

## 2

# Instructional Supervision

*In this Chapter...*

- ◆ Instructional supervision
  - Informal and formal classroom observations
  - Clinical supervision—three phases to get you there
- ◆ Differentiated and developmental supervision
  - Peer coaching
  - Action research
  - Portfolio development
- ◆ Pulling together differentiated supervisory practices

Instructional supervision, regardless of its form, involves skills that need to be understood, used, and transferred from one model of supervision to others. Skills include processes such as the use of data collection tools and conferencing strategies. Effective supervisors pay attention to the “pulse of the school” and what is generally occurring in classrooms by “getting supervision out of the main office” (Zepeda, 2003b).

Many new principals and other supervisors freeze with the thought of observing a teacher whose subject matter they do not know or understand (e.g., physics, special education, drafting) or because they are unfamiliar with a grade level (elementary, middle, or high school). A classroom observation takes into account more than subject matter. Supervisors might not know how to talk about teaching with another professional because of myriad reasons, such as

- ◆ fear of knowing how to capture data during a fast-paced lesson in a way that makes sense for both the supervisor and the teacher;
- ◆ unfamiliarity with the processes of effective supervision because of not having been supervised as former classroom teachers;

- ◆ a lack of familiarity with grade levels (elementary, middle, high school), the characteristics of students at a particular level, or knowledge about a range of instructional practices that would support a curricular area. (Zepeda, 2003a)

The supervisory call is for the principal to accept the challenge to be responsive to and knowledgeable about differentiated supervisory practices that are embedded in the forms, content, and processes inherent in models such as action research, portfolio development, auditing, and peer coaching—with or without the clinical model of supervision. How the clinical processes (pre-observation, classroom observation, and post-observation conference) of instructional supervision are extended will only be limited by the imaginations of those empowered to implement and conduct supervision that is responsive to the teaching and learning needs of teachers within any given context.

This chapter examines instructional supervision, focusing primarily on the construct of differentiated and developmental supervision, baseline procedures associated with instructional supervision (pre-observation conference, extended classroom observation, and post-observation conference), and select differentiated models of instructional supervision (peer coaching, action research, and portfolio development).

## Instructional Supervision

Effective instructional supervisory practices promote growth, development, interaction, fault-free problem solving, and a commitment to build capacity and resiliency in teachers. The intents of instructional supervision are *formative* and are concerned with ongoing developmental and differentiated approaches that allow teachers to learn from analyzing and reflecting on their classroom practices with the assistance of another professional (Glatthorn, 1984, 1990; Glickman, 1981, 1985, 1990). Yet, according to McGreal (1983), “All supervisory roads lead to evaluation.” This is one of the complex realities of leadership in that principals need to provide formative growth opportunities that eventually lead to a summative judgment at the end of the year.

Given the press for accountability and the high-stakes environments in which PreK–12 personnel find themselves, the supervisor might be tempted to move from a formative to a summative stance while working with teachers. Our advice is to resist this shift, because teachers need time, opportunity, and support as they make sense of teaching and learning. To this end, supervision that makes a difference in the instructional lives of teachers

- ◆ empowers teachers to learn from examining their own practices while engaging in deep conversations about practice with others because teaching has become a “complex, dynamic, interactive activ-

ity... (not a practice that can be) prescribed or standardized" (Smylie & Conyers, 1991, p. 13);

- ◆ acknowledges and responds to the unique learning needs of teachers because just as all students do not learn in the same way, neither do adults (Glatthorn, 1997; Glickman, 1990);
- ◆ promotes ownership because the more teachers own their learning, the more invested they will be in applying the lessons learned from examining their practices;
- ◆ champions informed choice about the types of supervisory supports and approaches (differentiated approaches such as peer coaching, action research, and portfolio development).

## Informal and Formal Supervision

The two types of classroom observations that a supervisor can make are the informal, drop-in observation and the planned, formal observation. Regardless of type, the supervisor who wants to gain entrée into the classroom needs to realize the world of teaching is not the same for the supervisor sitting in the back of the room as it is for the teacher standing in front of the classroom. Although informal observations forgo the pre-and post-observation conferences, formal classroom observations, if they are to be meaningful, must include these processes.

### Informal Classroom Observations

Informal observations are one way in which supervisors get to know their teachers "instructionally" (Zepeda, 2003b). By making the time to observe the work teachers do on a daily basis *in their* classrooms, supervisors can exert informed effort and energy to assist teachers beyond formally scheduled observations. Dubbed "walk throughs" and "pop-ins," informal observations can provide powerful learning opportunities for teachers, and according to the results of Skretta and Fisher (2002), "Informal classroom observations translate to improved student achievement by using the observations as opportunities to develop a common language for instruction and to promote meaningful dialogue about instruction" (p. 4). Skretta and Fisher (2002) caution, however, that

the mere presence of administrators in classrooms is not enough to guarantee substantive instructional change. However, when administrators equip themselves with a walk-through instrument and give teachers specific, detailed instructional feedback based on a 3- to 10-minute informal snapshot of a lesson, the effect can be tremendous. (p. 4)

Although informal observations typically do not include a pre-observation conference, supervisors can strengthen their relationships with teachers by communicating *something* about what was observed during a post-observation conference. Given the need to create opportunities for professional talk about teaching, the supervisor should strive to converse with a teacher after any type of classroom observation. Figure 2.1 provides a written way to communicate with a teacher after an informal classroom observation.

