

SUPERVISION

A GUIDE TO PRACTICE

THIRD EDITION

JON WILES
JOSEPH BONDI

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Preface

Now, in the 1990s, public education stands on the threshold of significant change. Innovations such as school-based management, new technology, and business-school partnerships promise to impact and alter forever the school form that we have known for nearly a century in America.

The prospect of such change is exciting for those in the education field. But along with great anticipation comes the realization of increasing and changing responsibility on the part of the supervisor. This new responsibility will bring with it the need for a cooperative style of leadership. More than ever before, supervisors will be required to be proactive while working cooperatively with teachers, administrators, parents, and community groups. Failure to do so will be to relinquish the leadership role.

At the same time, achieving success in such a role will require not only a positive attitude and a desire to succeed, but also the mastery of some very specific skills. *SUPERVISION: A Guide to Practice* is designed to provide a solid basis for identifying and developing these skills and for recognizing the changing nature of the supervisory role.

Text Organization

We bring six vital skill areas into focus in Part II of this text. Chapters four through nine, "Aiding Human Development," "Designing and Developing Curriculum," "Improving Classroom Instruction," "Encouraging Human Relations," "Providing Staff Development," and "Fulfilling Administrative Functions" represent major topics of interest for supervisors.

In contrast to the very specific treatment of skill areas, chapters 1 through 3 provide a general orientation to the field of supervision, along with an overview of the leadership role.

Part III (chapters 10 through 12) focuses on the problems of supervision in "Evaluating for Effectiveness" and "Politics in Supervision" and concludes with carefully selected case studies.

New to this Edition

This third edition of *SUPERVISION: A Guide to Practice* has been updated to reflect the newest trends and the most up-to-the-minute research available, including that in areas such as teacher induction, teacher empowerment, restructuring, technology, and teacher effectiveness.

An added feature titled "New Directions," appearing in chapters 1-11, offers a look at future trends and encourages the reader to set a course in acknowledging and managing the forces of the 1990s.

We believe this newest edition offers the reader a current and truly practical guide to supervision.

Acknowledgments

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Jon Wiles
Joseph Bondi

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PART ONE

***THE WORLD OF
SUPERVISION***

- 1 Orientation to Supervision**
- 2 Leadership in Supervision**
- 3 Supervision in Practice**

Orientation to Supervision

INTRODUCTION

Supervision is a complex and difficult leadership role in the field of education. Supervision occurs at many levels and supervisors hold many titles. In many school districts, the role of the supervisor is largely undefined and residual in nature. While historically a teacher-supporting role, supervision has recently become more administrative and managerial. Despite its lack of focus, supervision remains indispensable for the improvement of instructional programs in schools.

Supervision in the professional setting of a school is unique, and the recognition of this uniqueness is the beginning point for successful practice. Supervision in a school is not the same as supervision in a business. Even though many of the problems encountered in schools and industrial settings are similar, the responses to such problems must differ. Industrial supervisors gain their authority by decree such as found in the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act:

those having authority to exercise independent judgment in hiring, discharging, disciplining, rewarding, and taking other actions of a similar nature with respect to employees.

School supervisors gain their authority by either borrowing the power of line administrators, exerting political influence in their relationship with others, or by demonstrating clearly superior competence in their knowledge and actions. In the professional environment of education, supervisors must use persuasive influence rather than authoritative influence in responding to problems and needs.

To fully understand the nature of supervision in an educational setting, it is useful to trace the historical factors that have shaped the role to this time. The reader will note that the definition of supervision in education, and the roles played by school supervisors, has changed

dramatically in this century. It is expected that the role of the school supervisor will continue to evolve between the present and the year 2000 A.D.

HISTORY OF EDUCATIONAL SUPERVISION

The meaning of the term *supervision* and the role played by educational supervisors have evolved over time. Over time, school supervision has passed back and forth between a teacher-oriented role and an administrative role, with each swing redefining the function of supervision. The 1980s, for instance, witnessed a swing toward management while the 1990s, with the teacher empowerment movement, is seeing a move toward unions.

During most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, supervision was a form of inspection. The earliest schools in America utilized appointed boards of lay persons or citizens to oversee the operation of schools. Records indicate that these lay boards would periodically review school facilities, equipment, and the progress of students attending the schools. This initial citizen assistance, fashioned after lay advisement in the churches, soon became a form of citizen inspection and control. The relationship of the inspectors and the teachers was often stern and punitive. Characterized by telling, directing, and judging, supervisory visits to schools sometimes led to the dismissal of teachers.

The following list of rules for teachers was posted in 1872 by a New York principal:

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys, and trim wicks.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully; you may whittle nibs to the individual tastes of pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers should spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemingly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each day a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intentions, integrity, and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labors faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay providing the Board of Education approves.

With the growth of individual schools and the formation of school districts in the late nineteenth century, the observation and inspection functions of the lay boards were taken over by an appointed supervisor. Serving as an adjunct of the superintendent, and working directly in the schools, this individual freed the board of lay advisors (later the school board) to deal with more global concerns such as the construction of buildings and the raising of school revenues.

By the early years of the twentieth century, lay inspections of schools had given way almost entirely to the supervisory inspection of teachers in the classroom. The redefining of supervision to deal almost exclusively with classroom instructional concerns resulted from the increased responsibilities of the superintendent. As the "span of control" (the manageable scope of responsibility) of the office of the superintendent grew, classroom visitations were no longer a practical matter. Supervisors assumed the tasks of visiting classrooms and assessing teachers as a representative of the superintendent. It was at this time that school supervision first "crossed over" from a role of direct authority (line position) to one of representative authority (staff position), borrowing its role and power from the office of the superintendent. From that time—around 1910 to the end of the 1980s—school supervision remained a primary extension of administration.

