3.

Administering Effective Classrooms: Conflicts in Positive Supervision

Tom, a beginning third-grade teacher, is having problems with students doing seatwork during reading groups. He's spent time developing learning centers, but the students are still interrupting reading group instruction with questions. Tom and his principal, Bill, decide to explore the problem further during an upcoming observation. In the classroom, Bill records each student's engagement. This information helps Bill and Tom decide how to improve students' patterns of time use. As a result, Tom feels more successful and less threatened by the process of supervision.

Mary's standards for writing are not going to change, no matter how poorly her students perform. As a supervisor, Bill examines his own assumptions about student success and is able to confront conflicts in his supervisory beliefs while Mary changes her own professional practice.

In this chapter, Bill, Tom, and Mary use a supervisory process to improve their professional practice by focusing on the student behaviors of engagement and success—not without problems, however. Indeed, problems or conflicts are part of any supervisory experience. When supervisors and teachers understand that such conflicts are inherent in supervision, both will be able to improve their professional roles.

Supervision that supports classroom teachers' efforts to increase student involvement, success, and coverage may lead to increases in student achievement—if supervisors help teachers plan, manage, and

instruct so that there is an increase in student involvement, success, and coverage of appropriate content. These six areas relate directly to student achievement, as the model introduced in Chapter 1 shows (see Figure 1). Every supervisor should be proficient in observing classrooms, conferencing, and planning with teachers to improve performance in these areas. Supervision that is practiced in this way *can* make a difference.

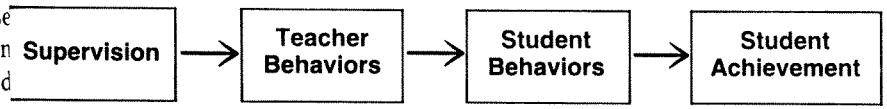
Past research has not concluded that supervision has much impact on student achievement, however, largely because the content of supervision in these studies was undefined. As recently as 1973, Cogan, a pioneer in the field, lamented, "The still unbridged gap between the observed behavior of teachers and the learning outcomes of students, represents a serious weakness in the use of observational systems in clinical supervision" (p. 160).

The problem has been confounded by the fact that many supervisors don't really supervise, but act instead as curriculum implementers. Some become the superintendent's assistants, and others lose their jobs in budget crises. Building principals have stepped into the breach, faithfully shouldering the burden of teacher supervision again. But for most administrative personnel, supervising classroom instruction consumes relatively little time (Ellet, Pool, and Hill, 1974). Conducting classroom supervision is relegated to the back burner while other fires are being put out.

Successful supervision is possible, however, given some important if's. It is possible *if* the superintendent places a priority on principals monitoring classrooms, *if* the principals internalize supervision as part of their professional role, *if* appropriate training is provided, *if* they know what to look for, and *if* they can manage the conflicts (Vann, 1979; Bailey and Morrill, 1980; Ryan and Hickcox, 1980; Neagley and Evans, 1980). Recognizing the discomfort and conflicts in supervision is a first step toward improving supervisory practice.

Supervision is an uncomfortable experience. It isn't like making friends, or working with a peer on a project. Unfortunately, textbook descriptions of warm, caring, and friendly educational supervision mask the conflicts inherent in the process. In reality, supervision calls up feelings of inadequacy, of being judged, of having to conform to the arbitrary standards of others. Supervisors as well as teachers feel conflicts and tensions within this relationship. Bad decisions, capri-

Figure 1. Supervision Supports Effective Classrooms.



ciously made, affect personal and professional lives. Control is lost. A yearly evaluation elicits discomfort. These are natural feelings about the uncomfortable experience of supervision. For the moment, take two aspirins and read on.

The Domains of Supervision

Supervision in the helping professions usually consists of three roles: the supervisor (such as principal, content area specialist, or department chairperson),[1] the supervisee (in this case, the teacher), and the client (the student).

We define the supervisor as a person who has formal authority to evaluate or rate a professional's performance within an organization, or as someone who has input into such evaluations. It is the supervisor who has the major responsibility for communicating and refining the organization's intentions, such as improved student achievement, to those who are evaluated (Etzioni, 1964). The supervisor's role links the purpose and goals of an organization to the role of the supervisee (the teacher) and to improved services for the organization's clients (the students).

The teacher's role is to help students learn, which implies providing students with time to learn and appropriate content to learn in ways that promote student success.

The student or client helps the teacher and supervisor keep score. The supervisor and teacher use students' behaviors to determine whether the improvements planned have been successful.

