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ABSTRACT

In all professions, the development of the field rests on an established knowledge base and on newer, emerging information. As a discipline, instructional supervision has been influenced by both evaluation-based and clinically oriented theories. This paper presents findings of a study that sought to determine the degree to which various supervisory theories are dominant in contemporary instructional supervision textbooks. The study examined 12 educational supervision textbooks, using a list of key words and concepts derived from several different supervisory theories. Theoretical orientations consistent with evaluation-based theories were found in seven of the textbooks, while more clinically oriented theories were dominant in the other five. No one theory consistently dominated the textbooks. Hence, considering that textbooks remain one of several major means for communicating a knowledge base to students, it is likely that supervisory practice will continue to be affected by varied theoretical orientations. (Contains 26 references.) (LMI)

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**Running Head: Views of Instructional Supervision**

Views of Instructional Supervision:

What Do the Textbooks Say?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to determine the degree to which various supervisory theories are dominant in contemporary instructional supervision textbooks. Twelve educational supervision textbooks were examined using a list of key words and concepts derived from several different supervisory theories. Results indicated that theoretical orientations consistent with evaluation-based theories were found in 7 of the textbooks, while more clinically-oriented theories were dominant in the other 5. No one theory consistently dominated the textbooks. Hence, considering that textbooks remain one of several major means for communicating a knowledge base to students, it is likely that supervisory practice will continue to be affected by varied theoretical orientations.

Views of Instructional Supervision:

What Do the Textbooks Say?

As a discipline, instructional supervision has been influenced by both evaluation- based and clinically-oriented theories. These theories are founded on a number of factors:

prescribed orientations, taxonomies of teacher and supervisory behaviors, and descriptions delimiting the scope of the interactions between teachers and supervisors, to name a few.

Theoretical content is communicated to supervisors in training in a plethora of ways; however, textbooks and other written materials remain one of several primary media for communicating this material. Hence, instructional supervision textbooks function as a means for determining instructional content and ultimately affecting supervisory practice. Considering the primacy of textbooks, the purpose of the present study was to examine the theoretical orientations utilized in contemporary instructional supervision textbooks, with the goal of determining the view(s) of supervision most likely to be dominant in the training of future instructional supervisors.

Theoretical Framework

In all professions, the development of the field rests on an established knowledge base and on newer, emerging information. Although instructional supervision has long been professionalized, the salience of theoretical orientation has been provident. Early on, the clergy controlled and supervised schools; thus, supervision reflected religious dogma. In the Eighteenth Century, under lay control, there was a dearth of mandates, and, consequently, laissez-faire attitudes prevailed. The Nineteenth Century brought about the creation of state boards of education, the certification of teachers, and the institutionalization of state aid, and

supervision took the form of administration "inspection" as states sought to promote school attendance and assure that educational programs met minimal standards.

In 1931, the Department of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction of the National Education Association, in an attempt to define the burgeoning profession and to delimit the roles and tasks of supervisors, proposed the following definition of instructional supervision:

. . . all activities by which educational officers may express leadership in the improvement of teaching. Such activities as observation of classroom instruction, conduct of teachers' meetings and of group and individual conferences are clearly within the meaning of this term. The development and execution of plans looking toward increased effectiveness in reading, arithmetic, and some other area of the school program, and the organization or reorganization of curriculum and method are still further examples of what is meant by supervisory activities. (p. 3)

As time passed, however, and the complexity of the supervisory process was duly noted, this and other original definitions were found wanting, and the dilemma of developing a more definitive theoretical explanation was obvious. In 1972, Mosher and Purpel discussed the predicament:

The difficulty of defining supervision in relation to education. . . stems, in large part, from unsolved theoretical problems about teaching. Quite simply, we lack sufficient understanding of the process of teaching. Our theories of learning are inadequate, the criteria for measuring teaching effectiveness are imprecise, and deep disagreement exists about what knowledge--that is, what

curriculum--is most valuable to teach. . . . When we have achieved more understanding of what and how to teach, and with what special effects on students, we will be much less vague about the supervision of these processes.

