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Summer 1993

An Attitudinal Study of the Clinical Supervision Practices of Tacoma Public Schools Principals and Assistant Principals

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AN ATTITUDINAL STUDY OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION

PRACTICES OF TACOMA PUBLIC SCHOOLS PRINCIPALS

AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

A Project Report

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty

Central Washington University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

by

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August, 1993

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The purpose of this project was to determine the statistical relationship between the importance of clinical supervision practices and the frequency of their use. To accomplish this purpose, a review of the current literature and research regarding clinical supervision practices was conducted. In addition, seventy-five principals and assistant principals rated the importance and frequency of clinical supervision practices as identified in the literature. Implications for clinical supervision practitioners are discussed.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

> There is no use talking about instructional
> improvements unless the teacher is given
> enough expert help to make the improvements
> stick. The kind of precise help the situation
> demands will not be delivered by scatter-gun
> supervision amounting to little more than sporadic
> visits followed by some global comments. (Pambookian)

As stated above by Pambookian (1979), the supervision of teachers can be an area with powerful potential for improving the effectiveness of the teaching/learning process.

Teachers are more likely to change when provided with information which shows a discrepancy between what they want to do and what they are doing.

The absence of a formal, useful system of providing teachers with information about what they do was verified by a recent National Education Association survey that revealed only thirty-four percent of secondary teachers in the United States were observed even once during the year, for a period of five minutes or longer (NEA, 1990). The median number of observational visits in secondary schools was one and the median number in elementary schools was two, and only one half of these visits were followed by a conference (McNeil, 1991).

With evidence pointing to the effectiveness of improving student achievement by assisting teachers in improving their instructional skills, why is so little being done? According to Cogan (1974) most administrators lack the necessary skills to properly evaluate teachers. Cogan stated:

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Many principals seem to be responding to an unexamined stereotype when they attempt to take on supervisory duties. The most powerful argument against their assumption of these tasks is a pragmatic one. It usually doesn't work. Most principals are not professionally competent to perform the tasks involved. As a consequence, much of what they do is misdirected and counterproductive. (p. 31)

All teachers are involved and concerned with improving their performance. Unlearning deeply etched patterns and incorporating more effective modes of teaching can be a difficult task, requiring supervisory assistance that must be very precise. Clinical supervision offered the practitioner one systematic approach in which collaborative and objective data collection with feedback provided the support for change in a teacher's classroom behavior (Cogan, 1973).

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to determine the statistical relationship between the importance of clinical supervision practices and the frequency of their use. To accomplish this purpose a review of related literature and research regarding clinical supervision practices was conducted. In addition, seventy-five principals and assistant principals rated the importance and frequency of clinical supervision practices as identified in the literature.

Limitations of the Project

For the purpose of clarification and focus, project limitations included:

1. Scope: The project was confined to principals and assistant principals in the Tacoma Public School District.

2. **Participants:** The project was limited to the seventy-five elementary and secondary principals and assistant principals in Tacoma.

3. **Research:** The preponderance of literature reviewed in Chapter 2 of this study was limited to research conducted within the last fifteen years.

4. **Time:** Questionnaires used for data collected were mailed May 30, 1993 and were returned by June 30, 1993.

Definition of Terms

Significant terms used in the context of this study have been defined as follows:

1. **Clinical Supervision:** The rationale and practice designed to improve classroom performance. It takes its principal data from events in the classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between the teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior (Cogan, 1973).

2. **Pre-observation Conference:** The meeting to establish trust and rapport between the teacher and supervisor. Also to get an orientation towards the students and the lesson to be observed (Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

3. **Observation:** The classroom visit to obtain specific data in order to provide objective feedback for the teacher (Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

4. **Post-Observation Conference:** The meeting to provide the teacher with an accurate descriptive account of the teaching behaviors observed and to analyze the data (Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of literature and research summarized on the following pages has been organized to address:

1. Evidence supporting the need for clinical supervision to improve instruction.

2. The three phase cycle of clinical supervision:
   a. Pre-conference
   b. Observation
   c. Post-conference.

3. Summary.

Research addressed in Chapter Two was identified through an Educational Resources Information Centers (ERIC) computer search. A hand search of other sources was also conducted.

Evidence Supporting The Need For Clinical Supervision To Improve Instruction

In 1955, Burton and Breukner heralded the age of modern supervision as:

> The systematic study and analysis of the
> entire teaching-learning situation utilizing
> a carefully planned program that has been
> cooperatively derived from the situation and
> which is adapted to the needs of those involved
> in it. (Burton and Breukner, 1955, p. 13)

Since 1955, some version of clinical supervision has influenced the routine practice of direct supervision. Modern supervision has assumed a pattern reflecting the activities described by Burton and Breukner, a pattern in which a supervisor observed a teacher teach and then held a conference with him to discuss the classroom experience observed.

