finish much more hopefully than I would have thought possible. Clearly, the meaning attached to supervisory practices that amount to forms of quality control and inspection of what teachers do has outlived its usefulness (despite those who continue to consistently argue the accountability line). I am reminded of Grumet's discussion of the medieval Latin origin of the term *supervision*, which she shows had its legacy in the process of scanning liturgical texts for errors or deviations from the original text.<sup>67</sup> In that historical context, Grumet reminds us of relevant questions:

What does the supervisor look for? Smudges? Omissions? Does he bend to the work eyeing each word and disregarding the meaning of the aggregate as the skilled copyreader trains himself to examine the surface content only? Are his standards for the work shared by the one who executed it, both participating in a practice so saturated with their common faith that the criteria for scrutiny need scarcely to be uttered?<sup>68</sup>

We need to take Grumet's point seriously and ask whether we can any longer afford to live with the moral and ethical implications of the metaphorical equivalent of supervision as some kind of skilled copyreading of the surface content of others' teaching. Although using supervision as a way of

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<sup>65</sup>Barry Kanpol, "Teacher Resistance and Accommodation to Structural Factors of Schooling Possibilities and Limitations" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April 1988)

<sup>66</sup>Lynne Strieb, *A (Philadelphia) Teacher's Journal* (Grand Forks. North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation, 1985), Ray Raphael, *The Teacher's Voice* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1985); Dixie Goswami and Peter Sullman, eds., *Reclaiming the Classroom: Teacher Research as an Agency for Change* (Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton Cook, 1987); William Ayres, "Teaching and Being: Connecting Teachers' Accounts of Their Lives With Classroom Practice" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April 1988); Robin McTaggart et al., *The Action Research Reader* (Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1982); Jon Nixon, ed., *A Teacher's Guide to Action Research: Evaluation, Enquiry, and Development in the Classroom* (London: Grant McIntyre, 1981); David Hustler, A. Cassidy, and E. C. Caff, *Action Research in Classrooms and Schools* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986); Shirley Grundy, *Curriculum: Product or Praxis?* (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1987); Andrew Gitlin and John Smyth, *Teacher Evaluation: Educative Alternatives* (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1989)

<sup>67</sup>Madeline Grumet, "Supervision and Situation: A Methodology of Self-Report for Teacher Education," *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 1 (Winter 1979) 191-257

<sup>68</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 191.

hierarchically shafting teachers (in the guise of accountability) may still have limited appeal in some quarters, even the medieval monks approached their task with much less certainty and faith in either their theory or their authority.

Although I have sketched the broad outlines of alternative and more educative possibilities here, teachers themselves have much more to do as they give expression to what working with one another means, in more authentic, responsible, critical, and enlightening ways. For my money, I am prepared to wait for teachers to pick up on the initiatives already started and to run with them.

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McLaughlin, Milbrey W., and R. Scott Pfeifer. *Teacher Evaluation Improvement, Accountability, and Effective Learning* New York: Teachers College Press, 1988. 167 pp. \$25.95/\$13.95.

Based on case studies of teacher-evaluation systems in four school districts, this text offers some generalizations about the development of teacher-evaluation systems. The authors conceptualize the development of teacher-evaluation systems as a problem of organizational change and provide insights into types of events that enable organizational change to occur. Besides outlining specific evaluation procedures used in the four districts, the authors link teacher evaluation to instructional and organizational improvement. Unlike other writers on teacher evaluation, the authors propose that the same system can be used to promote accountability as well as institutional and individual improvement.

—James F. Nolan

Smyth, W. John A. *"Critical Pedagogy" of Teacher Evaluation* Geelong, Australia Deakin University Press, 1988. 147 pp. \$A13.50

This course book in Deakin University's Open Campus Program contrasts the dialogical and the managerial conceptions of teaching. Smyth argues that the dialogical should serve as the framework for evaluating teaching. Three readings are included in addition to Smyth's text: one by the Boston Women's Teachers' Group, one by Gitlin and Goldstein, and one by Smyth.

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