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Culturally Responsive Instructional Supervision: Further Analysis of a Leading Textbook

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Abstract

This study explores whether and how culturally responsive practices are embedded in the leading text for instructional supervisions, *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach* (Glickman et al., 2018). Having identified a dearth of references to culture in most of the text, and a relative wealth of references to culture in two segregated chapters (Guerra et al., 2022), we explore how the cultural content-rich chapters address culturally responsive instructional supervision (CRIS) and how the lack of CRIS content influences the chapters that focus on the clinical supervision cycle. Employing Jacob's (2014) framework for supervisors for social justice and critical intercultural communication studies we examined how references to culture intersected with knowledge, skills, and dispositions of CRIS. Findings revealed instances of hegemony-supporting language, an indifference to the influence of invisible culture, a segregated treatment of CRIS content, and lack of practical application tools. Instructional supervision preparation and practice requires new texts informed by diverse perspectives and centering CRIS.

Keywords

culturally responsive; instructional supervision; educational leadership; principal preparation program; leader preparation; textbook analysis

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Introduction

By far the most widely used textbook in the field of principal preparation (Kao, 2020), *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach* (Glickman et al., 2018), now in its 10th edition, can well serve as a report on the state of instructional supervision preparation. Glickman et al.'s approach to supervision places the leadership practice at the center of human resource development in schools (Cormier & Pandey, 2021) most prominently through the clinical supervision cycle (Guerra et al., 2022). The clinical supervision cycle model arose in educational leadership practice near the time of *SuperVision*'s first edition in the mid 1980's and spread, in no small part, due to the advocacy of the cycle in the text (see Jones, 1995; Sullivan, 1980). An important work at its inception, much in education has changed over the years of *SuperVision*'s many editions. Partially in response to the changing demographic landscape of U.S. schools, Culturally Responsive education, introduced by Gay (2000), Irvine (1989), Ladson-Billings (1994), and further developed and advocated by many others, requires rethinking the traditional curriculum, instruction, policies, and administrative practices that privilege Eurocentric values and epistemologies (Delgado-Gaitan, 2006; Guerra, 2012; Hollins, 2008). In the first part of a two-part content analysis, findings revealed that in *SuperVision* "content related to cultural responsiveness was concentrated in a chapter at the back of the textbook" leaving the chapters about the clinical supervision cycle "all but devoid of references to culture" (Guerra et al., 2022). The "bifurcation of supervision practice and supervision focused on culture or diversity" (Guerra et al., 2022) implies that instructional supervision and the clinical supervision cycle, along with its four supervisory approaches, are presented as culturally 'neutral' (Guerra et al., 2022). This implied neutrality is investigated here in this follow-up study to better understand how the segregated content on culture and "implicit ideas of whiteness" Cormier and Pandey (2021, p. 119) impact the presentation of supervision practices taught to readers through the text.

Ignoring the cultural influences in the text upholds majoritarian values and perspectives as the nation's school leaders and instructional supervisors are prepared for this work. Without centering concepts of culture and culturally responsive instructional supervision practices with examples, the text risks exacerbating the gap between theory and practice and implicitly reinforcing problematic structures thereby perpetuating inequities for millions of American students. This paper further explores these previous findings of implied cultural neutrality and their meaning for leadership preparation and practice (See Cormier & Pandey, 2021; Guerra et al., 2022).

Positionality

Ann Marie Cotman is a postdoctoral associate in the School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education at the University of Florida. Throughout my life, as a White school student, parent, teacher, and researcher in the U.S. my racialized experiences, in myriad ways, masked the influence of my own culture on my thinking, perceptions, and decisions. Simultaneously, in my over two decades as a teacher and teacher-leader I have witnessed the harms caused by the dysconsciously White structures on which U.S. schooling is grounded, structures which perpetuate racism. My research centers on making explicit the ways that whiteness, and its accomplices of patriarchy, heteronormativity, and ableism, inform the policies

and practices that define the U.S. school experience. I am obligated to find, recognize, and make visible the White cultural dimensions at work undergirding the education systems our multicultural nation relies on. I don't expect this obligation to be fulfilled in my lifetime and I am grateful for my co-authors who, among other mentors, hold me to account when I need to think more critically and carefully. Other mentors, hold me to account when I need to think more critically and carefully.

Patrica L. Guerra is a Latina Associate Professor at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) located in the Southwest. Prior to teaching in higher education, she worked as a teacher and school leader at a state school for the deaf and as research associate at Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL). While working at SEDL, she conceptualized and created the Organizing for Diversity Project (ODP), a federally funded five-year research, development and dissemination project. During the ODP, she co-developed Understanding the Cultural Contexts of Teaching and Learning, a yearlong professional development (PD) program, and provided PD to educators in the field. Additionally, she co-authored a research report which evaluated the impact of the PD on teachers in the program. The knowledge, skills and experiences acquired from the ODP along with those from the state school for the deaf, where she had to learn sign language and deaf culture to be an effective teacher and leader, shaped her views about the higher education preparation needed for aspiring teachers and school leaders to successfully serve minoritized students and their families.

