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Handbook of Instructional Leadership

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Handbook of Instructional Leadership

How Really Good Principals Promote Teaching and Learning

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Based on information from
Jo Blase and Joseph Blase

1.The Craft of Teacher Supervision

- Principal should promote:
1. Collective practice of teaching
2. Sharing of instructional leadership with teachers
3. Alternatives and not directives should be used
4. Collegiality to support instructional supervision

The Study

- Studies suggest that even good instructional leaders that have good positive attitudes and positive strategies have only mixed success
- This is due to principals lacking communication skills and the knowledge essential for planning,change and instructional improvement

The Instructional Supervision Legacy: From Control to Collaboration

- Classifications of Supervision over the last 140 years:
1. Scientific Management
2. Democratic interaction approach
3. Cooperative supervision
4. Supervision as curriculum development
5. Clinical supervision
6. Group dynamics and peer emphasis
7. Coaching and instructional supervision
- Collegial forms of supervision have existed but advanced forms are rarely found in practice
- Control supervision still dominates professional practice

Research on Instructional Supervision

- Regarding Supervision – 5 tasks of supervision (Glickman 1985)
1. Direct assistance
2. Group development
3. Curriculum development
4. Action research
5. Staff development

- Supervision in Practice
1. Communication 2. Staff development 3. Instructional program 4. Planning and Change 5. Motivating and organizing 6. Observation and conferencing 7. Curriculum 8. Problem solving and decision making 9. Service to teachers 10. Personal development 11. Community relations 12. Research and program evaluation

Supervision in Practice (Pajak1989)

1. Communication
2. Staff development
3. Instructional program
4. Planning and Change
5. Motivating and organizing
6. Observation and conferencing
7. Curriculum
8. Problem solving and decision making
9. Service to teachers
10. Personal development
11. Community relations
12. Research and program evaluation

Regarding Instructional Leadership

- Sheppard found positive relationship between effective instructional leadership behaviors and teacher commitment, professional involvement, innovativeness. Good behaviors by principals:

1. Framing school goals
2. Communicating school goals
3. Supervising and evaluating instruction
4. Coordinating the curriculum
5. Monitoring student progress
6. Protecting instructional time
7. Maintaining high visibility
8. Providing incentives for teachers
9. Promoting professional development
10. Providing incentives for learning

Teacher Empowerment Related to Supervision and Instructional Leadership

- Reitzug 1994 constructed the following taxonomy for empowering principals

1. Support: Creating a supportive environment for critique of instruction by educators

2. Facilitation: Stimulating critique of instruction by educators

3. Possibility: Making it possible to give educators voice by publishing and acting on results of critique

School Reform Related to Instructional Supervision and Leadership (Clark and Clark 1996)

- Defining and sustaining educational purpose
- Developing and nurturing community
- Fostering personal and organizational growth

Leadership Processes

1. A strong sense of mission
2. Shared vision
3. Webs of communication
4. Breakdown of hierarchies
5. Shared goverance
6. Personal development
7. Lifelong learning
8. Learning communities

Current Issues in the Field

- Abolishing supervision
- The benefits of supervision to teachers
- Reconciling the estrangement between curriculum and supervision
- Coaching
- The name supervision itself
- Collegiality between supervisors and teachers
- The relationship between staff development and supervision
- National standards for preparation of supervisors
- The influence of business management practices
- The viability of clinical supervision
- How technology influences supervision

2 – The Conference: Heart of Instructional Supervision

Once mutual concerns and ideas are shared, and suggestions are discussed, it (the conference) becomes a planning conference in which teacher and supervisor, collaboratively, decide on continued use of effective, observable teaching behaviors, further collection of observational data, and/or work on a plan for the development of specific teaching behaviors that enhance the teaching process.