In a positive supervisory experience, the goal is to improve the organization's capability to deliver valued outcomes (and student achievement is one we value) through the supervisor's and teacher's increased competence in performing their professional roles. Supervision, then, is centered on improving professional performance, although at times, the supervisor and supervisee may delve into more personal matters (Herrick, 1977; Squires, 1978, 1981). Cogan (1973) would argue that the domain of supervision should be limited strictly to teachers' behavior patterns, but this prohibition does not recognize the meanings professionals attach to their behavior. On the other hand, supervision is not a therapeutic or counseling relationship (Hansen, 1971). What appears to differentiate supervision from therapy is the emphasis on improving a professional role (Squires, 1978). Thus, the process of supervision consists of the supervisor and supervisee exploring the patterns of their behavior and interaction, and the meanings associated with those patterns.

[1]One could also see the superintendent of small and medium-sized districts serving this function with their principals. In this case, the teachers are seen as third party, while the superintendent serves in the role of supervisor and the principal in the role of supervisee. However, given certain minimum conditions, the supervisory relationships and processes would be the same.

Certain assumptions are implicit in this definition. First, we assume that professional behavior is observable and patterned. If one enters a classroom, one can observe all the activities going on there—students looking around the room and asking questions of other students, for example. Further, this observable behavior is patterned; that is, the behaviors show some consistency and regularity over time. For example, classes begin and end with some regularity. Some teachers begin the lesson when the bell rings; others begin after all students are seated at their desks. The instructional process itself is usually patterned as well. It consists of such segments as review, presentation of new material, guided practice, and independent practice. Not only are most classroom environments patterned, but people's interactions with their environment also form patterns. For example, Ms. Jones patterns her class so lessons begin on time, students keep busy, and homework is assigned after the bell has rung. Ms. Jones also knows that, despite this intentional patterning of the environment, if Mary sits by Tasha, neither will complete her seat work. Teachers and students live these patterns most of the time. The patterns help to reduce uncertainty and provide a safe and predictable environment in which to work and learn. Such behavior patterns may promote or discourage students' learning.

In our definition of supervision, we also assume that individuals attach different meanings or values to the same behavior patterns. They do so by relating the behavior patterns to different criteria, such as "professional manner," "student achievement," or "student self-concept." For example, two individuals may disagree on the appropriateness of a teacher-directed, structured approach to teaching because one values students' achievement on standardized tests while the other values students' learning to take charge of their own lives. Both may see the same quiet, task-oriented class, yet they would interpret the behavior patterns differently. Like these two individuals, most of us make mental leaps from the behavior we observe to inferences about that behavior. We have a tendency to judge what we see by personal standards and by our own beliefs about what is good, true, and right. While it is not possible to stop our leaps from data to judgment, in the professional world of teaching and supervising we must be able to explicitly trace the path of our judgments back to the data, and teachers and supervisors must share that journey throughout the supervisory experience. We must also be able to state explicitly the criteria that are

being used to make judgments.

Student and teacher behavior patterns do significantly affect instructional outcomes, and for that reason they can form the foundation of the school's supervisory system (Bailey and Morrill, 1980). The key here is to have those behaviors take on meaning for teachers and instructional supervisors within the school. In the next section, we will discuss one format that can provide a structure for the supervisory relationship and thus reduce the conflict and tension associated with supervision.

A Format for Individual Supervision

Having an agreed-on format for individual supervision provides structure and safety for reducing conflicts in the supervisory relationship. In this section, we explain an individual supervisory format by describing the steps of a "clinical" supervisory cycle. Research documenting the effectiveness of this format is reported in Sullivan (1980). More detailed rationales and explanation of this format can be found in Cogan (1973), Goldhammer (1969), and Goldhammer, Anderson, and Krajewsky (1980).

The clinical supervisory models consist of at least four steps: (1) a preconference, (2) an observation, (3) analysis and reflection, and (4) a follow-up conference or postconference. It is generally assumed that the school has provided appropriate training for all staff in the format of the supervisory model and has a clear way of rating professional performance that is understood by the staff and is consistent with teacher association contracts.

The suggestions made in this section are prescriptive and are intended for administrators and teachers who are new to supervision. Naturally, both supervisor and teacher will adapt to their roles as supervision progresses.

The Preconference

During the preconference, the supervisor and teacher set the goals for the upcoming observation. These goals are consistent with both the general goals set by the supervisor and teacher during previous supervisory sessions and the goals of the organization. Specific data-collection methods are reviewed to determine if they are appropriate for the goals to be accomplished. A time is set for the observation, with the teacher's assurance that the time is appropriate for observation of the problem at hand.