Over the last 17 years, she has taught cultural responsiveness in supervision and in other principal preparation courses to master's students and delivered professional development in cultural responsiveness to practitioners in the field. During these experiences, she has encountered many well-intentioned educators with little awareness of the influence of invisible culture on teaching, learning, leading and on many other school practices, policies and procedures and with numerous deficit beliefs about minoritized students and parents. Believing students and parents are the problem and need to change, there is little understanding of their role in this situation. If minoritized students are to academically succeed in the current educational system, instruction, leadership and deficit beliefs about minoritized students and parents must change. Social justice which encompasses diversity, multiculturalism, invisible culture, inclusiveness, equity, cultural responsiveness, etc., should no longer remain as theoretical concepts in textbooks, but taught to aspiring principals and practiced and integrated in all principal preparation courses. Furthermore, aspiring principals' as well as faculty's deficit beliefs and racist comments voiced in classes, should be addressed (not ignored), deconstructed and reframed. Finally, to transform the hegemonic view of education in principal preparation textbooks, works written by critical scholars and scholars with cultural consciousness should be required and not just supplementary readings on course syllabi.

A. Minor Baker identifies as an American and White man who grew up in the upper Midwest. He is a former elementary teacher and school leader, and now is an Assistant Professor of Elementary Education at Missouri State University. His educational background was one common to many White, middle class, suburban youth, during which he attended majority white schools with students from similar cultural and economic backgrounds. It was not until college, and more specifically practicum experiences for his teacher education coursework, that he began to experience the breadth of communities and student diversity found throughout American

public schools. In his educational administration preparation, this author made the conscious decision to attend a preparation program focused on social justice leader preparation. This preparation ultimately prepared him for working and succeeding in schools with student populations that are diverse in a multitude of ways, e.g., culture, language, race, ability, economic background, gender, and sexual orientation. Prepared for supervisory practice using Supervision in his leadership course, he found relying on the *SuperVision* model was inadequate in preparing him to support teachers with diverse identities as well as supporting all teachers to address the learning needs of students. This supervisory disconnect acted like a wedge that began to open areas for exploration, ultimately leading the author to a Ph.D. program focused on school improvement, with a specific focus by the author on issues of equity and justice in school supervision.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

As previously noted, our first stage of research (Guerra et al., 2022) highlighted the chapters with the most references to culture: Chapter 22, “Addressing Diversity” and Chapter 23, “Building Community”, both found at the end of the text. We also detected a dearth of references to culture in the chapters focused on implementing the clinical supervision cycle (chapters 8-12) (Guerra et al., 2022). That first stage of investigation was supported by Jacob’s (2014) list of “knowledge, skills, and dispositions of supervisors for social justice” (p. 4). For this stage of investigation, we employed critical content analysis, conducting close readings of parts of the text that help illuminate hegemonic perspectives and inequitable power relationships (see Short, 2016). Here we follow up the first stage of our research by further illuminating deeper ways this segregation of culturally responsive content or lack of cultural knowledge impacts *SuperVision*. Specifically, our research questions ask:

1. How do the most culturally responsive content-rich chapters of *SuperVision*, chapter 22 Addressing Diversity, and chapter 23 Building Community, address culturally responsive instructional supervision (CRIS)?
2. How does a lack of culturally responsive (CR) content influence the chapters that focus on the clinical supervision cycle?

Engaging in CRIS requires embedding supervisory practices with knowledge of cultural value orientations or explanations for why people do things the way they do (Guerra & García 2000; Guerra & Nelson 2006; Nelson & Guerra, 2014). These invisible aspects of culture are all the more powerful for their invisibility (Hall, 1989). In responding to both their work and colleagues, principals (and other school leaders) as instructional supervisors must be aware of how their own language, judgments, and choices are influenced by their cultural identities and be mindful of how others’ may be similarly informed by different cultures (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Beyond growing awareness, culturally responsive school leaders will put their continuous self-reflection and learnings about culture to work challenging hegemonic thinking and creating socially just schools (Khalifa et al., 2016; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011; Shields, 2010). This introspective and often difficult work requires preparation, including preparation through coursework often built on *SuperVision*.

