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Teacher Supervision

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REVIEW
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FOCUS: Teacher Supervision

OTHER TOPICS

ARTHUR BLUMBERG AND R STEVAN JONES

Permitting Access: The Teacher's Control Over Supervision

Supervisors, of course, may visit any classroom, but they must be psychologically accepted by the teacher while they are there if the process is to be anything more than a ritual.

Interoffice Memo

Date: Any day of the school year
To: Any supervisor
From: Any teacher
Re: Your request to go swimming in my pool

Please be advised that it is my pool and that I issue invitations only to those people with whom I feel comfortable.

This interoffice memo is a metaphor with a message. It illustrates our belief that the teacher, not the supervisor, controls supervision. It is the teacher who permits or refuses access to self, and it is the supervisor who needs to obtain an invitation "to go swimming".

We need not list here the litany of studies that suggests that teachers tend to view the structure and process of supervision as something rather considerably less than efficacious. Although some teachers do value the help they receive from other teachers and supervisors, a great many seem to feel that observation is a meaningless ritual. Indeed, many of them may prefer it that way. Why this state of affairs? We cannot hope to answer that question here, but we propose to lay out a broad framework within which the notion of 'permitting access"[1] seems to fit and then to present the results of some initial inquiry into the concept's empirical validity.

Two other points are central to this discussion. First, we believe that most teachers want to be better than they already are. Increasing mastery of one's work leads to a confirmation of self-worth. Helping teachers become better, then, does not require helping them to become motivated. And while we acknowledge implicit motivation as a positive article of faith, we also recognize that it does not apply to all teachers (or supervisors).

Second, we are concerned about how a teacher thinks about what he or she does in the classroom. Teachers who are concerned about high-quality performance tend to have a deep intellectual and emotional stake in what they do - a deeply ingrained belief system about the process of teaching. It is not so much that veteran teachers, for example, do not want to alter the way they do things. Rather, any changes need to fit their established belief system about good teaching. Thus, if supervision is to be more than ritualistic or cosmetic, the supervisor must earn access to a teacher at the level of belief system. It is the teacher who, metaphorically, permits the supervisor to "swim in my pool." It is the supervisor who must attend to things that will result in a much-sought-after "invitation".

Legitimate Access and Interpersonal Access

The structure of supervision makes explicit supervisors' legitimate access to teachers. Not only may supervisors go into classrooms, but they are expected to "play" supervisor during and after those visits. So, too, do school organizations sanction group or school-based supervisory activities, such as staff development programs. These givens and expectations say nothing about what transpires between the supervisor and teacher or teachers and whether what occurs has any meaning for either party.

Two things seem clear concerning physical and role access to teachers by supervisors. First, all teachers know that they cannot refuse access as man-

"All teachers know that they cannot refuse access as mandated by the supervisory system. They also know that acceding to it is all they have to do. That is, once a supervisor is in a classroom or once teachers are seated at an inservice session, the question of access changes."

dated by the supervisory system. They also know that acceding to it is all they have to do. That is, once a supervisor is in a classroom or once teachers are seated at an inservice session, the question of access changes. Legitimacy of access does no more than open the structural door; thereafter teachers decide whether or not to grant access to their teacherhood.

Second, teachers may or may not explicitly realize their prerogatives for granting access, but they generally behave as though they implicitly accept such prerogatives. Picture, for example, a postobservation discussion between a supervisor and a teacher. The teacher may not be terribly interested in the supervisor's comments but realizes that a facade of interest needs to be created for the purpose of civility, if nothing else. For example, the teacher may pretend to listen intently to the supervisor or listen without intending to act on any of the suggestions. The situation is not unlike an experience with door-to-door salespeople. They ring our doorbell. We open the door, listen politely to the sales pitch, and then say, "No, thank you" or "I'm not interested" while closing the door. The big difference between the consumer and the teacher, of course, is that teachers' refusal to "buy" involves behavior that is more complex than a simple word or two.

Our experience and interpretation of the research led us to pose this question: Is there any empirical support for the idea that a teacher controls access to the supervisory setting?

To answer our question we interviewed 12 teachers. So as not to prejudice the interviewees, we did not broach the idea of access as we began our discussions. We asked teachers to recall, in as much detail as possible, circumstances in which they felt a supervisory experience had been highly productive for them. We define a "productive" supervisory relationship as one from which they had derived both a sense of professional effectiveness and of deeper insight into self.

After the teachers had described their experiences, we asked each one to think about it in terms of the concept of access. We asked, 'Did the supervisor do anything that said to you, in effect, "it's okay to open the door?"' After they had reflected, all 12 teachers indicated that the concept made sense. Further, they vividly recalled things their supervisors had said or done that had led them to conclude that it would be all right to "open the door."[2]

We analyzed the interviews with the idea that categories of access-inducing behaviors might emerge from teachers' comments about their experiences. Our analysis resulted in 41 descriptions of supervisor behavior, which we further grouped into 11 themes and finally into 3 categories. These categories are presented below with illustrative comments from the teachers.

1. *The supervisor's task-oriented approach toward the teacher.*

- The supervisors gave immediate nonpunitive feedback about the teaching:

"It wasn't critical. It wasn't, 'You're doing a lousy job.' It was, 'You might alter this. Let me know how it works out.'"

"It was the character of his immediate feedback. He never talked about technique. He talked about how I felt about my experience, was it good for me and the students, was I getting enough out of what I put in."

- The supervisors took a collaborative approach to problem solving:

"The door got opened by her saying, 'I'm new at this; I need your help; we're in this together.' And she was as good as her word."

"He had a collaborative approach to helping solve my problems."

- The supervisors made teachers feel they were the experts on teaching:

"She made my feel I had something to offer; that I was intelligent."

"He was new. I had more experience than he. He asked me to talk with him about what I did in the classroom. He made me feel very much the expert on what I was doing."

- The supervisors were genuine in their relationships with teachers:

"He didn't simply go through the motions."
"I knew, through our discussions, that he was really attending to my problems."

- The supervisors made the teachers feel that they are intelligent.

"She made me feel I had something to offer; that I was intelligent; that I could handle it."

2. *The supervisor's interpersonal set toward the teacher.*

- The supervisors made the

teachers feel that they were always available to them:

"He always had time for me."

"He was always there, not to criticize, but to reinforce ..."

"He would take a walk down to see us. It was always at the right time. He made himself very visible, but in a family kind of way."

- The supervisors made the teachers feel that they were being listened to:

"He's an excellent listener. I'm attuned to that. If someone's really listening, I'll tell him things."

"Things became more and more comfortable because I could tell he was listening."

- The supervisors were open about what they knew or didn't know.

"It was his openness about himself. He risked a lot of himself in the beginning."

"He modeled an open relationship with me. He never held back from saying 'I don't know'; that he didn't have all the answers."

- The supervisors made teachers feel that they were interested in them as people:

"He'd go out of his way to come and see me. He was always giving me stuff to read."

"He made me feel that, as a person, I could continually develop, learn, and grow. I think he cared about me as a person."

- The supervisors made the teachers' interests their interests:

"I had the feeling that my problems, professionally, were his problems."

"He had a sense of what I was talking about. It was like my problem became his problem."

3. *The supervisor's own competence as an educator*

- The supervisors gave the teachers a sense of their own competence:

"I had a great deal of respect for his competence and expertise."

"She was 'there' professionally. Her knowledge and competency made me respect her."

Granting Access

From those teachers' reflections, we begin to develop an array of factors that influenced them to permit access by their supervisors. Several additional comments are in order. First, our idea of access seems to make sense; that is, the teachers whom we interviewed were able to relate to it directly. Further, they did not have to search their memories long or hard to provide vivid examples. From this we surmised that granting access to self is an experience both gratifying and rare enough to be memorable. Clearly, it seems to be an antidote for the loneliness that often accompanies teaching. This is no small matter.

Second, we could hypothesize that without access, there can be no effective supervision. Although teachers are able to be specific about their access-granting experiences, it would be foolhardy for a supervisor to seize on one or the other behaviors with the idea that "If I do X, I will get Y." Life in schools is much too complicated for that. What does make sense, however - and this could be thought of as a rule of thumb - is that supervisors need to devote central attention to the matter of access in their relationships with teachers. It is not so much a case of manipulating an invitation to "go swimming" as it is of considering the character of relationships between supervisor and teacher as well as among teachers.

Third, there are probably some general principles involved - for example, one can hardly doubt the "rule" that all teachers want to be listened to and understood by their supervisor. It is probably also true that many idiosyncratic interpretations of the rule need to be considered. For instance, a teacher who has real difficulty coping with complex classroom problems might not be expected to open up to a supervisor who projects the image of an expert. More likely, such a supervisor would come across

"To be considered competent, to be listened to, to be asked to collaborate with one's organizational supervisor, particularly when that person is highly competent, produces a feeling of being valued."

"They vividly recalled things their supervisors had said or done that had led them to conclude that it would be all right to 'open the door.'"

as phony and uncaring. The conditions and behaviors of supervision relate to and affect each other.

Fourth, the teachers responded positively when they sensed that their supervisor and they were operating on the "same wavelength." It's an elusive idea and may well be a result of having granted access, rather than be a precursor to it. Sensing the pervasive and deep-seated views of another develops from relatively intense conversation between people over matters of common concern. We also suspect, however, that such congruence forms the ground on which mutually satisfying work relationships rest.

Fifth, much of what we have said here transcends the issue of productive supervision in the schools. That is, to be considered competent, to be listened to, to be asked to collaborate with one's organizational supervisor, particularly when that person is highly competent, produces a feeling of being valued. There is a vital mental health component attached to our notion of access, which probably should not be ignored.

Finally, though our focus was primarily on the relationship between supervisor and teacher and the teacher's control of that relationship, we noted earlier that a similar type of teacher control exists in schoolwide developmental activities. Therefore, just as a supervisor needs to attend to the problem of access when working with an individual, so must he or she attend to the same matter when working with a school staff. It is the faculty that owns the swimming pool.

Notes

1. We do not equate the notion of access with that of rapport, which typically is used to describe how well people relate to each other. One may have good rapport with one's supervisor and still not permit access in our terms. On the other hand, it is hard to conceive of granting access to another with whom one does not, minimally at least, "get along".

2. A side note is appropriate here. The teachers whom we interviewed were not the first 12 we encountered. We approached many others, but we did not interview them because they could not recall having had a productive supervisory relationship as we defined it. Casual questioning revealed that there had been no granting of access.

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EDWARD PAJAK

Dimensions of Supervision

Researchers from the University of Georgia found that a "love and like of people" is among the vital ingredients for supervisory excellence.

The consuming national interest in improving education makes the need to identify elements of outstanding supervisory practice more pressing than ever. An ASCD-sponsored research project attempted to do just that during the 1988-1989 school year. This article describes the study, which yielded 12 dimensions of outstanding supervision, gleaned from the literature of the past 15 years and verified by expert practising supervisors.

Using methods of content analysis, a team of 14 advanced doctoral students and faculty from the University of Georgia[1] reviewed supervision textbooks and research literature. We identified specific references to the knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with effective practice in various leadership positions, including superintendent, district-level generalist and specialist, principal, assistant principal, school-based supervisor, team leader, department chairperson, peer coach, and mentor teacher.

From this review, we compiled a list of more than 300 specific examples of knowledge, attitudes, and skills alleged to contribute to instructional improvement or professional growth. As a rule of thumb, we had to find any specific example in at least two sources in order to include it on the list. We excluded administrative functions such as facilities management, student discipline, and personnel evaluation.

Then the research team sorted and resorted these examples into categories on the basis of content. Eventually, from this classification effort, the following 12 dimensions of supervisory practice emerged:

1. Communication: ensuring open and clear communication among individuals and groups throughout the organization;
2. Staff Development: developing and facilitating meaningful opportunities for professional growth;
3. Instructional Program: supporting and coordinating efforts to improve the instructional program;
4. Planning and Change: initiating and implementing collaboratively developed strategies for continuous improvement;
5. Motivating and Organizing: helping people to develop a shared vision and achieve collective aims;
6. Observation and Conferencing: providing feedback to teachers based on classroom observation;
7. Curriculum: coordinating and integrating the process of curriculum development and implementation;
8. Problem Solving and Decision Making: using a variety of strategies to clarify and analyze problems and to make decisions;
9. Service to Teachers: providing materials, resources and assistance to support teaching and learning;
10. Personal Development: recognizing and reflecting upon one's personal and professional beliefs, abilities, and actions;
11. Community Relations: establishing and maintaining open and productive relations between the school and its community;
12. Research and Program Evaluation: encouraging experimentation and assessing outcomes.

Since the 12 dimensions represent duties of instructional leaders at all levels of the organization, they are not the sole responsibility of any single individual or position. Of course, any one position (e.g. superintendent, principal, lead teacher, department

chairperson) requires close attention to the performance of certain supervisory functions and less attention to others.

Verifying the Twelve Dimensions

During the second phase of the study, the researchers secured nominations of outstanding supervisors from four national professional groups with special expertise and interest in supervision and from exemplary teachers from two national teacher associations.[2] Questionnaires designed to verify the importance of the 12 dimensions were mailed to a national sample of 1629 individuals. On these questionnaires, the supervisors provided demographic information about themselves and indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that each of the 12 dimensions of practice was important to supervision in general. The participants circles one of four possible responses: S A = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, and S D = Strongly Disagree. Sixty-six percent of the sample (n = 1075) returned their questionnaires, with a good representation of the various positions at both school and district levels (see fig. 1).

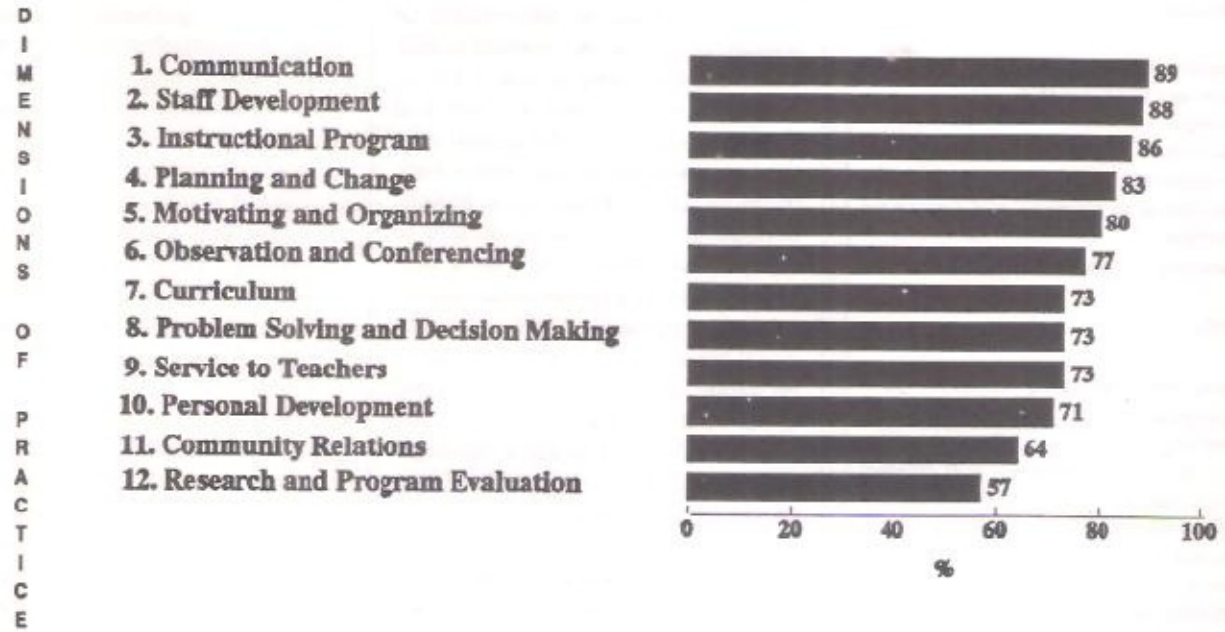
The respondents' perceptions of the importance of the 12 dimensions of supervisory practice are summarized in Figure 2. The dimensions were clearly verified, with more than 50 percent of the respondents choosing "Strongly Agree" with respect to the importance of each dimension. Ranking the dimensions suggests that, although all 12 dimensions were verified as important, certain ones were perceived as more important than others. Communications, staff development, and the instructional program, for example, were rated somewhat more important to supervisory practice than community relations or research and program evaluation.

Next the research team conducted a second survey to verify the relevance of the more than 300 specific statements of knowledge, attitudes, and skills from which we had derived the 12 dimensions of supervisory practice. The second round of questionnaires were mailed to 987 of the original sample of practitioners who had on

Fig. 1 Characteristics of Respondents to the First Survey (n=1,075)

Level	
Elementary	25%
Middle/Junior High	18%
High School	25%
District Office	32%
Number of Years' Experience in Current Position	
Mean	7.6 years
Median	5 years
Mode	3 years
Range	1-37 years
Type of School or District	
Rural	21%
Suburban	48%
Urban	30%
Highest Degree Earned	
Bachelors	5%
Masters	45%
Specialists	19%
Doctorate	31%
Sex	
Female	48%
Male	52%

Fig 2. Percent of Outstanding Practitioners Who "Strongly Agree" That Each Dimension Is Important to Supervisory Practice



the first survey indicated their willingness to respond. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement that each specific statement was relevant to the effective enactment of the dimension under which it was listed.

The response rate of the second survey was 68 percent (n=672). The characteristics of these respondents differed little from the original sample, and all levels of supervisory positions were again well represented. The specific statements verified as relevant to the communication dimension, for example, with a "Strongly Agree" rating greater than 50 percent or a mean score of 3.5, are presented in Figure 3.

The practitioners also identified the knowledge, attitudes, and skills considered relevant to the remaining 11 dimensions of supervisory practice. The limitation of space, however, makes it impossible to present them all here. (See note at end of article.)

