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ABSTRACT

Postmodernists have criticized modern conceptions of supervision as bureaucratic, hierarchical, and oppressive. This paper asserts that the postmodern proclivity to completely eschew expert supervision, evaluation, and judicious use of directive supervision is misguided, potentially limiting, and dangerous. The paper argues that collegial practices may not always be desirable and that directive supervision not only has its place in a supervisory program, but serves to safeguard the democratic framework of schooling and provides practical guidelines for practitioners and suggestions for the training of future administrators. The first part of the paper presents an overview of the three eras in the evolution of supervision--the premodern, the modern, and the postmodern. The three approaches to supervision outlined by May (1989) are described next--the applied-science approach, the interpretive-practical approach, and the critical-emancipatory approach. The paper argues that a diversity of approaches to supervision should be accepted, both the modern and postmodern. Supervision should be conceived as that process that utilizes a wide array of strategies, methodologies, and approaches aimed at improving instruction and promoting educational leadership as well as change. The paper presents the concept of "supervision as tofu"-- a practice that is diverse and versatile, yet uniform and substantial. It is unseen yet retains integrity. (Contains 100 references.) (LMI)

# "Supervision: Don't Discount the Value of the Modern"

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## Supervision:
## Don't Discount the Value of the Modern

Postmodernists have criticized modern conceptions of supervision as bureaucratic, hierarchical, and oppressive. According to a postmodernist view, supervision stifles individual autonomy, especially that of the teacher. A postmodern supervisor seeks to unsettle conventional hierarchical power relationships, replacing such relationships with "relational" ones (Waite, in press). Anathema is the technicist mindset that imposes preconceived values or notions of "good" teaching through the employment of various supervisory strategies and techniques. For the postmodernist, "the hidden dangers" in "rational-technical thinking are that it reduces supervision to a rigidly defined set of behaviors and responses, and places the supervisor in a position to authoritatively diagnose teachers' pedagogical problems and impose particular solutions" (Holland, 1994, pp. 11-12). To the postmodern supervisor, the bureaucratic/technicist ontology, fueled by Cartesian dualism, must give way to more holistic, postmodern perspectives.

But what does postmodern supervision really mean? Examining the work of Eisner (1985), Smyth (1991), Garman (1986), Gordon (1992), and my esteemed colleague on this panel, Duncan Waite (1995), it seems as if a postmodern supervisor would advocate that supervision be:

* collegial;
* non-evaluative; and
* non-directive.

Moreover, a postmodern view of supervision would seem to even eschew the term "supervision," which in and of itself connotes surveillance and control (Gordon; 1997; Sergiovanni, 1992). Postmodern interpretations clearly favor the term "instructional leadership," as Glickman (1992) explained several years ago:

> Supervision is in such throes of change that not only is the historical understanding of the word becoming obsolete, but I've come to believe that if 'instructional leadership' were substituted each time the word 'supervision' appears in the text, and 'instructional leader' substituted for 'supervisor,' little meaning would be lost and much might be gained. (p. 3)

Stephen Gordon (1997) concurs: "My argument is that while the primary goal should be a radical shift from control supervision to collegial supervision, changing the name of what we now call supervision, . . . will increase the chance" that the practice of supervision will change. He too advocates the term "instructional leadership."

I assert, however, that the postmodern proclivity to completely eschew expert supervision, evaluation, and judicious and intelligent use of directive supervision is misguided, potentially limiting, and yes, even dangerous. I will argue that collegial practices may not always be desirable and that directive supervision not only has its place in a supervisory

program, but serves to safeguard our democratic framework of schooling and provides practical guidelines for practitioners and suggestions for the training of future administrators.

### *What is the modern view of supervision?*

Three eras in the evolution of supervision are apparent: the pre-modern, the modern, and the postmodern.

#### *The Premodern*

Earliest recorded instances of the word "supervision" established the process as entailing "general management, direction, control, and oversight" (Grumet, 1979; Gwynn, 1961). An examination of early records from the Colonial period indicates that supervision was synonymous with "inspection." Parenthetically, those scholars who imply that early supervisory practices reflected democratic tendencies, at least as we understand democracy today, misread the evidence. Based on my historical investigations (Glanz, in press a), early supervisory practice was a far cry from democratic.

By the end of the nineteenth century, reformers concerned with undermining inefficiency and corruption transformed schools into streamlined, central administrative bureaucracies with superintendents as supervisors in charge (Elsbree, 1939; Gilland, 1935; Griffiths, 1966; Reller, 1935). Supervision, during this struggle, became an important tool by which the superintendent would legitimize his existence in the school system (Glanz, 1991). Supervision, therefore, was a function performed by superintendents to more efficiently administer schools.