Critical content analysis evaluates text for messages about power and dominant ideologies in explicit, implicit, and absent messaging (Short, 2016). This pairs well with two important

theories informing our analysis, intercultural communication studies and critical race theory. Because we are investigating cultural competence including understanding of dimensions of culture, particularly invisible dimensions (see Banks, 2016; Hall 1989), we employ the lens of critical intercultural communication studies, which, like critical content analysis, “foregrounds issues of power” in examining how communication is shaped (Halualani & Nakayama, 2013, p. 3). In our previous research we found *SuperVision* included “188 unique referencing instances, and a total of 148 pages of text with references that were determined to be invisible culture” (Guerra et al., 2022). In this study we strove to understand the nature and depth of the cultural knowledge presented. Our critical content analysis considered each presentation of CR knowledge, skills, and dispositions in Chapters 22 and 23 and how this content was integrated into the chapters focused on the clinical supervision cycle. We also examined the ways each passage defined, explained, embellished, described, exemplified, itemized, corrected, modified, or contradicted (Mayring, 2014) the CR concepts in question to understand how their presentation (or absence) might serve to reinforce or disrupt hegemonic school practices. This analysis was also informed by the work of critical race scholars whose work has served as a call to expose and disrupt all the ways that whiteness is upheld as standard and normal in U.S. schools (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001).

We acknowledge that the clinical supervision cycle operationalized by Glickman et al. (2018) is widely known and accepted in supervision cycles as the standard by which other approaches to instructional supervision are compared. Many teacher evaluation tools employ the basic model laid out in the text: a.) preconference with the teacher, b.) observation of classroom, c.) analysis of observed data and postconference planning, d.) postconference with the observed teacher, e.) critique of previous steps. As practitioners of instructional supervision, we recognize the value of this model, but as activists we also feel an obligation to highlight the limitations or blind spots that may exist with the universal adoption of the approaches detailed in *SuperVision*.

Findings

We identified several conceptual problems with the presentation and inclusion of cultural knowledge in *SuperVision*. Language in the text often supports a hegemonic view of schools, education, and supervision. The influence of invisible cultural values on educators’ choices and behaviors is segregated into self-contained chapters on culture and largely remains absent in other parts of the text. We also found a lack of information, tools, and discussion about the practical application of CRIS. The following passage explains these findings and includes a few illustrative examples to demonstrate these conceptual problems.

Hegemony-Supporting Language

Language helps create and fortify structures that maintain power imbalance or build equity (Patton & Museus, 2019; Giroux, 1988; Ng & Deng, 2017). Many terms and passages assume the normality of whiteness thereby implicitly othering those further outside of White (and often cis-, hetero-, able, and patriarchal) culture. The text frequently contrasts terms like “dominant culture” and “traditional schooling” (see pp. 416, 419, 420) with “diverse” (see pg. 418), “different” (see pg. 418), and “subculture” (see pp. 33, 89). Making sense of this contrast often requires readers to assume whiteness as the acceptable normal rather than encouraging

“critiquing the status quo” as the text advocates for K-12 students to do (p. 422). For example, in a passage encouraging readers to consider the harmful impacts of “classism and racism,” the text states “many lower-socioeconomic children have fewer out-of-school educational opportunities than middle-and upper-class students” (p. 414). No child is short-changed of educational opportunities; learning is the human experience, and all children bring a wealth of knowledge, experiences, and skills to the schoolroom (Amanti, et al., 2006; Richmond, 2017). This passage in the text implicitly places more value on the knowledge, skills, and experiences of students from White affluent and middle-class homes while the assets of children from other backgrounds are undervalued or rejected (Douglas et al., 2008; García & Guerra, 2004; Guerra & Nelson, 2013). Culturally responsive and equitable epistemologies recognize the wealth of cultural capital that all students and families bring to the classroom (Yosso, 2005; Yosso & Solorzano, 2005).

In exploring “Culture Clashes,” *SuperVision* offers an illustration from the research of Lisa Delpit (1995/2006) to illustrate the concept (p. 416). Some of the insight of Delpit gives way to a more anemic treatment of the scene that subtly undermines CRIS learning opportunities. The story explores “a White teacher’s reaction” to Marti, “a second-grade African American student” reading aloud a story she had written (pp. 416-417).

Marti: “Once upon a time, there was an old lady, and this old lady ain’t had no sense.”

Teacher (interrupting): “Marti, that sounds like the beginning of a wonderful story, but could you tell me how you would say it in Standard English?”

Marti (head down, thinking for a minute, softly said): “There was an old lady who didn’t have any sense.”

Marti (hand on hip, raised voice): “But this lady ain’t had no sense!” (p. 417).