### Figure 2.1. Sample Informal Post-Observation Feedback Form

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_

Number of students present \_\_\_\_\_

Students were

- working in small, cooperative groups
- making a presentation
- taking a test
- working independently at their desks
- viewing a film
- other \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher was

- lecturing
- facilitating a question-and-answer sequence
- working independently with students
- demonstrating a concept
- introducing a new concept
- reviewing for a test
- coming to closure
- other \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: Nancy:

- ◆ Students were working independently at their desks.
- ◆ The rearrangement of the room (desk, podium, and table) allowed you to work independently with students on their essays *and* to keep an eye on students working at their desks.

Perhaps you should hold the next freshman level meeting in your room so others can see your room arrangement. Thanks for letting me visit your room and see the work you do to help our students become better writers. I appreciate your efforts.

*Marcie Stiso*

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

## Formal Classroom Observations

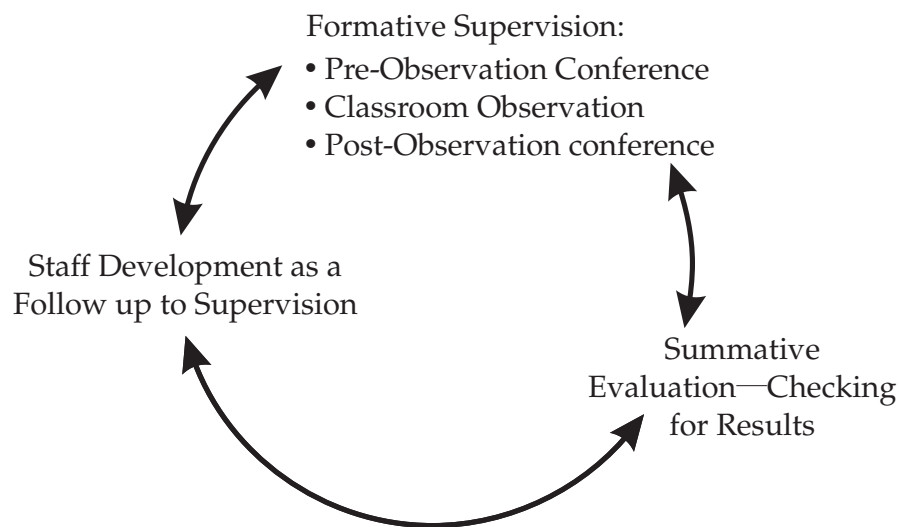
In a formal observation, the supervisor typically spends an extended amount of time in the classroom. Common sense indicates that extended classroom observations are needed for the observer to do more than get a snapshot of the classroom environment. Regardless of the length, a formal classroom observation needs to include a pre-observation and a post-observation conference.

Why is it necessary to include the pre-and post-observation conferences when conducting a formal classroom observation? The answer is a two-part one. First, as McGreal (1983) asserted, "The more teachers talk about teaching, the better they get at it;" it is during the pre-and post-observation conferences that teachers and supervisors have the opportunity to have focused discussions about classroom practices. Second, supervisors need to gain entrée into the world of the teacher's classroom, and entrée is not likely to be forthcoming for the supervisor who does not understand the teacher's point of view. Furthermore, this understanding can occur, in part, during the pre-and post-observation conferences.

## Clinical Supervision

The clinical supervisory model comprises the pre-observation conference, an extended classroom observation, and a post-observation conference. Figure 2.2 illustrates the cyclical process of instructional supervision and the components of the clinical supervision model.

**Figure 2.2. The Formative Nature of Supervision**



## Conducting the Pre-Observation Conference

Acheson and Gall (1997) indicate that the supervisor's main responsibility is to serve as "another set of eyes," or to hold the proverbial "mirror," with which the teacher can examine more closely specific classroom behaviors. Supervisors are in a better position to "hold the mirror of practice" if they collect stable data during the observation. To collect more stable data during the classroom observation, the supervisor needs specific information prior to the observation.

The pre-observation conference serves as a means to focus for the observation. The focus provides critical information so that more informed decisions are made about what data will provide useful information for the teacher to analyze in the post-observation conference. To this end, the focus guides the supervisor in deciding what observation tool to use to collect data during the classroom observation. Ideally, the pre-observation conference should

- ◆ strengthen the professional relationship between the supervisor and the teacher;
  - ◆ be held within 24 hours of the observation;
  - ◆ be held in the teacher's classroom where the observation will occur;
  - ◆ provide a clearly defined focus for the observation with the teacher taking the lead in identifying the focus;
  - ◆ give the teacher the opportunity to talk through teaching;
  - ◆ provide information about the characteristics of students and context factors such as the climate and culture within the classroom.
- (Zepeda, 2003b)

Most school systems have their own pre-observation conference form. The teacher might want to complete the pre-observation form prior to the conference with the supervisor; however, we suggest that the supervisor and teacher complete the classroom observation focus jointly during the conference. Essentially, the pre-observation form offered in Figure 2.3 can assist the supervisor in better understanding the teacher's classroom during the extended observation, identifying the focus, and, generally, in getting teachers to talk about their classroom practices. The more supervisors understand about the classroom environment and the teachers' instructional objectives prior to the observation, the more prepared supervisors will be to collect data that can assist teachers in understanding the dynamics of their work within their classrooms.

**Figure 2.3. Pre-Observation Conference Form**

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Grade/Subject: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

**1. The Classroom Environment**

Schools are diverse. It is not likely that every math teacher who teaches Algebra I teaches it the same way. This part of the pre-observation form focuses on the *characteristics, culture, and climate* of the classroom-learning environment.