Sergiovanni (1976) emphasized that teachers needed assistance to accurately distinguish between what they intended to occur and what actually happened in the course of an instructional episode, thereby allowing for comparisons and helpful diagnosis. Simon (1987) addressed the concept of "espoused educational platform" or intent and what was actually happening at a given point in time in a classroom setting:

> Many Professionals remain unaware
> of the differences between "what
> they practice and what they preach"....
> it is assumed that the integration of
> thought and action in professional
> practice depends on discovering and
> distinguishing between espoused educational
> platforms and platforms in use. (p. 580)

Hunter (1976) noted that "successful teaching is not based on what a teacher is, but depends on what a teacher does in planning and implementing those plans in the teaching process" (p. 163). In addition, Hunter (1980) stated:

> If what a teacher does is consonant with
> what is now known about cause and effect
> relationships in learning, and if that
> teacher's decisions and actions reflect
> awareness of the current state of the learner
> and the present environment, then learning
> will predictably increase. (p. 62)

The ability of the teacher to accurately perceive what happened in a given lesson can be handicapped by the fact that the teacher was submerged in the process himself. Brandt (1972) observed that "over one hundred teacher-child interactions occur in a typical hour of classtime" (p. 28). Goodlad (1979) pointed out that:

> Successful teachers orchestrate a dozen
> or more elements in their instruction in
> order to assure student success and
> satisfaction... Teachers are more likely
> to engage in these arduous, demanding
> teaching techniques when what they do is
> known to and supported by the principal.
> Teaching, like administrative leadership,
> is a relatively lonely activity. (p. 90)

Goodlad further contended that the need for an observer to assist the teacher in his efforts to improve instruction can be facilitated by the clinical supervision model. Clinical supervision has been distinguished from more traditional forms of supervision in that it takes its data principally from classroom observations. The resulting data can provide both the teacher and supervisor with unbiased information to assist the teacher in identifying discrepancies between what was intended and what actually happened during the lesson observed.

Acheson and Gall (1980) defined clinical supervision as a ".... model of supervision that is interactive rather than directive, democratic rather than authoritarian, teacher-centered rather than supervision-centered." Clinical supervision has afforded both the teacher and supervisor an opportunity to engage in discussion regarding the improvement of instruction.

Nasca (1976) concluded from survey results that "classroom teachers view direct assistance in the form of demonstrations in their own settings and prescriptions around their own instructional problems as the most valued sources of assistance from elementary supervisors" (p. 517).

Data which are perceived by the teacher can enable him to consider alternatives in lesson objectives, design, or rationale. The alternatives can then be incorporated and practiced in subsequent teaching sessions designed by the teacher as he attempts to improve his instructional practice, with support from the supervisor.

What specific practices are required of the supervisor to effectively support the classroom teacher in his effort to improve instruction? According to McCleary (1976) specific supervisory practices in clinical supervision are inherent, "born out of analysis of job practice and inferred from the authoritative literature" (p. 31). The three phase cycle of clinical supervision (i.e., pre-observation conference, observation, and post-observation conference) required particular skills and techniques of the supervisor. Each phase, their descriptions, and the relative supervisory practices associated with each have been described in the following sections.

Pre-observation conference

Basic to the practice of clinical supervision has been the development of trust between the teacher and supervisor (Cogan, 1973; Moore & Mattaliano, 1977; Blumberg, 1974). The pre-observation or planning conference had as its primary objective the establishment of rapport between the teacher and supervisor (Wiles & Bondi, 1980). This allowed the supervisor and teacher to build a relationship of mutual trust and respect as fellow professionals (Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

Acheson and Gall (1980) have described the pre-observation conference as the opportunity for the supervisor to get an orientation towards the students and lessons to be observed.

The supervisor and teacher worked together in significant ways, mutually agreeing on the focus of the observation and analysis of the teaching. Seven characteristics of the pre-observation conference were commonly cited in the research by Acheson and Gall and other authorities as described below.

Identify the teacher's concerns about instruction. The supervisor helped the teacher verbalize his needs and concerns; these became the basis for the observation (Wiles & Bondi, 1980; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Acheson & Gall, 1980).

McGreal (1982) advocated the use of the planning conference if for no other reason than to improve the reliability of the classroom observation. The range of things to look for is narrowed considerably when elicited needs and concerns of the teacher become the bases for the observation. Acheson and Gall (1980) concurred, stating the observer sees more when he has something on which to focus his attention. Such a focus can only be ascertained with the teacher before observing a lesson, as in the planning conference.

Hull and Hansen (1973) alluded to the threatening connotation observations can pose for teachers. These authorities stated:

> The supervisor must give attention during
> the pre-conference to reducing threat and
> to building a trust relationship. The teacher
> needs to feel safe with the supervisor, to
> know that it is the teaching that will be looked
> at and not the teacher, to feel that he and the
> supervisor are working as a team toward the same
> objective, that being the improvement of instruction.
> (p. 5)

As noted by Acheson and Gall (1980) the major purpose of clinical supervision was to help teachers improve their classroom instruction, it then became essential that the supervisor identified areas of instruction in which a teacher needed improvement.

This was accomplished by asking questions of the teacher, encouraging him to share needs and concerns (Acheson & Gall, 1980). Kidsvatter and Wilen (1981) believed questioning to be the most important means for pursuing the conference objectives. The questions posed encouraged a teacher to reflect, analyze, and evaluate. The questions should "focus, probe, and clarify, transcending the obvious and mundane" (p. 526). Frazee (1982) suggested that supervisors should start with clarifying questions "which are better if they are open-ended rather than yes or no questions" (p. 107). Clarifying questions aided the supervisor and teacher in mutually understanding and communicating a concern.

Translate the teacher's concerns into observable behavior. Once the concerns have been verbalized, Acheson and Gall (1980) believed one of the most important practices of clinical supervision was to state abstract concerns in concrete observable terms. Through this process the supervisor had enough information to observe the specific concern.