Fig. 3. Knowledge, Attitudes, and Skills Relevant to Effective Communication

Knowledge

Knowledge of conflict resolution strategies
Knowledge of relationships within groups
Knowledge of relationships between groups
Knowledge of human relations theory

Attitudes

Encouraging mutual trust
Open and approachable
Collegial
Committed to open channels of communication
Responsive to concerns and aspirations of others
Accepting of diverse viewpoints

Skills

Using and interpreting nonverbal communication
Speaking clearly
Communicating effectively with different audiences
Writing clearly and concisely
Managing conflict
Listening attentively
Creating opportunities for professional dialogue

To further verify the dimensions of practice and the knowledge, attitudes, and skills associated with each, the team conducted a series of telephone interviews. Twelve participants were randomly selected (one from each leadership position), and each participant was asked to respond to one of both of the following questions:

- What knowledge, attitudes or skills do you think are most important to effective supervisory practice?
- If you were planning a staff development program that would train people to be effective supervisors, what knowledge, attitudes, or skills would you want to include?

The telephone interviews further confirmed the important of the 12 dimensions. No new knowledge or skills were identified, but the respondents did elaborate on the relevance of certain attitudes to effective supervisory practice.

One clear theme emerging from the interview data was the respondents' strong belief in the importance of human relations. A superintendent observed, for example, that a key to supervisor effectiveness is a "love and like of people." A leader should take time to know something about each individual in the organization, he said, because it is important to be able to communicate with people on a personal as well as a professional basis.

Another participant said an instructional leader should "want people to be happy in their work, to feel good about what they are doing, and to feel that what they are doing is making a difference." A supervisor should be willing to give other people credit for success, he suggested, and be more of a "cheerleader" than a "scorekeeper".

Optimistic attitudes like these are sometimes dismissed as naive, but the

Communications, staff development, and the instructional program, for example, were rated somewhat more important to supervisory practice than community relations or research and program evaluation.

A supervisor should be willing to give other people credit for success and be more of a "cheerleader" than a "scorekeeper"

research team found such views expressed by outstanding supervisors at all levels with remarkable consistence. The supervisors were realistic - they recognized a need to maintain standards - but they also emphasized that there is "no one best way to teach, no pattern or process that is better than all others." A subject area specialist, for example, emphasized the importance of being "receptive to idiosyncratic teaching and encouraging to teachers who want to try new approaches."

In summary, these outstanding supervisors expressed attitudes that suggest supervision is a very person-oriented activity, It requires knowledge and skills, to be sure, but the human element is paramount. As one practitioner asserted,"You always have to remember that people are more important than things."

How We Can Use Our Findings

This study has taken an important step toward defining the discipline of supervision at the national level; its findings have powerful implications for research, training, and practice. We are undertaking further analysis to identify the knowledge, attitudes, and skills most pertinent to the effective performance of each specific position included in the survey. An interesting question we will consider is whether effective practice by content area specialists requires additional knowledge and skills related to subject matter.

The 12 dimensions and the knowledge, attitudes, and skills which they comprise may be useful to states or school districts for assessing needs and planning training programs for supervisors. Colleges and universities might also use these dimensions to guide the content and directions of their preparation programs for supervisors and administrators.

Finally, instructional leaders may find the dimensions useful for reviewing policies and programs in their schools and districts to ensure that all elements of effective supervisory practice are in place. And instructional leaders may also use them for assessing and planning their own professional development.

Notes

[1]The following faculty of the University of Georgia Curriculum and Supervision department served as members of the Project Advisory Committee: Theresa M. Bey, Ray E. Bruce, Mary F. Compton, Gerald R. Firth, Edith E. Grimsley. Doctoral students and practicing supervisors who were members of the committee include Letty Carr, Barbara Duke, Mary Guerke, Patricia Heitmuller, James Kahrs, Sheila Kahrs, Lewis McAfee, Rebecca Smith, and Hannah Tostensen.

[2]Supervisor nominators included 65 members of the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision, 180 members of the Supervision Network of ASCD, 100 members of the Instructional Supervision Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association, and 100 members of the Presidents and Executive Secretaries of ASCD affiliates. Fifty outstanding teachers from the National Education Association and fifty from the American Federation of Teachers also served as nominators.

Copies of the full report, "Identification of Supervisory Proficiencies Project" are available from ASCD for $15. To order, contact Lynn Klinger in the Member Relations Department at (703) 549-9110, ext. 226.

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CARL D GLICKMAN AND STEPHEN P GORDON

Clarifying Developmental Supervision

Supervisors should match their assistance to teachers' conceptual levels, but with the ultimate goal of teachers taking charge of their own improvement.

The theory of developmental supervision (Glickman 1981, 1985) has generated a great deal of interest, application, and research, as well as some misinterpretation. Our purposes here are to clarify propositions underlying the process, discuss the three phases necessary to put the theory into practice, and illustrate the process as applied to two task areas of instructional supervision. Finally, we discuss the purpose of the theory.

Underlying Propositions

Developmental supervision is based on three general propositions. First, because of varied personal backgrounds and experiences, teachers operate at different levels of professional development. They vary in the way they view and relate to themselves, students, and others. Teachers also differ in their ability to analyze instructional problems, to use a repertoire of problem-solving strategies, and to match appropriate strategies to particular situations. Furthermore, there are variations within the same teacher depending on the particular instructional topic or timing of life and work events.

Second, because teachers operate at differing levels of thought, ability, and effectiveness, they need to be supervised in different ways. Teachers at lower developmental levels need more structure and direction; teachers at higher developmental levels need less structure and a more active role in decision making.

The third proposition is that the long-range goal of supervision should be to increase every teacher's and every faculty's ability to grow toward higher stages of thought. More reflective, self-directed teachers will be better able to solve their own instructional problems and meet their students' educational needs (Murphy and Brown 1970, Parkay 1979). Further, if the goal of education in a democratic society is to produce responsible learners and decision makers, then teachers who are themselves autonomous and independent will be better able to facilitate students' growth toward such ideals (Calhoun 1985). Put simply, thoughtful teachers promote thoughtful students.

Phase One: Diagnostic

The developmental supervisor's first task is to diagnose the level at which a teacher or group of teachers is functioning in regard to a particular instructional or curricular concern. The central determinant in the supervisor's diagnosis is the level of abstraction exhibited by the teacher or group. The concept of teacher abstraction is derived from conceptual systems theory (Harvey et al. 1961). Abstraction is the ability to form "more orientations toward the environment and the interpersonal world" (Sullivan et al. 1970). Abstraction is not an innate characteristic of an individual but rather a variable.

Teachers exhibiting low abstraction have difficulty identifying instructional problems and generating instructional solutions; they seek concrete advice from an expert or authority on how to complete a complex task. Teachers exhibiting moderate abstraction can define instructional problems (usually centering on a single dimension of the problem) and can generate one or two possible solutions. They strive for independence but need help in selecting and prioritizing solutions, thinking through consequences, and implementing an improvement plan. Teachers exhibiting high abstraction can identify problems from disparate sources of information. They can visualize various strategies, anticipate the consequences of each action, and select the most appropriate response. Highly abstract teachers follow the problem-solving task through to completion, taking full responsibility for its results.

The supervisor makes this diagnosis by talking with and observing teachers

in action and asking them questions, such as "What do you see as areas for classroom instructional improvement?" "How do you know this is an area of concern?" "What could you do about it?" Another part of diagnosis is observing classroom teaching behavior, especially with students who aren't learning. The supervisor looks for the degree of flexibility and adaptability that the teacher exhibits when handling a learning or behavioral problem. Do teachers use habitual, routinized sets of behaviors when learning problems continue? Can they change in midstream by abandoning actions that aren't working in favor of other actions? Is there a rationale for new actions, or are actions random and erratic? Talking with and observing teachers at work can help the supervisor to determine teachers' varying levels of abstraction.

Phase Two: Tactical

The supervisor's next step is tactical, focusing on the immediate concern of helping teachers solve current instructional problems. The tactical phase initially involves matching supervisory approach to the level of teacher abstraction. The supervisor matches a *directive* approach with teachers exhibiting low abstraction, a *collaborative* approach with teachers exhibiting moderate abstraction, and a *nondirective* approach with teachers exhibiting high abstraction.

Using the directive approach (with teachers of low abstraction), the supervisor provides teachers with a great deal of information and advice. This approach calls for high supervisor responsibility and low teacher responsibility for the instructional improvement decision. The supervisor does not attempt to coerce teachers to use a specific action, but instead suggests alternatives for the teacher to consider and choose.

The supervisor using the collaborative approach works with teachers (of moderate abstraction) to share perceptions of a problem, propose alternatives, and negotiate a mutually designed plan of action. In the collaborative approach, supervisors and teachers share responsibility for the final decision.

Taking the nondirective approach, the supervisor invites teachers (of high abstraction) to define instructional problems themselves, generate actions, think through consequences, and create their own action plans. The nondirective approach calls for low supervisor responsibility and high teacher responsibility for the final decision. Nondirective supervision, however, should not be confused with a laissez-faire approach.

The nondirective supervisor takes an active role by encouraging teachers to make critical decisions and follow through on those decisions, and by being an involved facilitator, helping teachers clarify their perceptions and plans.

The tactical phase of developmental supervision - matching supervisory approach to teacher level of abstraction - is the functional dimension of the model, concerned with the approach most likely to produce a satisfactory solution.

Phase Three: Strategic

The real and more important "developmental" dimension of the model is the third phase. The strategic phase is aimed at accelerating the development of teacher abstraction, helping teachers to think "harder and smarter," and stimulating their problem-solving abilities. The strategies intended to promote growth in teacher abstraction are all long-term propositions. One strategy is to gradually expose teachers to new ideas, ways of viewing students and instruction, problem-solving techniques, and teaching methods. At first such new ideas should be related to concepts that teachers already understand and value. In time teachers can be exposed to a wider range of ideas and innovations (see Hall and Loucks 1978).

A second strategy is to gradually lessen teachers' dependence on the supervisor during decision-making conferences. This can be done by gradually *decreasing* the structure

Teachers vary in the way they view and relate to themselves, students, and others. They also differ in their ability to analyze instructional problems, to use a repertoire of problem-solving strategies, and to match appropriate strategies to particular situations.

Table 1
Phases of Developmental Supervision

PHASE	PURPOSE	GOAL	SUPERVISORY TECHNIQUES
3. STRATEGIC*	Developmental	Increase teacher abstraction and self-direction	Gradual exposure to new ideas; incremental decrease in structure, increase in teacher responsibility; optimal mismatches with other teachers.
2. TACTICAL	Functional	Meet instructional need/ solve instructional problem	Match supervisory approach (directive, collaborative, or nondirective) to teacher level of abstraction (low, moderate or high).
1. DIAGNOSTIC	Functional and Developmental	Determine current teacher level of abstraction (low, moderate, or high)	Observe and interact with teacher(s). Compare teacher behaviors to research on teacher abstraction.

*Strategic phase, once begun, is ongoing. Diagnostic and tactical phases continuously repeat during the strategic phase.

provided by the supervisor while simultaneously *increasing* the teacher's decision-making role. A third strategy is for the supervisor to involve teachers exhibiting lower levels of abstraction with teachers exhibiting slightly higher levels in problem-solving sessions. Such "optimal mismatches" (Hunt 1971) can result in conceptual growth for teachers exhibiting lower abstraction.

The three phases of developmental supervision make for a complex model of instructional leadership. Table 1 summarizes the purposes, goals, and supervisory techniques related to each phase.

Two illustrations of the Model at Work

We can further clarify the model by illustrating the three different phases of developmental supervision as implemented in two distinct supervisory tasks: providing direct assistance to three teachers and helping a group of teachers work better together.[1]

Direct assistance. In our first example, let's suppose that the developmental supervisor is engaged in a separate clinical cycle (preobservation conference, classroom observation, postobservation conference) with each of three teachers, focusing on teacher questions and student responses. In the *diagnostic* phase (phase 1) the supervisor holds preobservation conferences and classroom observations for each teacher. The supervisor diagnoses Teacher A as exhibiting low abstraction, Teacher B as moderately abstract, and Teacher C as highly abstract in regard to questioning techniques.

The *tactical* phase can be illustrated by discussing initial postobservation conferences held with each of three teachers. With Teacher A (low abstraction), the supervisor uses a directive approach, first presenting data gathered during the observation, then interpreting the data and asking for teacher response. The supervisor next suggests instructional improvement goals and enlists possible alternatives to accomplish them. The teacher is asked to select from these alternatives, and the supervisor outlines an action plan. Finally, the supervisor provides Teacher A with baseline data and standards by which to evaluate the effectiveness of the improvement effort.

Taking the collaborative approach with Teacher B (moderate abstraction), the supervisor asks for the teacher's perceptions of how the observed class went and potential areas for improving teacher questions and student responses. The supervisor then follows with observation data and his or her own interpretation of improvement areas. Comparing perceptions, the supervisor and Teacher B determine their goals for improvement. Through continued brainstorming, negotiating, and problem solving, the supervisor and teacher eventually agree on an action plan and follow-up activities designed to evaluate outcomes.

The supervisor uses a nondirective approach with Teacher C (high abstraction) by reporting observation data, which Teacher C has requested, and then using active listening skills while the teacher relates personal perceptions. The supervisor encourages Teacher C to set instructional improvement goals and explore alternative avenues for reaching these goals. The supervisor serves as a sounding board, using the nondirective interpersonal behaviors of listening, clarifying, encouraging, and reflecting as the teacher formulates an action plan.

Despite the fact that different supervisory approaches are used in each of the three conferences, they are all examples of the tactical phase of developmental supervision. In each conference the supervisor attempts an optimal match between supervisory approach and teacher level of abstraction. The goal of each conference is to solve a relatively immediate instructional problem.

The *strategic* phase of the developmental model is carried out in subsequent clinical cycles. During the *next post-observation conference with* Teacher A (originally of low abstraction), the supervisor moves away from a purely directive approach, asking the teacher to propose some personal ideas for instructional improvement. At this stage the supervisor might still assume the bulk of decision-making responsibility, but in future clinical cycles the supervisor and Teacher A would gradually move into a fully collaborative relationship.

During the next clinical cycle with Teacher B (originally of moderate abstraction), the supervisor begins a gradual shift away from a collaborative approach toward nondirective supervision. This is done by requesting that the teacher set a personal goal for instructional improvement, then collaborating on the remainder of the decisions in that conference. In subsequent post-observation conferences, the supervisor hands over more responsibility to Teacher B, in time assuming an entirely nondirective approach with that teacher. The ultimate goal of the strategic phase of developmental supervision is for all experienced teachers to take charge of their own instructional improvement efforts, with supervisors and peers serving as facilitators and providing feedback.

Group development. Our second example illustrates how a supervisor might work with a group of teachers. The critical part of a group's functioning is being able to make collective decisions in their team, grade level, department, or school. An effective group must be able to reach agreement on when change is necessary and what direction that change will take.

Suppose that a supervisor is working with three departments or teams on curriculum revisions. In the diagnostic phase, the supervisor determines that Group A is made up primarily of teachers exhibiting low abstraction; most of the teachers in Group B are exhibiting moderate or mixed levels of abstraction; and highly abstract teachers predominate in Group C. (If there is an equal distribution of abstract thinkers, the supervisor *would regard the group as moderate).*

Greiner (1967) has identified a number of approaches used to bring about organizational change with groups. The supervisor can use adaptations of three of these approaches during the tactical phase of group development, for instance, a *decision-from-alternatives approach* when working with Group A (low abstraction). The supervisor identifies the need for curricular change, then presents the group with alternative ways to make the change, along with advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. The group then decides which alternative it will use. This approach is essentially directive, in that the supervisor takes responsibility for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting data to the group.

The supervisor uses an adaptation of the *data discussion approach* (Huse 1980) with Group B (moderate abstraction) by seeking data from the group, organizing the information *gathered, and presenting the or*ganized data to the group. The group then analyzes the supervisor's feedback to determine if change is necessary and, if so, the appropriate means for making the change. This is basically a collaborative approach to change, with the supervisor serving as an "information mediator" between initial data gathering and the group's final data analysis and decision.

The supervisor relies on the *group problem-solving approach* (Greiner 1967, Huse 1980) when working with Group C (high abstraction). Here the group generates its own data, then analyzes those data to identify problems and decide on appropriate changes. The supervisor serves as group facilitator throughout the problem-solving process. The group problem-solving approach, then, is a nondirective one (again, not a laissez-faire approach).

The strategic phase of group development begins with the next round of problem-solving sessions. The supervisor helps the less abstract group to gradually increase their share of responsibility in the decision-making process. During Group A's next series of meetings, the supervisor changes to the more collaborative data discussion approach for identifying needed change, but maintains the original (and more directive) decision-from-alternative approach for choosing a plan of action. Eventually the supervisor completes the shift toward collaborative decision making, using the data discussion approach throughout the decision-making process.

For the next session with Group B, the supervisor shifts to the nondirective problem-solving approach for identifying the group's new problem, then shifts back to the role of information mediator, using the (more collaborative) data discussion approach for creating an action plan. In time, the supervisor uses the group problem-solving approach during all stages of decision making with Group B.

If the goal of education is to produce responsible learners and decision makers, then teachers who are themselves autonomous and independent will be better able to facilitate students' growth toward such ideals.

The gradual movement of the groups of lower abstraction to higher abstraction can be accelerated by optimal group mismatches. Group A is matched with Group B either in a workshop that simulates decision making or in an actual decision making session aimed at solving a problem common to both groups. Here, Group B shares new ways of thinking about change and change strategies with Group A and thereby models a higher level of thought process and decision making for members of Group A. A separate workshop or meeting, focusing on a different change-related problem, involves Groups B and C. In this session, Group B is pulled toward Group C's level of abstraction and change strategies.

Another way of promoting increased thought and collective responsibility of group members is by reforming groups in which the highest level of abstraction is exhibited by the majority of group members. This placement pulls upward the thinking of the minority of members who exhibit less abstraction. Unfortunately, the reverse is also true. If the majority of group members are less abstract, they tend to inhibit and pull down the more abstract thinkers.