*Characteristics of the Learner:* What are students like? Are students on an even playing field in relation to performance, motivational levels, and abilities? Are there students with special learning needs that require modification to instruction and assessment of learning?

*Culture and Climate:* How would you characterize the atmosphere in the room? Probe teachers to talk about how things are run, the roles students assume in the learning process, the way students communicate with one another and you, the levels of cooperation, student attitudes, and student behavior and hot spots.

**2. Learning Objectives**

*Content:* What is to be learned? Ask the teacher to walk you through the lesson for the observation (this is sometimes called *preplanning*, an original process in the very first clinical supervisory model). Make sure that you understand what topics (subject matter) will be covered during the class you will be observing. The teacher should make clear the objectives for the class.

*Process:* What will instruction look and sound like? What will the teacher be doing, and what will the students be doing? Probe teachers to articulate a cause and effect between what they will be doing and what it is anticipated that the students will be doing.

What instructional strategies will be used? Ask the teacher to talk you through the method so that you understand it. Try to discover why the teacher has chosen specific instructional strategies. Probe so that you understand both the content and the instructional methods that will be used to deliver instruction.

*Resources:* What resources and materials will be used throughout the lesson? With the advent of technology, teachers have a variety of equipment available to enhance instruction. Technology can be used both as a resource for learning and as a way to enhance instructional methods.

### 3. Looking for Results

This portion of the pre-observation focuses the discussion on how the teacher will determine if objectives have been met, how the teacher monitors for learning and application of concepts being covered, and what types of assessments will be used regardless of when these assessments are administered.

*Assessment:* What teaching behaviors assist you in assessing whether or not students are learning? Ask the teacher to identify what the students will be able to demonstrate and what artifacts (test or quiz grades, portfolio artifact, project, essay) will be used to demonstrate mastery.

### 4. Focusing for the Observation

The focus is, perhaps, the most important aspect of the pre-observation conference. The focus allows the observer to

- “zoom” into the area in which the teacher wants objective data describing teaching behavior;
- collect better data because the supervisor will know what type of *observation tool* to use to collect stable data.

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

Perhaps the most important feature of the pre-observation conference is the focus for the upcoming classroom observation. The focus serves to

- ◆ ready the supervisor for the observation (understanding the context of the classroom—learning and social characteristics of students, classroom climate, teacher’s instructional style, subject familiarity, and other unique aspects);
- ◆ ready the teacher for the observation;
- ◆ promote dialogue between the supervisor and the teacher;
- ◆ help the teacher identify a growth area. (Zepeda, 2003a)

## Conducting Classroom Observations—Tracking Data

There are a variety of tools and methods of collecting classroom observation data. Throughout the chapters in this book, we offer many ways in which the supervisor can capture data during classroom observations. For the purposes of this chapter, a few ways to collect and to landscape data are offered with the open invitation to modify and to adapt these forms.

### ***Tool 1: Focus on Questioning***

The data collection tool shown in Figure 2.4 can assist with tracking the level of questions that teachers ask of students. Using Bloom's Taxonomy as a way to frame and then analyze the questions asked of students, the teacher can see the level of questioning used throughout a lecture or classroom discussion.

#### **Figure 2.4. Data Collection Tool 1: Focus on Questioning**

Date: 02/02/04      Beginning Time: 10:10      Ending Time: 10:30

Teacher: Mrs. Anna Stevens      Observer: Mr. Donald Taylor

Lesson Topic: Fractions and Decimals      Grade Level: Grade 3

Date of Post-Observation Conference: 02/03/04 (after school)

<i>Time</i>	<i>Questions, Activities</i>	<i>Levels of Thinking*</i>					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
10:10	How many have heard the word decimal?	T					
	What do you think decimals mean?	T					
	How do you know?	T					
	Have you ever seen a decimal?	T					
	What do you think that means?	T					
	Why the decimal? Why that period?	T					
10:15	Decimal points do what?	T					
	What makes the cents, not the dollar?	T					
	Why is .99 not a dollar?		T				
10:25	How would you write \$200?	T					
	What does .00 mean?	T					
	Is that where Desmond saw a decimal point?	T					
	What instrument... temperature?	T					
	How many kinds of therm? name 2.	T					
10:30	What is she looking for?	T					
	What is a normal temperature?	T					
	Have you seen your temperature written?	T					
	Why do you think you need to use a decimal point?		T				
*Key: 1 Knowledge      2 Comprehension      3 Application							
4 Analysis      5 Synthesis      6 Evaluation							
Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.							

### ***Tool 2: Focus on Wait Time***

The data collection tool shown in Figure 2.5 helps teachers examine how long they wait before calling on students to answer questions. To use this method, write just the stem of each question the teacher asks. Using a watch with a second hand, measure the elapsed time from the end of the question to the call for a response.

**Figure 2.5. Data Collection Tool 2: Focus on Wait Time**

Date: 02/23/04                      Beginning Time: 8:15                      Ending Time: 9:05  
 Teacher: Peggy Stanford                      Observer: Glenda Brown  
 Lesson Topic: *Rumble Fish*                      Grade/Level: Grade 9, Honors English  
 Date of Post-Observation Conference: 02/24/04

<i>Teacher Question</i>	<i>Wait Time (in seconds)</i>
...in what year?...James?	2 seconds
When you think of the lessons the characters learned by the end of the book, who do you think grew up the most?	3 seconds
How does the Siamese Fighting Fish come to be symbolic of the characters in this book?	5 seconds

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

### ***Tool 3: Focus on Variety of Instructional Methods***

Regardless of the subject area, the grade level, or the teacher's experience, a single class period should include a variety of instructional methods. (The attention span of the average seventh-grade student is estimated at approximately 10 minutes; that of a ninth-grade student, 12 minutes.) The reader should consult Chapter 6, which details the developmental levels of the students across grades PreK–12. For each instructional strategy used, indicate the time and what the teacher and the students were doing, as shown in Figure 2.6.