Ovando, 1991, p. 21

Talk With Teachers

- Build Trust
- Develop the group
- Foster collaboration and collegiality
- Support peer coaching
- Observe in classrooms
- Confer with teachers about teaching and learning
- Empower teachers
- Maintain visibility

Good Principals Use Five Primary Conference Strategies

- Make suggestions for improvement of instruction
- Visit classrooms and give feedback
- Model good instruction by actually teaching a class
- Using Inquiry – ask questions about the teachers methods
- Soliciting Advice and Opinions from teachers

3. - Staff Development: Promoting Professional Growth

[Teachers need new work habits] that are collegial and public…not solo and private…a new way of learning about learning. Meier,1995

Promote Teachers' Professional Growth

- Study literature and proven programs
- Support practice of new skills, risk taking, innovation, and creativity
- Provide effective staff development programs
- Apply principles of adult growth and development
- Praise, support, and facilitate teachers' work
- Provide resources and time
- Give feedback and suggestions

Tips for Leaders to Enhance Professional Development

- Build an atmosphere of democracy and culture of learning among teachers and administrators
- Involve faculty and parents in school improvement
- Provide training in action research
- Assess the effects of instruction and the climate of the school
- Organize a staff development council to coordinate activities
- Focus staff development on curriculum, instruction, and technology
- Organize study groups
- Develop peer coaching relationships
- Provide time for collaboration
- Commitment of time in studying outcomes

4. – Reflection: Encouraging Critical Study

[Reflective thinking] involves (1) a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and (2) an act of searching, hunting, inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle and dispose of the perplexity.

Dewey,1933 p.12

Foster Teacher Reflection

- Develop teachers' reflection skills in order to construct professional knowledge and develop sociopolitical insights
- Model and develop teachers' critical study(action research) skills.
- Classroom observations – Ask teachers to reflect on their behaviors
- Become inquiry oriented – Ask questions and have dialogue with teachers
- Use data to question, evaluate, and critique teaching and learning. Make Suggestions
- Extend autonomy to teachers
- Praise teachers for concrete teaching behaviors

Encouraging Reflection

1. Reflection is often a shared learning experience.
2. Time must be allotted for reflective dialogue.
3. A lack of trust precludes reflection that might otherwise lead to school improvement.
4. Reflection is sense making.
5. The ability to reflect must be developed over time.
6. The development of reflection skills requires verbal support and modeling.

5. – Being Visible Versus Interrupting and Abandoning

Being Visible results:

- High morale and motivation
- Enhanced self-esteem
- Increased sense of security
- Reflection and reflectively oriented behavior

Interrupting and Abandoning results in:

- Anger
- Low Motivation
- Psychic pain
- Feelings of no support
- Loss of respect for principal
- Poor performance

6. – Praising Versus Criticizing
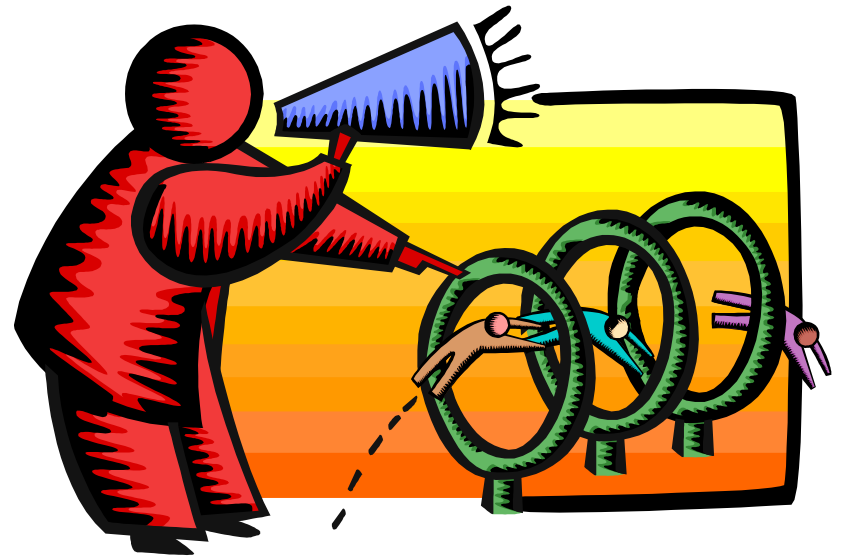
Praising results in:

- High motivation
- Feeling rewarded, cared about
- Enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- Willingness to comply
- Reflection and reflectively oriented behavior

Positives of Principals Wandering Around and Visiting Teachers

- Motivates Teachers
- Monitor Instruction
- Accessible and Provides Support
- To Keep Informed of Activities

Wandering Has Negative Effects

- Interruption of class – taking valuable teaching time away from teachers
- Interfered with teachers teaching – correcting teachers method of teaching during the class

Criticizing results in:

- Anger
- Low motivation
- Damaged self-esteem
- Fear
- Confusion
- Loss of respect and trust for principal
- Appearing to comply;ignoring, avoiding principal
- Resistance and rebellion
- Cautiousness

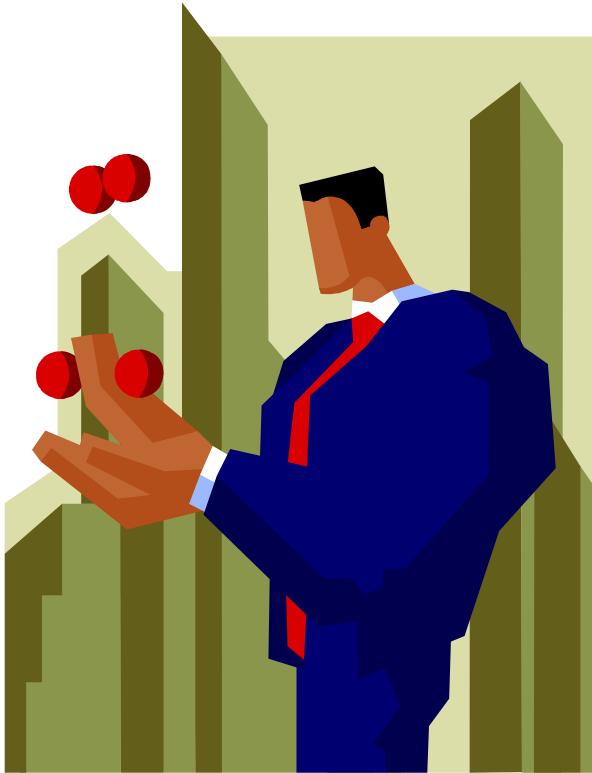# 7. - Extending Autonomy Versus Maintaining Control

Extending Autonomy results in:

- High motivation
- Enhanced self-esteem and confidence
- Increased sense of security and professional discretion
- Reflection and reflectively oriented behavior
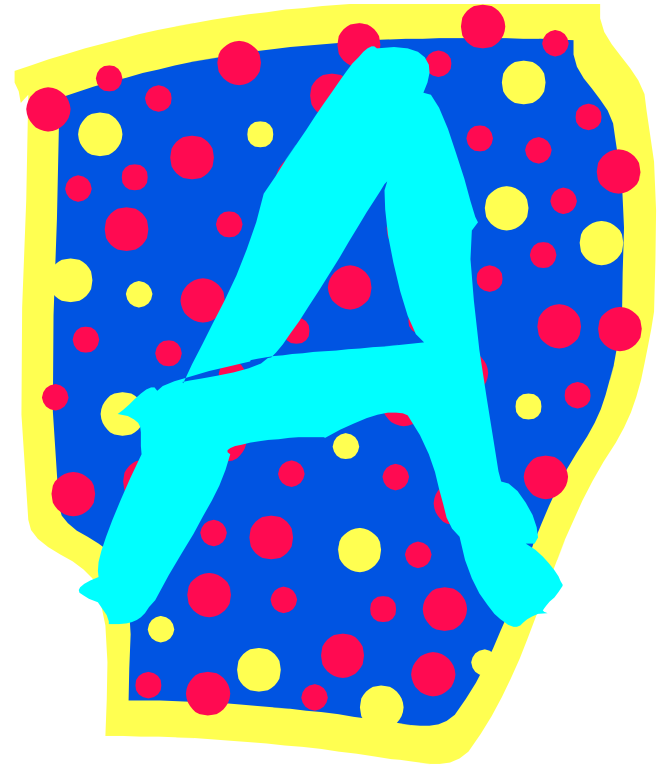
Maintaining Control results in:

- Limited involvement in decision making(false image of governance)
- Sense of being manipulated
- Feeling abused

Controlling Leadership – Negative Effects on Teachers

- Motivation
- Anger
- Self-esteem
- Fearfulness
- Confusion
- Loss of respect and trust for the principal

- Thoughts of quitting teaching
- Compliance
- Avoidance
- Resistance/rebellion
- Quitting
- Lack of communication with the principal

8. – Conclusion: Building a Learning Community

[Supervision is] a way to assist and facilitate the professional activities of teachers working collaboratively to achieve school improvement through shared decision making.

Zepeda, Wood,& O'Hair, 1996,p29

The goal in a learning community is to build connections between people, socially and intellectually. Control interferes with this process; it distances people from one another. Commitment strengthens interpersonal connections. As I have argued elsewhere, building a learning community is tantamount to developing a commitment to shared learning.

Prawat, 1993,p.9

Effective Principal Behaviors Are Effective Because They Accomplish the Following:

- Give teachers choice and discretion
- Foster non-threatening interaction
- Provide evidence of authentic interest
- Allow for "pleasing the principal"

What,Then, Is Good Instructional Leadership or Supervision?

- Zepeda in 1996 concluded that emerging trends in supervisory practice will emphasize the following:

1. Training for administrators/teachers in supervision, mentoring, and coaching.
2. Sensitivity to processes of professional growth and improvement.
3. Training in observation and reflection on practice in teacher preparation programs.
4. Integration of supervision with staff development, curriculum development, and school improvement systems.
5. Improved professional practice in and outside classroom.
6. Continuous improvement as part of every educator's daily life.
7. Focus on group processes in classrooms rather than a one-on-one supervisory experience.
8. Collegial assistance among educators, parents, and students.
9. Use of terms such as colleague consultation and coaching to describe collaboration among professionals.

Supervision should embrace efforts such as:

- Coordination of one-to-one assistance programs among teachers
- School-wide efforts to improve teaching and learning
- Implementation of parent-teacher partnerships for classroom observation and interpretation of student behaviors
- Development of action research programs to inform decision making
- Initiation of collegial study groups to share successes, problems, research, and dialogue about teaching and learning
- Development of mentoring programs
- The teaching of teaching, with sharing of results with other teachers
- Use of a variety of self-assessment and self-improvement plans
- Reflective discussion and writing

Ministerial roles of principals and supervisors include the following:

1. Purposing
2. Maintaining harmony
3. Institutionalizing values
4. Motivating
5. Managing
6. Explaining
7. Enabling
8. Modeling

Researchers suggest the following roles and behaviors for would-be educational leaders.

- Be critical humanists who support the goals of democracy
- Adopt the ethic of caring
- Administrators should operate from their personal values and should lead with soul, passion, and purpose
- Moral leadership
- Leadership, parent involvement, professional commitment and collaboration among the staff

Teachers opinions on actions of a good instructional leader.

1. Talk openly and frequently with teachers about instruction.
2. Provide time and peer connections for teachers.
3. Empower teachers
4. Understand and embrace the challenges of change.
5. Lead

Works Cited

Blase, Jo, and Blase, Joseph. *Handbook of Instructional Leadership – How Really Good Principals Promote Teaching and Learning.*California: Corwin Press, 1998.