(p. 3)

A decade later, Harris (1985), acknowledging the complexity of both the supervisory process and the diversity of thinking of the field, noted that though several major theories have emerged, these theories often lacked focus. In this vein, Harris proffered the following insight:

Supervision, like any complex part of an even more complex enterprise, can be viewed in various ways and inevitably is. The diversity of perceptions stems not only from organizational complexity but also from lack of information and absence of perspective. To provide perspective at least, the total school operation must be the point of departure for analyzing instructional supervision as a major function. (pp. 1-2)

Using Harris' framework, at least two major "total school" theoretical perspectives have been dominant in recent years. These two perspectives, noted herein, as "evaluation-based" and "clinically-based" theoretical orientations, are each concerned with total school operation; however, while the former focuses on accountability, the latter focuses on personal and professional growth.

#### Evaluation-Based Perspectives

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, views of many of the major theorists in instructional supervision focused on measurement of teaching behavior, system

accountability, and evaluation of teaching performance. This development in the field was due at least in part to the positivistic paradigm that had for quite some time dominated the field of social science research and evaluation. However, during the 1980s, numerous reports on the reform of American education were introduced which called for specific measurable results, prompting even moreso the move toward a practice of instructional supervision focused on evaluation and accountability.

In 1981, Alfonso, Firth, and Neville offered a behaviorally-oriented definition: "Instructional supervision. . . is the behavior officially designated by the organization that directly affects teacher behavior in such a way as to facilitate pupil learning and achieve the goals of the organization" (p. 43). John Lovell, in 1983, protracted the focus, noting the eminence of system accountability:

Instructional supervision behavior is assumed to be an additional behavior system formally provided by the organization for the purpose of interacting with the teaching behavior system in such a way as to maintain, change, and improve the design and actualization of learning opportunities for students. (p. 43)

By the late 1980s, Krey and Burke (1989) provided a consummate definition of supervision which included several evaluation-based tenets, noting that as an accountability procedure instructional supervision consists of "instructional leadership that relates perspectives to behavior, clarifies purposes, contributes to and supports organizational actions, coordinates interactions, provides for maintenance and improvement of instructional program, and assesses goal achievement" (p. 22).

Clinically-Based Perspectives

Clinical supervision perspectives have been found in the instructional supervision literature for approximately three decades, and have moved to a prominent position in the literature in recent years. Defined by Morris Cogan (1973), its leading pioneer and proponent, clinical supervision is:

. . .the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance. It takes its principal data from the events of the classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between the teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the students' learning by improving the teachers' classroom behaviors. (p. 1)

Similarly, Acheson and Gall (1980), defined clinical supervision as "a process, a distinctive style of relating to teachers... a face-to-face interaction between the supervisor and teacher and a focus on the teacher's actual behavior in the classroom" (p. 8). Likewise, Robert Goldhammer (1969) stated, "Given close observation, detailed observational data, face-to-face interaction between the supervisor and teacher, and an intensity of focus that binds the two together in an intimate professional relationship, the meaning of 'clinical' is pretty well filled out" (p. 54).

Lovell and Wiles (1973) defined clinical supervision as "a problem solving approach to instructional supervision in which objective observation and analysis of teaching is the basis for feedback as framework for change and improvement of performance" (pp. 35-36). Tanner and Tanner (1987) provided epistemology and perspective:



Like the concept of "internship," the term clinical is derived from the field of medicine, where it refers to practice based on the actual treatment and observation of patients as distinguished from experimental or laboratory study. However, where clinical medicine is focused on the treatment of ailments within a controlled environment, clinical supervision is conducted in the normal setting of the classroom and school, and involves the gathering of data from direct observation of actual teaching - learning events and conditions with the goal of improving classroom instruction. (p. 182)