Identify procedure for improving the teacher's instruction. The teacher who had verbalized concerns in concrete terms was now ready to think about alternative behaviors in his classroom instruction. The supervisor helped by thinking aloud or brainstorming ideas with the teacher (Acheson & Gall, 1980). The question both the conference participants examined at this point was "What changes might be made to improve learning?" (Glatthorn, 1984, p. 19).

Assist the teacher in setting self-improvement goals. The focus of concern and examination of alternative behaviors to be employed by the teacher lend themselves to a generalized direction for the clinical supervision process. Consequently, stating the direction in terms of a goal helped ensure that both the supervisor and teacher had the same understanding of the direction and agreed with it (Acheson & Gall 1980).

McCleary (1976), in a report of sources and methodologies for identifying supervisor practices in clinical supervision, cited one such practice to be "identifying needs, aspirations, talents, and goals of both persons and institutions in which the trusteeship is to take place" (p. 31).

The goal statement was important in preventing misunderstandings and ensured that proper procedures were followed as well (Goens and Lange, 1976).

Arrange a time for classroom observation. To this point in the pre-observation conference, participants have talked about the focus and strategies to be used throughout the remainder of the supervisory cycle. It remained then to arrange a time for actual classroom observation. The time selected should be mutually convenient (Acheson & Gall, 1980; Frazee, 1982; Wareling, 1982). The teacher was more likely to feel that the supervisor respected him as a professional, with the primary responsibility for his classroom, if the consideration to observe at a mutually convenient time was extended (Acheson & Gall).

Select an observation instrument and behaviors to be recorded. The teacher could also be cooperatively involved in the selection of the observation technique. This included the designation of a particular observation instrument (i.e., questionnaire, survey, seating chart, etc.). The instrument selected should be one which gave data specific to the concerns expressed by the teacher (Acheson & Gall, 1980; Lovell & Wiles, 1983).

Clarify the instructional context in which data will be recorded. Finally, in an effort to strengthen the relationship of trust and respect between the teacher and supervisor and to provide the supervisor with a context for observation, the supervisor asked questions of the teacher to understand what he would be seeing when he observed the lesson. "The teacher will tolerate the presence of the supervisor better, knowing that they have a shared understanding of what the lesson is about" (Acheson & Gall, 1980, p. 54).

The Observation

Sergiovanni (1976) stated it would be helpful to the supervisor and the teacher for the supervisor to become familiar with a variety of ways to record behaviors observed during classroom instruction. The resulting data could serve as highly useful feedback devices, helping teachers as they attempted to understand how well certain instructional procedures work or what actually happened in their own classrooms throughout a school day. Brandt and Perkins (1972) stressed that:

> with precise, accurate records of some of the
> activity a teacher is responsible for but too
> busy to assess accurately while he is teaching,
> a teacher and supervisor should have the most
> fruitful discussions of what the data mean,
> whether too much of some kinds of behavior and
> too little of others have occurred, and what
> instructional strategies might produce more
> desirable behaviors. (p. 8)

This was particularly true when the data was of those aspects of school life about which the teacher was concerned. Acheson and Gall (1980) and other authorities consistently cited nine activities used to collect classroom data as detailed below.

Recording selective verbatim: Teacher Questions. One practice utilized by supervisors was that of recording selective verbatim. Useful for noting events in the classroom, selective verbatim was a written record of exactly what was said in designated instances. This task was usually done by the supervisor while the teacher's class was in progress (Acheson & Gall, 1980). Brandt and Perkins (1972) referred to this practice as narrative data.

> Behavior is recorded in sequence as it
> happens and without interpretation....
> the essence of narrative reporting is
> the objectivity and completeness with

which behavioral setting information is
recorded, so that resulting descriptions
accurately represent that which actually
takes place. (p. 27)

A teacher and supervisor would analyze question-asking data obtained in an observation in terms of the cognitive level, the amount of information required, redirection, probing, and multiple questions asked (Acheson & Gall, 1980).

Recording selective verbatim: Teacher feedback. Teacher feedback to students can be documented through the use of selective verbatim as well. It is important for teachers to know how they responded to their students so that they could assess where changes in their behavior would promote improved student learning. Considered to be a landmark research project in identifying the conditions and skills a teacher needs to teach effectively, the Beginning Teacher Evaluation Study (BTES) found feedback to be "more strongly and consistently related to achievement than any of the other teaching behaviors [identified in the study]" (Denham & Lieberman, 1980, p. 37).

Data from recording of selective verbatim can be viewed in light of the above findings to look for any patterns that could impede academic achievement.

Record selective verbatim: Teacher directions and structuring statement. Wiles and Bondi (1980) summarized structuring statements to be those that a teacher would use in "preparing students for the lesson by reviewing, outlining, explaining, objectives, and/or summarizing" (p. 194).

Students performed better if directions and other verbal cues were used by teachers throughout instruction. Selective verbatim data reflected the frequency of such statements as well as the types of statements used by the teacher, including those statements aimed at overview, review, summary, directions, and reinforcement (Acheson & Gall, 1980).