When both supervisor and teacher have some common experience with the supervisory process, the preconference may last only five minutes. Supervisors and administrators just beginning this process in a schoolwide effort, on the other hand, will realize the value of fully modeling a preconference to provide the teacher with vital understandings necessary to the successful beginning of a positive supervisory experience. During the preconference, both supervisor and teacher establish an environment in which the ground rules are known.

The Observation

The purpose of the observation and the type of data to be collected are established during the preconference. The administrator or supervisor arrives at the classroom on time and takes his or her place in a location agreed on during the preconference. The supervisor does not interrupt either the teacher or the students during the lesson, unless such interruptions were agreed to in the preconference. During the observation, the supervisor records the data in the manner agreed on during the preconference. The supervisor may also note other data not included on the particular form being used but pertaining to the goals identified in the preconference.

Because students are generally the best source of evidence that learning is taking place, the supervisor is advised to spend time looking for and recording student patterns. Teachers appreciate this, as some patterns may go unrecognized by the teacher, especially in large classrooms. The supervisor resists the impulse to find fault with the teacher, noting instead the many positive behavior patterns that contribute to students' learning. The supervisor knows from experience that, in many of the school's classrooms, the majority of the learning-teaching patterns promote students' learning.

The supervisor realizes the importance of taking detailed notes on classroom patterns, as this provides a helpful history for the teacher and supervisor to use in discussing the class during the postconference. The supervisor also uses the notes to jot down hunches or hypotheses to discuss later with the teacher. When leaving, the supervisor remains as inconspicuous as possible. No judgment about the class is made at this point, for the patterns identified during the observation need to be discussed more fully with the teacher at the postconference. The supervisor leaves with a goodbye and a promise to meet with the teacher during the next few days. As both teacher and supervisor have been trained in data gathering and pattern analysis, the supervisor duplicates a copy of the observation notes and gives them to the teacher.

Analysis and Reflection

After the observation, the teacher may want to make notes on classroom

patterns and areas for discussion during the postconference. After receiving the supervisor's notes and making an appointment for the conference, the teacher sets aside time to carefully reflect on both sets of notes and discern patterns that appear in the data. The supervisor also takes time to prepare for the conference by reviewing the observation form and jotting down a few areas that relate to the goals identified in the preconference. The supervisor further reflects on the positive patterns that assisted student learning, as these provide the key for helping the teacher improve in the identified goal areas. The supervisor may want to list several areas on which to focus during the conference.

Thus, both teacher and supervisor have studied, analyzed, and reflected on the data generated by the observation. Both have discerned patterns in that data. And both teacher and supervisor come to the conference with areas that they wish to discuss in relation to the goals set during the preconference. By completing these tasks beforehand, both the teacher and the supervisor help ensure that the postconference will be productive.

The Postconference

The postconference allows the teacher and the supervisor to share the meanings of the professional behavior patterns they have identified in order to improve their professional role performance. One postconference format is suggested in Figure 2. To keep the conference on track, beginning supervisors may want to keep a copy of this format on their desks and give a copy to the teacher. This is not the only conference format available, of course. See Acheson and Gall (1980) for other examples. Whatever conference format is agreed upon, both supervisor and teacher need to practice its use. Once both are proficient, variations will come more easily.

The Five Phases of a Supervisory Experience

The clinical supervisory cycle and the Champagne-Morgan conference strategy shown in Figure 2 provide a structure for reducing conflict over the short haul. In this section, the conflicts inherent in a long-term supervisory experience are described.

Just as the experiences of colleagues change over a lengthy relationship, so do those of supervisors and teachers. In fact, the total supervisory experience is made up of many supervisory cycles and many conferences. To feel at ease in a supervisory relationship, as uncomfortable as that relationship may be, it is helpful to recognize the five distinct phases of the supervisory experience and to be familiar with

Figure 2. The Champagne-Morgan Conference Strategy.[a]

Phase I: Setting Goals and Commitments to a Goal

Step 1. Objectives are specified/reviewed: *"We decided to take a look at two patterns in your teaching."*

Step 2. All data relating to objectives are shared: *"Let's talk for a few minutes about how you see this and how I see it given the data we already have, before we begin to suggest ways to deal with it."*

Step 3. Agreement is made to focus on "key" objectives: *"This seems to be the key issue that we can begin to work on today."*

Step 4. Agreement is made that some behavior changes are appropriate: *"Am I right that you want to try to do that differently?"*

Phase II: Generation and Selection of Procedures or Behavior

Step 5. Positive, appropriate behaviors in the setting related to the objectives are identified and reinforced: *"What was that neat thing you did today? Perhaps we can build the new procedure on that."*