Supervision as inspection became the dominant method of administering schools. Payne (1875), author of the first published textbook on supervision, stated emphatically that teachers must be "held responsible" for work performed in the classroom and that the supervisor, as expert inspector, would "oversee" and ensure "harmony and efficiency." A prominent superintendent, James M. Greenwood (1888) stated emphatically that "very much of my time is devoted to visiting schools and inspecting the work." Greenwood (1891), three years later, again illustrated his idea of how supervision should be performed. The skilled supervisor, said Greenwood, should simply walk into the classroom and "judge from a compound sensation of the disease at work among the inmates" (p. 227). A review of the literature of the period indicates that Greenwood's supervisory methods, which relied on inspection based on intuition rather than technical or scientific knowledge, were widely practiced.

Supervisors using inspectional practices did not favorably view the competency of most teachers. For instance, Balliet (1894), a superintendent from Massachusetts, insisted that there were only two types of teachers: the efficient and the inefficient. The only way to reform the schools, thought Balliet, was to "secure a competent superintendent; second, to let him 'reform' all the teachers who are incompetent and can be 'reformed'; thirdly, to bury the dead" (pp. 437-38). Characteristic of the remedies applied to improve teaching was this suggestion: "Weak teachers should place themselves in such a position in the room that every pupil's

face may be seen without turning the head" (Fitzpatrick, 1893, p. 76). Teachers, for the most part, were seen by nineteenth century supervisors as inept. As Bolin & Panaritis (1992) explained: "Teachers (mostly female and disenfranchised) were seen as a bedraggled troop - incompetent and backward in outlook" (p. 33).

The practice of supervision by inspection was indeed compatible with the emerging bureaucratic school system. The raison detra of supervision in the premodern period was to achieve quality schooling by eradicating inefficiency and incompetence among the teaching force. Premodern supervision later gained legitimacy in the educational community through the application of the principles of scientific management, advanced first by Frederick Taylor (1911) and later translated into education by Franklin Bobbitt (1913). During this period, various elaborate rating forms were developed to produce efficient, competent teachers (Pajak, 1993b). Note that the improvement of instruction was less important than purging the schools of the inept.

In the premodern era, then, supervision was characterized in two ways: by "inspectional" practices, which reflected the "emergence of bureaucracy" in education, and, by the "social efficiency" movement. The movement to alter supervisory theory and practice to more democratic and improvement foci would not occur until in the 1920s as a direct result of growing opposition to autocratic supervisory methods. This post-1920 period marks the beginning of what can be referred to as the "modern" era of supervision.

***The Modern***

Bureaucratic supervision, relying on inspectional methods and seeking efficiency above all else, dominated discourse in the field during the premodern era. This sort of supervision attracted much criticism from teachers and others (Rousmaniere, 1992). Representative of the nature of this opposition are comments made by Sallie Hill (1918), a teacher speaking before the Department of Classroom Teachers, decrying supervisory methods of rating. Hill charged in 1918:

> There is no democracy in our schools. . . . Here let me say that I do not want to give the impression that we are sensitive. No person who has remained a teacher for ten years can be sensitive. She is either dead or has gone into some other business. . . . there are too many supervisors with big salaries and undue rating powers. (p. 506)

The movement to alter supervisory theory and practice to more democratic and improvement foci, while at the same time minimizing the evaluative function, occurred in the 1920s (e.g., Hosic, 1920; Barr & Burton, 1926, Burton, 1927; Ayer & Barr, 1928, Stone, 1929) as a direct result of growing opposition to autocratic supervisory methods. Consequently, supervisors tried to change their image as "snoopervisors" by adopting alternate methods of supervision. The following poem, quoted in part below, indicates the desired change of focus to more democratic methods in supervision:

With keenly peering eyes and snooping nose,

From room to room the Snoopervisor goes.
He notes each slip, each fault with lofty frown,
And on his rating card he writes it down;
His duty done, when he has brought to light,
The things the teachers do that are not right. . . .

.
The supervisor enters quietly,
"What do you need? How can I help today?
John, let me show you. Mary, try this way."
He aims to help, encourage and suggest,
That teachers, pupils all may do their best. (Anonymous, 1929)

Influenced in large measure by John Dewey's (1929) theories of democratic *and* scientific thinking as well as by James Hosic's (1920) ideas of democratic supervision, supervisors attempted to apply scientific methods and cooperative problem-solving approaches to educational problems (Pajak, 1993a). Supervision, during this period, reflected efforts to employ democratic *and* scientific methods. Democratic supervision, in particular, implied that educators, including teachers, curriculum specialists, and supervisors would cooperate in order to improve instruction. Efforts by prominent superintendent, Jesse Newlon, reinforced democracy in supervision. In an article entitled "Reorganizing City School Supervision," Newlon (1923) asked: "How can the ends of supervision best be achieved?" He maintained that the school organization must be set up to "invite the participation of the teacher in the development of courses. . . ." The ends of supervision can be realized when teacher and supervisor work in a coordinated fashion. Newlon developed the idea of setting up "supervisory councils" to offer "genuine assistance" to teachers. In this way, he continued, "the teacher will be regarded as a fellow-worker rather than a mere cog in a big machine."