SuperVision sums the problem: “the teacher...did not realize that the second-grade student understood Standard English but wanted to stray from this form to better articulate and assert her point” (p. 417). The text describes this conflict as a failure in “understanding cultural norms” (p. 417). Users of this textbook looking to understand “the cultural clashes that lead to inequitable treatment of some students” find here powerful and problematic implicit messages that work against improving cultural responsiveness. Supervision identifies the origins of this “culture clash” as the teacher’s failure to understand the African American cultural norms that inspired Marti’s story-telling style. In other words, though Marti is not to blame, it is her culture that throws the wrench in the works. If this interaction truly results from a failure to understand cultural norms, the cultural norms the teacher should first recognize are most likely their own. This incident illustrates why supervisors must understand the influence of invisible culture on teaching and learning and employ CRIS. Only culturally responsive supervisors will be able to support teachers in interrogating their own implicit expectations, including about storytelling and language as in this example, that invisibly inform their classroom practices (Guerra & Nelson, 2010; Guerra & Nelson, 2006).

In Delpit’s (1995/2006) original presentation of this interaction she points out that Marti was employing “so-called nonstandard” English as a powerful literary device like many “world-class” American writers (p. 169). Giants in the pantheon of American literature, e.g., “Charles Chesnutt, Alice Walker, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, and Zora Neale Hurston,” have made using

vernacular English an American literary norm (Deplit, 1995/2006, p. 169). With its ubiquity in great American literature, it could be the teacher recognized the technique, but instead failed to acknowledge its value or understand that Marti was purposefully “exhibiting a very sophisticated sense of language” (Deplit, 1995/2006, p. 169). In this case, the teacher’s implicit assumptions about the abilities of this student must be interrogated and the deficit orientation addressed, deconstructed and reframed by their culturally responsive instructional supervisor (Guerra & Nelson, 2010; Valencia, 1997). Further, the culturally responsive instructional supervisor must draw the teacher’s attention to other ways that their teaching practices undermined both equity and culturally responsive teaching, such as interrupting the student during a read aloud to assess language skill. Unfortunately, the text’s presentation of the classroom exchange prevents readers from identifying this possibility and exploring the CRIS work it would require.

The text follows this classroom scene by asserting that the danger presented by “not understanding cultural norms,” is that it “can cause teachers to underestimate the ability of poor and racial/ethnic minority student...depriving students of developing the higher-level skills they are perfectly capable of learning” (p. 417). In many ways this belies the truth that racist thinking may be the cause, not the effect, of failure to understand cultural norms. Further still, familiarity with cultural norms does not necessarily repair or challenge racist beliefs at all (see Greenland, 2021). Erasing racism does not equal creating cultural responsiveness and creating a culturally responsive space will not erase racism in a classroom or school; CRIS preparation must acknowledge and wrestle with these realities.

Language in the text also evades culture by leaving uninterrogated terms that have historically been deployed against marginalized groups. In a passage dedicated to “addressing diversity” “among economic, racial, and ethnic groups” the text refers to “achievement gaps” and “dropouts,” accurately pointing out damning statistics should serve as “an urgent moral imperative to change the way we educate low-income and racial/ethnic minority students” (p. 413). However, Black scholars have pointed out that “achievement gap” (Ladson-Billings, 2013) and “dropout” (Dei, 1993) by their very syntax imply the problem lies with the minoritized students who do not succeed and instead drop out rather than an inadequate educational system pushing them out (Morris, 2019) or a self-protecting instinct calling them out of schools that were attempting to enculturate them out of their cultural and racialized identities (Boggs, 2011/1970). These powerful, if silent, implications undermine the texts’ later call for educators to reflect on how social conditions “such as inadequate housing, poor health care, segregation, and inequitable school funding” impact “low-socioeconomic and racial/ethnic minority students” (p. 415).

These uninterrogated terms work to distance the work of schools from the experience of students with minoritized identities. Contrasting language juxtaposes “traditional schooling” and “dominant” culture with “those who belong to different cultures” (p. 412). Along with further sharpening the image of schools as belonging to White, middle class, cishet, and able culture, this presentation invites the idea that the school culture must “respond” (p. 437) to the othered, that diversity must be “addressed” (p. 412). This approach covertly supports deficit beliefs that minoritized students pose challenges and problems, challenges and problems that the school otherwise would not encounter. In many passages this distancing navigates a fine line: “If we need to change schools and the way we teach to close the achievement gap, then addressing

diversity should be a task of instructional supervision” (412). The rhetorical “if” silently suggests that perhaps schools needn’t change, perhaps the change must come from the students and communities. Rather than placing cultural responsiveness at the center of creating schools, in many passages instructional leaders are invited to view responding to the perspectives, strengths, and needs of students from marginalized communities as important, but auxiliary to the essential parts of their work. There is no doubt that other places in *SuperVision* make more ardent calls for educators to re-think their habits of mind, a characteristic of the text also noted by Cormier et al. (2021). Vacillating between calls for educators to reconceptualize their work as inseparable from cultural responsiveness and calls for educators to simply consider making room for marginalized groups creates a mixed message and could give cover to those shunning the importance of truly transformative CRIS.