In the first third of the twentieth century American education was heavily influenced by models of industrial mechanization and the practices of so-called scientific management. The impact of an industrial orientation in education was pervasive and dominated supervision practices for nearly a quarter of a century. Writing of the period, Callahan observes:

The procedure for bringing about a more businesslike organization and operation of the schools was fairly well standardized from 1900–1925. It consisted of making unfavorable comparisons between schools and business enterprise, of applying businesslike criteria (e.g., economy and efficiency) to education, and of suggesting that business and industrial practices be adopted by educators.¹

For educational supervision the impact of the business age was the emergence of bureaucratic supervision. Supervision became tied to goals, objectives, and specifications. An orientation toward efficiency and economy led to divisions of labor, technical specialization, high organizational discipline, specific procedures for work situations, and a reliance on written communication.

Serious applications of empirical research accompanied the emphasis on rules and regulations, stratified authority, and the generation of comprehensive policy documents. Following the lead of industry, educators who served as supervisors conducted time and motion studies and looked for new ways to operate schools more efficiently. It was

also during this period that instruction, and hence supervision, became specialized by subject area.

By the early 1930s educational supervision in the United States was becoming ineffective in its enforcement and inspector role. School supervisors, often called "snoopervisors" behind their backs, were able to work with classroom teachers in only the most mechanical ways due to the evaluative dimension of their observations and reports. Again, it was changes in the area of educational administration that altered the role of instructional supervision.

American education during the thirties entered a new era, a period to be labeled "progressive education" by later historians. A combination of rapid growth in school population, increasing diversity among school children, economic prosperity, mobility, and other socioeconomic factors temporarily released American education from its structured heritage. New school programs swept over the land. Schools became more personal, humane, and "child-centered."

For school administrators this new era meant increased responsibilities. Schools became more complex institutions, and even more complex management skills were needed. Early research on group dynamics indicated that a human element existed in organizations that administrators had not previously considered. School administrators, following the lead of business professionals, began to practice a more democratic style of leadership. By the 1940s such "human relations" behavior was common in schools and had become an emerging theme of educational supervision.

School supervision in the 1940s and into the middle of the next decade focused on processes rather than products. Supervisors spent more of their time helping teachers develop as instructors than judging teacher performance. Cooperative group efforts were maximized and democratic interaction practiced. During this period, supervision emerged as a recognized specialty area in education, and definitive texts were written on the subject.

The launching of Sputnik I by the USSR in 1957 altered the form and substance of American education. Overnight, old programs and goals were scrapped, and new educational plans and programs were designed. Curriculum development dominated the educational scene, and such development influenced the role of educational supervisors. In many school districts supervisors became curriculum developers and the lines of demarcation between these two specialized roles blurred.

In the early 1960s supervisors became subject matter field agents, and many large district supervisors today remain in this role. The tasks of the supervisor of the 1960s were a combination of interpreting curriculum projects, organizing materials, involving teachers in the production of school programs, and serving as a resource person to teachers in the classroom. As a sort of collateral duty, many supervisors

found themselves entering into training and retraining of classroom teachers by organizing subject-focused inservice opportunities.

By the late 1960s, the goals of many school districts were no longer distinct. Too many program changes had occurred in a short period of time, leading to an overextended and crowded school curriculum. In addition, the first signs of declining achievement coupled with dramatically rising costs in education forced a reassessment of school programs as a matter of necessity. Administrators began to return to the traditional practices of making things orderly in schools. An evolution of events including performance contracts, behavioral objectives, standardization of curricula, testing, and legislated graduation requirements was set into motion and continued into the early 1990s.

The conditions during the late 1960s and the administrative responses in the 1970s and 1980s had an interesting effect on the field of supervision and the role of the school supervisor. As supervision was fighting for a clear identity in a time dominated by curriculum development, there was an effort to focus the role of supervisors in the instructional dimensions of school improvement. The supervision literature of the late 1960s and early 1970s was primarily concerned with the analyses of the teaching-learning process and the new concept of "clinical supervision." Supervisors followed this theoretical lead to become proficient in videotaping, the use of interaction analysis instruments, and the use of "action research" to explore new possibilities for instruction.

By the late 1970s, however, economic and political pressures on schools had become so great that administrators began returning to an industrial orientation reminiscent of the first quarter of the century. Supervisors, slow to assess the changes about them, continued to work with teachers and assume a support role even when unionization of teachers and movements such as "teacher centering" clearly established barriers to a supervisor-teacher relationship. In the process, many supervisors had their jobs abolished in negotiation sessions or saw their training roles usurped by classroom teachers in "centers." Those supervisors who did see the writing on the wall moved quickly to follow the line administrators into managerial roles.

Through the 1980s, supervisors held a strange assortment of jobs with titles such as Assistant Principal for Instruction or Program Manager. The deployment of supervisors at the district, school, and classroom level was too diverse to make a generalization about emerging patterns. Clearly, supervisors were speaking a management language and were on the "administrative team" in most districts. Also clear was the continued focus on improving instruction as the primary role of school supervision.

The 1990s have seen a shift from top-down management of schools through legislative, state, and district mandates to school-site