The idea that supervision can meet the diverse needs of a democratic society characterizes the modern conception of supervision from the 1920s through the 1980s. An examination of the publications devoted to instructional supervision indicates this modern democratic thrust is closely aligned with scientific thinking in order to facilitate instructional improvement (Holland, 1994; Pajak 1993b). For the modern supervisor, cooperative, democratic, and scientific approaches to supervision are vital to support instructional improvement.

Various definitions (culled, in part, from Krey & Burke, 1989) and discussions of supervision during this era attest to the emphasis on cooperative, democratic, and scientific methods to improve instruction:

> The fact that he is invested for the time being with a good deal of delegated authority does not justify him in playing the autocrat. To do so is neither humane, wise, nor expedient. . . the democratic method is applicable to education, to educational supervision. (Hosic, 1920)

> If supervision were merely scientific management or inspection or bossing the job, then truly it would have but little in common with the art of teaching . . . in *modern* (emphasis added) school practice. (Editorial, 1921)

The aim of supervision is the improvement of teaching. (Burton, 1922)

The next step in supervision is scientific and expert supervision . . . (Oberholtzer, 1922)

Instructional supervision, therefore, has the large purpose of improving the quality of instruction, primarily by promoting the professional growth of all teachers. . . ." (Dunn, 1923)

. . . supervision is a cooperative undertaking in which both supervisor and teacher are to be mutually helpful and jointly responsible for the work in the classroom. (Nutt, 1928)

Supervision is a creative enterprise. It has for its objective the development of a group of professional workers who attack their problems scientifically, . . . (Department of Superintendence, 1930)

Supervision is cooperative. All supervisory agents work toward common ends. (National Conference of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction, 1930)

Personally I think creative and democratic supervision are quite consistent with the scientific. (National Conference of Supervisors and Directors of Instruction, 1930)

. . . Our times demand a new curriculum [and supervision] in which vitalized learning is directed toward the preservation of democracy. . . . (*The Changing Curriculum*, 1937)

But the conditions which at one time partially justified the centralized, hierarchical scheme of administration and supervision no longer exist. (Featherstone, 1942)

Supervision can be objective and yet be human. Supervision can be creative and yet be thorough . . . It can be co-operative and yet not shirk responsibilities. It can recognize the importance of individuals and yet retain instructional standards. It can give help and yet not be dictatorial. (Spears, 1953)

Supervision is teaching teachers on the job to improve instruction. (Bartky, 1953)

Supervision is cooperative, democratic, and helpful. (Burton & Brueckner, 1955)

Modern supervision helps the teacher to evaluate learning and in so doing makes it possible for the teacher to grow in ways which will stimulate learning. (Crosley, 1957)

Supervision is a process for stimulating teacher growth. . . (Hicks, 1960)

Action through wide participation of all concerned in the processes of inquiry and the judgement of outcomes [is the goal of supervision]. (Lucio & McNeil, 1962)

. . . modern supervision is positive, democratic action aimed at the improvement of classroom instruction through the continual growth of all concerned - the child, the teacher, the supervisor, the administrator, and the parent or other interested lay person. (Neagley & Evans, 1964)

Supervisory skills, based on a body of knowledge, theories, or propositions, in addition to human understandings, are needed to handle the practical and technical problems of education in the laboratory of the ***modern*** (emphasis added) school. It should be added that a necessary function of supervision is the continual study and development of new technical skills in order to discover better ways of defining purposes, predicting the outcome of proposals, managing situations, and assessing the consequences of actions. (Lucio & McNeil, 1969)

School supervision is instructional leadership. (Feyereisen, Fiorino, & Nowak, 1970)

Modern supervision is positive, dynamic, democratic action. (Neagley & Evans, 1970)

Clinical supervision may be defined as supervision focused upon the improvement of instruction by means of systematic cycles of planning, observation, and intensive intellectual analysis of actual teaching performances in the interest of rational modification. (Weller, 1971)

[Supervision] is planning for, observation, analysis and treatment of the teacher's classroom performance. (Mosher & Purpel, 1972)

. . . hindsight suggests that the profession went too far in its efforts to turn supervision into a helping function, a teaching function, a curricular function-- anything, but the function it literally names, overseeing with a view to improving the quality of an operation. (Lewis & Miel, 1972)

Clinical supervision may therefore be defined as 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 teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior. (Cogan, 1973)

Instructional supervision is herein defined as: 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. (Alfonso, Firth, & Neville, 1975)

Supervision is a major function of the school operation, not a task or a specific job or set of techniques. Supervision of instruction is directed toward both maintaining and improving the teaching-learning processes of the school. (Harris, 1975)

Supervision is conceived as a service to teachers . . . Supervision is a means of offering to teachers specialized help in improving instruction. (Oliva, 1976)

. . . a leadership function that bridges administration, curriculum, and teaching, and coordinates those school activities concerned with learning. (Wiles & Bondi, 1980).