Influence of Invisible Culture

Making a strong case for CRIS, *SuperVision* posits that a “real problem” responsible for “damage done to lower-socioeconomic and racial/ethnic minority students” rests in “educators not understanding a group’s cultural norms” (p. 416). *SuperVision* certainly includes information about invisible culture, though that information tends to be concentrated in the chapters dedicated to diversity and community building (see Guerra et al., 2022). This segregated treatment minimizes the influence of invisible culture on concepts in the main body of the text, particularly in chapters 6-12 which address providing instructional supervision through the clinical supervision cycle.

Understanding “language and cultural patterns” (Jacobs, 2014, p. 5) or “dimensions of culture” (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 31) is essential knowledge for culturally responsive instructional supervisors (Jacobs, 2014, p. 5; see also Bowers & Flinders, 1991).

These culturally determined ways of being (Krizmanić & Kolesarić, 1991) or value orientations include but are not limited to different styles of thinking, relating, resolving conflict, viewing power (Hofstede et al., 2010) and communicating (Hall, 1989). Identified as deep or invisible culture, these unobservable and often unconscious value orientations are the explanations for why teachers, school leaders, school staff, students, parents and communities do things the way they do (Nelson et al., 2011) and have significant implications for all aspects of schooling (García & Guerra, 2004; Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Trumbull et al., 2001). (Guerra et al., 2022)

In tackling one invisible dimension of culture, *SuperVision* (2018) explains “Students from high context cultures tend to take time to describe the context of a situation, often in the form of a story. Teachers from the “dominant” culture, on the other hand, tend to be low context; they prefer direct, explicit messages and often consider messages from members of high-context cultures to be rambling and confused” (p. 417). The text then follows with more details about the relative value of written and oral communication by different cultures as well as linear versus episodic narrative styles. There is great value in encouraging instructional supervisors to understand different communication styles, an important aspect of invisible culture. Communication styles influence all aspects of the school experience from discipline to instruction and assessment (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Darensbourg et al., 2010; Morgan,

2010; Solano-Flores & Nelson-Barber, 2001; Townshend, 2000). However, this brief description of a high context communication style leaves readers with an incomplete explanation, which only serves to reinforce stereotypes and invite deficit thinking when, as a result of limited understanding of high context communication, they are not able to imbue their supervisory work with this knowledge.

To understand the differences between high and low context communication, it is important to know members of individualist and collectivist cultures both have ingroups or people (e.g., family and friends,) they seek out in time of need and with whom they spend time (Triandis 1995). Individualist cultures tend not to bring members of their different ingroups together to meet and frequently socialize. Instead, they compartmentalize their relationships into different groups such as nuclear family, job friends, gym/workout friends, church friends, which means individuals from low-context cultures generally infer little when communicating with others (Hall & Hall, 1990; Hofstede, et al., 2010). Since they tend not to interact as one large group, they use explicit communication to avoid misinterpretation and confusion (Hall & Hall, 1990; Hofstede, et al., 2010; Irwandi, 2017). Their communication is in the words expressed and they tend not to rely on context or shared experiences, for understanding. On the continuum of communication, this low context communication style is viewed as direct and is generally common among individualist cultures, which place high value on written communication (Hall & Hall, 1990).

In contrast, members of collectivist cultures tend to bring members of their ingroups together as one large overlapping group, which often consists of family and extended family members, and friends. Since ingroup members socialize frequently and spend much time together over the years, they develop close relationships and share numerous lived experiences (Guerra & García, 2000; Guerra & Nelson, 2006; Hall, 1989; Hall & Hall, 1990; Triandis, 1995). These shared experiences or knowledge are the basis for their high context communication style (Hall, 1989; Hofstede, et al., 2010). Because of the extensive time spent together and the high value placed on relationships, collectivists tend to focus on preserving harmony among ingroup members. Consequently, direct and explicit communication is generally avoided to prevent conflict among group members. Rather, high context communicators tend to use indirect messages and know to infer from their implicit communication style; valuable message information lives in the communication context and within the receiver (Hall, 1989; Irwandi, 2017). This dependence on context and shared understanding allows for the nonlinear “episodic narratives that shift from setting to setting” referenced in *SuperVision* (p. 417). High context messengers are “acculturated from birth to send and receive...message[s] through behavioral context” and without this context miscommunication is likely (Irwandi, 2017, p. 250). They also tend to employ ambiguous messaging to maintain relationships and peace among group members (Hall, 1989). In other words, they often do not explicitly say what they mean (Guerra & Nelson, 2006) but may do so through other forms of communication including gestures, silence, facial expressions, and tone (Hall, 1989). On the continuum of communication, this high context communication style is viewed as indirect (Hall & Hall, 1990). Finally, it is important to understand that research on cultural dimensions, e.g., individualism-collectivism, low-high context communication, and low-high power distance, etc., was conducted on and refers to tendencies of a group. Individuals within a group may not adhere to all beliefs or behaviors at all times (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Glossing over key attributes of cultural communication styles, their unique origins, and most importantly how they are made manifest in school settings, hinders readers who seek to place their work as instructional supervisors “in a broader context of culture and language” (Jacobs, 2014, p. 5). For example, instructional supervisors must explore how a difference in cultural values might impact a preconference conversation. In the “technical skills” portion of *SuperVision*, a preconference is described as determining “(1) the reason and purpose for the observation, (2) the focus of the observation, and (3) the method and form of observation to be used,” a pointedly linear and low-context communication goal. “These determinations are made...so that both supervisor and teacher are clear about what will transpire,” (p. 269), however, the very likely influence of power distance differences in the outcome of the preconference, particularly when participants are from different cultural backgrounds, is neglected. This technical work of supervising is presented as a culturally ‘neutral’ process when it intersects repeatedly with cultural values.