Seating charts: Engaged time-on-tasks. Observational data can also be collected using seating charts (Acheson & Gall, 1980). One focus, using seating charts, might be that of student engaged time-on-tasks. This information would be recording the amount of time a student spends actively learning, whether studying a subject or completing assigned learning activities (Touchton, 1982). Levin (1981) recommended that teachers who are interested in improving their students' involvement considered these eight guidelines:

1. Devote more time to teaching-learning activities. Those that are essential to instruction include explaining, directing, probing, testing, listening to responses, and demonstrating new ideas and procedures.
2. Increase active student participation by moving about the classroom frequently, changing seating arrangements, and reinforcing as many students as possible for their participation.
3. Make fluid transitions between activities.
4. Use adequate and clear instructions.
5. Increase the interest value of instruction by relating it to students' interest.
6. Identify and help the least involved students.
7. Prepare students adequately for instruction.
8. Adapt instruction to individual needs. (pp. 10-12)

Seating Charts: Verbal Flow. Given the many interactions in which students and their teachers engaged daily, the teacher could benefit from information about the verbal communication patterns that are exhibited in the classroom. Acheson and Gall (1980) distinguished information about verbal flow from selective verbatim: "Selective verbatim is concerned more with the actual content of the verbal communication, whereas verbal flow identifies the initiators and recipients of the verbal communication and the kind of communication in which they are engaged" (p. 113).

Cooper and Good (1983) highlighted results of studies in which certain biases were evident in verbal interaction patterns between teachers and students. "The data indicated that teachers interact differently with students depending upon whether the student is perceived high or low in potential.

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The interaction differences.... suggested that high achievers have more favorable interactions with the teacher than do low achievers" (p. 62).

Other biases can be identified in terms of ethnic origin, seat location, age, and sex. A study by Adams, Biddle, and Rist ("What's Noteworthy," 1981) found that "students most likely to be asked questions or participate in discussions were seated in a T-shaped area, with the top of the T at the center front of the room and stem extending down the middle" (p. 35).

Jackson and Cosca (1980) found that teachers praise, encourage, and accept ideas of and direct more questions to Anglo students than to Chicano students. Gall (cited in Acheson & Gall, 1980) reviewed research relative to differences between students in verbal behavior and reported that "black students tend to participate less in discussions than white students, and younger students tend to participate less than older students" (p. 114).

The teacher could look at data gathered during an observation and focus on verbal flow patterns to identify patterns that may have revealed certain biases. He was then able to make a conscious effort to change patterns of verbal interaction that did not promote learning for all students.

Seating charts: Movement patterns. Acheson and Gall (1980) believed data concerning the movement flow or proximity of teacher and students revealed three basic patterns:

"1. The teacher's movement patterns may affect classroom control and student attentiveness.

2. The teacher may reveal consistent bias in movement patterns.

3. Students' movement patterns may reveal whether or not they are at tasks" (p. 120).

The BTES study (Denham & Lieberman, 1980) disclosed that when monitoring students by circulating around the room during seatwork to check on their progress, teachers most often were commending, giving feedback or explanation. "Students pay more attention.... good teachers do this to keep students on tasks, but also find out how students are doing so they can plan further instruction" (p. 37).

Good and Brophy (1984) saw such movement patterns as effective classroom management techniques as well:

> When teachers are checking seatwork or
> moving about the room, they often can
> eliminate minor misbehavior simply by
> moving close to the students involved.
> If students know what they are supposed
> to be doing, the teacher's physical
> presence will motivate them to get busy.
> This technique is especially useful with
> older elementary students. (p. 207)

Anecdotal records. Rather than using structured recording practices discussed to this point, the teacher and supervisor may have found the use of wide-lens anecdotal records to be more helpful. The term "wide-lens" as coined by Acheson and Gall (1980) is used to describe an anecdotal record consisting of "handwritten notes of short, descriptive sentences, each summarizing events as they unfold throughout the observation" (p. 128). Prior to the observation the teacher and supervisor agreed upon just how much of the classroom activity was to be noted.

As with every other type of observational practice, it remained vital that the data be objective and non-evaluative. This helped ensure that the teacher formed conclusions about the effectiveness of the lessons, rather than reacting to a perceived evaluation (Wareling, 1982).

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Video and audio recordings. Video and audio recordings were recognized by Acheson and Gall (1980) to be:

> Probably the most objective observation
> [practice].... they allow teachers to see
> themselves as students see them. Another
> advantage of recording is that they have
> a wide focus. They can pick up a great deal
> of what teachers and students are doing and
> saying. A good recording captures the "feel"
> of classroom interaction. (p. 131)

Salomon and McDonald (1970) conducted a study in which they observed teachers' selection of information and changes in attitude when viewing their own recorded teaching performances on video-tape. They concluded that "self viewing on video-tape will not lend to any desirable attitudinal and behavioral changes unless it serves as feedback, that is, information about the amount of departure from desired performance" (p. 285).

Use of checklists. Another approach to collecting reliable data during an observation was the use of supervisor-administered checklists. These were general instruments or procedures that can be adapted to particular situations. Lovell and Wiles (1983) described checklists as instruments:

> Providing general categories of behavior
> [i.e., calls on nonvolunteers, redirects
> question, praises student responses,
> invites student-initiated questions, etc.]
> under each category and with spaces provided
> for recording incidents of specific behavior
> within a certain timeframe. (p. 176)

These instruments can be developed by the supervisor and teacher in such a way that the data will be useful as feedback, encouraging the teacher to examine his actual behavior during the lesson observed.

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Acheson and Gall (1980) pointed out that the instruments "can be constructed using research-based statements reflecting what are known to be effective and ineffective behaviors" (p. 145).

In summary, the observation phase of the clinical supervision cycle provided an opportunity for the supervisor to gather objective data, germane to the specific concerns voiced by the teacher in the pre-observation conference.