### Figure 2.6. Data Collection Tool 3: Variety of Instructional Methods

Date: 03/12/04                      Beginning Time: 9:00                      Ending Time: 10:10  
 Teacher: Karla Jones                      Observer: Rita McCan  
 Lesson Topic: *Rumble Fish*                      Grade/Level: English, Grade 8  
 Date of Post-Observation Conference:      03/15/04

*Data Collection Instrument:  
 Variety of Instructional Methods*

<i>Time</i>	<i>Instructional Method</i>	<i>Teacher Behavior</i>	<i>Student Activities</i>
9:00–9:10	Organizing lecture	Lecture, directions for small group work, break students into small groups.	Listening, taking notes, asking questions.
9:11–9:35	Cooperative learning	Assist students to get into small groups, passing out materials. Monitoring student work.	Getting into groups, selecting roles (recorder, timer). Discussing the symbol, the Siamese Fighting Fish; finding citations from the text to support ideas; presenting citations from the text to support ideas.
9:36–9:48	Large group discussion	Leading students to citations offered by groups.	Reading citations offered by other groups.
9:49–9:59	Question and answer	Ask questions.	Responds to questions (looking up citations to back up ideas).
10:00–10:10	Closure	Assignment given.	Asking questions, begin homework.

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

### ***Tool 4: Focus on Tracking Transition Patterns***

Transitioning from one activity to another is an important part of instruction, especially for longer class periods (regardless of the grade or subject matter). Record the instruction or activity, the transition, and the student response. (Figure 2.7)

#### **Figure 2.7. Data Collection Tool 4: Transitions Tracking Chart**

Date: 03/25/04      Beginning Time: 8:00      Ending Time: 9:00  
 Teacher: Mary Barker      Observer: Frank Donaldson  
 Lesson Topic: *Rumble Fish*      Grade/Level: Grade 9, English I  
 Date of Post-Observation Conference: 03/26/04 (4th block)

#### *Transitions Tracking Chart Number of Students Present: 27*

<b>Instruction/Activity</b>	<b>Transition</b>	<b>Student Response</b>
8:00 Getting students into cooperative groups	Gives directions for small cooperative group. Stops movement to give clarifying instructions.	Students meander, finding their group members; four students ask clarifying questions during movement.
8:20 Getting students back into large group	Flicks lights on and off, asks Group 1 to send their rep to the front of the room to give a summary.	Students are moving desks, ripping paper from their notebooks.

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

Again, the reader is cued to consult subsequent chapters as classroom observation tools that are subject specific are offered as a means to assist instructional supervisors to collect and to landscape data collected during classroom observations.

### **Conducting Post-Observation Conferences**

Talking about teaching is a cooperative venture, and it is the supervisor's responsibility to engage teachers in reviewing, analyzing, and reflecting on data collected during classroom observations. Hopefully, the end result of such an interaction is that the supervisors will understand the learning needs of their teachers and the supervisor and teacher will chart the next steps in the learning process.

### The Supervisor's Scorecard

Feedback is critical to any instructional supervisory model. Without feedback after an extended classroom observation, it is not likely that growth and development will occur or that teachers will make changes in their classroom practices. Feedback is effective because of its frequency, timing, specificity, and contextualized nature.

- ◆ *Frequency*—Feedback should be given frequently (this means that principals need to get supervision “out of the main office”).
- ◆ *Timing*—Feedback should be given as soon as humanly possible after a formal or informal observation. Time fades the memory. Think of the difficulties in recreating the events of the classroom even with stable data collected during an observation.
- ◆ *Specificity*—With stable data, feedback should be related to specific events as they unfolded in the classroom.
- ◆ *Contextualized Nature*—Feedback must be given based on the contextualized nature of the classroom including variables such as the characteristics of students (see Figure 2.3 and Chapter 6), the experience level of the teacher (see Figure 2.9), and the focus of the classroom observation as elaborated in the pre-observation conference (see Figure 2.3).

The discussion during the post-observation conference should be a mutual exchange between the teacher and the supervisor.

The clinical model was worth examining because the model includes the baseline activities of all other supervisory models—the pre-observation conference, the extended classroom observation, and the post-observation conference. There are several other models of instructional supervision and two key approaches in which these models are embedded, namely, differentiated and developmental supervision. Differentiated and developmental supervision are more than mere models; these are constructs that help to guide supervisors in their approaches to working with teachers.

## Differentiated and Developmental Supervision

School districts typically use the same supervision methods for all teachers regardless of whether they are beginning, midcareer, or late-career teachers. Although there is recognition that learning to teach is an ongoing process, rarely does instructional supervision position teachers in a role of authority to select

supervisory options that best fit their individual needs. Figure 2.8 presents the major premises of differentiated and developmental supervision (Glatthorn, 1984; Glickman, 1981).

### **Figure 2.8. Differentiated and Developmental Supervision**

In differentiated and Developmental Supervision,

- ◆ Instructional practices are examined through experimentation, observing others, and discovery.
- ◆ The type of supervision is determined by the individual based on self-perceived needs.
- ◆ The teacher is situated as active in the experience of learning in the company of others through formulating hypothesis about practices, and developing and testing alternatives in practices.
- ◆ Emphasis is focused on the interactions with others in constructing and reconstructing practices. Communication includes nonjudgmental feedback and open exchanges with others.
- ◆ Adults are assumed to be capable of exerting self-directed learning.