Euro-American school leaders and teachers in the U.S., particularly those from middle- and upper-class socioeconomic classes, tend to embody a low power distance orientation (Guerra & Nelson, 2006; Hofstede et al., 2010). Believing power is distributed equally among members of society (i.e., equal opportunity) and inequalities are to be minimized, teachers question their principal’s decisions and parents challenge teachers’ instructional assignments or discipline decisions. Less delineation exists between superiors and subordinates like school leaders and teachers or adults and children; and subordinates are to be consulted for input on matters (Hofstede et al., 2010). In contrast, those who grew up in a collectivist home culture with a high-power distance orientation, “expect and accept that power is distributed unequally” across society but particularly in institutions and organizations (Hofstede et al., 2010, p. 61). There is clear delineation between superiors and subordinates as between principals and teachers and adults and children (Hofstede et al., 2010). Failing to understand and respect the influence of cultural identity on the way people perceive and experience power will yield misunderstandings, deficit-oriented interpretations of behaviors, and severely limit productive professional interactions.

Segregation of Culturally Responsive Information

Explicit discussions about the influence of culture and identity on the work of instructional supervision are largely relegated to separate chapters at the end of the text (Guerra et al., 2022). Analysis of the earlier chapters that directly address essential knowledge, skills and technical tasks of supervision reveals a dearth of advice about how to imbue those tasks with CRIS practices. This omission of cultural knowledge might leave readers understanding that a culturally ‘neutral’ (White, American/Eurocentric) mainstream style of supervision should fit all circumstances; considering culture becomes optional, not central to the work of supervision. As an example, below we describe the impact of this segregation approach on the text’s presentation of instructional supervision approaches.

Chapter 4 of *SuperVision* describes adult learning theory and models of human development to help instructional supervisors “[ascertain] the levels, stages, and issues of adult development” of the teachers they supervise in order to progress their professional development (p. 91). Most of the chapter focuses on theories designed by Euro/American scholars with occasional nods to

challenges from “critical perspectives” (p. 71). These critiques could have opened the possibility of injecting CRIS knowledge in the text, were they not so sparse. For example, among a list of “questions raised” about the “assumptions” underlying the theory of andragogy, *SuperVision* includes their “cultural nature” citing Sandlin, 2005 (p. 66). This two-word phrase condenses powerful issues enumerated by Sandlin from a host of researchers and theorists:

1. Andragogy assumes wrongly that education is value neutral and apolitical.
 2. Andragogy promotes a generic adult learner as universal with White middle-class values.
 3. Andragogy ignores other ways of knowing and silences other voices.
 4. Andragogy ignores the relationship between self and society.
 5. Andragogy is reproductive of inequalities; it supports the status quo.
- (Sandlin, 2005, p. 27)

Given the breadth of strong criticism, readers would benefit from an exploration of how and why the theory is challenged and more relevant and recent models introduced. A fuller discussion of these criticisms would more authentically encourage readers to engage in the critical reflection demanded by CRIS (Griffin, et al., 2016; Jacobs, 2014; Khalifa et al., 2016) and recommended by the authors themselves (see page 108).

The chapter concludes with brief passages about “the role of gender” (p. 88) and “the role of race and ethnicity” in adult development, passages that on the surface challenge the ‘neutrality’ of the previously presented adult development models (p. 89). Unfortunately, having again been segregated to the end, their countering power is diminished. The main messages of the chapter have been thoroughly explored without having been substantially informed by gender, cultural, and racial considerations.