The ultimate goal of developmental supervision is have all groups operating at the group problem-solving level, with the supervisor using nondirective, interpersonal behaviors to facilitate the group's own decision making.

A Human Theory

We are aware that the model of developmental supervision is complex. Level of abstraction will vary not only among individuals and groups but *within* the same individual or group depending on the particular instructional concern. For example, a high school teacher might exhibit high abstraction when thinking about improvements in her advanced physics class and exhibit low abstraction when thinking about her general science class. A science department might exhibit high abstraction with a laboratory approach to teaching and exhibit lower levels of abstraction with student record-keeping. Also, a stage of development is not reached permanently but can change with new teaching situations, personal life happenings, and altered professional work conditions.

Developmental supervision is not a contingency or situational theory. It is not a theory to label teachers into fixed categories. It does not lend itself to algorithms or prescriptive actions. Rather, it is a theory about understanding the aim of our work in relation to ourselves and others. A democracy such as ours aims at educating students to become thoughtful and independent citizens who ultimately will make decisions in the best interests of all (Kohlberg and Mayer 1972). Insofar as informed human judgment is critical to education, we must strive for all educators to become more active, autonomous, and thoughtful about instruction.

Notes

1. For a thorough discussion and review of research on the application of developmental supervision, see Glickman 1985.

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DON JUNE, HOWARD WENGER, AND BARBARA GUZZETTI

Personalizing Instructional Supervision Systems

Five years after individualizing a "packaged" system, administrators at Loveland, Colorado, High School see greater teacher autonomy with increased learning and experience more positive relationships with teachers.

A View of Change from the Practitioner's Corner

Five years ago the administrative team at Loveland High School, Colorado, shopped the educational marketplace for an instructional supervision system that would provide for better teaching, resulting in increased student learning. Because we believe the most important factor affecting student achievement to be the quality of the instructional staff, we looked for a model that would help us design and implement instructional training to increase teacher effectiveness. We hoped to find a system that would function within our existing organization, without upsetting the good teaching practices already in use.

What we found were several "packaged" systems that taught us how to identify, coach, and reinforce specific instructional behaviors that reportedly increase student achievement. Each system offered observation and conference techniques to diagnose and prescribe remedies for deficient instructional strategies. Unfortunately, we soon discovered that our use of a "packaged" system did not ensure the use of desired techniques by our teachers. Perhaps the reason our staff didn't voluntarily implement the recommended practices is that the structured system provided only superficial skills for implementation.

Teachers need to be able to adapt and adopt instructional strategies, making their own judgments where appropriate; the process of making those judgments characterizes the teaching act. We agree with Costa and Garmston (1985) that the aim of supervision should be to help teachers make better decisions about instruction. However, most of the packaged systems we saw emphasize teaching and supervisory practices that expect and reinforce routinized performance. Our staff prefers a highly individualized and personalized approach. Yet no single supervisory process provides enough flexibility to accommodate the many teaching styles in our high school.

Personalizing a Packaged System

By modifying a packaged system, we have been able to provide what our staff wants: an individualized approach to instructional supervision. We formulated and implemented a plan that is characterized by four steps.

Step 1: set a goal. First we set a goal that we hoped to accomplish within five years: to enable teachers to teach themselves to teach. We wanted teachers to acquire the skills necessary for correcting their own miscalculations (Sergiovanni 1984). By increasing their repertoire of instructional strategies, we hoped that our staff would be able to choose appropriate instructional techniques from an array of options. We call this goal *creating the autonomous teacher.*

The implied intent of our goal is that autonomous teachers will increase students' awareness of their own learning processes. We wanted students to look for the objective in a lesson and to seek an understanding of why they are doing a particular activity. We call this implied goal *creating the autonomous learner.* Our administrative team then made public our five-year goal: autonomous

teachers creating autonomous learners.

Step 2: Create a vision. Next we needed to establish an attitude conducive to change: a belief that change would be rewarded with success. Recent research has shown that teachers' attitudes change with their behavior as they begin to experience success (Guskey 1985). However, we had problems getting teachers to that point. Our philosophy is a radical departure from traditional practice; high schools have not been organized for close scrutiny of instructional practices. Firestone and Herriott (1982) have described the constraints of large staff size, departmentalization, and diverse staff goals, which inhibit secondary administrators' influence on instructional improvement.

Realizing these constraints, we addressed the problem of a large staff first by dividing all administrative duties into thirds. This means that each administrator evaluates one-third (approximately 25) of the teachers. The concept of a *coprincipalship* began to evolve.

Second, we broke down the walls of departmentalization. We have found that we don't need to understand physics, for example, to understand good teaching. Our acceptance by the departments is better when we focus on specific teaching acts. No longer do we need to feel inadequate in a class we personally have never taught.

Third, we attempted to unify staff goals by publishing our yearly objectives, sharing our five-year plan, and modeling good teaching practices. Departments have begun to adopt goals that are similar, if not identical, to building goals.

Step 3: provide support. Attitudes conducive to advancement are not created by simply announcing that expectation. Not only have we declared instruction as our priority, but we also make all our decisions in support of these efforts. We speak of "advancement" in teaching, as opposed to "improvement," which implies remediation of a deficiency. We have furnished the necessary resources and opportunities to foster professional growth. These resources take the form of in-service taught by our administrators (together with the district teachers) and formal college courses taught by our staff for our staff. We also share the latest research on teaching and learning through informal but regular study groups composed of teachers and administrators. Through these efforts, instructional supervision has become one component of a staff development program.

In addition to announcing and supporting our expectations, we began using a lesson plan format that incorporates the instructional strategies we adopted from packaged systems. The strategies we selected are: (1) a perceivable objective, (2) clear purpose and relevance, (3) an established and maintained learning set, (4) learning activities congruent with objectives, (5) modeling that provided an example of the behavior or content desired, (6) informal checks for student understanding, (7) guided practice of content and behavior, and (8) an evaluation plan for measuring attainment of objectives. We periodically collect and read lesson plans, giving individual teachers written feedback. As a result, our staff members display increasingly effective levels of competence in applying these techniques.

We modified the content of our packaged systems by requiring appropriate use of these instructional strategies as the *minimal* expectation for all teaching plans; every element is not needed for every lesson. As teachers master these techniques, they request additional strategies. We have added other elements, such as internal bridges, external bridges, closure, and rehearsal techniques (Stahl 1983), which have been used and shared by teachers able to tackle more sophisticated practices.

We reinforce these strategies by using them in planning the inservice courses that we teach. Faculty meetings are an opportunity to practice what we preach. We model these behaviors in our own presentations, conveying the notion that skillful planning is indeed a high priority.

Step 4: reinforce. An intensive observation/feedback cycle is the single most powerful tool we use to encourage our staff to translate the teaching-learning research into practice. We adapted the structure of our cycle (fig. 1) from the supervision model constructed by Dornbusch and Scott (1975). Teachers understand the process of our cycle; they know the criteria we will be looking for prior to an observation.

Our supervision process is characterized by a four-day observation cycle. Each teacher is visited by the same administrator on four consecutive days, during the same class, for the entire period. We set this repeated sampling as a norm because, like Darling-Hammond and Wise (1983), we believe that administrators cannot adequately assess teaching performance based on only a few minutes in a classroom. Also, as Hunter (1985) has pointed out, many lessons incorporate only a few elements; an appropriate strategy one day may not be appropriate the next. We want to see if teachers can judge when and how a particular technique is appropriate.

With a staff of approximately 75 teachers, our supervisory schedule results in each administrator visiting at least 100 classrooms per year. This number increased for our nontenured teachers, who are observed during two separate cycles each year. Every teacher receives oral and written feedback about the four observations during one-hour conferences with the administrator.

In addition to establishing a supervision cycle, we model our belief that instruction is important by reinforcing two rules. First, if an unforseen event interrupts our schedule, we will start the four-day cycle over again. Second, we will allow no interruptions (that we can control) in our schedule of observation.

When a crisis occurs during a period when an observation is scheduled, the coprincipalship concept enables

another administrator to address the problem. By consistently announcing and following this procedure, we show teachers, parents, and district personnel that we recognize and support the importance of instructional supervision. The coprincipalship approach has enabled us to modify the cursory nature of a packaged supervision system.

What Came from Our Modified Plan?

One consistent outcome of our personalized plan for instructional supervision is the development of a positive relationship between administrators and teachers, which we believe has been fostered by three circumstances. First, our approach to supervision is flexible in that we share techniques we have learned from other teachers. Our allowance for variation stimulates teachers to become more adaptable in what they will accept and implement.

Second, our own administrative failures seem to work in our favor. For instance, we sometimes expect too much too soon, have our own teacher favorites, and unintentionally alienate some teachers. We deal with our mistakes by admitting them, soliciting teachers' input for an analysis of why we failed, and continuing to work toward our goal.

Third, our conscious and persistent effort to build trust helps foster a positive relationship between administrators and staff. While an atmosphere of trust encourages teachers to take risks and share new behaviors, trying to create it is complex - not a procedure to be obtained easily from a packaged system. We try to build trust by being predictable in our expectations and actions. Once teachers know how we will react (as coach, not judge), they are free to try new techniques with confidence in an atmosphere conducive to experimentation.

We are now in the fifth year of our five-year plan. We have seen our teachers become more autonomous in their teaching; they are better able to make correct judgments and appropriate decisions at "teachable moments". After years of experimentation, we believe that our personalized approach to instructional supervision is best for a complex organization. Before you buy a packaged system, consider modifying one. It worked for us.

An intensive observation/feedback cycle is the single most powerful tool we use to encourage our staff to translate the teaching-learning research into practice.

A View of Change from the Researcher's Corner

Some of us who have taught instructional supervision nearby at the University of Colorado-Boulder were able to study the Loveland High School administrative team's efforts. We spent countless hours observing their staff development practices and interviewing teachers and administrators. We can certainly document and elaborate on the process they have reported. Beyond that, however, we wanted to know how far they had come toward reaching their goal. Had they developed autonomous teachers and students?

Our graduate students and the literature also stimulated questions. Research tells us that teacher evaluation is not commonly used for instructional improvements; it is unusual to find instructional supervision embedded in an administrator-conducted staff development effort (Wise and Darling-Hammond 1984, Guzzetti and Martin 1986). Therefore, we wanted to know if results had been worth the expended resources (time, dollars, and effort). Our graduate students asked how teachers reacted to such close scrutiny. What was the effect of a rigorous supervisory cycle?

Our queries concerned the effects of changing teachers' attitudes and behaviors. We focused on the consequences of implementation and reinforcement (supervision) of that implementation. Had changes in teacher behavior affected student performance? Was the assumption that improved instruction would result in improved learning a logical one?

How Can We Examine Effects?

Our first thought was to determine effects by comparing achievement test scores. However, since Loveland was a high-achieving school before the staff development effort and had continued to maintain that record, this strategy did not prove useful. We were familiar with statistical peculiarities (regression effects) when attempting to show statistically significant growth with extreme groups. Instead we chose to use naturalistic techniques to identify differences that would indicate practical significance.

One researcher conducted audio-recorded, semistructured interviews in a private setting with selected teachers. We used a purposive sampling procedure to identify a range of informants - from teachers who had been enthusiastic to those who, in one administrator's words, were "not exactly our fans." We asked teachers to describe benefits and drawbacks of implementing new teaching strategies, to identify any differences in students' performance or awareness of the learning process, and to appraise the usefulness of their supervision.

We also conducted audiotaped interviews with small groups of students in a private setting, asking them to talk about their teachers' instruction and their own awareness of the teaching-learning process. Had they noticed teachers using instructional techniques that helped them learn? If so, had

The implied intent of our goal is that autonomous teachers will increase students' awareness of their own learning processes.

these techniques made them more aware of how to learn? And, finally, had the teaching made a difference in their grades?

The Teachers' Report

The teachers described three benefits resulting from the implementation and supervision of new teaching strategies.

1. *Increased student learning.* When asked if student performance had changed as a result of particular instructional methods, teachers responded that they believe that their students are learning more, but not necessarily earning better grades. (Interviews with students reinforced this perception). Teachers did report improved student performance on informal measures, such as essays, assignments and pre- and postunit tests.

Teachers also related that students are more aware of the teaching-learning process. One English teacher in the building for nine years noted:

> Students seem to expect to accomplish more now. Once a few teachers establish practices like stating objectives, the kids look for it in other classes. It's a subtle process; teachers don't say, "Now we're going to do guided practice." Yet the students are very critical of classes where they don't feel a sense of structure.

2. *Established teacher autonomy.* Teachers, speaking of standards for their own performance, felt that establishing a repertoire of instructional strategies increases their awareness of what constitutes good teaching. They have increased their accountability for learning through continuous monitoring of student progress and have engaged in substantive conversations about instruction with their colleagues. They have become attuned to the craft of teaching. An English teacher in the building for eight years explained:

> Teachers are aware of those who put thought and effort into their preparation. The status quo has become following the elements of instructions toward specific outcomes, whereas before the status quo was each to his own. Before, if someone didn't given much thought to teaching, no one would know the difference. Now it's different, and I don't mean bad.

3. *Improved attitudes toward supervision.* Teachers were unanimous in their appreciation of the observation/feedback cycle. They described this intense scrutiny (four consecutive days) as uncomfortable but necessary. One teacher related the act of watching teaching to watching a move; she explained that it is more difficult to watch several 15-minute segments of a film and try to pierce it together than it is to watch the whole two-hour movie and understand it. The intensive observation system enables the administrator to see the whole movie.

Teachers also attributed their administrative team's approach to observation as a factor that fosters positive attitudes. Administrator's acceptance of variation in implementation and teaching style prompts teachers to willingly try new methods. Other teachers spoke of the observation-supervision process as a professional

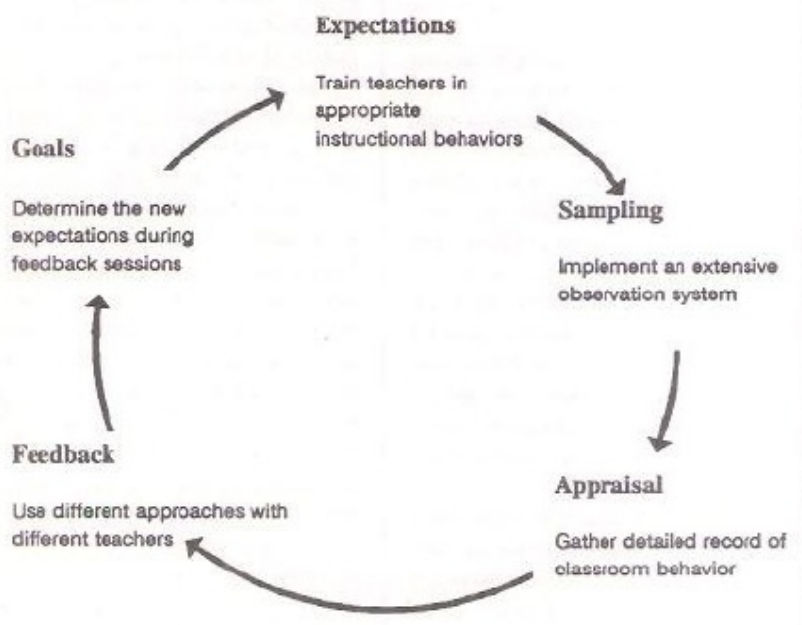

Fig. 1. Observation/Feedback Cycle

growth effort for both administrators and teachers.

> The attitude the administrator displays is one of coeducation, like we're all in this together. The attitude is "We're here to help you out; we're not out to get you."

As a result, teachers have come to expect and respect their administrators' knowledge about the teaching-learning process:

> I can ask them an educational question, and they can give me ten articles on that. They're "educator-administrators," not "administrator-educators."

The Students' Report

Students articulately identified teachers' behaviors that have helped them become autonomous learners. We identified three propositions from the students' taped interviews.

1. *Students are aware of teachers' instructional practices.* Students were able to identify specific teaching strategies that they find beneficial, although no effort had been made to train students in the language of instruction. They didn't know labels like "closure" or "guided practice", yet they were able to describe these techniques. For example, one senior explained "purpose and relevance" as used by his physics teacher:

> The best teacher I have applies the lesson to something you do everyday. My physics teacher installs experiments along the way and gives examples while he's lecturing. A lot of teachers relate the topic to other experiences.

Students reported how many of their teachers gave objectives for the day and the percentage of those who used "purpose and relevance." Their comments reveal uneven degrees of implementation (or degrees of effectiveness) among teachers.

2. *Students benefit from teachers' organizational patterns.* The imagery students used when talking about the benefits of teachers' organizational practices is particularly powerful and illuminating. They spoke of the "tools" they were given to learn with and the "atmosphere" teachers set for learning. One senior stated:

> Almost all my classes have a "game plan". That's very helpful because it sets boundaries. The teacher lets you know what you'll be doing, why you're doing it, and how you're going to be doing it.

3. *Students believe good instruction affects their learning.* Students distinguished between learning more and earning better grades. They believe that teachers who are implementing the strategies they described are causing them to learn more; however, better grades are not necessarily an end product. In one junior's words:

> I can't say that I get better grades because of a teacher's teaching. Their teaching does affect how easy it is to get that grade. It's hard to reach yourself. It's easier if they give it to you to take than if you have to pull it out.

What Can Research Learn from Practice?

Researchers, practitioners, and trainers can be encouraged by these findings. The Loveland administrative team's efforts have shown that secondary administrators can overcome organizational constraints to directly effect instructional improvement. That is, "packaged" supervision systems can work if we open the packages and use the contents in creative ways.

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Supervision in the Age of Teacher Empowerment

A study of three schools that practice shared governance indicates that supervision and teacher empowerment are compatible concepts.

Will the empowerment of teachers make supervision and school administration obsolete? In this article I hope to offer insight into this question from a study I conducted on differentiated staffing, participative decision making, and the role of administrators. I investigated programs that had operationalized one or more aspects of differentiated staffing - such as senior teachers serving in supervisory roles; collective responsibility among teachers for student progress; and collaboration among teachers on educational policy, school improvement, and school effectiveness issues - as discussed in the reports by the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy (1986) and by the Holmes Group (1986). These reports suggest that such a system can enhance professionalism by affording teachers greater participation in school governance and decision making. Neither report, however, clearly specified the roles of administrators nor acknowledged how expanded responsibilities for teachers might alter them.