Differentiated supervision operates on the premise that teaching is a profession and teachers should have some control over how they are supervised and evaluated. Ogden (1998) wrote

most growth occurs when supervision and evaluation is an individualized process. There are times when structure and close support is appropriate and needed. But for those who have already proven their competence, a teacher-centered, self-directed process can elicit their best. (p. 22)

## **Developmental Supervision**

From a developmental perspective, Glickman (1981) believes that “the goal of instructional supervision is to help teachers learn how to increase their own capacity to achieve professional learning goals for their students” (p. 3), and a supervisor’s style either enhances or impedes teachers’ abilities to engage in learning that is “developmentally” appropriate.

The success of developmental supervision rests on the ability of the supervisor to assess the conceptual level of the teacher or a group of teachers, and then to apply the appropriate approach of supervision with the teacher having a *voice* in the form supervision would take (e.g., clinical supervision, action research). The four supervisory behaviors (interpersonal styles) as reported by Glickman (1990) follow:

1. Directive approach
2. Nondirective approach
3. Collaborative approach
4. Nondirective approach

Figure 2.9 (see page 32) explains the four supervisory orientations and includes approximations as to when a supervisor would use each and under what conditions. The reader is reminded that there are no absolutes about which style to use under what circumstances, and Glickman (1981) asserts vigorously that “unless all teachers in a staff are remarkably homogeneous, no single approach will be effective for all” (p. 40). These orientations portray the kind of approaches a supervisor would employ based on the developmental stage of the teacher, and “effective supervision must be based on matching orientations of supervision with the needs and characteristics of teachers” (Glickman, 1981, p. 40).

It is important for a building level supervisor to reflect about what kinds of supervisory behavior would best suit the teachers in the building because the supervisor’s style (directive, collaborative) will have impact on the relationship between the teacher and supervisor.

There are many approaches to differentiated and developmental supervision. When the differentiated approach to supervision was in its early stages, peer coaching was emerging as a staff development model, and Glickman’s (1981) developmental approach to supervisory leadership and subsequent approaches had gained acceptance in PreK–12 schools. Differentiated approaches to supervision have since expanded to include, for example,

- ◆ peer coaching
- ◆ action research
- ◆ portfolio development

**Figure 2.9. Supervisory Styles**

<i>Supervisory Style</i>	<i>Audience</i>	<i>Range of Supervisory Behaviors</i>
Directive control approach: Supervisor directs all aspects of the supervisory process.	Beginning teachers; teachers on formal plans of improvement; teachers, regardless of experience, struggling with learning to use new but essential instructional strategies.	Inform, direct, show, lecture, and mandate.
Directive informational approach: Supervisor shares information with an emphasis on what must be achieved.	Beginning teachers; teachers struggling with learning to use new but essential instructional strategies.	Inform, lecture, generate alternatives between the teacher and supervisor.
Collaborative approach: Open, two-way problem solving; teacher and supervisor are equals searching for understanding of practice and its impact on student learning. Collaborative decision making with the teacher taking the lead in framing questions, posing solutions, and making the final decision about what course of action to take next.	Experienced teachers; teachers with expertise and refined skills.	Guide, keep the focus during discussions, link teachers with similar needs.
Nondirective approach: Self-directing; the teacher develops solutions and ongoing activities to assist with examining practices.	Master teachers.	Listen in a nonjudgmental manner; ask open-ended questions; provide clarification to questions; extend inquiry through reflection, role-playing scenarios, and dialogue.

Source: Adapted from Glickman (1981, 1990).

## Peer Coaching

Peer coaching can be considered a model of staff development, a model of supervision, and a model of action research. Sullivan and Glanz (2000) write that “peer coaching is defined as teachers helping teachers reflect on and improve teaching practices and/or implement particular teaching skills needed to implement knowledge gained through faculty or curriculum development” (p. 212). Joyce and Showers (1982) provided the first model of peer coaching as a form of staff development, and they developed this model as a means for peers to coach each other while exploring instruction *in* the classroom. They believed that “like athletes, teachers will put newly learned skills to use—if they are coached” (Joyce & Showers, p. 5). The coaching model has been further developed and refined, and it includes alternate forms such as cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1994) and peer supervision (Goldsberry, 1998; Munson, 1998).

The model resembles the clinical supervisory model in that peers observe peers and conduct both pre- and post-observation conferences, but the intents were more on coaching teachers on transferring newly learned skills from staff development learning opportunities into practice and, concurrently, into a mechanism to teach new instructional strategies to teachers. In this respect, peer coaching is a model of teaching, a model of staff development, and a model of instructional supervision (see Figure 2.10).