The text’s exploration of adult development is followed by a series of chapters (chapters 7-10) designed to help supervisors select and apply the best supervisory approach from a “continuum” of choices, i.e., directive control, directive informational, collaborative, and nondirective, based on a teacher’s assessed stages of adult development (see pp. 116-117). Supervisors are to support teachers in moving up the continuum. The cultural (and gendered) limitations of general models of adult development pointed out in chapter 4, are neglected in these application-oriented chapters. For example, ranking a “collaborative” style, a shared problem-solving approach, subordinate to a “nondirective” style in which the teacher has “the ability to think and act on his or her own” explicitly honors the value of individualism as superior to collectivism.

Additionally, the text overlooks problems that may be inherent in encouraging supervisors to assess teachers’ developmental level. For example, the directive styles, suggested for teachers who are “fearful, dependent, impulsive, defensive” (p. 131), “uncertain,” (p. 141) and “rigid” (p. 142), could easily be misapplied based on cultural or racial bias. Research evidence points to generally poorer perceptions of the performance of teachers of color, particularly Black teachers (Jiang & Spote, 2016; Campbell & Ronfeldt, 2018; Drake et al., 2019; Campbell, 2020). For example, an African American teacher with a direct communication style might be misperceived as defensive by a principle who is less direct, or a Latina teacher with high power distance could be misperceived as dependent by a principal with low power distance. Assessing the personal development of a teaching colleague would necessitate engaging with the cultural values that

undergird both the supervisor's perceptions and the teacher's observable behaviors. In chapter 6, the text counsels aspiring leaders to seek out conflicts between their perception of self and "how others perceive us," (pp. 117-128), falling short of explicitly pointing out potential dissonances may be powerfully impacted by cultural differences.

SuperVision cautions that supervisors "not properly prepared are more likely" to "be biased" when identifying and supporting "quality teaching" (p. 285). Responding to this warning, would then require proper preparation in identifying and addressing bias and in favor of cultural responsiveness in all instructional supervision tasks. To this end, information about knowledge, skills, and dispositions of culturally responsive leaders should be integrated throughout the text (Griffin, et al., 2016; Hawley et al., 2010; Hollins, 2008; Nelson & Guerra, 2014).

Lack of Practical Application

In addition to segregating culturally responsive knowledge from the main thrust of the text, there are few efforts to help readers understand the practicalities of approaching supervisory work from a culturally informed point of view. Instructional supervisors in training require examples and exercises to build their culturally responsive muscles. Only through changed practices and beliefs, will leaders and their schools move toward creating culturally responsive spaces for students (Griffin et al., 2016, Guerra & Nelson, 2009; Khalifa et al., 2016). To produce transformational learning, readers must have pragmatic directions, rehearsal, and application practice to make effective use of their reflections and growing cultural knowledge, to "use their imaginations to redefine problems from a different perspective" (Mezirow, 1997, p. 10).

Moreover, using these transformational learning experiences increases the likelihood of aspiring school leaders remembering and applying culturally responsive knowledge once on the job. These experiences not only add to their supervision knowledge and skills but more importantly they change their behavior, thoughts, and beliefs (Mezirow, 1997) about minoritized students and families. Paired with problem-based learning, an instructional approach that has aspiring leaders apply knowledge read in textbooks to authentic classroom situations (i.e., culture clashes), their understanding of CRIS deepens (Nilson, 2010). *SuperVision* too emphasizes the "centrality of experience to learning", however misses valuable opportunities to inject learning with practice scenarios embedded with invisible cultural differences, CRIS tools, and how-to information for readers to use in the field (p. 69).

One tool is offered in the clinical supervision cycle-focused chapters for conducting observations that look for "Indicators of Culturally Sensitive Teaching" (p. 201). This observation tool lists 12 indicators and requests a yes/no response regarding their presence during an observation. There is also a column to record additional comments. *SuperVision* advises that this "performance indicator instrument" is "open to interpretation" and "should not imply an absolute standard" (pp.198-199). Instead, "only after the supervisor and teacher have discussed the circumstances surrounding the teacher's instructional procedures can they be properly interpreted" (p. 199). The broad and vague indicators on the instrument offer wide latitude for interpretation and do not require a culturally responsive perspective. The first indicator, for example, asks whether the teacher "Displays understanding of diverse cultures" (p. 201). The response to this question requires that the instructional supervisor observing the teacher has deep knowledge about

cultural understanding and the skills to recognize the display of this understanding by others. Another item, “Uses examples and materials that represent different cultures” could easily be misused to highlight what Banks (2016) calls a problematic “contributions approach” to integrating diverse cultures in a classroom (p. 60). An instructional supervisor not trained in CRIS may only look for visible elements of culture, e.g., food, clothing, and posters of cultural heroes. Leaders not prepared for CRIS work are unlikely to be able to meaningfully respond to this and other vague items on the instrument.