Because theories are often adapted by practitioners in ways far different than theorists envisioned, especially over time, I selected long-standing programs that had been recognized as exemplary by either a government agency or a nationally known research organization. In each of the three programs I examined, the shared governance model had evolved from pre-1983 theories. Their practices, however, reflected many aspects of theories encouraged and adopted since the publication of *A Nation At Risk* in 1983. The portraits illustrate how teachers and administrators in three different settings have been able to share governance and benefit from the experience.

Midwestern High School

"Midwestern High School" has approximately 1,500 students and 85 professional staff members. It is part of a district that has had a peer review/teacher mentoring program in place for almost a decade. A review board of union and management leaders selects senior teachers as mentors on a competitive basis. Criteria for selection include letters of recommendation from the candidate's building principal, his or her union representative, and three peers. Emphasis is placed on whether the candidate is skilled in human relations and able to terminate teachers who cannot achieve competency. During three-year rotations, the senior teachers supervise the first-year work of novices. Sometimes tenured teachers are also recommended for mentoring by a combined building union and administrative committee. The mentors spend about 30 hours per year observing and consulting with the novices, offering assistance in practical classroom management and instructional techniques. More time is provided for those experiencing difficulty. During the year in which a teacher is being mentored, administrators have minimal supervisory responsibilities for that teacher. They monitor attendance, make brief (5- to 10-minute) classroom visits, and record overall observations about the professional behavior of the teacher being mentored.

At every level of the program, the emphasis is upon sharing governance. District-level union officials and administrators share in the supervision of mentors. Twice a year, mentors formally report the progress of their supervisees to the review board, which in

Sharing decisions concerning who does what is as vital as the enlargement of responsibilities that is so satisfying to the teachers in the study.

turn carefully scrutinizes their efforts. Mentors may also recommend retention or termination of the teachers to the review board. After novice teachers have successfully completed the first year, they are then placed in a traditional supervisory relationship with the building administrators, who make all subsequent retention and tenure recommendations.

Is it a perfect system with tension? Not always. For years administrators were reluctant to give up any traditional supervisory responsibilities; some remain skeptical. Because roles and responsibilities are at times ambiguous, those in participative governance situations need to be flexible. For example, because mentors are assigned to several schools, they do not directly associate with parents. Thus, if a novice is challenged by a parent, the administrator steps in as usual.

The benefits of shared governance, though, seem to compensate for these drawbacks. For the mentors, making meaningful contributions to the educational goals of the district provides powerful intrinsic rewards. For the novices, receiving more time, attention, and practical assistance than a building administrator can provide is a plus - a point with which administrators agree. Novices also feel their internship period prepares them in ways that their student teaching did not. While administrators share supervision with senior teachers during the novices' critical first year, they do retain many traditional supervisory responsibilities. The benefits of shared governance for administrators are twofold: gaining more competent teachers and having time to redirect their energies into other important responsibilities.

Suburban/Rural High School

"Suburban/Rural High" has 800 students, 65 faculty members. It is an East Coast traditional high school. For 15 years teachers there have been organized into departments without chairpersons in which they collectively make all instructional and managerial decisions. They select their courses and texts, schedule classes, determine budgetary allocations, order books and materials, and participate in hiring new staff and administrators. In addition, all members of the professional staff - administrators, librarians, counselors, and teachers - serve as personal and academic advisers to approximately 10 students. In many ways Suburban/Rural High (a U.S. Education Department award winner) is the antithesis of differentiated staffing. However, this school has operationalized theories that recommend a more professional model for decision making than traditional bureaucratic management.

At Suburban/Rural, the teachers I interviewed were enthusiastic about their enlarged and empowered responsibilities. They did not, however, view this change in their role as happening in the absence of supervision. On the contrary, nearly every teacher acknowledged the principal as the inspiration and guiding force behind this unusual and long-standing system of empowerment. The principal described himself as a facilitator of shared governance who plays the "managing partner" role discussed in the Carnegie Forum report.

A surprising example of why supervision is not obsolete has occurred at Suburban/Rural High School: teachers there have given back a significant responsibility to the supervisors. For the first seven or eight years of the program, teachers served as disciplinarians as part of their advisory responsibilities. Over time, though, they recognized that a more consistent discipline policy was needed. In order to play more of an advocate's role for students, they requested an assistant principal for discipline be hired.

As in any school, some tension exists between teachers and supervisors. For example, at difficult times teachers often want the principal to make decisions, while he encourages them to work through problems and reach their own solutions. Some teachers complain that the combination of consultative and participative decision making at full faculty meetings causes them to spend too much time talking

about every item on the agenda. Nevertheless, none of the teachers I interviewed wanted to give up their special system. Because the teachers see their principal as instrumental in facilitating their empowerment, Suburban/Rural High is a powerful example of effective supervision in a school where teachers have appreciable influence over the entire program. Teachers actually recommended adding a position to the supervisory staff! That teachers are also enthusiastic about their responsibilities attests to the possibilities of carefully managed shared governance.

Inner-City High School

"Inner-City High School" has 196 students, 12 teachers, and 3 paraprofessionals per site. It is an East Coast alternative school. For 18 years, teachers and paraprofessionals, working in interdisciplinary teams of about 15 persons, have made decisions about curriculum, scheduling, budget, hiring, and school policy, including discipline. As at Suburban/Rural High, teachers here also serve as personal and academic advisers to students. The school is divided into four sites, and a principal and an assistant principal travel among them. Each site has a teacher coordinator who is the building peer supervisor. Teachers here believe they have a great deal of influence over the entire program.

Are the principal and assistant principal made obsolete as a result of the teacher coordinator role? The administrators and teachers I interviewed all view the administrators as facilitators and feel that governance is shared. Sometimes the views of teachers and administrators differ, but enthusiasm outweighs the inevitable criticism. Here, as at Suburban/Rural High, the principal is philosophically committed to shared governance and decision making. In addition to their facilitative roles, administrators supervise and evaluate new teachers, perform managerial functions as the school's liaisons to the central office, and offer insight and advice. In many ways they retain traditional responsibilities while offering teachers real empowerment.

Curiously, here too, over time, teachers have given back certain responsibilities to administrators. As an innovative experimental school, Inner-City High has in past years tried peer review and evaluation. However, teachers found the task incompatible with the small, collegial environment; they felt their time could be better spent on instructional and managerial tasks. As a result, administrators now consult with teacher coordinators but are solely responsible for teacher evaluation.

The Key to Shared Governance

Skeptics might suggest that since teachers give back power, why bother to give it to them in the first place? The answer rests in the basic philosophy of shared governance. Sharing decisions concerning who does what is as vital as the enlargement of responsibilities that is so satisfying to the teachers in the study.

The research highlighted here suggests that supervision can be dynamic in empowered situations if administrators are philosophically committed to the concept. They also need to recognize that the process is slow, may be inefficient, and requires patience. And yet, in spite of the obstacles, the payoffs of shared governance can be substantial. Expanding teachers' responsibilities in ways that given them significant influence may be key to developing better schools. Clearly, as we have seen in these three portraits, supervision and teacher empowerment are concepts that in practice are mutually compatible. In shared governance, the important point to remember is that the emphasis must be on *sharing*.

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Author's note. To obtain a complete report of the study findings, please contact the author at the address below.

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CAROLYN TAN

The Montessori Approach: A Brief Outline

In Singapore today, there is a gradual but increasing number of Montessori preschool set-ups. At the same time, there is also quite a number of Montessori-trained teachers in the preschool market. Although Singapore has generally been slow to accept this approach, there continues to be a resurgence in the popularity of Montessori schools in recent years in the U.S.A. and the U.K.

Who is Montessori?

Maria Montessori, who lived from 1870 to 1952, was a medical doctor, educator, humanitarian and philosopher. She inherited the intellectual and progressive tradition in education from Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel. She developed this inheritance further by discovering and formulating original ideas about children's intellectual development as well as by designing revolutionary learning materials. In 1907, as director of the *Casa dei Bambini* (Children's House) in an impoverished quarter of Rome, Montessori observed children and developed her theories of and materials for early learning.

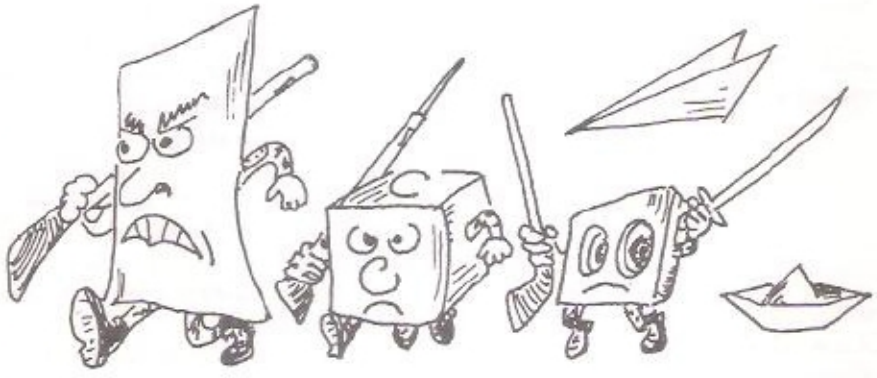
The Absorbent Mind

The most basic principle in Montessori's theory is that the learning capacity of a young child is fundamentally different from that of an adult. To realize this, we need only think of learning to speak of a new language. Adults experience great difficulty in learning a new language. Even when they accomplish this, they rarely speak the language well enough to pass as a native speaker. And yet a three-year-old can accomplish this in a remarkable way. How does the young child learning his first language speak it so perfectly?

According to Montessori, the child has an absorbent mind - a unique learning capacity. In using the term "absorbent", she did not mean "like a sponge absorbing water" but in the sense of "combining into itself". This is an unconscious absorption of the environmental stimuli by means of a special pre-conscious state of mind. Impressions do not just "enter" the mind, they "form" the mind. This is why the child enjoys and seeks the repetition of a stimuli many times over. Each time, the impression changes the child's perspective slightly. For the adult who learns by hypothesis-testing and drawing of conclusions, such repetition of previously learnt stimuli is both tedious and boring. This unconscious absorbing of impressions is an "active" phenomenon in that it involves the child in imitation, movement, manipulative play and so on and helps create the child's basic human development and abilities which will later be integrated with other abilities learnt earlier to become skills.

The Sensitive Periods

The child's intellectual development does not merely depend on an absorbent mind that just reproduces like a tape-recorder. It involves the processing, categorizing and interpreting of information. The impressions absorbed fit into an intellectual structure. This structure forms gradually and unfolds as the child grows. Through her years of observing children, Montessori deduced a general outline of this structure and



Revolutionary learning materials ...

The most basic principle in Montessori's theory is that the learning capacity of a young child is fundamentally different from that of an adult.

termed them the six sensitive periods of early learning and development.

The first sensitive period for the development of **sensory perception** begins at birth and continues through age five. During this time, the child needs to use all his sense faculties as fully as possible. Frustration surfaces in children who are constantly told not to touch anything and are locked up in a play pen or cot.

The second sensitive period for **language development** takes place from age three months to age five-and-a-half years. Montessori observed that language development occur in many stages from the early months of infancy.

The third sensitive period for **order** lasts from the child's first birthday till when he turns three. During this period, the child's development seems to go through an organizational phase where impressions are being patterned. This implies that the external order of the environment such as the location of things and the following of the same routine will benefit the child's inner development of order. This is probably why children in the "terrible two's" seem to cry most of the time. This is often a result of a small change in the order or pattern of adult behaviour or environmental stimuli.

The fourth sensitive period is for **small detail** and occurs around age two. Often, children at this period concentrate very deeply on a specific task such as turning the pages of a book. The child's total attention may be focused on the turning corner and not on the rest of the page.

The fifth sensitive period for **movement** begins at age two-and-a-half and lasts until age four. For example, a young child loves to wash his hands simply because there is an inclination to do so to gain more precise control of physical skills. In contrast, an older child will only wash his hands to clean them. This sensitive period is crucial in order for the child to co-ordinate and acquire more complex physical development.

The sixth sensitive period is for **social relations** which lasts from age two-and-a-half to age five. This mainly involves social development. During this period, the child pays special emphasis to the behaviour of others and begins to develop friendships as well as involve himself in co-operative play with others.

Learning by Connecting

The absorbent mind constructs an intellectual structure. The sensitive periods provide the basics for the building of general skills. According to Montessori, 'learning' then is the act of connecting previously assessed impressions so that they are bound together by use or meaning. Firstly, the mind absorbs. Secondly, the loosely absorbed stimuli is repeatedly acted out to form connections between phenomenon, for example, connecting between a verbal sound and a letter of the alphabet. Through repetition and activity, phenomena are connected and concepts are formed. Thirdly, the child applies these concepts to situations in his world, for instance, using sound-letter combinations to write a story.

The Prepared Environment

In order for the absorbing mind, sensitive periods and learning by connecting to take place effectively, the child requires a "prepared environment" to meet these developmental needs. The distinguishing features of Montessori's prepared environment are the child-sized environment, the selectively "graded" activities (in terms of difficulty), the practical life activities designed for the sensitive periods as well as the self-corrective materials. These are introduced when the child is ready and thereafter left freely available for the child's repeated use.

The Adult's Role

In Montessori's theory, adults need to understand the child sufficiently to guide his development in the best environment. The teacher in a Montessorian classroom is basically a guardian of the environment, a facilitator

of the child's interaction with the materials and an observer of the child's work and development. In Montessorian terms, the teacher is the "director" of the environment. She is not the teacher in the traditional sense of the word because the child learns through active discovery, not passive reception.

Applications to Singapore Preschool Classrooms

Considering all the highlights of Montessori's theory for early learning, it seems difficult to apply in the context of Singapore preschools. In most of our preschool classrooms, the teachers play a dominant role in deciding how and what should be learnt in the classroom. Although there is much discussion about matching teaching styles to the learning needs of the children and showing concern about the emotional welfare of our students (that is, pastoral care), our curriculum plans are often guided by what we feel are the needs of the children. This approach would be ironic in Montessori's view, particularly for early childhood education where we are dealing with the formative years of learning. According to Montessori, "the child is the father of the man". There is much we can learn about the child from the child himself. Therefore, in order for him to develop to his fullest potential, the teacher can only be a guide in the learning process.

Today, many preschool classrooms have adapted their curriculum in particular ways to incorporate Montessori's ideas. The most common feature adopted is the free-directed activity concept where the child can select his own task (guided by the teacher) and independently complete it in his own time. Many schools are using the famous Montessorian sand-paper letters in their reading programme as well as other sensorial equipment. On the teacher's part, although it has been difficult to change their perceptions of the role they play, many are now more mindful of the inner needs and sensitivities of the children they work with. Hence, the preschool climate is slowly changing to accommodate Montessori's views as our society works to enhance child development and education by recognizing the child's place in this world.

In most preschool classrooms, teachers play a dominant role in deciding how and what should be learnt...

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QUAH MAY LING

Dyslexia: What Teachers Need to Know

Dyslexia is not a disease. It is not contagious, but it has been reported that one child in every seven has it to some degree, often with tragic impact on his schooling and life. Some studies suggest that it may be one of the most potent factors behind juvenile delinquency. It probably kept inventor Thomas Edison and the American President, Woodrow Wilson from coping with ordinary schoolwork. It made Hans Christian Andersen an atrocious speller all his life, even though he became a magnificent storyteller. It most likely accounted for the nickname "Mr Dullard" given to a school boy named Albert Einstein. The term "dyslexia" is a Greek word meaning "having difficulty with reading" and was originally made up by the medical profession to describe the reading and spelling difficulties of patients who had suffered certain sorts of brain damage which might have been caused in accidents or wars, or as a result of tumours, strokes, psychiatric disorders, drugs or the effects of ageing. Historically speaking, children who experience reading disabilities have been classified according to a variety of terminology. Strephosymbolia was used by Orton (1937) to describe the child with a "twisted" symbol difficulty. Later on, terms such as alexia, minimal brain dysfunction and word blindness were used. More recently, the term dyslexia has come into wide use to describe children who experience learning disabilities in reading.

Today, the term "dyslexia" is universally accepted and used as a convenient label to describe a learning disability involving difficulty with reading in spite of normal intelligence, adequate educational opportunity, and no evidence of sensory, neurological, or emotional dysfunction. This language disorder is characterised by difficulty with reading, spelling, handwriting, language and memory. (For an extended discussion of dyslexia, see, for example, Richardson, 1992; Siegel, 1985; Siegel and Ryan, 1988; Stanovich, 1988; Vellutino, 1979.)

Although it appears to be unrelated to basic intellectual capacity, dyslexia causes a mysterious difficulty in handling words and symbols. Some subtle peculiarity in the brain's organizational pattern blocks out an otherwise bright child's ability to learn to read, to write legibly, to spell or perhaps to use numbers. Ackerman, Dykman and Gardner (1990) found that children with severe dyslexia were slower in counting from memory and naming alternating digits and letters than those with milder reading impairment.

The dyslexic child is not different from the rest of his peers except his minor impairments become highly debilitating for they make it extremely difficult for him to learn to read. This affects writing and all other academic learning. Earlier, it was thought that this disability occurs much more often in boys than girls (five to six times more), but recent studies show evidence that the number of boys to girls with dyslexia may be closer than previously believed (Shaywitz, Shaywitz, Fletcher & Escobar, 1990). In a study of 249 children with severe reading retardation, Melekian (1990)

The dyslexic child is not different from the rest of his peers except his minor impairments become highly debilitating for they make it extremely difficult for him to learn to read.

concluded that (a) marital status does not contribute to the causation of dyslexia, (b) large sibships predominate in children with dyslexia, and (c) high ordinal birth positions prevail within these sibships. On the controversial side he found (a) no convincing evidence that parental age is a risk factor in dyslexia and (b) parents', especially mothers', low socioeconomic and educational status cannot be excluded as an aggravating factor of reading and writing disabilities.