[Clinical supervision] is that phase of instructional supervision which draws its data from first-hand observation of actual teaching events, and involves face-to-face (and other associated) interaction between the supervisor and the teacher in the analysis of teaching behaviors and activities for instructional improvement. (Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1980)

[Supervision] is an in-class support system designed to deliver assistance directly to the teacher . . . to bring about changes in classroom operation and teacher behavior. (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1983)

Supervision is a process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher. . . (Glatthorn, 1984)

Supervision refers to the school function that improves instruction through direct assistance to teachers, curriculum development, in-service training, group development, and action research. (Glickman, 1985)

We have defined supervisory leadership as the process of helping teachers to find the best possible methods to improve teaching and learning. Perhaps it is well to reemphasize that this doers not mean telling them what to do but means sharing with them the problem-solving responsibility. (Tanner & Tanner, 1987)

Supervision is instructional leadership . . . (Krey & Burke, 1989)

We wish to promote an alternative model of supervision that is interactive rather than directive, democratic rather than authoritarian, teacher-centered rather than supervisor-centered. This supervisory style is called clinical supervision. (Acheson & Gall, 1997, although their first edition appeared in 1980)

As the variety of definitions and descriptions above imply, supervision is of vital importance to promote instructional improvement. Modern conceptions of supervision promote professional growth of teachers, foster curriculum development, and support instruction.

Modernist supervision, if you will, provides assistance to teachers and direction for supervisors-in-training whether through clinical practice (Goldhammer, 1969), developmental supervision (Glickman, 1985), cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1994), or group development and action research (Glickman, Gordon, Ross-Gordon, 1995). Such task-oriented approaches, supported by the application of descriptive research methods and clinical practice characterize supervision in the modern era. Informing practitioners that their school, in the postmodern vein, is viewed as indeterminate, non-linear, cyclical, and contingent doesn't offer much solace for those who have to confront a multitude of social, psychological, and educational challenges daily. Teachers want constructive assistance from supervisors whom they perceive as trustworthy and skillful (Blumberg & Amidon, 1965; Blase & Kirby, 1992). If a supervisor can observe a teacher's classroom and accumulate practically verifiable information (e.g., data that indicates Teacher X is allowing girls less time to respond to questions as compared to boys) so that the teacher can view his classroom from another perspective and consider alternate ways of doing things, then, I think, a modernist approach does have much to offer. Autocratic practices do not characterize the modern era as they did in premodern times (a point postmodernists tend to miss). As my personal experiences as a teacher, assistant principal, and curriculum director for 20 years in the N.Y.C. public schools affirm, modern supervision can make a positive contribution to instructional improvement.

### *The Postmodern*

I will allow Duncan Waite to explicate his vision of the postmodern view of supervision. Briefly, though, he will likely suggest that modernist views of supervision are overly technicist in orientation. As an alternative, he suggests "dialogic supervision" (Waite, 1995) which advances collegial relationships between supervisors and teachers. He advocates the "null technique" in which the supervisor becomes "witness to a teaching episode in order to enter into a dialogue with that teacher . . ." (Waite, in press). Dialogic supervision seeks to enhance the quality of the teacher-supervisor relationship by focussing more on the dialogue than the "data." This way, says Waite, "both the teacher and supervisor have a better chance of coming to the table on an equal footing . . ." "Egalitarian reciprocity" is what Duncan suggests, while I maintain that such equality may not always be wise or even possible.

### *Three Ways of Doing Supervision*

Three approaches to supervision have been suggested by May (1989). These models of supervision may very well reflect thinking and practice of supervision over the last 50 years. Too often, however, an either/or paradigm for viewing supervisory practice is adopted. I believe that a diversity of approaches to supervision should be accepted, both the modern *and* postmodern.

The three models of supervision articulated by May (1989) include: the Applied Science Approach (which represents a modern conception of supervision); the Interpretive-Practical Approach; and the Critical-Emancipatory Approach (both of which may represent a postmodern

perspective, although some might argue that the former approach has modernist tendencies).

1. The Applied Science Approach

This approach to supervision relies on the empirical-analytical sciences and emphasizes technical aspects of the supervision process. At its most basic level, this applied science approach assumes that certain school personnel are in a better position to oversee the instructional process than others. In May's words, "This conception suggests that supervisors are experts and teachers are not [necessarily]. . . . This view of teaching and/or supervision carries several labels which embody a theme of control: directive, executive, behavioristic or positivist; . . ."