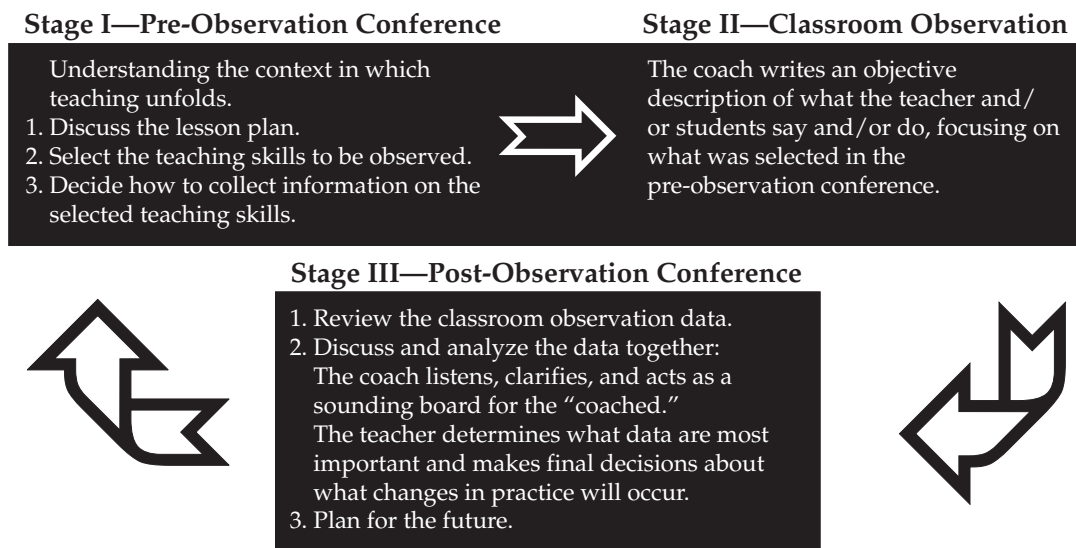
**Figure 2.10. The Peer Coaching Model**



Source: Joyce & Showers (1995, p. 112).

Given the iteration of the original model, “Peer coaching either can be viewed as an individual staff development strategy or it can provide the programmatic framework for planning a comprehensive staff development program which employs multiple strategies” (Gingiss, 1993, p. 81), including classroom observations, feedback, and follow-up coaching.

Peer coaching affirms the sequential processes of the original clinical model of instructional supervision (Pajak, 1993) and includes the pre-observation conference, the extended classroom observation, and the post-observation conference. Figure 2.11 illustrates peer-coaching as a model of instructional supervision.

**Figure 2.11. The Peer Coaching Model**

## Administrative Support

Peer coaching will not magically occur without, in part, administrative support. Willerman, McNeely, and Koffman (1991) indicate that administrative support is needed prior to and during the implementation of peer coaching and that

administrators should understand the peer coaching process and allow ample time for its implementation. Peer coaching does not challenge the administrator’s authority, nor question his competence. Rather, it gives teachers an opportunity to improve their teaching performance while it decreases the need for administrators to spend their valuable time doing numerous classroom observations. Administrators can suggest peer coaching as a method that might be used to help teachers who feel frustrated or burned out regain feelings of control and competence. (p. 6)

Gingiss (1993, p. 82) concludes, “Principals can provide informal encouragement, formal endorsement, personal involvement, and resource designation.” It makes sense that for coaching to flourish as a viable means to promote growth, principals need to allocate resources to find substitute teachers to cover classrooms so coaches can coach. Principals need to provide other resources such as materials needed by teachers to learn about instructional techniques. Perhaps the two most important resources that administrators need to provide are emotional support and encouragement for teachers to engage in peer coaching.

## Action Research

Action research linked to supervision is another way to differentiate practice. Action research can extend and complement the clinical model of supervision by focusing attention more acutely on specific areas that the teacher wants to examine about his or her practice over an extended period of time. Dewey (1929) wrote, “The discovery is never made; it is always making” (p. 76), and “each day of teaching ought to enable a teacher to revise and better in some respects the objectives aimed at in previous work” (p. 74). More recently, Grady (1998) indicates “action research is reflective inquiry undertaken by educators in order to better understand the education environment and to improve practice” (p. 43).

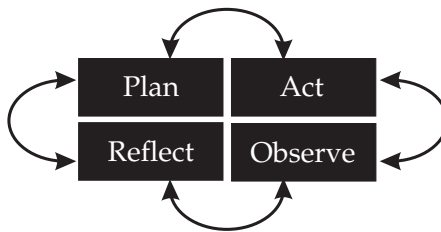
Action research empowers teachers as the processes because they are the *doers* involved in a range of activities (testing a hypothesis, collecting and interpreting data, and talking with peers or supervisors). Moreover, action research is empowering because the teacher as doer is in a position to implement modifications in practice based on data that is relevant; the teacher implements changes based on what makes most sense in the classroom. Action research (undertaken by teachers) is research that occurs in conjunction with day-to-day classroom or school activities.

The cyclical nature of action research models as envisioned by Dick (1999) positions teachers as doers engaged in

- ◆ raising questions about classroom practices;
- ◆ developing a plan (methods for collecting data);
- ◆ analyzing data (with or without the assistance of others);
- ◆ reflecting on data and the implications for practice;
- ◆ experimenting with new practices.

Dick (1999) cautions that the processes of action research should not be viewed as lockstep, and his model illustrates the iterative nature of action research (Figure 2.12).

**Figure 2.12. The Process of Action Research**



Action research connected to clinical supervision and peer coaching can provide a focal point in dealing with the messiness and complexities of reality to arrive at applicable solutions (Avery, 1990) to problems of practice in the classroom.

The supervisory role in action research can range from intensive involvement (highly directive), to involvement as an equal (collaborative), to being a resource or occasional facilitator (nondirective). Supervisors may guide the focus for investigation, they may educate participants and recipients of the research, they may assist in interpretive processes, or they may facilitate recommended action. However, if action research is to be empowering, the supervisor's role needs to gravitate to more of a nondirective stance.

What is more important for supervisors is to build an *infrastructure* for teachers to work with one another, and Pajak (1993) believes "the supervisor's task in action research is to provide teachers with information concerning both problem-solving and group process skills" (p. 257). He illuminated the developmental aspects of action research by asserting that the supervisor should gradually increase the choices of individuals and groups participating in action research to develop teachers' "thought, autonomy, and capacity for collective action" (p. 258).