The adverse effects of failure in school on the dyslexic child are serious. Usually, he does not show any signs of anxiety until he starts school and is required to use his faulty sensori-motor systems for learning to read and write. His reaction to failure is one of frustration and these frustrations may lead to emotional problems which are an added stumbling block to successful learning. Consider the dyslexic child. He appears to be normal. He is intelligent, often extremely intelligent, with a great capacity to learn. He does not limp, stutter, wear thick spectacles. He may be a good sportsman, a great storyteller, a reliable friend, a good sport - everything boys and girls are, until he goes to school. Then he faces the first and biggest failure of his life. He has trouble learning to read. Since our educational system, with some exceptions, is geared to learning by reading, the dyslexic child may be denied an education and all the economic and cultural rewards that stem from it. In general, children who fail to learn to read and write early may develop all kinds of associated problems. They seldom find status in school either with their teachers, or more importantly, with their peers. They may become friendless and solitary, their lack of confidence inhibiting their ability to make friends. Their teachers may try to help them, but defeated and discouraged by lack of progress, may give up and hope the problem will solve itself. Sympathetic and discerning teachers, however, will seek further advice and professional help.

What can teachers do?

"How do I recognize it?" and "What can I do about it?" are two fundamental questions which any teacher would ask about the dyslexic child in their class. The skillful teacher of reading has no difficulty in recognizing when a child has a reading problem. The difficulty arises in trying to single out the dyslexic child from the wide range of other children who are failing to make adequate progress in learning to read. Furthermore, to have to wait (as is commonly the case) until a child is two or more years behind in reading development, with no obvious intellectual, social, emotional or educational explanation for this, before a proper diagnosis of dyslexia can be made, is a lamentable state of affairs. Surveys (for example, Lowenstein, 1983) have highlighted the urgent need for more accurate assessment of dyslexia in order to be able to differentiate clearly between the dyslexic child and children with other types of reading difficulty.

Diagnosis and screening

The conventional methods for diagnosing dyslexia have remained essentially unchanged for the past two decades. In summary, these involve establishing (a) that the child's reading age is significantly behind his chronological age (usually two or more years behind), (b) that the child's intelligence is not significantly below average, (c) that there are no social, emotional or educational causes for the reading difficulty, (d) that the child is not suffering any sight defects, hearing loss, brain damage, or serious problems of general health, and (e) that the child exhibits some 'positive signs' of the disorder, such as speech problems, difficulty with sequential memory, clumsiness, crossed laterality, and so on. However, the conceptual and methodological inadequacies of this diagnostic system are well-known (Ravenette, 1971; Reid, 1969; Singleton, 1975, 1977).

Over the last ten years, there has been progress made in identifying

With early identification, a dyslexic child need never experience failure and become a candidate for remedial education.

'positive signs' of the disorder. There have been efforts to base diagnosis on differential performance in subtests of general intelligence scales (Ellis and Miles, 1981; Thomson, 1982) and also on the reading and spelling errors and language difficulties of the dyslexic (Snowling, 1983; Thomson, 1984). Several studies have confirmed that retarded readers are generally poor at certain subtests of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), particularly on the Information, Arithmetic, Digit Span and Coding subtests (Tansley and Panckhurst, 1981; Thomson, 1984) and one study reports a similar profile on the British Ability Scales (Thomson, 1982).

A common approach has been the compilation of assorted diagnostic procedures designed for use in screening for dyslexic-type difficulties (for example, Aubrey et al, 1982; Clay, 1979; Miles, 1983). However, one of the major difficulties in screening is setting the cut-off points in order to minimize false negatives (cases where children are not identified as being 'at risk' by the screening procedure but who are later found to manifest dyslexic symptoms) while at the same time, not including an unacceptably high number of false positives (children who are labelled 'dyslexic' as a result of screening but who turn out to be quite normal). Perhaps the two most well known screening tests are the Aston Index (Newton and Thomson, 1976; Aubrey et al, 1982) and the Bangor Dyslexia Test (Miles, 1983). The Aston Index is designed both as a screening device for children shortly after school entry and as a diagnostic test for reading failure in older children. It involves (a) the assessment of general intellectual ability and (b) the analysis of performance on reading-related and dyslexia-related skills. In addition, details of social and emotional development, family background and medical history are taken. For older children, the Index includes tests of spelling and oral reading (Schonell). By contrast, the Bangor Dyslexia Test concentrates more on 'positive signs' of dyslexia, such as knowledge of left and right, ability to repeat polysyllabic words, subtraction tables, saying months of the year, digit span, sentence memory, rhyming ability and familial incidence. Reading age and intellectual ability are also taken into account.

An analysis of the child's problems should indicate the best way to help him. Diagnosis should be dealt with by an interdisciplinary team composed of medical, psychological and educational experts. The most useful report for a teacher will be one which gives the child's potential intellectual ability, the results of tests of word reading, reading speed, comprehension and spelling, an indication of the child's perceptual abilities as indicated by tests of visual and auditory discrimination and motor coordination. As mentioned earlier, the Aston Index, an early predictor of dyslexic type difficulties which includes tests which teachers can administer when pupils do not make expected progress in the written language skills, can also be used. The teacher needs to know what makes a child "tick", so an interview with his parents is essential, and if there are other teachers involved, they should also be consulted.

Teaching

With early identification, a dyslexic child need never experience failure and become a candidate for remedial education. The child with a faulty sensori-motor system loses out on all counts - not only can he not recognize or recall whole words easily, but he also has a problem in that neither a "look-and-say" nor a "phonic" approach would be appropriate either by itself or in combination. A dyslexic child may fail even with remedial help because his specific needs are not met. Success can be achieved when the language training achieves harmonious interaction of all the senses, that is, when the learner sees, hears, speaks and writes simultaneously. This is multisensory learning. The learner is using visual, auditory, kinesthetic and oral abilities in an integrated process, thus encouraging the various parts of his sensori-motor system to support each other in making permanent sound-symbol associations.

Most teachers are aware of the importance of encouraging their pupils' fluent spoken language to promote good comprehension and pleasure in reading, coupled with a facility in writing for enjoyment and communication. If these attributes are to be within the scope of a dyslexic child, in addition to training in oral and written construction for organizing and expressing his thoughts in speech and writing, he needs to acquire the necessary mechanical skills for recognizing and producing the printed word. Unless teachers can be helped to recognize the problem and be willing to undertake some training, many dyslexic children will continue to represent the "hardcore" of the teacher's problems.

It is often said that a backward reader needs only the encouragement of a sympathetic teacher. This may be true of a pupil who has failed to read for reasons which are primarily emotional. Many sympathetic teachers who have taken up remedial teaching because they want to help children to learn to read, have been defeated by their own lack of knowledge when they attempt to teach a dyslexic child who cannot make sense of known methods of learning. The teacher needs to study how to teach the skills in a way that the dyslexic child will understand. Because such a child may have experienced many beginnings and failures, he will need to have complete faith and confidence in his teacher. This situation will only come about if the teacher is an expert in her field. Good relationship between teacher and learner will not last without progress.

What hope is there for dyslexics?

Fortunately, even the victims of severe, classic dyslexia can now learn, with proper help to read at a decent speed and to write legibly. The experts' consensus is that the best solution is educational: careful, systematic, one-to-one tutoring on a regular basis, to teach the dyslexic child using multisensory approaches.

Since every dyslexic child's problems are different, individual tutoring techniques must also vary.

The encouraging prognosis for properly tutored dyslexics was documented in a study by Margaret Byrd Rawson who carefully followed a group of 20 boys with moderate to severe dyslexia, all of whom had been given structured, multi-sensory language training in school. All but one went to college; 18 earned degrees; then, went on to obtain a total of 32 postgraduate degrees. Not all dyslexics will do as well. Yet, it is also clear that dyslexics no longer need to fail simply because of language and reading problems.

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CHONG KENG CHOY

Improving Pupil Grades: A Tool

In Singapore, teachers typically teach a class of forty pupils as a group. When the pupils learn, they learn as individuals. We have a situation in which group teaching is expected to result in individual learning. However well we prepare the lesson, and however well we present the lesson in class and monitor pupils' understanding through appropriate questioning, we know very well that we are unable to meet the needs of every pupil. The truth is individual needs of pupils vary. At times the variation could be very large. Teaching becomes like trying to hit as many of the forty shifting targets as possible all at once. This is an enigma, but this is not the problem.

While teaching and learning are carried out in the classroom, we need a tool to link them so that teaching and learning could lead to improvement in pupils' grades. The tool must help us think about each pupil's needs, so that teaching and learning is mediated by it. The problem is that such a tool is not available.

The solution: fashioning a tool

In order to fashion such a tool, we could look at some basic ideas in managing change. First, we need to know what the current state is like. Second, we need to decide on the next state we like to reach. Third, we must decide on what to do in order to reach that next state. Fourth, we must decide on when we are likely to have attained that next state. At the end of the time period, we repeat the cycle of this four-step model. Let us try to fashion the tool we need by stepping through this model.

Step 1

At the beginning of the term, based on test results or other forms of evaluative feedback, we list the names of the pupils in the class in five clusters. The first cluster consists of pupils who will obtain a distinction grade at the end of the year, according to our professional judgement. We could be wrong, but we can make a judgement. In the same way, we decide on a second cluster of pupils who will obtain a pass grade at the end of the year, and a third cluster of those who will fail. However, there will be difficulty in placing some pupils in one of these three clusters. For them, we create two additional clusters. The first consists of pupils who will be in the margin between a distinction grade and a pass grade. The other consists of those who will be in the margin between a pass grade and fail grade. Having constructed the five clusters, we have a picture of the current state of our class for the subject we teach.

Step 2

Now we need to decide on the next state we desire to reach. We want to improve the grades for our pupils. So we could decide on helping the pupils move on to the next higher cluster. For example, we could think of moving pupils in the fail grade cluster to the marginal pass/fail grade cluster, which is between the pass grade and fail grade clusters. We want every pupil to reach the next higher grade cluster. For us to want to do this, we must assume that all pupils can learn.

However well we prepare the lesson, and however well we present the lesson in class and monitor pupils' understanding through appropriate questioning, we know very well that we are unable to meet the needs of every pupil.

Helping pupils reach the next higher grade cluster ...

Step 3

We must decide on what to do in order to help the pupils reach the next higher grade cluster. Let us list all the names of the pupils in the class on a page according the five grade clusters. This is easily done on a computer. Next draw a column down the page next to the column of pupils' names. Against each name, write what we can do for the pupil so that he or she could move up to the next grade cluster at the end of the year. Call this the action column. Let us draw a third column next to this action column. This is the progress column. In this column, we can write our perception of each pupil's progress as we carry out the action we have decided just a while ago.

Step 4

We could decide that at the beginning of next term, we will do Step 1 again for this class. Remember what we did in Step 1 - we arranged the names of our pupils in five grade clusters according to our best judgement. We risked being wrong. At the beginning of next term, we will carry out Step 1 again and obtain a name list in five new clusters. Presumably some pupils will be placed in a cluster different from the one they are in this term. We will then continue to step through the four-step model.

The tool and its use

Now we have the tool in front of us. It is a class list with the pupils' names arranged in five grade clusters, namely, Expected Distinction, Expected Distinction/Pass, Expected Pass, Expected Pass/Fail, and Expected Fail. This is the first column on the sheet of paper. The second column is for you to indicate the action to be taken for each pupil. The third column is for you to record your perception of each pupil's progress. Let us remember what we have written in the action column for each pupil when we prepare and teach our lessons over the rest of the term. Let us keep this in mind when we direct our questions to appropriate pupils during our lessons, so that questioning is not used to monitor pupils' understanding of our lesson but to help pupils cross their individual barriers to understanding. Recall also what we have written in the action column when we grade or read our pupils' written work. Once a week, let us remember to note our perception of each pupil's progress. This tool is simple to use.

The step forward

With experience in the use of this tool to link teaching and learning to improving pupil grades, we may build variations into the tool. We could think of more clusters, especially subclusters for the pass grade cluster. We could include records of test scores within the third column on perception of pupils' progress. One suggestion for enriching our experience with the tool: we could share our success and failure in its use during our departmental meetings in school. Better still, we could try to construct other tools for linking teaching and learning to improving pupils' grades.

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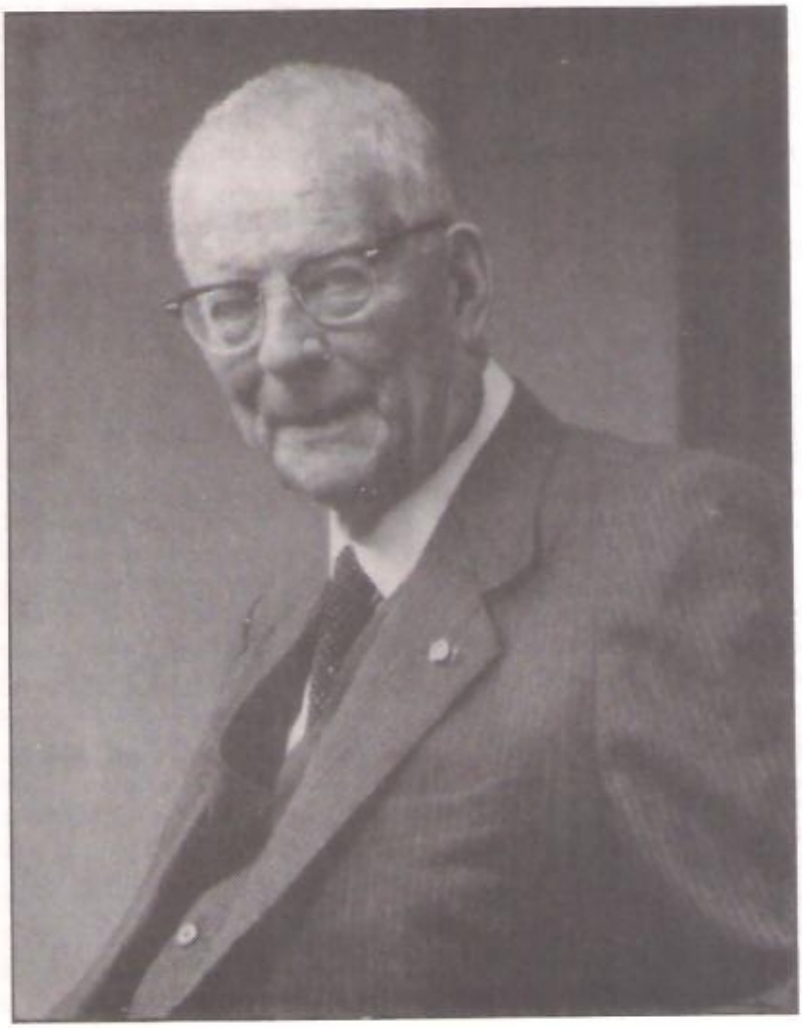
JOHN JAY BONSTINGL

The Total Quality Classroom

Deming's principles for improving industry can help schools better prepare young people to meet the challenges of a workplace that will demand more of them than it did of workers in previous generations.



The right time for attention to final outcomes in any production process - including the learning process - is at every step along the way.

- W. Edwards Deming

My favorite hangout is one of those rare finds in life. It's a small, family-owned neighborhood restaurant, a place where you can find just about everybody in town at one time or another. Prices are reasonable, food portions are delicious and generous, service is prompt and always given with a smile, and the table settings show a certain attention to detail.

Recently, when I went there for lunch, the place was packed. Jim, the owner, was at the door greeting incoming customers and asking those who were leaving whether they had a good time. Jim, a hands-on manager, is always at the restaurant to make sure everything is going just right. When he's not at the door, he's going from table to table, making sure his customers are satisfied. Old-fashioned quality service from a relatively young man.

He greeted me as I was shown to my table. "Jim," I commented with a smile, "I'm going to have to buy stock in this place - I've never been here when your restaurant hasn't been filled to capacity. What's your secret?"

"No secret," Jim responded, shaking his head. "We just aim to please our customers. We try to give them the best quality we can, as consistently as possible."

"Hmm," I thought aloud, "I know quite a few teachers who would love to have their students consistently producing the best quality work they're capable of doing. It seems to be getting harder and harder to motivate young people in their school work."

"Sometimes it's not as easy here either," Jim replied. "Just yesterday I was training a new waiter, a college sophomore with a 3.8 average - a very bright young man. First thing, I told him, 'Here's our menu. Sit down and read it over.'

"I stressed how important it is that our waiters know absolutely everything we offer on our menu. A few minutes later, he gets up and asks, 'Okay, what do I do now?' I told him, 'Sit back down and read the menu. I want you to *know* it.'

"And? What happened?" I asked.

Jim continued: "This bright young man tells me, 'I've read the menu. What do you want me to know about it?' It was as if he was asking me, 'What are you going to put on the exam? Tell me what you want me to know and I'll memorize it, but I won't waste my time with anything else!' "

"I know what you mean, Jim," I said, thinking of the multitude of times my students have raised their hands in the middle of a lecture or experiment, cutting the process short with the bottom-line question, "Mr B, is this going to be on the test?" The sole measure of relevance, the lone determiner of student effort wisely expended: Is it going to be on the test?

"Just yesterday," Jim continued, " a new waitress asked me how many mushrooms to put on a 12-inch pizza. Apparently, at her previous job - one of those chain restaurants - she had to follow a thick rule book, and one of the rules prescribed the exact number of mushrooms to be put onto every pizza, no more and no less.

"So I asked her: 'Do you like pizza?' and she said, 'Sure.'

" 'Okay,' I said, 'how many mushrooms do *you* like on *your* pizzas? Just do for your customers what you would like if you were in their place. You decide!'

"My toughest job," Jim concluded, "is getting these kids to put themselves in the customer's shoes. I keep thinking how nice it would be if they all thought of themselves as managers. I want them to take a natural pride in their work, to make good decisions without a lot of outside advice, to act as a team, to just use their common sense. My only rule is this: Everyone who works here must always keep the customer first in mind."