Using this approach implies that supervisors diagnose problems in the classroom after a series of close observations. Supervisors then prescribe a particular course of action and teachers are expected to incorporate the suggested changes. Suggestions offered presumptively are drawn from a research base. Suggestions pertaining to technical classroom management skills and specific teaching strategies are common.

The applied science approach is technically-oriented, hierarchical in its organizational structure, and most often associated with modern views of supervision. This prescriptive model is often called directive or evaluative supervision. This model, in my opinion, has its place in any supervisory program.

However, a modernist supervisor employing developmental supervision (Glickman, 1985) might not always need to assume such directive measures and yet can utilize this applied science approach. The supervisor may assume the role of research investigator by collecting data via Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon's (1995) "categorical frequency instruments" or Acheson and Gall's (1997) "selective verbatim" technique. Providing these data, without offering advice or suggesting specific courses of action, the "modern" supervisor affords teachers the opportunity to reflect and view their classroom through "another set of eyes."

2. The Interpretive-Practical Approach

The interpretive-practical approach is reflected in "person-centered" supervision. "Uniform answers to educational problems are viewed as impossible to apply because practical problems are seen to be context bound, situationally determined, and complex." The supervisor is not the overseer or prescriber but a guide, facilitator, or confidante. Relying on enhanced communication and shared understandings, this approach encourages interpersonal and collegial aspects in the supervision process. This model is often called consultative or collaborative supervision. Clinical supervision, embodying neo-progressivism, may, but does not always, characterize this approach (Hopkins & Moore, 1995).

Supervisors with a modernist bent, it should be noted, are also very concerned with the human relations element to supervision. Nearly every text quoted in "The Modern" section above includes a chapter explicating the value of developing the human dimension of supervision. Being

facilitative and concerned for people is very much a modern notion. Yet, a modernist supervisor doesn't find evaluative supervision incompatible with the importance of nurturing the human enterprise. Supervision represents the process of supporting instructional services thereby meeting the aims, goals, and objectives of the school organization. I am certain all of us who have school-age children want to be assured that teachers are held accountable and that high quality instruction is a prime goal.

For the modern supervisor, however, the "collegial" element in this interpretive-practical approach may be somewhat problematic, as I will indicate later.

3. The Critical-Emancipatory Approach

May believes that this approach encourages reflective action on the part of both teachers and supervisors. Going beyond mere collaboration in the development of instructional goals, this approach challenges teachers to "examine the moral, ethical, and political dimensions embedded in everyday thinking and practice." Intending to raise teacher's consciousness and critical awareness of the sociopolitical contexts in which they work, emancipatory supervisors challenge teachers to take risks and construct knowledge for themselves (see, e.g., Bowers & Flinders, 1991; Waite, 1995).

These three models should not be viewed as evolutionary in the sense that one replaces the other as individuals make advancements in the supervision field. Rather, all three approaches, the technical, practical, and political, have viability and applicability for instructional improvement. As May (1989) argues, "each framework suggests a legitimate human interest." Myopic, biased, and inclined towards "pedagogically correct" practices (Lasley, 1993), educational supervision as a field needs to broaden its conception of supervision by including the modern.

### *It's Not Pedagogically Correct to say "SUPERVISION"*

Allow me to briefly argue why I think the postmodern conception is misguided when it eschews directive supervision and advocates only collegial relationships.

Sergiovanni (1992) hopes that a day will come when "supervision will no longer be needed." He and others like him who eschew the term "supervision" in favor of "instructional leadership" are not, I believe, disingenuous, but the penchant for substitute language, in general, is symptomatic of a more widespread trend to speak in euphemisms - sometimes referred to as jargon or educationese. Jerry Pulley (1994), a teacher educator at the University of Texas-Pan American, in a wonderful little article entitled "Doublespeak and Euphemisms in Education," maintains that our propensity for political correctness or what Lasley (1993) calls "pedagogical correctness", in this context, has beclouded our perspective so much so that our language has become confused and self-contradictory at best and "grossly deceptive" and evasive at worst.

To disparage modern conceptions of supervision that rely on a positivist social science approach that attempts to accumulate practically

verifiable information about the teaching-learning process offers little solace and doesn't provide much direction for practitioners in the field. Let's call "supervision" what it is and deal with it. Changing terminologies may be in Pulley's (1994) words "euphemistically correct" but it doesn't deal substantively with the underlying issues that beg for consideration and resolution (Hiser, 1994). As Pohly (1993) argues ". . . some people suggest abandoning the term and substituting something more palatable, but that is a false solution because it fails to deal with the condition that produces the resistance" (p. 2).