"Developmental" supervision, more recently appearing in the literature, has been defined by its chief advocate, Glickman (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995) as "the school function that improves instruction through direct assistance to teachers, curriculum development, staff development, group development, and action research" (p. xvii). More narrowly, Tanner and Tanner (1987, p. 186) noted that developmental supervision is "a problem-solving process for curriculum improvement." Glickman's (Glickman, 1981; Glickman et al., 1995) concept of developmental supervision focuses on a sliding scale of supervisory behaviors based on the needs of any given teacher. As summarized by Tanner and Tanner (1987), "Glickman has used the developmental concept in supervision to denote different styles of supervisory leadership for the improvement of instruction. He sees the supervisor appropriately employing different leadership styles with different teachers and according to different circumstances" (p. 186). Likewise, Gordon (1990) spoke to contingencies that may affect the role of the supervisor: "Developmental supervision requires

the instructional leader to use alternative supervisory approaches to help teachers improve their instruction and cognition growth" (p. 293).

Although the terms "clinical supervision" and "developmental supervision" have often been used interchangeably, Gonzalez-Baker and Tinagero (1983) distinguished between the two, noting that clinical supervision focuses on what and how teachers teach while developmental supervision is based on individual teacher stages of concern. Despite this valid epistemological distinction, developmental perspectives, like clinical perspectives, focus primarily on teacher growth; hence, developmental perspectives were considered a type of (or special case of) the clinical perspective for purposes of the present study.

#### Related Studies

At least three previous studies investigating some aspect of the content of textbooks for educational supervision have been conducted. Two of these studies (Bruce & Grimsley, 1987; Pajak, 1990) assessed the books for content relative to educational supervision generally while the remaining study (Anderson, 1993) looked specifically at content relevant to clinical supervision of instruction. Hence, there has been a relative dearth of studies on the content of supervisory textbooks specifically as regards views of instructional leadership. Considering the importance of instructional leadership to the overall mission of schooling, it is surprising that only one study has been devoted to this purpose and that that study looked only at references to one model of instructional supervision.

In the one study addressing textbook content relative to clinical supervision, Anderson (1993) found that only about half of the 24 supervision textbooks he surveyed contained little if any mention of clinical supervision. Other books included fairly lengthy sections or

chapters on the topic, although for the most part, these books viewed clinical supervision as an innovative or avant-garde approach to supervision that competes with the larger work of the field. Although the Anderson study provides some insight into the specific content of typical supervision textbooks, it does not address the degree to which various theoretical perspectives are dominant in the books evaluated.

## Method

### Sample

Spanning a 15-year time period, 12 educational supervision textbooks were examined. Books were selected for inclusion in the sample based on a number of factors, including their recency of publication and the degree to which instructional supervision (as opposed to other facets of educational supervision) was prominent in their content. The selected textbooks included Supervision of Instruction: A Developmental Approach (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 1995); Supervision for Today's Schools (Oliva, 1993); Clinical Supervision: Coaching for Higher Performance (Anderson & Snyder, 1993); Supervisory Leadership: Introduction to Instructional Supervision (Glatthorn, 1990); Supervision: Focus on Instruction (Beach & Reinhartz, 1989); Evaluation-Based Leadership: School Administration in Contemporary Perspective (Glasman, 1986); Supervision in Education: Problems and Practices (Tanner & Tanner, 1987); Supervision: A Guide to Practice (Wiles & Bondi, 1991); School Leadership and Instructional Improvement (Duke, 1987); Instructional Supervision: A Behavior System (Alfonso, Firth, & Neville, 1981); Techniques in the Clinical Supervision of Teachers: Preservice and Inservice Applications (Acheson & Gall,

1980); and Handbook for Effective Supervision of Instruction (Neagley & Evans, 1980).

The sample was comprised of seven books with general titles of supervision, three books with the term "clinical supervision" included in the title, and one book described as a "developmental approach" to supervision. While titles suggested contents, actual discourse was utilized to determine the theoretical perspectives underlying the subject matter.

### Procedures

Three broad questions were used to determine the dominant supervisory orientation of the 12 textbooks included in the sample:

1. What theoretical perspectives of supervisory practice fit the specific definition of supervision as presented in each textbook?
2. What is the dominant theoretical perspective in each textbook?
3. To what extent does the textbook focus on teacher growth and, alternately, on teacher evaluation?