In another example, the advocated continuum of developmental supervision has the disadvantage of limiting supervisors’ toolkit of approaches when addressing the myriad needs of teachers. For example, teachers who are judged to warrant a non-directive supervisory approach because of their “ability to think and act” on their own, may sometimes need a directive informational approach to help overcome reticence to a challenging new idea outside of their comfort zone (p. 161). For example, teachers “may initially resist RJ [restorative justice] implementation” finding it in conflict with their “culture of traditional punishment” (Guckenburg et al., 2015, p. 12). A master teacher’s cultural value of collectivism may suggest a collaborative approach better suits them even when they are very capable of independent decision making. A novice second-career teacher, formerly a bank manager, who appreciates their supervisor’s direct control orientation of providing concrete problem-solving plans, might benefit from a non-directive approach in some circumstances, like when creating systems to track student progress.

Further, although aspiring school leaders from a collectivist background have learned the knowledge and skills to successfully implement a non-directive supervisory approach in a clinical supervision post-conference, our years of experience in teaching the master’s supervision course at a Hispanic Serving Institution reveal, they often choose not to do so, particularly with teachers from a collectivistic background. Instead, implementing a collaborative supervisory approach because of their value of group identity, interdependence, shared responsibility, and cooperation (i.e., collaborative problem solving), and respect for authority. Without this understanding of invisible cultural differences and their influence on the clinical supervision cycle and supervisory approaches, and on aspiring school leaders in principal preparation programs, faculty and others could easily view aspiring minoritized school leaders as incapable of being effective instructional supervisors.

Exploring scenarios like those above would offer developing school leaders low-stakes opportunities to test out new CRIS knowledge. Chapter 11, which focuses on developmental supervision, offers four case studies and a reflective exercise for readers, opportunities to explore the practicalities of instructional supervision. Though the narratives explore a range of “teacher’s levels of adult development, expertise, and commitment” (p. 187) none invite exploration of cultural differences or the influence of cultural dimensions on interactions. The text encourages supervisors, in addition to considering teachers’ level of development to remember “other variables,” e.g., “the specific problem that the supervisor and teacher are dealing with,” “the past relationship of the teacher and supervisor,” and “other variables that might need to be considered” (p. 187). Relegating cultural differences to an anonymous “other” all but erases this consideration as students explore the scenarios.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This book reaches a wide audience because of its popularity across the country in leadership preparation programs and wealth of practical content but delivers contradictory messages. The text presents “Cultural Tasks of Supervision” separate and apart from the “Knowledge,” “Interpersonal Skills,” and “Technical Skills” of the work, though CRIS demands that cultural skills undergird all supervisory practice. As Cormier and Pandey (2021) found, the text espouses the importance of cultural understanding and responsiveness in schools, “Educators’ beliefs about education often are influenced by cultural assumptions they may not be aware of because assumptions are so deeply ingrained and taken for granted” (Glickman et al., 2018, p. 108). However, *SuperVision* misses opportunities to incorporate culturally responsive knowledge throughout the text or offer practical knowledge about how to perform CRIS. Instead, a dominant hegemonic perspective often grounds the concepts and practices presented conveying implicit messages of whiteness.

Instructional supervision preparation and practice requires new texts informed by diverse perspectives, more recent scholarship, and the knowledge of theorists and leaders from minoritized communities. Culturally responsive IS texts will challenge hegemonic leadership practices by featuring perspectives and paradigms from minoritized communities. Integrating culturally responsive knowledge would result in a text that adopts inclusive language while shunning a color-evasive and culturally ‘neutral’ presentation. The text would focus on equity, invisible culture, inclusivity, and racism along with their influence on teaching, learning, coaching, leading and supervising instruction. Cultural responsiveness would be integrated throughout the text helping readers envision how deficit beliefs that come from an unexamined hegemonic lens may be bolstering educational practices. And, perhaps most importantly for a textbook, specific information about the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for culturally responsive supervisory practice should be embedded and taught through activities, scenarios, tools, and real-world examples.

We also want to raise concerns that basing leadership preparation heavily on written texts itself leans into specific cultural values. Learning from independent reading speaks most comfortably to individualism and low-context communication styles while collectivistic and high-context cultures orient toward a collaborative construction of knowledge in community, often via oral methods. Additionally, static textbooks can grow dangerously distant from the realities of culturally responsive education. We argue that there is a twofold need to both understand instructional supervision through the printed word, but also in collaborative discourse with fellow community members from diverse backgrounds. Additional modalities of learning and doing would both embrace a CR approach to IS preparation and offer means to address the most current contexts and issues that leaders face.

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