Pedagogical correctness, as conceived by many postmodernists, "is characterized by a set of 'right' and often avant-garde beliefs about how, the curriculum [supervision], and schools should be structured" (Lasley, 1993, p. 77). The consequences of pedagogical correctness are both obvious and onerous. Cherishing certain practices in favor of others potentially limits practice because certain ways of doing supervision, for instance, are not considered relevant nor efficacious. Educators, according to Lasley (1993), "begin to think in terms of absolutes (a right or wrong way in all instances) rather than the efficacy of practice vis-a-vis a context" (p. 79). When supervisors or those concerned with supervision, avoid particular methods because they may not be pedagogically correct or fail to consider exceptions to practices that are mandated as pedagogically correct instructional improvement is severely compromised.

Reluctance to offer directive methods of supervision is not only evident but illustrative of this penchant for "correctness." In preservice settings, for instance, there is much need for directive measures for many student teachers because of their lack of experience and low levels of confidence about teaching. Based on a recent survey I conducted of 40 student teachers in both urban and suburban settings in New Jersey, they (65%) often complained that their cooperating teacher and/or university supervisor were too non-directive and did not offer substantive comments after observing lessons. One student gave a typical response: "My professor is very nice and often praises me. Yet, sometimes I wish he'd offer more constructive criticisms. I can't be doing everything right?!" (Glanz, 1996).

Studies done with preservice teachers supports my observations and findings that student teachers prefer directive approaches over nondirective methods of supervision (Copeland, 1980; Copeland & Atkinson, 1978). Students in these studies reported that they had difficulty resolving instructional problems under nondirective approaches. Students preferred when cooperating teachers and university supervisors suggested concrete solutions and specific recommendations. Desrochers (1982) reported that student teachers considered supervisors more credible when they used a directive supervisory style. Although student teachers may prefer directive supervision, surveys of existing supervisory practices indicate that most supervisors use "collaborative and nondirective approaches" and "provide feedback that stimulates teachers' thinking rather than controls teachers' actions" (Glickman, 1990 p. 561).

Cooperating teachers (N = 26) and university supervisors (N = 30) in my study were asked whether they thought student teachers preferred directive or nondirective methods of supervision. University supervisors

responded that they employed nondirective measures because, as one supervisor stated, "student teachers are so fragile and nervous that they need confidence-building and support." "I see myself as a facilitator, not an ogre," commented one university supervisor. Although cooperating teachers were more likely to employ directive measures, many were reluctant to offer other than cursory suggestions for improvement. When queried as to why more directive measures were not employed cooperating teachers pointed out some the following reasons: lack of time, wanting to remain collegial, lack of effectiveness, and too punitive. Admittedly, when asked whether they felt any pressure to be more nondirective than directive, few, if any, said they did. "I give the student what I think he or she needs," stated one cooperating teacher. Yet, as I suspect, prevailing attitudes and theories do affect, sometimes unconsciously, the practice of supervision in schools.

Supervision for experienced teachers has been characterized as a "meaningless ritual" (Blumberg & Jonas, 1987). When supervisors or those concerned with supervision avoid engaging teachers in collaborative and meaningful discussions about instructional improvement and amidst an impoverished school climate that is unresponsive to attempts at instructional improvement, then it is not surprising that supervision as such becomes perfunctory and unproductive. It is not that teachers do not see the need for reflection and improvement, but to the contrary most teachers welcome assistance and recommendations for improvement when offered intelligently and forthrightly.

Contrary to the widely held belief that inservice teachers do not want directive supervision, I believe that many of them welcome supervision that is constructive, direct, and intelligent. Teachers want one-to-one help. Teachers want feedback from, for example, an assistant principal who observes a lesson and conducts a post conference during which insights and suggestions for improvement are offered (Glanz, 1994). Under this scenario, both supervisor and supervisee can be co-inquirers. Often recommendations for improvement are not dictated but rather emerge amidst a reflective, inductive dialogue between teacher and supervisor. The supervisor facilitates and guides the teacher to understand the complexities of classroom interaction. Although supervision can sometimes be threatening, particularly for non-tenured faculty, it offers an opportunity to obtain valuable information about teaching and learning.

Pajak and Glickman (1984) conducted a study in which groups of inservice teachers were shown videotapes of simulated supervisor feedback in post-observation sessions. Teachers did not particularly favor supervisors who merely described their classroom observations without making any concrete suggestions. Most, if not all the teachers involved in the study, preferred supervisors who after describing what they saw in the classroom made specific recommendations for improvement. As Glickman (1990) in summarizing this study states: "It can be surmised from these studies that teachers generally preferred descriptive feedback about their teaching, followed by discussion of interpretations and future goals, culminating in collaborative suggestions and decisions about future instructional actions" (p. 554).