I looked around at Jim's cheerful, bustling staff. "Looks like you've found the secret."

"Thanks, Jay," he responded. "But it does take a lot of hard work."

Most of the hard work Jim does with his young employees is focused on training them to take personal thoughtful responsibility for implementing his customer-focused policy of service. "When they are first hired," Jim reflected, "many of these young people wait for me to tell them what to do, even after I put them through an intensive training program. I've got to work closely with each of them over time, to develop the characteristics I want them to exhibit - the *secret* as you put it."

Both of the employees Jim discussed with me - the college sophomore who didn't want to waste his time with the menu and the young waitress who needed instruction in mushroom placement - are actually exhibiting ideal employee behavior, according to a philosophy of work expressed early in this century by Frederick Winslow Taylor, an industrial engineer.

The Industrial Model at Work

Taylor taught American industry to view every worker as simply "a cog in the giant industrial machine, whose job could be defined and directed by appropriately educated managers, administering a set of rules" (Walton 1990). Workers need not exercise any imagination or individual initiative, according to Taylor, because such action would only serve to disrupt the realization of management objectives.

Taylor's industrial model was a top-down, authoritarian structure, in which management's job was to worry about quotas and quality if necessary, while subservient workers mindlessly did management's bidding without questioning the reasons for their work or the overall plan. It was just the sort of "enlightened thinking" that Henry Ford was looking for, perfectly suited to his revolutionary new assembly-line factory. Taylor's model became the enthusiastically accepted norm among bosses throughout American industry - and quickly spread to the service and government sectors.

The Industrial Model at School

To a great extent, American education mimicked this military-industrial model of "efficient" work. Perhaps in that era such schooling was appropriate to train young people for work requiring "patience, docility, and

the ability to endure boredom. Students learned to sit in orderly rows, to absorb facts by rote, and to move through the material regardless of individual differences in learning speed" (Clarke 1986).

Today's teachers and students know that system all too well. The philosophy and practice of Taylorism is still in place in many schools, industries, and government offices throughout the country. And yet, it is becoming abundantly clear that this model will not serve us well in the world of the future, where workers will need to be sharp, creative thinkers with a keen sense of intellectual curiosity and a personal dedication to lifelong learning, as well as an individual commitment to the collective good.

Indeed, we are living in such a "world of the future" at this very moment. Yet our ways of responding to the challenges before us are more in tune with the perceived needs of the past than with the imperatives of our present and our future. As management consultant Robert F. Lynch tells us, "Our entire educational system is designed to teach people to do things the one right way as defined by the authority figure. We are taught to recite what we hear or read without critically interacting with the information as it moves in and out of short-term memory. In this exchange, the information leaves no tracks, and independent thinking skills are not developed" (1991).

Education, in the new paradigm, will be a process that encourages continual progress through the improvement of one's abilities, the expansion of one's interests, and the growth of one's character.

Lynch links antiquated educational philosophies and practices with antiquated workplace philosophies and practices: "The workplace often reinforces the value of compliance. The student going into the workplace has been taught there will always be someone in charge who has the 'right' answer. Satisfying the supervisor becomes akin to getting a passing grade. Satisfying the customer is secondary or nonexistent in this system" (1991). No wonder Jim has such a difficult time training his young restaurant employees to think for themselves and to "always keep the customer first in mind."

What We Lost Along the Way

What is lost along the way we have run our schools and businesses is, of course, precious opportunities for high-quality work. We now know that, apart from the military, systems that are based on control, compliance, and command stifle creativity, loyalty, and optimal performance. In such systems, fear, cynicism, apathy, and low productivity spread like a crippling disease throughout the entire organization.

Back in the early part of this century, when literacy rates were low and common mechanical work required little or no formal schooling, Taylorism reaped abundant rewards for the industrial barons of the times. And, by the end of World War II, with foreign productive capacities decimated, American worldwide preeminence in technology, manufacturing, and trade seemed to be forever secured.

But then something happened that the leaders of American industry are just now beginning to fully understand and acknowledge. The rest of the world began to catch up with the United States. Today, competition in hundreds of highly competitive fields comes from European, Asian, and Latin American companies. Most noticeably, it comes from the Japanese, whose postwar "economic miracle" has enabled Japan, a country with virtually no indigenous natural resources, to rise Phoenix-like from the ashes to attain its current position of strength in world finance and trade.

The imperative for our nation is clear. According to a study by the National Center on Education and the Economy, America's choice amounts to this: Either we commit now to high performance in the processes and products of our schools and industries, along with the development of intrinsically motivated and highly skilled young people, or we consign more than 70 percent of our workers to increasingly lower wages and put our heritage truly at risk as the global economy washes over us.

According to this report, "What the world is prepared to pay high prices and high wages for now is quality, variety, and responsiveness to changing consumer tastes ... 'Tayloristic' methods are not well suited to these goals. Firms struggling to apply the traditional methods of work organization to more complex technologies, increased quality requirements, and proliferating product variety often create cumbersome and inefficient bureaucracies" (National Center on Education and the Economy 1990).

The alternative, the report says, is to reduce bureaucracy "by giving frontline workers more responsibility. Workers are asked to use judgment and make decisions." The results are enhanced productivity and improved quality, essential factors contributing to economic prosperity and greater democratic participation in the workplace and in our society at large.

In the school, our students and

teachers are the frontline workers. How can we rethink the schooling process so that young people have greater opportunities to develop the self-direction and creative decision-making skills so essential to success in the emerging global economy and American workplace?

Deming Enters the Picture

W. Edwards Deming has profound insights to share, as educators grapple with this challenge. Deming is the American whom Japanese industrial leaders today regard as the crucial factor in their postwar "economic miracle." Hearing of his reputation as an expert in statistical quality control, the Japanese invited Deming to come to their country in 1950 to teach them how to produce consistently high-quality goods and services. Over the span of four decades, Deming taught Japanese owners, managers, and workers the principles and practices of his philosophy. Those of use who can remember when "Made in Japan" was a cause for laughter and derision are now marveling at how far Japan has come in a single generation.

Until a decade ago, Deming's teachings were largely unknown or ignored in this country. Then, on June 24, 1990, NBC broadcast "If Japan Can ... Why Can't We?", a documentary that riveted America's attention on the "miracle" and the prophet who had helped Japan achieve it through a profound dedication of every Japanese worker and the entire Japanese society to the principles of total quality production. In October 1991, PBS aired a follow-up documentary series entitled "Quality ... Or Else!", underscoring the urgency of our current situation.

Today, the Ford Motor Company, IBM, Xerox, Westinghouse, and a host of other companies are adopting "total quality" as their operational byword. They are redefining their reasons for existence around the requirement to service the customer first. Bureaucracies are being resculpted and hierarchies flattened to give more control over quality to those on the front lines.

We are beginning to realize that products of consistently high quality are the natural result of consistently high-quality processes. The most successful organizations carefully build quality of process and product into their long-term strategic planning as well as their day-to-day operations. Ford reflects this idea in company slogans: "We build quality in!" and "Quality is Job One!" When dedication to quality is adhered to at every point in the production process, quality products - those that serve the customer's needs first - are the consistent results.

American companies that have become known throughout the world for mediocre products, inefficient delivery systems, and inadequate attention to customer needs are now seeing their market share shift to foreign manufacturers whose products have established reputations for consistently high quality and consumer satisfaction.

Insights for Education

Likewise, in American education we have seen a dramatic increase in student cynicism and apathy in recent years. Media attention to low SAT and other standardized test scores, not to mention international comparisons of student achievement, have led to the current national education reform movement. Classroom teachers have very often felt the sting of public upbraiding, as blame for the inadequacies of the system have been so often focused singularly upon them.

Deming would take issue with the assertion that individual teachers are to blame for our nation's educational malaise. "Don't fix blame; fix the system,' he suggests.

Our students do not come into our classrooms from a vacuum. Their families have had them in their own care for a far longer time than any one teacher will have them in a course. Families are part of the educational system, and yet this generation of young people may well be the first in our country to have grown up without

Deming would take issue with the assertion that individual teachers are to blame for our nation's educational malaise. "Don't fix blame; fix the system," he suggests.

learning their first lessons in responsibility, competency, cooperation, and compassion at home. The implications for education are staggering. Later lessons in these essential personal qualities will come at much greater costs, if they are ever learned at all. Consistent family support and interaction with the school is paramount for student success in education and in life.

Within the school system there must be change as well. Administrators must rethink their role, allowing greater managerial freedom to teachers in their work with students. Teachers are the administrator's frontline workers. Administrators and teachers are not natural adversaries. Administrators who think of themselves as advisors and teammates with their teachers will reap great rewards in terms of teacher productivity, school morale, and community relations.

Teachers, in such a nurturing environment, will be more likely to nurture their students, to see themselves as advisors and teammates with their students, rather than power-wielders and deliverers of "the right answer." Teachers will use a wide variety of methods to help their young charges develop their ability to set goals, to apply creative ideas and consistently high-quality effort toward the achievement of those goals (alone and in cooperation with adults and fellow students), and to take pride of workmanship in their efforts.

Teachers will use tests as prescriptive and diagnostic tools, rather than as a final "inspection" of the student's learning. As Deming points out, the right time for attention to final outcomes in any production process - including the learning process - is at every step along the way. Industry is beginning to realize that quality assurance by inspection is inherently wasteful; it puts all the responsibility for the quality of the end product on the inspector at the end of the line. Total quality requires a commitment to quality by everyone in the production process. In education, that commitment must be made at every level, from the superintendent, the school board, and the community, to the people who do the primary work of education: the teacher-student teams.

The whole idea of grades and student assessment must also be reexamined. Is there a place in the quality-focused school for the bell-shaped curve and other artificial determiners of success and failure? If our young people are to succeed, should a given percentage of them be made to feel inferior? What might be the results if industries consciously set out to produce mediocrity or inferiority in two-thirds of *their* products?

Deming (now 91 and going strong) would suggest that undue attention to short-term benefits - whether they are monthly wages or quarterly corporate profit-loss statements or course grades - is inherently destructive of potentially positive long-term results.

Indeed, the entire issue of grades as assessment symbols will need to be rethought. If nothing succeeds like success, why do we seem to structure schooling for boredom, apathy, and marginal student involvement, rather than structuring the work that teachers and students do together for ultimate success? In what other industry do we bring people into the work environment without training them in the skills needed for success?

A Broader View of Education

Ultimately, the purpose of education must be redefined. Education, in the new paradigm, will not be a delivery system for collections of fragmented information in the guise of curriculums. Rather, education will be a process that encourages continual progress through the improvement of one's abilities, the expansion of one's interests, and the growth of one's character. Such an education would be good for the individual, good for the economy, and good for the commonweal we call society.

This vision of education will be achievable, however, only when we, individually and collectively, commit our resources to the continuous process of human improvement. Quality is our "Job One" - a commitment we must each make to ourselves and to one another.

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LEWIS A. RHODES

On the Road to Quality

Total Quality Management can provide the continuing information and management support all school personnel need to get a little better everyday at teaching and learning

I was halfway out the door heading home when the office phone rang. "You don't know me," the voice said, "I'm a middle school civics teacher in Sioux City. I read your Deming articles," he continued, "and I want you to know that for me Deming is the last great leader of the Enlightenment ... He's provided the final, and missing, element of natural law."

Normally a comment like that would have surprised me. But this was one more of a series of unanticipated reactions evoked by an article I had written six months earlier about the acknowledged founder of the quality movement, W. Edwards Deming (Rhodes 1990). What was going on? For example, "For an administrator who just 'hung it up' after 29 years of trying to influence public education, I found Deming's word heartening." The most frequent reaction, however, was "I thought I was the only one who saw possibilities for schools!"

These, and other reactions, were different from those I'd heard regarding other 'new" ideas in education, and they started me on a yearlong quest to discover why. This article suggest some answers.

Why Quality? Why Now?

It's relatively easy to answer the question,"Why has America suddenly become so interested in quality?" One need only listen to economic news about America losing the productivity race to world-class competitors.

However, it's more difficult to find answers to why these ideas are proving so attractive to educational practitioners, even before being touted by university-based theorists or outside reformers. Why the growing interest and commitment when there are no full working educational "models" as there are in other systemic programs such as Outcome-Based Education? Why such appeal, when few can even agree on a definition of "quality"! And why such seeming understanding now, after decades of exposure to many of the same ideas in the writings of organizational researchers and theorists such as Drucker, Herzberg, Argyris, Likert, Maslow, and MacGregor?

Apparently Deming's words and ideas resonate with something that many people already personally believe is "right". The ideas seem to validate long-held feelings of working individuals who know they want to be effective in their jobs, and who by and large have given up on their organizations ever acting as if they believed it, too. As one midmanager, whose organization had sent her a Deming seminar, realized with a shock, "You mean our organization might actually do this ... when now they're rewarding

Apparently Deming's ideas validate long-held feelings of working individuals who know they want to be effective in their jobs, and who by and large have given up on their organizations ever acting as if they believed it, too.

people for doing just the opposite?"

It's becoming clearer to me that the power of Total Quality Management concepts of Deming and others derives (1) from their psychological and value-driven base, and (2) from their "totalness." They deal with an organization's work processes as a single system.

As one elementary teacher wrote to me, "Schools have a head start over industry in implementing quality concepts because we have a better foundation in psychology and human development than industry." On the other hand, it's also clear why school people don't feel they can act on those principles. The prevailing organizational paradigm has all the characteristics of a dysfunctional family. That is, its members believe that their present roles and relationships (isolated practitioners, relying on little but their own experience and expertise to respond to children's needs) are the way things are supposed to be. If there's a problem, they - not their "family" - are the ones responsible and in need of fixing.

Until now, this dysfunctional condition has characterized most modern organizations - not just schools. Humans are born as purpose-driven, trial-and-error learning, self-regulating organisms. But most organizational life limits this natural behavior. Regardless of what Herzberg's (1959) research might have told us about the power of intrinsic motivation and the ineffectiveness of external rewards, we could not imagine our work settings existing without grading, evaluating and labeling the people in it. We could not imagine that "top" organizational leaders would be willing to give up what seemed like the power of problem solving and decision making to those on the "bottom". Moreover, with little experience to support it, we really haven't believed that total organizations could change.

So what happened? In a way, W. Edwards Deming has done for the management of work processes what Roger Bannister did for the 4-minute mile. Deming's work in Japan provided evidence that something not believed possible was possible. Total organizations could change, it could cost less to produce quality results, and the brain power of the workers on the front line could be an organization's most valuable resource.

A Student's Eye View

Total Quality Management (TQM) has been termed "a thought revolution in management" (Kim 1991). For business and industry, it created a fundamental paradigm shift by refocusing attention on the "customer" whose needs, requirements, and potentials must now drive the work process. In industrial TQM, the *voice of the customer* provides the information an organization must have to remain responsive. In education, our paradigm shift also involves seeing things through the eye of the customer.

When decisions by teachers, administrators, and board members are made in isolation, there is no way to take advantage of relationships to others who share the same goal.

I started out the year thinking that Total Quality Management could help all those involved in schools to view their actions from a perspective that had a "customer/student" at the center. Today, my concept of student-centredness has changed, and along with it my understanding of the potentials of TQM for education. I had always been bothered by critics' declarations that education is too process-oriented and not sufficiently student-centered. On the contrary, I had observed that student-centeredness already was the cause of some of education's most serious management problems. Underlying most decisions in educational practice has been the unstated belief: this is what's best for the kids. The separate acts of teachers, administrators, and board members alike are driven by their personal views of what's best for children. Unfortunately, the potential power of this common focus has become instead a fundamental weakness because decisions are made in isolation, with no way to take advantage of relationships to others who share the same goal.

The work of schools has been student-centered in the same way that the work of a basketball team might be called "hoop-centered." The success of the whole team (organization) is tied directly to success in putting the ball through the hoop. But imagine a team in which the centers, forwards, and guard were each trained separately and each provided the opportunities to individually practice the necessary decisions and moves for putting the ball through the hoop. What would happen when they came back together to play a real game? Because of their "hoop-centeredness," each would attempt to shoot directly for the basket every time he or she got the ball. The result: many cases of individual "suc-

cess" but a team that most often would lose the game.

What does that metaphor have to do with paradigms for education? Keeping the student foremost in our thoughts has little to do with shifting our sense of the system. We still are looking *at* the student. The total quality view allows us to see *with* a student's eye view - to understand what the school and the world around it looks like to children growing up today.[1]

This student's eye view also allows us to understand that there are always two parallel "systems" in operation. One we control through planning and operational management decisions to achieve the *results* we *want*. The other "system" is composed of all factors that influence the *results we get*, whether or not we can control them.

Two Parallel Systems

The "two systems" view of schooling may help explain why the work processes of the central office and the classrooms seem so disconnected. Each is responding to a different criterion. As an example, the work of curriculum developers in the "first system" starts with what students *must know*. This first system then provides educators with goals for general direction-setting, as well as general support for attaining them.

The work of daily instruction, on the other hand, takes place largely in the "second system." It starts with, and must respond to, what students *already know*. And much of this base of knowledge increasingly is a product of the "second system" - the one over which educators have little control. As Bill Moyers has noted, the *popular culture* is the "most powerful chancellor, superintendent, principal, or teacher in America" (1990). The images and fragmented reality that children confront every day and from which they evoke meaning and values provide the canvas and frame on which schooling starts. And because this starting point on each student's learning journey is constantly changing, those planning and helping students make that journey must have access to continuing information about where each child is.

This continuing information becomes necessary for appropriate and effective instruction. But until now, districts have not had tools and processes to support a classroom capability for this degree of diagnosis and prescription. Information has been pulled out of classrooms to support others' decisions, instead of being moved down and made accessible to those who could more readily act on it. Compounding the problem, America's concern for the *results* of the learning journey currently overshadows the vital need to know where you are at all times. While goals are an obvious direction-setter, if you're not where you think you are when you start out, you can totally miss your goal.