- Many practices focused on what is known about effective teacher behaviors that promoted student learning. They included such structured practices as selective verbatim, with emphasis on questioning strategies, verbal feedback, directions and structuring statements, student time-on-task, verbal flow patterns, or movement flow of teacher and students. A broader focus for the observation can be implemented with wide-lens anecdotal records or video recordings.

The post-observation conference

The primary goal of the post-observation feedback conference was to encourage teachers to examine their own effectiveness (Sweeney, 1982; Cogan, 1983; Lovell & Wiles, 1983; Acheson & Gall, 1980). These authorities consistently noted four characteristics of the post-conference discussed below.

Provide the teacher with feedback using objective observational data. According to Acheson and Gall (1980), this required that the supervisor provided an accurate descriptive account of the teaching behaviors observed. Acheson and Gall (1980) maintained that the "essential ingredient of effective conferences [is] providing objective data" (p. 57). Lovell and Wiles (1983) stressed the need for the importance of a strong and valid data base that could be used as feedback.

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"If the data base is fuzzy, distorted, not relevant to teacher concerns, or not presented in an adequate way, the supervisory process is likely to be worthless or, worse, alienating to the teacher" (p. 175).

The first step in the feedback conference was to analyze the data. The teacher and supervisor looked for patterns of behavior that repeated with great frequency over time (Lovell and Wiles, 1983). It was important that both participants withhold making value judgments; the data will speak for itself. Shale (1975) suggested that "the most difficult part of the task for the principal is to remove his judgmental thinking from the process as he and the teacher concentrate on improving instruction" (p. 35).

Based on the data, the teacher decided on what instructional changes to make in the future. These changes more than likely would reflect the concerns verbalized by the teacher in the pre-observation conference (Acheson & Gall, 1980).

Elicit the teacher's inferences, opinions and feelings. According to Lovell and Wiles (1983) in an effort to facilitate mutual trust and respect between the conference participants, it was important that the teacher be encouraged to share his "inferences, opinions, and feelings about the data" (p. 60). The supervisor could elicit such responses by asking questions of the teacher, inquiring as to what he would repeat or change if he were to do the lesson observed again. Glatthorn (1984) agreed that helping the teacher discern the prevailing feelings about the lesson "will yield some important insights about the teacher's perceptions" (p. 34).

Goens and Lange (1976) identified specific practices that a supervisor must demonstrate to foster the best helping relationship. Among those, "being a good active listener and hearing the intent as well as the content of peoples' messages" (p. 19) and "being sensitive to an individuals perceptions and situations" (p. 19) support the need to elicit the teacher's responses to the observation data.

Sweeney (1982) agreed that the supervisor can and should "communicate a desire to understand teachers' meanings and feelings" (p. 38) in the context of a helping relationship rather than an authoritative one.

Encourage the teacher to consider alternative lesson objectives. As stated by Acheson and Gall (1980), the supervisor is in a position to encourage the teacher to consider alternative strategies or activities during the feedback conference. Such behavior can result when the teacher decided what needed to be changed based on the patterns revealed by the data examined. Feldens and Duncan (1978) conducted a study in which they reported that:

> Feedback, goal setting, and goal setting combined with feedback, when coupled with systematic observations and inservice training of teachers in the instructional behaviors being observed, does promote instructional behavior changes of those teachers who choose for themselves the nature of the change. (p. 50)

Together with the teacher, the supervisor can be supportive and "introduce assumptions, theories, and research about teaching" (Lovell & Wiles, 1983, p. 179). Hunter (1980) concurred:

> The trained observer can identify teaching behaviors which research and classroom evidence would support as increasing the probability of learning. Bringing these behaviors to the conscious awareness of the teacher and articulating why they are effective increases deliberate and appropriate use of these principles in the future. (p. 67)

Lovell and Wiles (1983) stated the supervisor may need to model the alternative behaviors or strategies that the teacher has selected to incorporate in future lessons.

The teacher observes the modeling and provides the feedback during the subsequent conference (Acheson & Gall, 1980). Alfonso, Firth and Neville (1984) stated that "supervisors need to work closely and continuously with teachers. It is essential that they possess specialized skills, including the ability to demonstrate the skills they seek to develop in teachers" (p. 18). Hunter (1984) agreed that supervisors must be able to "articulate, explain, and demonstrate the cause-effect relationships that exist between teaching and learning" (p. 183).

Providing the teacher with opportunities for practice and comparison. Once the teacher has decided on what changes are to be made and has developed a plan, the supervisor must allow the teacher time "to try out new approaches, develop new skills, or compare several strategies" (Acheson & Gall, 1980, p. 68). Flanders (1976) believed that opportunity for practice was important for teachers to incorporate new behaviors permanently in their instructional strategies. "When teachers study their own interaction thoughtfully and have a chance to practice new patterns of interaction, they tend to modify their behavior so as to become more responsive" (pp. 55-56). Joyce, Hersh, and McKibbin (1983) maintained that "practice is a very efficient way of acquiring skills and strategies whether related to the tuning of style or the mastery of new approaches" (p. 140).

The supervisor should continue to lend his support in a helpful manner by arranging a time to "observe, record, and reinforce teacher progress" at a later date (Acheson & Gall, 1980, p. 65). Joyce et al. (1983) concluded that this pattern of "practice-feedback-practice" (p. 141) will permit the teacher to incorporate or transfer new practices into his repertoire of effective instructional behaviors. "In other words, feedback alone does not appear to provide permanent changes, but regular and consistent feedback is probably necessary if people are to make and maintain changes in very many areas of behavior" (p. 141).