Teachers want supervision of this sort. They want supervision that is well-informed, practical, and helpful, regardless of who offers it or what model is utilized (see, e.g., Blumberg & Jonas, 1987; Brandt, 1985; Whistler, 1984). Some of those who advocate a dissolution of supervision aren't cognizant or accepting of this premise. Relying on "pedagogically correct" approaches not only potentially limits viable options for improving instruction, but does little if anything to explain what supervisory practices may in fact contribute to our efforts in renewing schools. Whether called cognitive coaching, instructional leadership, facilitative practice, critical inquiry, or supervision, it's about working face to face with classroom teachers to refine teaching practice (Nolan, 1995).

The penchant for pedagogical correctness is quite obvious in regards to how educators view and discourse about supervision. According to current belief systems, supervision based on hierarchical roles is considered anathema. A perusal of various definitions, for example, in prominent textbooks on supervision (e.g., Krey & Burke, 1989; see also Holland, 1994), indicates an emphasis on "democratic and professional" processes of supervision and an avoidance of anything remotely referring to directive methods. Current thinking and action (i.e., discourse) in the field does not support bureaucratic authority, personal authority, professional-moral or technical-rational authority as being equally legitimate conceptions of supervision. Rather, supervision has been reconceptualized and redefined more narrowly, in the postmodernist sense (e.g., Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1993). Inclusivity and an acceptance of diverse ideas about theory and practice of supervision do not appear to dominate discourse on supervision.1

### *Collegial Relations: A Cautionary Note*

Collegiality emphasizes autonomy, independence, equality of authority, sameness of rank, and self governance. Collegiality is "simply an inappropriate, even dangerous, paradigm for schools in modern democratic society" (Harris, 1997, p. 144). Ben Harris, in an essay entitled "Is a Collegial Relationship Possible Between Supervisors and Teachers? No," affirms that:

> Collegiality as a way of conceptualizing supervision in relation to the individual teacher is full of serious problems in common daily operations as well as problems of educational improvement and reform. If a superordinate goal shared by teachers, supervisors, students, parents, and the larger society can be clearly identified, it

1. Recently, I was reviewing a manuscript that is likely to be published in one of the more widely read journals in the field in which the author(s) concluded, "Our student teachers need to know that our role is not to be judges and critics, or even models of expert teaching, but rather co-participants in the construction of narratives, the articulation of their commitments, and the shaping of their practices." I'm troubled by the apparent avoidance of anything romotely connoting directive methods of supervision because it potentially limits options. In disagreeing with the author quoted above, I believe that although there are times when the student teacher and supervisor can be "co-participants", student teachers, for the most part, need and want us to be constructive critics of their work. Also, see Nevins Stanulis (1994).

> surely must be that of improving learning opportunities for all students. At the heart of any such goal-related activity is supervision of instruction. But this involves systematic efforts to improve curriculum, materials, teaching, support services, assessments, and leadership for instruction.
>
> Collegial relationships combined with the teacher-centered realities of school life offer little promise of ensuring either minimum standards of educational quality or the reforms and restructuring urgently needed in a rapidly changing society. (p. 146)

Harris goes on to argue that supervisory leadership requires that minimum standards of quality be maintained by providing new teachers intensive mentoring and training beyond what is offered in preservice programs. "Ensuring that all children have access to teaching that promotes significant learning . . . is not a collegial responsibility," argues Harris. "Each teacher will hopefully do his or her best," continues Harris. Supervisors must be responsible "to ensure that every teachers' best efforts are good enough and to initiate supervisory interventions that are needed, securing the students' right to meaningful learning."

"When more dramatic improvements in teaching and learning are at stake, collegial relationships are even less practical" says Harris. Given the fact that teachers are busy and often over-worked as they try to manage a classroom comprised of 30 or more students, and given the supervisor's very different, yet demanding routines, collegial relationships just don't make sense. Harris explains:

> Supervisors are onlookers as experienced teachers, and they bring to the school and its teachers one or more unique perspectives and special professional skills. These supervisory perspectives derive from observing and analyzing many teachers at work, from knowing the broad scope and sequence of the curriculum, from responding to pressures from both within and outside the school, from seeing students' achievements as they progress through the system and across subject areas. Rarely can a classroom teacher have the same perspective on teaching and learning as that of a professional instructional supervisor. They work in different worlds in some ways. (pp. 147-148)

Admittedly, supervisors cannot be knowledgeable and expert in every specialty, so when teachers do possess unique skills their input and expertise should be acknowledged and utilized. "However, the responsibility for providing technical leadership for improving whole schools . . . must be heavily invested in a team of supervisory personnel. Such leadership, like good teaching, is very demanding and requires full-time professional attention" (p. 148).

Supervisors are specialists in curriculum, staff development, teaching methods, and instructional evaluation. These specialists must assume instructional leadership in order to ensure instructional quality. As Harris concludes, "to abdicate leadership for instructional change in exchange for collegiality could be a educational tragedy" (p. 150).