Step 6. Alternative behaviors or reemphases are identified and examined: *"Before we decide what we are going to do, let's try to think of three or four different ways to approach this."*

Step 7. An alternative behavior is selected: *"Which one of these ideas do you think seems the best one to begin working with?"*

Step 8. Detailed implementation plans for the selected alternative are completed: *"Now that we've selected a way to go, our next step is to plan in detail what that means."*

Step 8a. (If appropriate) Plans made are practiced or role-played: *"Try out Steps 1 and 3 of this process on me here, now. We may need more work on it."*

Phase III. Commitments and Criteria of Success Are Specified

Step 9. Criteria for successful implementation of selected behavior are decided and agreed on: *"Will you suggest some ways we can measure or know whether our plans are working?"*

Step 10. Feedback is shared on purposes, commitments, and perceptions of the conference: *"We have worked on ____ today. What do you think we have accomplished?"*

Step 11. Commitments of both parties are reviewed: *"Okay, here is what I have promised to do, and here is what I think you have promised to do. Do you agree?"*

Conference Terminates.

[a]Champagne and Hogan (1978). Used with permission of the authors.

the specific conflicts that are attendant on each phase.

The five phases are (1) entrance, (2) diagnosis, (3) technical success, (4) personal and professional meaning, and (5) reintegration.[2] During the entrance phase, supervisors and teachers may experience conflict about the structure of supervision. The diagnosis phase may bring to light conflicts over the teacher's need to improve and the role of the

[2]The above phases were summarized from two studies of positive supervision, one from a supervisee's point of view (Herrick, 1977) and one from a supervisor's viewpoint (Squires, 1978, 1981). The results are generally consistent with findings of the investigators in the fields of counselor education (Kell and Mueller, 1966), social work (Pettes, 1967), psychiatry (Ekstein and Wallerstein, 1958), and teacher education (Goldhammer, 1969), and are similar to other typologies in the literature (Horgan, 1971; Gross, 1974; Schuster et al, 1972).

supervisor as helper. The technical success phase may produce conflicts stemming from an increasingly open relationship and from the additional demands success brings to both supervisor and teacher. During the fourth phase, both the supervisor and the teacher overcome conflicts about delving more deeply into the professional meanings and personal implications of their improving professional patterns. Reintegration, the fifth phase, occurs as the supervisor and teacher overcome conflicts about ending the supervisory relationship and integrating the improved professional patterns into their everyday habits.

The phases of a positive supervisory experience are different from the steps of a clinical supervision cycle. The clinical cycle consists of four steps that help to guide the supervisor's and teacher's interactions in the short term. The five phases of positive supervision occur over a more extended period of time. For example, a supervisor and teacher may complete a number of clinical supervisory cycles and still be working toward the technical success phase. Indeed, they may never go past that phase, even though they complete many clinical cycles.

Two stories—one from a teacher's perspective and one from a supervisor's—will serve as a base for describing the phases of positive supervision.

Tom's Story

In the first story, Tom, a beginning third-grade teacher, describes his experience with positive supervision focusing on one of the factors that affect student achievement: engagement. To set the scene, Tom met with the supervisor (in this case, Bill, the elementary principal) on two occasions. At the first meeting, Bill told Tom about the district's policy for supervising beginning teachers and specified how Tom would implement this policy. This discussion accomplished one of the tasks of the entrance phase. They talked about both participants' expectations for supervision and set up the first supervisory cycle. After the first cycle, Tom and the principal agreed it would be profitable to take a more in-depth look at the patterns of time use in the classroom. Here is Tom's description of the second clinical supervisory cycle, which took place in February of Tom's first year:

After the first supervisory cycle, Bill thought we might take a look at how students were using time in the classroom, and I agreed. Besides, Bill was the boss, and I was having trouble keeping the reading groups and the rest of the class busy at the same time. I'd work with one reading group and could never seem to have enough worksheets to keep all the other kids busy. Someone was always fooling around, and I'd have to stop the group and get the kids back to work. I had worked hard setting up activity centers in the class for kids to use after their worksheets, but these also caused some problems, because sometimes the directions weren't clear (it's hard to write directions for third graders) and so they'd come and ask me—again interrupting the reading group.

During the preconference, Bill and I talked about this problem. He began by commenting on what a lot of work I'd put into the centers and said that during his last observation, the centers appeared not to be working out as well as I had expected. Indeed that was true. I was relieved that Bill thought I was doing a good job.