Summary

The research and literature in Chapter Two supported the following themes:

1. The clinical supervision model provided the practitioner with a systematic approach through which the supervisor can offer direct, in-class support and service to the teacher.

2. The success of its implementation is distinguished from other models in the collegial, collaborative relationship established between the supervisor and teacher. This open, trusting relationship provides both participants with the opportunity to work together in the collection and analysis of observation data.

3. The resulting data, coupled with what is known about effective teacher behaviors can promote student learning and can enable the teacher to make decisions about his instructional practice, tailoring that practice accordingly.

4. It rests with the supervisor to sensitively employ the various practices identified in each of the phases of the supervision cycle, ensuring that the teacher is successful in his attempt to improve instruction.

CHAPTER THREE

PROCEDURES FOR THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to determine the statistical relationship between the importance of clinical supervision practices and the frequency of their use. To accomplish this purpose a review of related literature and research regarding clinical supervision practices was conducted. In addition, seventy-five principals and assistant principals rated the importance and frequency of clinical supervision practices as identified in the literature.

Chapter Three contains background information describing:
1. Need for the Project.
2. Development of the Questionnaire.
3. Population Group/Sample Surveyed.
4. Treatment of Data.

Need for the Project

The Tacoma Public School District provides extensive inservice training in clinical supervision for principals and assistant principals. As a part of their job responsibilities, the administrators in Tacoma are expected to complete two teacher observations each month using the clinical supervision model. The direct purpose of these observations is to improve instruction.

The writer of this project (Leanne M. Dunlap), fully supporting the need for clinical supervision, wanted to determine how the administrators of Tacoma viewed clinical supervision. For example: Did they see it as an integral component of their role in improving instruction? What type of clinical supervision practices were most often used? The present study sought to answer these kinds of questions while identifying the statistical relationship between the importance of clinical supervision practices and the frequency of their use.

Development of the Questionnaire

To design a questionnaire for data collection an ERIC search was conducted to identify clinical supervision practices from the literature. These practices became the primary source for developing the questionnaire. The twenty-three item questionnaire for use in this project was designed in three parts: the pre-observation conference; the classroom observation; and, the post-observation conference. A scale of one to four was assigned to each of the twenty-three questions, for respondents to indicate the regularity of each practice. In addition, three of the questions were open-ended.

Population Group/Sample Surveyed

For the purpose of this project, the investigator surveyed a single population group, consisting of seventy-five Tacoma Public School District principals and assistant principals. This included five principals and eleven assistant principals at the high school level; ten principals and ten assistant principals at the middle school level; and, thirty-six principals and three assistant principals at the elementary level. Those surveyed were asked to rate the importance and frequency of clinical supervision practices.

Treatment of Data

Replies for each questionnaire item were tallied to indicate both frequency and percentage of responses. Data generated from the questionnaire has been presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

Data presented in Chapter Four have been organized in three sections. These sections correspond with the three categories contained in the questionnaire instrument (APPENDIX) for the purpose of this project, which was to determine the statistical relationship between the importance of clinical supervision practices and the frequency of their use. These sections included:

1.   Administrator practices: pre-observation conference.

2.   Administrator practices: classroom observation.

3.   Administrator practices: post-observation conference.

Responses to the open-ended questions have also been grouped, in accordance with the three questionnaire categories and have been tabulated by frequency and percentage.

The questionnaire was mailed to all seventy-five principals and assistant principals in the Tacoma Public School District. Sixty-six questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 88 percent. All questionnaires were filled out correctly and included in the data collection.

Respondents completed a twenty-three itemed questionnaire. Twenty specific clinical supervision practices were rated in terms of frequency with which each practice was utilized throughout the clinical supervision process. Responses to each of the twenty questionnaire items were tallied. In addition, responses to the three open-ended questions were also included. Tables 1 through 3 illustrated the results of clinical supervision practices of the Tacoma Public School administrators surveyed.

A Presentation of Data

Pertaining to Administrator Practice:

Pre-Observation Conference

Table 1 provides a summary of responses of practicing administrators when asked to rate the frequency of clinical supervision practices during the pre-observation conference. For example, sixty four respondents (97%) "always/often" met with the teacher prior to conducting the classroom observation. Table 1 further indicated that 70% or more of the respondents "always/often" during the pre-observation conference did the following: Identified teachers concerns about instruction (89.9%); identified procedures for improving the teacher's instruction (72.8%); arranged for classroom observation time (100%); selected an observation instrument and behaviors to be recorded (81.8%); and, clarified the instructional context in which data was recorded (86.4%).

It was observed that of the seven characteristics of the pre-observation conference, Tacoma administrators practiced six of them "always/often" 70 percent or more of the time. The one pre-observation characteristic rated the most frequently was, arranged for classroom observation time. This was "always" done 97 percent of the time by Tacoma administrators.

In response to open-ended questions regarding the pre-observation conference, Tacoma administrators indicated they also discussed the following topics with teachers: A management plan; building program goals; and, effective instructional practices.