In addition, while reviewing the content of each textbook, certain key words and phrases inherently linked in the literature to either evaluation-based and clinically-based supervision models were used to complement the information gained via responses to the three broad questions noted above.

### Results

Of the 12 supervisory texts included in the study, five (i.e., Acheson & Gall, 1992; Anderson & Snyder, 1993; Beach & Reinhartz, 1989; Glickman et al., 1995; Tanner & Tanner, 1987) were found to be predominantly clinically-based in their theoretical perspective, and seven (i.e., Alfonso et al., 1981; Duke, 1987; Glasman, 1986; Glatthorn,

1990; Neagley & Evans, 1980; Oliva, 1993; Wiles & Bondi, 1991) were more evaluation-based. Two of the five clinically-based texts (Glickman et al., 1995; Tanner & Tanner, 1987) specifically targeted developmental supervision, while another (Beach & Reinhartz, 1989) included discussion of both clinical and evaluative strategies, with clinical strategies, obviously, predominating. The seven evaluation-based books included discussions of both clinically- and evaluation-based approaches to supervision, with an obvious tendency toward evaluation-based approaches.

The predominant theoretical orientations of two of the texts considered clinical in perspective (Beach & Reinhartz, 1989; Tanner & Tanner, 1987) were particularly difficult to determine. Although Beach and Reinhartz included a chapter on evaluation (Chapter 10), they begin the chapter with an almost apologetic rationale for its inclusion in the book: "Historically, most supervisors, unless they served in a direct line of authority (that is, as principal), have shunned the role of evaluator because they viewed this function as counterproductive to promoting staff development" (p. 209). Moreover, despite the inclusion of this chapter in their book, Beach and Reinhartz generally seemed to be much more clinical in focus. In fact, their chapter on the "mechanics of supervision" (Chapter 9), follows a highly clinical pattern, with the supervisory process described in terms of observation, data collection and analysis, and conferencing.

The Tanner and Tanner text was difficult to categorize due to the authors' painstaking attempt to offer a balanced approach and to the highly descriptive (as opposed to prescriptive) tone of the text. However, the authors make isolated statements (e.g., pp. ix, 503) that the text is developmental in focus. If beginning with the final chapter ("How to

Judge a School"), it would seem there is a slight bent toward the evaluation-based perspective. However, the clear tendency throughout the text of decrying extremist production-efficiency approaches to supervising schools, along with a tacit preference for developmental strategies, throws the balance in favor of a more clinically-based (i.e., developmental) orientation.

### Evaluation-Based Texts

Of the seven texts characterized by this orientation, the Glasman and Alfonso et al. texts were most clearly the exemplars of the cohort. Certainly, the titles alone (Evaluation-Based Leadership and Instructional Supervision: A Behavior System, respectively), indicate a tendency toward accountability and measurable behavioral outcomes. Other books, though not as clearly evaluation-based in their title or even their general tone, were included in this category based on certain underlying assumptions of the authors. For example, Neagley and Evans (1980) favor a competency-based "systems model" of supervision, even though they are also willing to consider elements of the clinical process. Duke (1987) tends with some consistency to tag together "supervision and evaluation" with some regularity, even when discussing concepts of the clinical process. Likewise, Wiles and Bondi (1991, p. 30), in defining the supervisor's role as a school leader, lean toward a process-product orientation:

Supervision leadership involves thinking, planning, organizing, and evaluating processes. The thinking and planning phases of improving instruction are most like policy formation and administration. Organizing instructional programs is most like those functions of curriculum where a translation of ideas into programs

occurs. The evaluation functions of supervision are usually directed toward the instructional activities of the institution.