Until now, in both public and private sectors, *systemic* strategies such as strategic planning, mission development, and visioning have been effective ways to develop and gain agreement on desired results. But we have lacked comparable systemic processes that can be used to accomplish the results through continually adjusting the work environment. In education, without such processes to bridge the two systems, many current reform efforts have attempted instead to shrink the boundaries of the two until they appear as if they can both be addressed by building personnel.

A Quality Lens Applied

Districtwide TQM provides, in effect, such a bridging process: a process of *strategic management*. Building on the context and direction-setting provided by systemwide agreement on outcomes, it focuses the total system's daily attention to the "other end" of the process - where the students really are, and it brings to the work setting the strategies necessary to continually generate information required to maintain a journey of incremental improvement between the results we plan for and those we're actually getting.

One shorthand way I've begun to think about what TQM might be like in practice is to imagine a school district entirely staffed by developmentally appropriate educators. These practitioners - usually found in early childhood and special education - always start where the child "is". They do this, not because they know more than other educators, but because in most instances they have no other choice. The realities of disabilities and age (try to group 2-year-olds and keep them quiet) prevent them from making the *management compromises* "regular" educators, operating as isolated practitioners, have to make. The daily negotiation between quantitative

The total quality view allows us to see with a student's eye view - to understand what the school and the world around it looks like to children growing up today.

TQM can provide a broadly applied constructivist approach within which students, staff, and the organization itself are each engaged in continually creating meaning.

curriculum requirements and the qualitative needs of 20-30 individual children - within the fixed limits of time, space, and accessible resources - leaves most isolated practitioners grasping the most manageable alternatives. Most of the "bad" things that reformers rail against - lectures, standardized tests, ability-level grouping, bell schedules, uniform texts, marking on curves - are merely practical ways for isolated practitioners to handle on a continuing daily basis the scope of that management task.

Applying a quality lens to schooling allows us to see management as the common work of the school practitioner and of the administrator. Both create and manage environments in which others can work. Both are decision makers who must solve the same basic problem: how to combine what they know with the resources they have to best meet continuing learning needs. This work process is little different than in industry today where, as Shoshana Zuboff notes, the changing requirements of work have made it necessary for workers to become learners and for managers to become teachers - that is, provide environments where workers can learn from their continuing experience (1988).

No Substitute for Knowledge

One final point I've heard this past year has been that I am not alone in my search for the meaning of TQM for education. We each seem to start out by trying to understand it in terms of what we already know. This is no easy task because so much of what we know is filtered through other beliefs, and TQM challenges many of them.

This portends a period of time when we all will be engaged as much in unlearning as in learning. It will also require that as educators, we be able to untangle our perceptions of ourselves as cognitive, purposeful beings from the jumbled web of "everything-connected-to-everything-else" that comes to mind when we think of learning, teaching, and schooling. All three are, and must be managed as, learning processes.

Moreover, as educators and non-educators attempt to translate into schooling business terms such as "customer", "supplier", or "product", new insights may develop that illuminate the more complex work processes of schooling.

For instance, our "customer" may not have chosen to be one. Unlike industry, the "raw material" that emerges as our "final product" never belongs to us at any point during the process. We can have no "scrap". External judgments of the quality of an industrial product are made after the development process is complete. External inspectors of education's products and processes are daily facts of life.

Current pathways to this understanding of schools as organized work systems and the relevance of TQM to them seem to follow one of the three directions. Perhaps the easiest route is to start with translating Deming's *14 points* into education. This usually is a rewarding group experience because it uncovers how much agreement there is about what's wrong with the ways we manage ourselves in organizations. One important caveat, however. The 14 points are not a sequential checklist. Much like the "Ten Commandments," these 7 do's and don'ts merely illustrate the way people would behave if they bought into the philosophy underlying them.

This is why Deming subsequently had to develop his *Theory of Profound Knowledge*. "Hard work and best efforts, put forth without guidance of profound knowledge, may well be at the root of our ruination. There is no substitute for knowledge... We are being ruined by best efforts directed the wrong way. We need best efforts directed by a theory of management" (1989).

As statements of what people need to believe and know, each of the four areas of *Profound Knowledge* challenges a prevailing mental model loaded with unquestioned assumptions. Each forces one to confront what he or she accepts about people and processes in organizations with what they intuitively "know".

For example:

- His concepts about *systems* confront what, because of our acceptance of the isolated practitioner paradigm, we believe about the lack of interdependency in organizations.
- His thoughts about people, as *psychological beings intrinsically motivated* to want to be effective in their work, force one to apply to others a principle that some of us may think applies only to ourselves.
- His demonstration that

management processes are the causes of up to 90 percent of the variation in outcomes and results of any system challenge directly our attempts to improve schools through monitoring of results, then assigning blames, and trying to fix individuals.

- And his *theory of knowledge* forces awareness of humans as cognitive beings trying to construct knowledge from experience within frames provided by theories and beliefs. In a confusing way, his four elements of *profound knowledge* are themselves an illustration of this one element.

It would seem logical to enter into an understanding of the implications of Deming's ideas through the portal of profound knowledge because it is the sine qua non for long-term commitment. However, initially this path may not provide as many easily glimpsed signposts as the 14 points, and it can require skilled facilitation to help people "let go' of their paradigms.

But What Does It Really Mean?

Finally, because TQM is a process designed to make continual improvement a fact of organizational life, it has been natural to attempt to contrast it with other "improvement" strategies such as Outcome-Based Education, Effective Schools, Accelerated Schools, and Essential Schools. While a point-by-point comparison may help communication, it can blur a fundamental difference between *improvement* processes and *management* processes. Whether true of not, the former tend to be perceived as processes with *change* as a goal. Total Quality Management, on the other hand, connects the "where-we-are-ness" of daily practice to the "where-we-want-to-go-ness" found in the organization's goals. Change becomes just a natural consequence of people managing themselves in a way that allows them to get a little bit more effective every day. The result: continual growth in *total* organizational and personal capacity to act differently.

What seems increasingly clear to me as I've tried to describe TQM in terms of current educational understanding is that it can provide a broadly applied constructivist approach within which students, staff, and the organization itself are each engaged in continually creating meaning, acting based on that new meaning, and being involved in processes that increase their capability to act again. My current definition of TQM is relatively simple:

Total Quality Management is a value-based, information-driven management process through which the minds and talents of people at all levels are applied fully and creatively to the organization's continuous improvement.

Notes

[1]Remember, the oft-cited Copernican paradigm shift - from a view of an earth-centered universe to one that was sun-centered - was not accepted for several generations because people had to intuit the new system concept. No one could stand on the sun, look up, and find that Copernicus' logic was immediately apparent.

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KENNETH A. LEITHWOOD

The Move Toward Transformational Leadership

At the reins of today's new schools will be not one but many leaders who believe in creating the conditions that enable staffs to find their own directions.

Instructional Leadership is an idea that has served many schools well throughout the 1980s and the early 1990s. But in light of current restructuring initiatives designed to take schools into the 21st century, "instructional leadership" no longer appears to capture the heart of what school administration will have to become. "Transformational leadership" evokes a more appropriate range of practice; it ought to subsume instructional leadership as the dominant image of school administration, at least during the '90s.

Sarason (1990) claims that the blame for the "predictable failure of educational reform' rests, in large measure, on existing power relationships in schools: relationships among teachers and administrators, parents and school staffs, students and teachers. His view is widely held: most initiatives that fly the restructuring banner advocate strategies for altering power relationships. They include school-site management, increasing parents' and teachers' participation in decision making, and enhancing opportunities for the exercise of teacher leadership (Sykes 1990). In these respects, the restructuring of schools is analogous to the groundshift in large businesses and industries begun more than a decade ago from Type A toward Type Z organizations (Ouchi 1981). Type A organizations, very useful for some situation and tasks, centralize control and maintain differences in status between workers and management; they also rely on top-down decision processes. Such organizations, which include the traditional school, are based on "competitive" (Roberts, 1986) or "top-down" (Dunlap and Goldman 1991) power. This is the power to control - to control the selection of new employees, the allocation of resources, and the focus for professional development. One cannot do away with this form of power without losing one's share. It is a zero-sum gain.

In contrast, Type Z organizations rely on strong cultures to influence employees' directions and reduce differences in the status of organizational members. Type Z organizations emphasize participative decision making as much as possible. They are based on a radically different form of power that is "consensual" and "facilitative" in nature - a form of power manifested *through* other power, not *over* other people. Such power arises, for example, when teachers are helped to find greater meaning in their work, to meet higher-level needs through their work, and to develop enhanced instructional capabilities. Facilitative power arises also as school staff members learn how to make the most of their collective capacities in solving school problems. This form of power is unlimited, practically speaking, and substantially enhances the productivity of the school on behalf of its students. While most schools rely on both top-down and facilitative forms of power, finding the right balance is the problem. For schools that are restructuring, moving closer to the facilitative end of the power continuum will usually solve this problem.

The noneducational organizations that have undertaken this Type A toward Type Z groundshift have usually done so not out of concern for individual rights or social justice but because such a shift increases their productivity. Restructured schools also hope for these positive effects; as Sarason (1990) explains in defense of greater teacher participation in decision making:

> ... when a process makes people feel that they have a voice in matters that affect them, they will have greater commitment to the overall enterprise and will take greater responsibility for what happens to the enterprise (p. 61).

Transformational leadership provides the incentive for people to attempt improvements in their practices.

The term *instructional leadership* focuses administrators' attention on "first-order" changes - improving the technical, instructional activities of the school through the close monitoring of teachers' and students' classroom work. Yet instructional leaders often make such important "second-order changes" as building a shared vision, improving communication, and developing collaborative decision-making processes (Leithwood and Montgomery 1986, Duke 1987, Smith and Andrews 1989).

We are learning that schools are complex systems made up of parts with greater interdependencies than we earlier believed. Successful first-order changes usually depend on the support provided through significant second-order changes. Failure to acknowledge this complexity is the second reason Sarason (1990) offers for the predictable failure of educational reform. Restructuring initiatives are primarily about second-order changes; they require leadership with a similar focus.

Transformational Leadership

School administrators must focus their attention on using facilitative power to make second-order changes in their schools. "Transformational leadership" provides such a focus. As Roberts (1985) explains:

> The collective action that transforming leadership generates empowers those who participate in the process. There is hope, there is optimism, there is energy. In essence, transforming leadership is a leadership that facilitates the redefinition of a people's mission and vision, a renewal of their commitment, and the restructuring of their systems for goal accomplishment.

In contrast, "transactional" leadership is based on an exchange of services (from a teacher, for example) for various kinds of rewards (salary, recognition, and intrinsic rewards) that the leader controls, at least in part. Transactional leadership practices, some claim, help people recognize what needs to be done in order to reach a desired outcome and may also increase their confidence and motivation. Transformational and transactional leadership practices are often viewed as complementary. Both Bass (1987) and Sergiovanni (1990) consider transactional practices to be central in maintaining the organization - getting the day-to-day routines carried out. Such practices do not stimulate improvement, however. Transformational leadership provides the incentive for people to attempt improvements in their practices. This is why Avolio and Bass (1988) refer to transformational leadership as "value added."

The idea of transformational leadership was proposed in a mature form first by Burns (1978) and subsequently extended in noneducational contexts by Bass (1987) and others. Researchers, however, are only just beginning to make systematic attempts to explore the meaning and utility of such leadership in schools, and very little empirical evidence is available about its nature and consequences in such contexts.

My colleagues and I have recently completed three studies in an ongoing series aimed at addressing these issues. We have studied schools initiating reforms of their own choice as well as schools responding to both district- and state-level initiatives. Our results suggest that transformational school leaders are in more or less continuous pursuit of three fundamental goals: 1) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; 2) fostering teacher development; and 3) helping them solve problems together more effectively.

Maintaining a collaborative culture. In collaborative school cultures, staff members often talk, observe, critique, and plan together. Norms of collective responsibility and continuous improvement (Little 1982, Hargreaves 1990) encourage them to teach one another how to teach better. Our case study of 12 improving schools (Leithwood and Jantzi 1991) identified a number of strategies used by their leaders to assist teachers in building and maintaining collaborative professional cultures. These strategies in-

cluded involving staff members in collaborative goal setting and reducing teachers' isolation by creating time for joint planning. Bureaucratic mechanisms were used to support cultural changes; for example, leaders selected new staff members who were already committed to the school's mission and priorities. These school leaders actively communicated the school's cultural norms, values, and beliefs in their day-to-day interpersonal contacts; and they also shared power and responsibility with others through delegation of power to school improvement "teams" within the school.

Fostering teacher development. One of our studies (Leithwood et al. 1991) suggests that teachers' motivation for development is enhanced when they adopt a set of internalized goals for professional growth. This process is facilitated when they become involved in establishing a school mission they feel strongly committed to. School leaders can do their part by helping to ensure that such growth goals are clear, explicit, and ambitious enough to be challenging but not unrealistic. Feedback from colleagues about discrepancies between their goals for growth and their current practices can be especially helpful.

School leaders can further enhance teachers' development when they give them a role in solving nonroutine problems of school improvement within a school culture that values continuous professional growth.

Improving group problem solving. Staff members sometimes want to and often have to work harder in order to bring about any meaningful school improvement. Transformational leadership is valued by some because it stimulates them to engage in new activities beyond classrooms and put forth that "extra effort" (Sergiovanni 1991). But our third study of transformational school leaders uncovered practices they used primarily to help staff members work smarter, not harder (Leithwood and Steinbach 1991). In this study of how such leaders solved problems in collaboration with teachers during staff meetings, we found that they ensured a broader range of perspectives from which to interpret the problem by actively seeking different interpretations, being explicit about their own interpretations, and placing individual problems in the larger perspective of the whole school and its overall directions.

These school leaders also assisted group discussions of alternative solutions, ensured open discussion, and avoided commitment to preconceived solutions: they actively listened to different views and clarified and summarized information at key points during meetings. They avoided narrowly biased perspectives on the problem by keeping the group on task, not imposing their own perspectives, changing their own views when warranted, checking out their own and others' assumptions, and remaining calm and confident. These leaders shared a genuine belief that their staff members as a group could develop better solutions than the principal could alone, a belief apparently not shared by the nontransformational leaders in our study.

Making a Difference

What hard evidence is there that transformational leadership makes a difference? The evidence is both substantial and positive in noneducational organizations, but only a handful of studies in educational settings, in addition to our own, have been reported (Murray and Feitler 1989, Roueche et al. 1989, Roberts 1985, Kirby et al. 1991, Hoover et al. 1991). One of our studies, a case analysis in 12 schools (Leithwood and Jantzi 1991), paralleled the findings of Deal and Peterson (1990) in demonstrating a sizable influence of transformational practices on teacher collaboration. A second study in 47 schools (Leithwood et al. 1991) demonstrated highly significant relationships between aspects of transformational leadership and teachers' own reports of changes in both attitudes toward school improvement and altered instructional behavior. This study, furthermore, reported little or no

One of our studies suggests that teachers' motivation for development is enhanced when they adopt a set of internalized goals for professional growth.

relationship between transactional (control-oriented) forms of leadership and teacher change - a finding also recently reported by Blase (1990). In sum, we judge the evidence regarding the effects of transformational educational leadership to be quite limited but uniformly positive; clearly, giving more attention to such leadership in the future is warranted.

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RON BRANDT

On Teacher Empowerment: A Conversation with Ann Lieberman

Now Executive Director of the Puget Sound Educational Consortium at the University of Washington, Ann Lieberman has spent her career working with teachers. A long-time teacher advocate, she heightens her sensitivity by spending as much time as possible in schools. Here she discusses the positive developments occurring in the profession and the changes needed to nurture them.

Some people consider you a teacher advocate. Do you see yourself that way?

Yes, in the sense that most of my academic life I have worked primarily with teachers, and this experience has deepened my understanding of teachers' life and work. When you leave teaching, you tend to forget how intense and complex it really is. Even teachers who do something else for a while quickly forget what that dailiness is like. And when the "experts" lose their sensitivity, they begin creating theories about what teaching should be that don't take into consideration what they knew when they were there.

Until a few years ago you chaired the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Columbia University Teachers College.

And I was also the Executive Secretary of the Metropolitan School Study Council, which was developing

new relationships with schools and school districts in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. In that capacity I worked with a couple of projects with the teachers' union, including one involving the New York City Teacher Center Consortium.

What are you doing now?

I'm a professor at the University of Washington, but my major job is Executive Director of the Puget Sound Educational Consortium, a group of 14 school districts linked to the university. My job is to try to bring about change simultaneously in the College of Education and in the schools. For example, we have a leadership academy, located in one school district, in which about 200 principals from all 14 districts participate every year.

We've just gotten a small grant to create a professional development school, which will have a teacher leader, a principal, and give faculty members, who will work with four middle schools trying to redesign how to bring new teachers into the middle school, and also focus on continuing professional development. At the same time, they'll be trying to create a culture in the school that will help the new teachers think differently about how they teach. The university faculty are rethinking their role too.

My job, then, is to promote collaborative activities that promise to foster fundamental changes in both the schools and the university - changes that are necessary to invigorate our educational system.

To what extent do these changes involve "empowering" teachers?

One strand of activity that has turned out to be very important is what we call teacher leadership. Initially, it was just a group of teachers from the 14 districts who began meeting to talk about the reform movement, their own roles, and what they thought of teacher participation. This grass roots discussion group turned into an action research study mounted by the teachers with support from Pat Wasley, a doctoral student at the university, and me. The teachers ended up writing a report reflecting their struggles with the idea of teacher leadership. They also created a new agenda of their own. For me that's what it's all about involving people authentically in dealing with their own professional lives.

That's your definition of teacher empowerment?

Yes. Real participation by teachers reflecting *their* vision of participation. One problem is that the word *empowerment* is very value-laden. Because it has *power* in it, some people jump to the conclusion that it means a takeover: that teachers are now going to tell everybody what to do. I think that's a misunderstanding. It means empowering teachers to participate in group decisions: to have real decision making roles in the school community, which in most places they don't have now.

Shouldn't it also include certain prerogatives that a member of any profession ought to have: the right to make key decisions affecting one's own work?