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TABLE 1

FREQUENCY (f) AND PERCENTAGE (%) OF RESPONSES OF SIXTY-SIX PRINCIPALS
AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS WHEN ASKED TO INDICATE
WHICH ACTIVITIES THEY PRACTICED DURING THE PRE-OBSERVATION
PHASE OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION CYCLE

ADMINISTRATOR PRACTICES: PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. Meet with the teacher prior to conducting classroom observation	f	59	5	2	
	%	89.4	7.6	3	
2. Identify teachers concerns about instruction	f	32	26	7	1
	%	48.5	39.4	10.6	1.5
3. Identify procedures for improving the teacher's instruction	f	18	30	14	4
	%	27.3	45.5	21.2	6
4. Assist the teacher in setting self-improvement goals	f	13	33	12	8
	%	19.7	50	18.2	12.1
5. Arrange for classroom observation time	f	64	2		
	%	97	3		

TABLE 1--CONTINUED

		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
6.	Select an observation instrument and behaviors to be recorded				
	f	37	17	11	1
	%	56	25.8	16.7	1.5
7.	Clarify the instructional contex in which data will be recorded				
	f	40	17	8	1
	%	60.6	25.8	12.1	1.5
8.	Other:				
a.	Discuss management plan				
	f	2			
	%	3			
b.	Discuss building program goals				
	f	3			
	%	4.5			
c.	Review effective instruction practices				
	f	1			
	%	1.5			

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A Presentation Of Data

Pertaining to Administrator Practices:

Classroom Observation

As indicated in Table 2, techniques used "always/often" by Tacoma administrators for data collection when conducting the classroom observation phase of the clinical supervision cycle were the following: Transcribed teacher directions and structuring statements (97%); transcribed verbal feedback to students (93.9%); transcribed teacher questions asked to students (92.4%); and, made informal anecdotal records of general classroom activities (89.4%).

Tacoma administrators "never" used video and/or audio recordings 83.3 percent of the time and only 1.5 percent used this technique "often". In addition, Tacoma administrators "sometime/never" used observer-administered checklists 66.7 percent of the time.

In response to open-ended questions regarding the classroom observation, Tacoma administrators indicated they also used the following techniques to gather data: A lap top computer; made script tape; discussed lesson with students; and, recorded specific activities requested by the teacher.

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY (f) AND PERCENTAGE (%) OF RESPONSES OF SIXTY-SIX PRINCIPALS
AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS WHEN ASKED TO INDICATE
WHICH ACTIVITIES THEY PRACTICED DURING THE CLASSROOM
OBSERVATION PHASE OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION CYCLE

ADMINSTRATOR PRACTICES:
CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. Transcribe teacher questions asked to students	f	36	25	5	
	%	54.5	37.9	7.6	
2. Transcribe verbal feedback to students	f	37	25	4	
	%	56	37.9	6.1	
3. Transcribe teacher directions and structuring statements	f	45	19	2	
	%	68.2	28.8	3	
4. Observe and tally students' engaged time on task	f	7	33	24	2
	%	10.6	50	36.4	3
5. Observe and tally verbal flow	f	13	22	29	2
	%	19.8	33.3	43.9	3

TABLE 2--Continued

		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
6.	Observe and tally movement patterns	f	8	28	28	2
		%	12.1	42.4	42.4	3
7.	Make informal anecdotal records of general classroom activity	f	44	15	6	1
		%	66.7	22.7	9.1	1.5
8.	Use video and/or audio recordings	f		1	10	55
		%		1.5	15.2	83.3
9.	Use observer-administered checklists	f	13	9	17	27
		%	19.7	13.6	25.8	40.9
10.	Other:	f	4			
	a. Use lap top computer	%	6.1			
		f	4			
	b. Analyze the data with teacher	%	6.1			
		f	3			
	c. Make a script tape	%	4.5			
	d. Discuss lesson and objectives with students	f	2			
		%	3			
	e. Record specific activities requested by teacher	f	4			
		%	6.1			

A Presentation of Data

Pertaining to Administrator Practices:

Post-Observation Conference

Table 3 contains a summary of activities Tacoma administrators practiced during the post-observation conference. The Activities with the highest frequency that were "always" practiced were: Provided the teacher with feedback using objective observational data (84.9%); and, elicited the teachers inferences, opinions, and feelings about the data (81.8%).

Table 3 further indicated that Tacoma administrators practiced all four post-observational activities "always/often" 70 percent or more of the time.

In response to open-ended questions regarding the post-observation conference, Tacoma administrators indicated they also did the following: Set time for another observation; developed plan for change; discussed personal development plan; set instructional goals for next visit; and, offered resources for staff development.

A summary of major findings has been presented in Chapter Five.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY (f) AND PRECENTAGE (%) OF RESPONSES OF SIXTY-SIX PRINCIPALS
AND ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS WHEN ASKED TO INDICATE
WHICH ACTIVITIES THEY PRACTICED DURING THE POST-OBSERVATION
PHASE OF THE CLINICAL SUPERVISION CYCLE

ADMINISTRATOR PRACTICES: POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
1. Provide teacher with feedback using objective observational data	f	56	8	2	
	%	84.9	12.1	3	
2. Elicit the teacher's inferences, opinions, and feelings about the data	f	54	10	2	
	%	81.8	15.2	3	
3. Encourage the teacher to consider alternative lesson objectives, methods, and reasons	f	21	31	14	
	%	31.8	47	21.2	
4. Provide the teacher with opportunities for practice and comparison	f	19	28	18	1
	%	28.8	42.4	27.3	1.5
5. Other: a. Set time for another observation	f	3			
	%	4.5			

TABLE 3--Continued

		ALWAYS	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	NEVER
Other Cont.:					
b.	Develop plan for change if necessary	f	2			
		%	3			
c.	Discuss personal development plan	f	4			
		%	6.1			
d.	Set instructional goals for next visit	f	4			
		%	6.1			
e.	Offer resources for staff development	f	2			
		%	3			

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this project was to determine the statistical relationship between the importance of clinical supervision practices and the frequency of their use. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current literature and research regarding clinical supervision practices was conducted. In addition, seventy-five Tacoma Public School District principals and assistant principals were surveyed and asked to rate the importance and frequency of clinical supervision practices as identified in the literature.