Although Oliva (1993) claims an "eclectic approach" (p. 12) to defining supervision, the topic of evaluation-oriented activities comes up with a good deal of frequency throughout the text even when discussing ideas that usually are not evaluative in focus. For example, Oliva presents clinical supervision is a type of formative evaluation. Wiles and Bondi (1991) in providing a list of eight areas of supervisory competence complete their list with the competency "Supervisors Are Evaluators" (p. 23), which is described as follows: "The previously stated roles, collectively, place the supervisor in a constant evaluation position. Assessing teacher performance, program outcomes, texts and materials, consultant performance, and analysis of testing results--all are part of the evaluation role." Though more truly eclectic in nature, Glatthorn's (1990) perspective on instructional supervision also leans toward evaluation, considering, for instance, that (a) "teacher evaluation" is one of his four main foci of supervisory leadership and (b) the contextual grounding for the entire book (Chapter 1) is the effective schools movement, which, as previously noted, has frequently been linked to evaluation-based perspectives.

#### Clinically-Based Texts

Obviously, the two texts (Acheson & Gall, 1992; Anderson & Snyder, 1993) with the term "clinical" in their titles exemplified a clinically-oriented perspective. Interestingly, however, the Anderson and Snyder text, the only edited anthology of the 12 books in the sample, includes a section (three chapters) on teacher evaluation, with a focus on how clinically-based supervision methodologies might be merged with traditional evaluation

systems. Acheson and Gall's work focuses on effective data gathering and reporting techniques for use in non-evaluative clinical settings. The only mentions of evaluation in Acheson and Gall's book are for the purpose of distinguishing clinical supervision from evaluation.

As previously noted, Beach and Reinhartz have assumed a veiled clinical focus in their work whereas Glickman et al. (1995) and Tanner and Tanner (1987) are more assertive in their developmental orientations. For example, Glickman et al. stated, "the ultimate aim of the supervisor should be reflective, autonomous teachers facilitated by nondirective supervision" (p. 132). Likewise, in explaining the orientation of their text, Tanner and Tanner noted:

. . .when teachers see supervision as a developmental process of cooperative effort toward diagnosing and solving substantive problems in the classroom and school, they are more likely to seek supervisory assistance and their professionalism is enhanced enormously. The professionalization of supervision and of teaching hinges on the elimination of deficiency-oriented supervision in favor of a developmental approach. (pp. ix-x)

#### Discussion

The foregoing results suggest that the evaluation- and clinically-based theoretical orientations of instructional supervision are represented relatively equally in the textual materials presently available for training instructional supervisors, indicating that both orientations are alive and well. Moreover, considering that most of the texts are, to some degree, eclectic in nature, it is highly likely that most textbook readers will be exposed to



more than one viewpoint even in those cases in which a bias toward a particular viewpoint exists. Thus, it is quite likely that both clinically- and evaluation-oriented perspectives will continue to have an impact on supervisory practice, and that many new educational supervisors may emerge from their training with an eclectic perspective of their supervisory role.

Of the 12 texts included in the sample, seven were found to be evaluation-based. The continued emphasis on the evaluation-based perspective is healthy in that this perspective has served the profession well for many years. Every teacher is not effective in every teaching situation; however, there are certain generic teaching competencies that all teachers should possess. The evaluation-based perspective on the supervision of instruction assumes that good supervisors can coordinate the activities of instruction toward measurable individual and systemic competencies. In systems that are heavily accountability driven, these leadership skills are essential.

That five of the 12 books were clinical in their theoretical perspective is also noteworthy. In supervisory settings focusing on clinical (including developmental) perspectives; the goals of instructional supervision are mutually determined by the supervisor and the instructor and teaching may be viewed as a science with definitive behaviors to be sharpened via reflective practice (developmental approach) or as an art that promotes creativity and boundless strategies for reaching all students (traditional clinical approach). In today's climate of participatory management, supervisors would be wise to consider the inculcation of clinical strategies into their supervisory repertoire.

It will be interesting to see whether these two orientations will continue to dominate the literature used in training instructional supervisors. Wiles and Bondi (1991, p. 11) have noted that as political, social, and economic forces shift, so do perceptions of instructional supervision:

We can envision a time in the near future when social, economic, and political conditions in the United States would allow schools to redefine their mission and enter another developmental stage [of supervisory practice]. If this should occur, supervision and the role of supervisors would once again be transformed to meet the changing conditions in schools.

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