Using the processes of the clinical supervision model, the principles of action research illustrate the possibilities (see Figure 2.13).

**Figure 2.13. Clinical Supervision and Action Research**

<i>Clinical Supervisory Phases</i>	<i>Action Research Processes</i>	<i>Data Collection Methods</i>
Pre-observation conference	Identification of a problem or issue	Data collection based on the observation focus
Observation	Data collection	Observer notes, audio and/or video recording
Post-observation conference	Analysis and interpretation of data; refocusing for ongoing observations (data collection); reflection on results	

Figure 2.14 offers a range of tools that can complement action research and supervision.

### **Figure 2.14. Tools to Extend and Complement Action Research and Supervision**

*Peer Classroom Observations:* Peers observe one another while teaching and collect data purposefully linked to a question of practice.

*Video-tape:* Teachers can collect data about their own practices by utilizing video-taping. An instructional aide or colleague can video-tape the lesson. Later, the teacher can view the video-tape alone or in the company of a colleague.

*Auditing:* Auditing can take many forms with the teacher collecting data as an accountant would audit “the books.” Data from the audit are examined and conclusions are drawn.

*Portfolio Development:* Teachers can track changes in practices with the artifacts serving as the data. Portfolio development as action research chronicles changes in practices and the data that caused changes to occur.

Source: Zepeda (2003a). Used with permission.

## **Portfolio Development**

Portfolio development is another example of a differentiated approach to supervision, and the model is adaptable to fit a variety of needs of teachers across career stages (Zepeda, 1997). The use of the portfolio for and by adults has emerged in the past 10 years as a viable way to chronicle more holistically their growth and development. In an era of high-stakes accountability, teacher performance is based almost exclusively on student performance on such formalized and quantifiable measures as standardized test results.

As the era of accountability moves forward, school systems run the risk of falling into the trap of losing sight of what teachers do on a daily basis and the gains in learning for both students and teachers that cannot be measured through formal assessments. Perhaps, the portfolio is a way to examine the elusive—what teachers learn from their work.

The intents of portfolio supervision are grounded in the belief that people engage in more meaningful learning when they learn in the company of others. Portfolio supervision supports the ongoing study of the teaching process by the individual teacher alone or with collegial or supervisory support and assistance (Zepeda, 2002, 2003b).

There are numerous skills associated with developing a portfolio including data collection (artifacts to include), analysis (the meaning of the artifacts), and then reflection on the meanings in practice that the artifacts symbolize. The pro-

cesses of portfolio development can be linked to supervision, staff development, and evaluation. Embedded in each process include reflection, feedback, and goal setting.

The portfolio provides the opportunity for teachers to collect artifacts over an extended period of time—an entire school year, even from year to year—and this is the strength of the portfolio. The contents of the portfolio, regardless of whether the process is tied to supervision, should relate directly to the agreed-on purposes and goals of the portfolio itself (Sanborn & Sanborn, 1994).

Zepeda and Mayers (2000) indicate that the professional teaching portfolio might include a range of topical areas in which artifacts are selected:

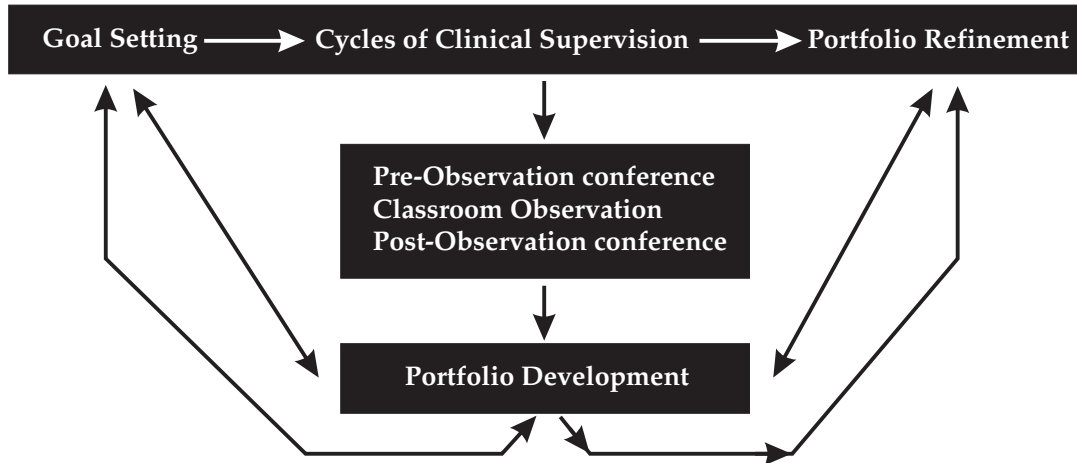
- ◆ *Personal* (e.g., statement of beliefs concerning teaching)
- ◆ *Curricular* (e.g., sample lesson plans and tests)
- ◆ *Classroom* (e.g., samples of student work)
- ◆ *School as a learning community* (e.g., committee work, interdisciplinary lesson artifacts)
- ◆ *Professional growth* (e.g., career goals, journals, videotapes). (p. 168)

Once parameters regarding the contents of the portfolio have been agreed on, an organized approach needs to be developed for selecting the contents of the portfolio.