Summary of Major Findings

Pre-Observation Conference. Tacoma administrators "always" meet with the teacher prior to conducting the classroom observation 89.4 percent of the time. In addition, these administrators "always" arranged for a classroom observation time 97 percent of the time.

Classroom Observation. Tacoma administrators "never" used video and/or audio recordings 83.3 percent of the time.

Post-Observation Conference. Tacoma administrators "always" provided the teacher with feedback using objective observational data 84.9 percent of the time and also elicited the teacher's inferences, opinions, and feelings about the data 81.8 percent of

Conclusions

Conclusions reached as a result of the project were:

1. In the pre-observation phase of the clinical supervision cycle, a pre-observation conference is commonly practiced.

2. During the classroom observation, respondents preferred a specific focus for recording observation behaviors as opposed to a "wide-lens" technique of recording general classroom activity.

3. The post-observation conference functions primarily to provide the teacher with an opportunity for feedback and additional practice.

Recommendations

As a result of this project, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. Administrators should give priority to the pre-observation phase of the clinical supervision cycle, recognizing the inherent benefits to both conference participants as they work together to improve classroom instruction.

2. Administrators should reconsider the use of audio-visual equipment as a tool with which to collect objective data during the classroom observation.

3. Administrators should provide more opportunities for practice and comparison to improve instruction through modeling and inservice.

4. Further research should be conducted to determine the relationship of consistently implemented clinical supervision practices and the improvement of instruction.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE COVER LETTER

May 25, 1993

Address
XXXX
XXXX

Dear Mr./Mrs......,

I have recently completed my administrative internship at Truman Middle School in Tacoma, and am currently in the process of completing my Masters project in Educational Administration at Central Washington University.

As a part of this project, I am surveying the teacher evaluation practices of all Tacoma School District principals and assistant principals.

Specifically, I am investigating administrators' clinical supervision practices employed during: 1) pre-observation conference, 2) formal classroom observation, and 3) post-observation conference.

Although I am aware that you have many demands on your energies, especially at this busy time of the year, I hope that you will take a few minutes to respond to the enclosed questionnaire.

I am enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful response.

PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE BY JUNE 25, 1993.

Sincerely,

Leanne M. Dunlap   Dr. Jack McPherson
Masters Candidate   Graduate Studies Chair
Central Washington University   Central Washington University

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: To the right of each descriptive behavior, circle the number which best indicates your supervisory practice.

4 = ALWAYS   3 = OFTEN   2 = SOMETIMES   1 = NEVER

ADMINISTRATOR PRACTICES: PRE-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

FREQUENCY

1. Prior to conducting the classroom observation do you meet with the teacher?	4	3	2	1

During the pre-observation conference do you:

2. ask questions of the teacher to identify the teacher's concerns about instruction;	4	3	2	1
3. identify procedures for improving the teacher's instruction based on concerns discussed;	4	3	2	1
4. assist the teacher in setting self-improvement goals;	4	3	2	1
5. arrange for classroom observation time;	4	3	2	1
6. select an observation instrument and behaviors to be recorded;	4	3	2	1
7. clarify the instructional context in which data will be recorded;	4	3	2	1
8. other (please be specific)._____	4	3	2	1

DIRECTIONS: To the right of each descriptive behavior, circle the number which best indicates your supervisory practice.

4 = ALWAYS   3 = OFTEN   2 = SOMETIMES   1 = NEVER

ADMINISTRATOR PRACTICES: FORMAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION

During the classroom observation do you use any of the following techniques?

9. transcribe teacher questions asked to students;   4   3   2   1

10. transcribe teacher verbal feedback to students;   4   3   2   1

11. transcribe teacher directions and structuring statements;   4   3   2   1

12. observe and tally students' engaged time on task;   4   3   2   1

13. observe and tally verbal flow (who is talking to whom);   4   3   2   1

14. observe and tally movement patterns (flow of teachers and students);   4   3   2   1

15. make informal, anecdotal records of general classroom activity;   4   3   2   1

16. use video and/or audio recordings;   4   3   2   1

17. use observer-administered checklists;   4   3   2   1

18. other (please be specific) _____   4   3   2   1

_____

DIRECTIONS: To the right of each descriptive behavior, circle the number which best indicates your supervisory practice.

4 = ALWAYS   3 = OFTEN   2 = SOMETIMES   1 = NEVER

ADMINISTRATOR PRACTICES: POST-OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

Following the classroom observation, do you meet with the teacher to:

19. provide the teacher with feedback using objective observational data;   4   3   2   1

20. elicit the teacher's inferences, opinions, and feelings about the data;   4   3   2   1

21. encourage the teacher to consider alternative lesson objectives, methods, and reasons;   4   3   2   1

22. provide the teacher with opportunities practice and comparison;   4   3   2   1

23. other (please be specific). _____   4   3   2   1

_____