Yes, I believe it should. We've had a system in which teachers - and principals as well - have had very few such prerogatives.

You seem most interested, though, not in individual autonomy, but in something broader.

Yes, I want to see a shift toward a kind of collective autonomy. I think that behind the classroom door, a lot of teachers already have individual autonomy -

Maybe not officially -

But it's there, and we all know it. Without getting into the argument about what's a profession and what's not, the power I see in collective behavior is that when it becomes legitimate for teachers to work

When you leave teaching, you tend to forget how intense and complex it really is. Even teachers who do something else for a while quickly forget what that dailiness is like

When it becomes legitimate for teachers to work together, they not only get a sense of themselves as a group; they begin to help each other solve problems they cannot solve by themselves.

together, they not only get a sense of themselves as a group; they begin to help each other solve problems they cannot solve by themselves - and we know that teachers have tremendous problems to solve.

There's growing interest across the country in school-based management, which in some cases included provisions for parent participation. Do you see a contradiction between empowering the professionals while at the same time providing for more input from parents?

No. I think initially there will be tension, but it's not because parents and community want one thing and teachers want another. It's because until now the system has divided people. Teachers have been in a defensive posture, left to fend for themselves with only their unions supporting them. The parents have been outside saying, "Look, we want something good for our kids - Why aren't they making it?" The tensions come because teachers, insecure in their isolation, are bound to protect what they have. They feel they know best - and parents feel *they* know best - but as teachers struggle together to establish a real trusting relationship, they will be able to be more open with each other *and* with the community. The mechanisms to accomplish this will have to be discovered along the way - and I am sure they will be - as teachers develop collective confidence, knowledge and experience in working with parents.

What signs are you seeing that may be harbingers of the kinds of changes you say we need?

There is certainly a sense in the land that things have to be difference. The reports of the Holmes Group, the Carnegie Commission, and the Education Commission of the States all point to that. I know that the rhetoric far outstrips the reality, but without the rhetoric, people don't feel that they can do anything substantially different.

The problem is that we want these changes to happen overnight, and it takes time to organize and get people thinking in a different way. My biggest fear is that the political energy won't last long enough to allow the little beginnings popping up everywhere the time they need to grow and mature.

Some of the big programs in career ladders, merit pay, and so on are beginning to falter or have been called off already.

I believe the reason is that some of the early models did not consider the delicate nature of the school culture. How do you encourage collaboration while at the same time pitting teachers against each other?

We must learn to use teachers' strengths in a lot of different ways. Most people have strengths in some areas but are not especially good in others. That's legitimate and human, and we have to figure out how to get organizations to allow for that and even nurture it.

You're seeing signs of that happening?

I'm excited by the variety of things being attempted. Several teachers in our teacher leadership project have told me, "This is the first time I've felt really engaged with other teachers. I am using what I know." Now, I call that new behavior. Administrators may say, "It's not so different. We've always had teachers on committees." But it is very different for teachers to be put on committees by administrators, as has been customary, rather than being in control of - and responsible for - the changes they themselves initiate or take on. I think the unions involved in these efforts are seeing these differences too.

That raises an important point. Administrators I've talked with have deep misgivings about the 'empowerment' talk. Do you believe some of their concerns are legitimate?

Such as ... ?

Well, as you've noted, some of the efforts

to improve teacher status are sponsored by teacher unions. These administrators are afraid that any new power will go not to teachers as individuals but to their organizations.

We must remember that for a long time teachers' working conditions and pay were very poor and they had no one representing them. Understandably, unions took a very militant stance and fought for all the basic bread-and-butter issues they should have fought for. But now things seem to be changing. It's a new time; the unions are struggling with a new way of behaving - and everybody else ought to be struggling too, including professors and principals. If the union is not just bargaining for money but is involved in rethinking how schools needs to adapt to change, then it should be encouraged. Knee-jerk opposition is not appropriate. That's not to say that the unions are always right; clearly, there are problems enough to go all the way around.

Another argument I've heard is that teachers don't really want to get involved in a lot of administrative matters. They'd rather have administrators make the tough decisions, such as who gets 'riffed' when there declining enrolments. Principals claim that some teachers are concerned only with their own classrooms; they won't look at the whole picture, so they can't be depended on to make schoolwide decisions.

Well, I think it's true that most teachers, because they are isolated, are concerned primarily with their own classrooms and their own kids - but that is precisely why it is important to end their isolation. And that in itself takes time and the development of different organizational structures. Working collaboratively requires a new set of skills and attitudes. Ways have to be found to give teachers experience in working together so they can begin to see how other adults can be important to them.

Now, as to how much decision-making teachers want to do, I think that while they are mainly interested in curriculum and instruction - that's the stuff they know and care about - the specifics of running the school will have to be worked out over the long haul as new structures are developed. Good principals and superintendents have always worked closely with teachers; but now we're seeing a redefinition of roles. We can't any longer just make a list of duties: the principal does this, teachers do that. This will take changing behaviors and attitudes on all sides, which is uncomfortable and threatening for all concerned. But because it is difficult doesn't mean it cannot or should not be done.

Another interesting argument is based on the effective schools literature, which is said to prove that good schools have strong principals. This can be interpreted to mean that you won't have an effective school if, for example, it's run by a committee of lead teachers.

I think the "committee of lead teachers" is a caricature. There was one line in the Carnegie Report that has been picked up by a lot of people as though all over the country, "restructuring" means schools run by "committees of teachers." I think it's worth trying, but only as one of many possible models.

I would just say this about effective schools: one misunderstanding of that literature is the idea that the principal did all these wonderful things without teachers. Teachers have rarely been mentioned in the effective schools literature, even though they are obviously critical to successful schools.

I might add that some things we hear about teacher empowerment seem to make the opposite assumption: that if we empower teachers, the principal disappears. Both of these extremes are false. Differing circumstances call for differing responses. In any case I don't think we should equate "strong" with a patriarchal or an authoritarian model.

So what do you think the principal's role should be in the years ahead?

Principals, like teachers, are individuals with varying strengths and weaknesses and styles, who will play different roles in different contexts. But I see principals spending far more time than is the case today facilitating the work of teams of teachers. I like Phil Schlechty's notion of the principal as "leader of leaders" rather than assuming that one person is in charge who has to make all the tough decisions. It dignifies the idea that in any organization, people have a variety of strengths to be nurtured and that all can be leaders in one way or another.

It is a difficult but exciting time. If we seek to hang on to our personal privileges and old ways of doing things, we will certainly fail. We must have the courage to take the organizational and personal risks that will be necessary to fundamentally improve the education of all our children.

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KAREN FOSTER

Small Steps on the Way to Teacher Empowerment

A "slow but sure" approach at Clinton Grove Elementary in Maryland has helpe pave the way for real teacher empowerment.

Do teachers really want to make their own decisions? Folk wisdom among principals has it that the superstars do indeed want to have an impact on their own professional lives but that average teachers - perhaps 95 percent of the work force - just want someone to tell them what to do. And yet principals and other school system leaders recognize the advantages of school-based decision making. The challenge, then, is to prepare teachers for empowerment.

When Clinton Grove Elementary was selected as a Project 2000 School - one of several schools to initiate a futures-planning, school-based management model within the Prince George's County, Maryland, Public Schools - the foundation had already been laid for a move toward teacher empowerment. By the end of the project's first year, Clinton Grove's management team of representatives from all the teacher teams, the support staff, and the parents had made major decisions about budget and spending, instituted curriculum and instructional changes at the primary level, developed a personnel plan, implemented a staff development program incorporating peer coaching, and much more. Here's how it happened.

The Concept of Group Responsibility

For the last several years, teams of teachers had been making decisions about such routine matters as schedules, supplies, and duties. When I became Clinton Grove's principal, one of my first decisions was to abdicate responsibility for determining if it was too cold for outdoor recess. The teachers could understand my reasoning - it was never too cold for me, an avid skier - so we agreed that the person on duty each day would decide. Then there was the matter of schedules: I asked teachers to take

Shared decision making in action can be seen at a meeting of Clinton Grove's School Management Team, made up of the principal and representatives from the school's teacher teams, support staff and parents.

In a playful yet symbolic gesture, Clinton Grove Elementary Staff shared a dinosaur cake at the conclusion of a problem-solving workshop, signifying their intent to let go of old practices and welcome new ideas.

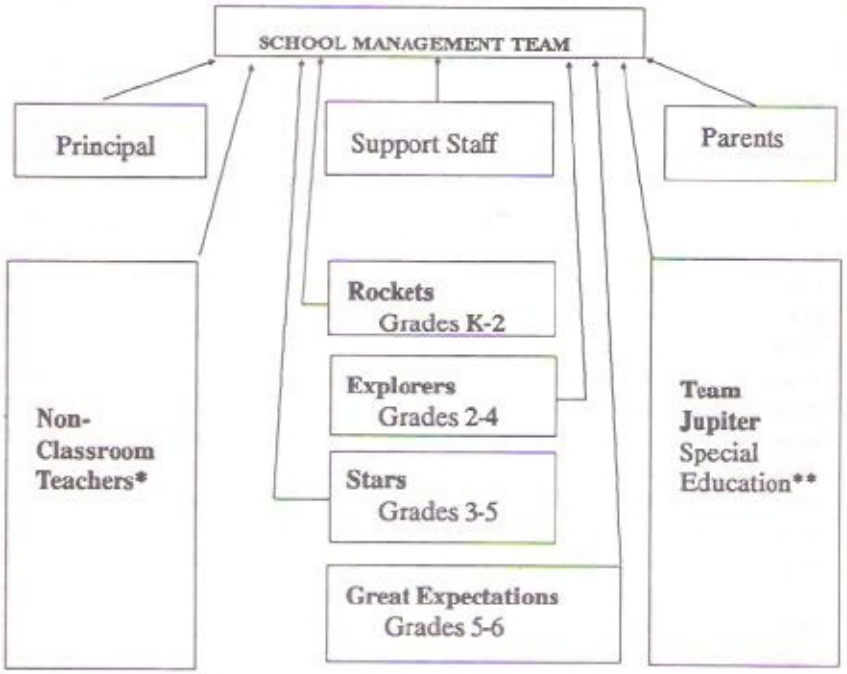
recess when their kids needed it. One team experimented with recess before lunch and liked it so much, they've done it that way for five years. I also decided to keep the supply closet open at all times. I reminded people to let the secretary know when supplies of an item were running low so she could recorder. Once we struggled through the entire Christmas season with an off-shade of construction paper - dark green instead of bright green - but we survived.

These simple decision opportunities helped to pave the way for real empowerment. Two cautions, however, are worth noting: (1) it's necessary to move decision making beyond the mundane to the important aspects of teaching and learning and (2) there's a narrow line between empowering teachers and adopting a laissez-faire leadership style. One major difference between the two extremes in style concerns the idea of *group* responsibility. While the laissez-faire principal merely tells each teacher to do what he or she thinks best, the principal moving toward empowerment charges a group of teachers with coming up with the best decision for all.

Our district's school improvement program had given us a framework for understanding the concept of group responsibility and led to our development of a mission statement. Evaluating decisions against a mission statement guards against the parochialism of individual teacher interests and the danger of making decisions based on the interests of adults rather than of students. The principal's role here is to assist teachers in comparing any proposed action with the statement, as they identify how it supports or deviates from the stated philosophy.

Individually and in small groups, we listed all the skills, knowledge, attitudes, and qualities we wanted our "ideal graduate" to possess. From that initial copious list we reduced, refined, and rewrote until we had a simple one-paragraph statement. The process took us almost a year. After getting parents' approval, we had the mission statement printed. We hung framed copies on the wall in every

Fig. 1. Structure of Clinton Grove Elementary's School Management Team



* Non-classroom teachers: music, physical education, reading resource, library media specialists.

** Special education: teachers of self-contained classes, resource facilitator, aides, speech/language pathologist.

classroom, and the statement prefaced the Parent Handbook. The symbolism of its overriding presence, as much as its meaning, served to bring people together.

The Staff Development Team

Probably the biggest single step toward preparing teachers for empowerment came through staff development. I had become enthusiastic about TESA (Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement), a structured program incorporating peer observation and coaching, and several system-level staff members had been trained to teach the program, so we started a TESA pilot. The timing couldn't have been worse. By the time everything came together, it was early May! But we went ahead, and although the participants found themselves doing peer observations the last week of school, they became strong proponents of the program.

The next year those five teachers became enthusiastic trainers for the entire staff. To participate, we required that all teachers commit to the idea. A few of us held our breaths while we waited for one painfully shy teacher to agree to take part in a program that would invite others to observe her. But peer pressure won out, and she committed to it. Although the yearlong training didn't always go as smoothly as the pilot, with its high-energy and high-skill volunteers, changes in attitude became apparent within a few months, as teachers realized that coaching was nonthreatening and that their colleagues could actually offer them help. The year ended with the decision to continue peer coaching next year using locally generated topics and group-designed observation and coaching instruments. Interested staff members joined the original core of volunteer TESA trainers, and collectively they became the Staff Development Team.

The School Management Team

Now that teachers were working together more closely, we replaced our loosely coupled grade level teams with six larger, more cohesive teams serving multi-grade groups of children: one primary team (K-2), two for the middle grades (one including some primary students [2-4], one including some older students [3-5]), one intermediate (5-6), one special education team, and one non-classroom team that included the teacher specialists (see fig. 1). Each team then selected a leader, who became that team's representative to our new School Management Team, also composed of the principal, a representative of the support staff, and three parent delegates.

Because the team also functioned as the advisory council required by the local union contract, the members spent some time for the first few months going through the standard gripe sessions such groups often get involved in. Once the team was handed was real information, though, and asked to make a real decision, they quickly moved on. By midyear, team members had lost patience with anyone who brought one of those typical gripe-session issues to the table.

As the group's work proceeded, the need for information became apparent. Principals, especially experienced ones in large school systems, often don't realize the amount of information they hold about the way things are done that is not accessible to teachers. The team was enthusiastic about several sessions they arranged with representatives from various departments. For example, after an instructive talk with the maintenance coordinator for the building, the team addressed several requests directly to that department. Their meeting with the reading supervisor to plan for the hiring of a new reading specialist was also most helpful because it gave them insights into developing an expanded job description for the reading specialists position, and it aided them in the interview process.

During the year, a three-day intensive workshop on problem solving was made available to schools in Project 2000, and the management team decided to take advantage of it. Although it took most of the discretionary money given by the PTA, we sent seven members of the team. Later, by accepting a three-day block of time in June that no one else wanted, we were able to get everyone in a leadership position in the school trained. At the conclusion of the workshop, the training group threw a party for the whole staff featuring a dinosaur cake. Eating the cake symbolized getting rid of all our old, outdated ideas so we could be ready in the fall to start anew.

An Empowered Staff

Now I have taken a new position, and several staff members have transferred. Leaving the school was difficult for me, but I know the power is there to make Clinton Grove the very best. Through shared decision making about simple things, trust-building activities, and development of a unified mission, all these teachers have become superstars who want to control their own professional lives, and they have the skills to do it.

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JANICE BARUSH

Go Head or Go 'Starn'?

For decades, we have been sowing the seeds of Correct English Usage. The ground was fertile. Many seeds germinated.

The years rolled by.

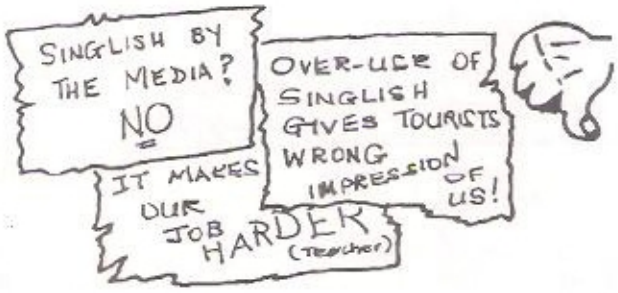
Singlish evolved.

Now with the help of SBC's current 'English' progrmmes, the use of Singlish is going to be entrenched.

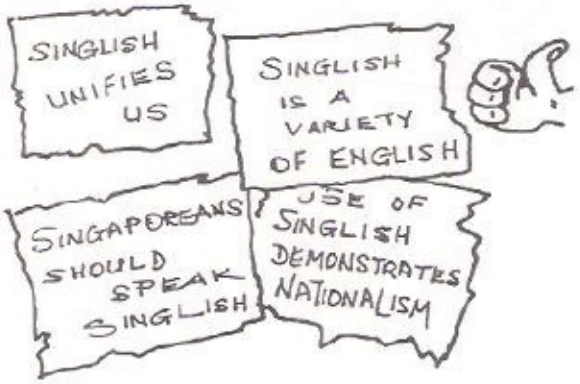
I agree that we should not be expected to use English like a native speaker. I even think that using Singlish in the market place in all right but I certainly do not condone the use of bad English in the name of Singlish.

If that is allowed, do we accept this as Singlish?

The Straits Times obtained feedback from some readers on the use of Singlish. As expected, one group was against its use by the media



and the other group was for its use because it is a variety of English.



Let's turn our attention to the people who are for the wide use of Singlish. In my opinion, they are:

(1) those who know only sub-standard English
(2) those who are proficient in Standard English and can switch from one variety to another without effort.

This latter group may not have problems in dealing with the varieties of English but what about the thousands of pupils in our schools who are not able to tell the difference?

If our children are exposed ONLY to Singlish once they are out of the classroom, then I am afraid the standard of English is going to drop even further.

We do not need to look far and deep to realise this.

Just look across the Causeway:

(1) Johorians have improved their English through watching SBC because of its English programmes and subtitles.

(2) The Malaysian Prime Minister, recently lamented that his top officers were unable to express themselves at international conferences because they were hampered in their command of English and communicative skills.

Why are we lowering standards? (At least, the Malaysians have their Bahasa Malaysia.)

Singaporeans bemoan the poor command of Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. Eventually, what are we going to be good for?

We must make up our minds to GO HEAD or GO 'STARN'.

Janice Barush is the graphic illustrator for Singapore ASCD Review.

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