Each cycle of the clinical supervision model has as its baseline the pre-observation conference, the extended classroom observation, and the post-observation conference. It was the intent of the original clinical model for more than one complete cycle of supervision to occur throughout the year. This is the lynchpin for including portfolio development as part of the clinical model of supervision, as it can be extended through portfolio development (Zepeda, 2002, 2003b).

Through overall goal setting, the teacher chooses an area to explore for the year, and under optimal conditions, all classroom observations are focused toward assisting the teacher to meet established goals. Artifact collection can become part of the data collection process used in the classroom observation. The analysis of artifacts can become part of the post-observation conference.

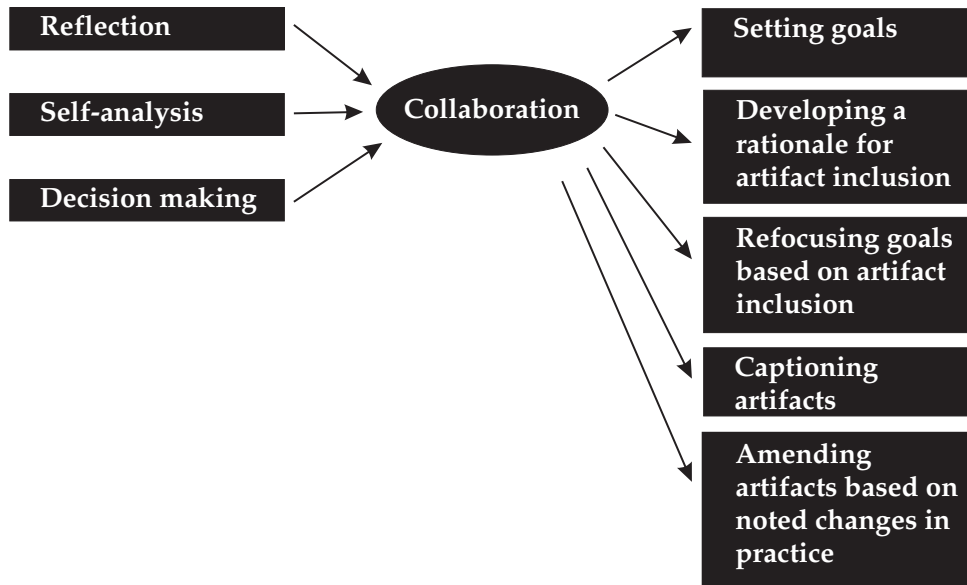
Based on the research of Zepeda (2002, 2003a), a model of portfolio supervision was fleshed out of the practices of teachers in an elementary school. Figure 2.15 illustrates the model and shows how portfolio development can become a part of the clinical supervisory process.

**Figure 2.15. Portfolio Supervision**

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

In this model, all activities—goal setting, the focus of the observation, data collection, and artifact collection, selection, and analysis—are embedded in the pre-observation conference, the classroom observation, and the post-observation conference. This model assumes that teachers and supervisors are familiar with certain skills—the skills in guiding a teacher through portfolio development are parallel (perhaps even identical) to those skills needed to conduct meaningful classroom observations and conferences.

Figure 2.16 portrays the reciprocal nature of skill application when the portfolio is used as a complement to clinical supervision. Each one of these skills works in tandem as teachers explore their practices while constructing knowledge from examining practices and the artifacts that are included within the portfolio.

**Figure 2.16. Skills Inherent in Portfolio Supervision**

Source: Zepeda (2003b). Used with permission.

## Pulling Together Differentiated Supervisory Practices

The clinical model of instructional supervision can be extended and modified to meet the needs of teachers. With practices such as peer coaching, action research, and portfolio development, the supervisor has a variety of tools to help teachers examine their practices. Through the processes inherent in action research, peer coaching, portfolio development, the clinical model of supervision can be extended.

For example, peer coaching is an option available to differentiate instructional supervision. Most notably, peer coaching can extend the clinical model of supervision by including action research and portfolio development. Through action research, teachers develop a question or a problem of practice to investigate with data collection following. Data can be culled from a variety of sources such as instructional artifacts (e.g., lesson plans) and data collected during classroom observations.

Peer coaches can assist teachers in making sense of their practices by giving feedback from classroom observations. In the original model of peer coaching, skill transfer from staff development opportunities was a major intent. Coaches would examine lesson plans, observe classrooms, and give feedback on the application of skills in the classroom with the teacher being “coached” through more advanced applications of skills based on student responses. The inter-

change of student response to teacher action (teaching, for example) would be examined with the coach “keeping one eye on the teacher, and the other eye on students” responding to instruction.

Coaching keeps action research alive with data related to classroom practices and the overall results of teacher’s efforts guiding further observations and coaching sessions.

Portfolio development as an extension to the coaching process can also enhance learning. In fact, action research vis-à-vis portfolio development and coaching can be bundled to form an even more powerful iteration and extension of the peer coaching model (Zepeda, 2002). A teaching portfolio can be constructed, examined, reexamined, and refined (along with practice) based on the observations of peer coaches who can, in turn, give feedback on the artifacts chosen for inclusion in the portfolio and the rationale for including items.

### Suggested Readings

- Downey, C. J., Steffy, B. E., English, F. W., Frase, L. E., & Poston, W. K., Jr. (2004). *The three-minute classroom walk-through: Changing school supervisory practice one teacher at a time*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Glatthorn, A. A. (1997). *Differentiated supervision* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Gordon, S. P. (2004). *Professional development for school improvement: Empowering learning communities*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2000). *Supervision that improves teaching: Strategies and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Zepeda, S. J. (2003). *The principal as instructional leader: A handbook for supervisors*. Larchmont, NY: Eye On Education.