***Summary***

I have indicated that "premodern" conceptions of supervision were bureaucratic and inspectional. Modern conceptions, by comparison, emphasized democratic supervisory practices relying on cooperative and scientific methods to improve instruction. I argued that the postmodern view, that emphasizes "pedagogically correct" practices and collegial relationships, is misguided.

Modern conceptions of supervision have a far greater positive impact on practice and implications for the training of future administrators than do postmodern views. Modern views of supervision, relying, in part, on a technical-rational view of the teaching-learning process, offers practitioners practical guidelines for instructional improvement. In contrast, some postmodernists who eschew directive supervision, in effect, limit alternative conceptions of supervision and are unappreciative of the needs among many prospective administrators who want concrete proposals and strategies. Such views are shortsighted because they fail to consider the exceptions to practices that are labelled "postmodernist." Admittedly, modernist conceptions with their reliance on the empirical-analytical sciences, emphasizing the technical aspects of the supervision process have marked limitations. Yet, postmodernist constructions can be equally limiting when they fail to consider a wide array of strategies, methodologies, and approaches aimed at improving instruction and promoting educational leadership as well as change.

A postmodern view, it seems to me, although embracing a more progressive paradigm for practice than evaluative supervision should not dispel more traditional approaches (e.g., directive supervision) when warranted. Varied models of supervision, incorporating both postmodern *and* modern views, should always be welcomed and encouraged. Both administrators-in-training and practitioners will, then, be armed with varied modalities to enhance instructional improvement.

In the final section of this paper, I present a metaphor for supervision that, I believe, can help us recast and refocus our thinking about educational supervision that embraces both the modern and postmodern views (Glanz, in press b).

### *Tofu as a Metaphor for Supervision*

Supervision should be conceived as that process which utilizes a wide array of strategies, methodologies, and approaches aimed at improving instruction and promoting educational leadership as well as change. Those concerned with supervision may then work on curriculum development, staff development, school-wide reform strategies, action research projects, and mentoring while, at the same time, they may utilize directive, collaborative, or empowering methods. Supervision is supervision regardless of the context in which it is practiced (e.g., preservice and/or inservice settings). Supervision as such does not become meaningless or lack purpose. Rather, supervision is pliable enough to meet a wide range of instructional needs. Remaining responsive to diverse demands would be the field's greatest asset. "Supervision as Tofu" in this context becomes an apt metaphor.

"Tofu," translated into English as "bean curd" or "soybean curd", is an important product of the soybean used in China for more than 2000 years. Rich in proteins, vitamins, and minerals, low in calories and saturated fats, and entirely free of cholesterol, tofu appears to be the ideal food. Tofu is also unique because it has no taste. Tofu's remarkable quality is that it assumes the flavor of any other food with which it is placed. Tofu can be marinated, stir-fried, scrambled, baked, broiled, grilled, steamed, or barbecued. As Paino and Messinger, authors of The Tofu Book state: "It can hide in your cannelloni, taco, or stew, and - before your eyes - take on the flavor of those and many other foods" (p. 57). Once only found floating in vats in an Oriental grocery or health food store, tofu now is found in colorful packages on the shelves of many supermarkets.

Tofu's unique quality to remain almost incognito and yet to assume the flavor of its host dish without loss of its nutritional value can be a useful analogy for educational supervision. Supervision is tofu in the sense that it no longer must conform to prescribed or expected practices. Supervision is tofu in the sense that it is flexible enough to represent a wide array of instructional and reform strategies. Supervision is tofu in the sense that, although unseen at times, it remains a supporting service for teachers. As such, supervision as tofu retains its integrity yet remains responsive to diverse demands. Supervision as a function survives and flourishes because it is able to offer instructional assistance amidst a rapidly changing and complex school system.

Supervision is also tofu because its knowledge base is broad, inclusive, and liberal. Supervision thus can function in a variety of settings with diverse groups of teachers, each possessing unique and varied needs. With supervision now broadly conceptualized and practiced, it is not limited to particular methodologies. Supervision can achieve conceptual clarity in this context because its practitioners no longer fear the use of "pedagogically incorrect" strategies when appropriate and warranted. "Directive," "differentiated," "transactional," and "transformational" supervision all find suitable justification within this more encompassing view of the field. Like other fields such as counseling (e.g., Williams, 1995) and religion (e.g., Pohly, 1993), supervision so practiced in schools becomes purposeful, relevant, and influential.

Supervision as tofu, is diverse and versatile, yet uniform and substantial (like yin and yang). If diversity represents adaptability and flexibility in a range of settings and needs, then tofu is an apt metaphor to describe the work of supervision in schools. As tofu, unassuming yet nutritious, makes an ideal substitute for high calorie foods, supervision as tofu also blends into the educational landscape to help provide needed services and assistance to teachers.

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