He asked me to explain some of my goals and purposes for constructing the centers. Basically, I said I wanted to use them as an enrichment experience (perhaps the fancy term would impress him) after kids were through with their worksheets from the reading group. He told me that it looked like what I wanted to do was to keep the kids busy on a variety of reading activities. I agreed with that one too.

Bill explained that he would come in and be my "eyes" in the class during a reading period. He would record, once every two minutes, what each child in the classroom was doing according to the following scheme:

1. *Involved in reading group*
2. *Working on worksheet*
3. *Working in activity center area.*

I gave him the names of the kids in each of the three reading groups and the seating charts, and he said he would make an X on the chart by the kids who were paying attention or doing their work, and an O by the kids who weren't. He said he'd make a copy for me after the observation and we'd look for patterns in the data. Well, it sounded a little complicated, but I figured he knew what he was doing. Besides, it might be interesting to really know what the kids were doing while my back was to them during the reading groups. We set the time for the observation.

I knew he was coming, so I worked hard on making sure directions for the activities in the center were understandable. I even tried them out on a few kids before the observation day. When these children showed me that they understood the directions, I put their names on the bottom of the cards so that if the other kids had questions, they wouldn't have to interrupt me. Why didn't I think of that sooner?

Next, I made sure the worksheets were interesting and reinforced the skills I was teaching. I even prepped the class a little on what would happen when the principal came to visit. He would sit at the side of the room and take notes, and the students were to pretend he was just a desk or a chair. The kids thought that was pretty funny.

And that's what happened. I wasn't bothered by his taking notes; I knew what he was taking notes on. After a few minutes things settled into a routine. I was a little nervous, but my extra preparations helped me feel more confident. And the kids seemed to want to "look good for the principal." I really had a

heightened sense of what I was doing, especially those little slips I made. But then I remembered that Bill was looking at the students and not at me. After observing, he smiled and left.

I was curious about what he had found out. After school I picked up the filled-in observation sheets and took a look at them. It was complicated. At the bottom of the sheets were some notes: "Total engagement rate for class, 70 percent; engagement rate for reading groups, 90 percent; engagement rate for kids working on worksheets, 50 percent; engagement rate for students in centers, 60 percent."

We had decided to meet during one of my planning periods the next day for the postconference. I had jotted down some notes about the observation sheets, but I was curious and a little suspicious about the numbers. What did they mean? Would I be rated on just the numbers? I decided to wait and see, but I would also have my defenses ready for using just numbers to determine my rating.

When I came into Bill's office, we got right to the task at hand. It almost seemed too abrupt. Bill did most of the talking at first. He reviewed with me how he had recorded the data and determined all the engagement rates. I was fascinated by all that information about just one small aspect of teaching. Bill briefly reviewed a little of the research and gave me copies of some articles to read. He talked about the standard 75- to 85-percent engagement rate and said that I had come pretty close. He complimented me on the attention I received from the kids in the reading groups and said I would soon have the rest of the class working just as well. He also praised the fast-paced discussion and my ability to pull all the kids in for comments. He said they really seemed to be listening to each other. Then he asked how this activity was different from working on seat work or at the centers. "Perhaps once we review the differences, we can incorporate more of what is working in your reading groups in the other activities," Bill said. "That would probably help to improve engagement rate in those two groups." We came up with the following list of differences:

Reading Group	***Other Groups***
Teacher-directed	*Self-directed*
Interactive	*No interaction with others on the task at hand*
External pacing by teacher	*No opportunity for interaction*
Everyone "knew" they were going to participate	*Everyone working independently*
	No clear way of giving rewards to those who did the work in the way expected

I had never really thought about the different groups in that way. From the list, there doesn't appear to be any reason why there couldn't be only two groups in the classroom instead of three. That would mean less time for students working alone. And there didn't seem to be any reason why kids had to work alone at the centers, or even wait for me to check their worksheets, except that was the way I set it up.

I mentioned these ideas to Bill, who said they were great and that I should try some different arrangements and see how they worked. He offered only one piece of advice—that I should face the room while conducting the reading group. "Very often," he said, "just a look at a misbehaving kid is all that's necessary."

The conference time was getting short. Bill asked me to try a few of these ideas and let him know how they turned out. He offered to return to the class when the changes I was going to try were going smoothly. If I needed any assistance, his door was always open before and after school, or by appointment during my preparation period. I left the office with a few minutes left before the next class.

I was excited about the new understandings I had about my classroom. I was also surprised that we had come up with just a few ideas but nothing really specific. I will check with the other third-grade teacher about some of my ideas to see if she has any suggestions. I am beginning to trust Bill a little more. He seemed to know the right questions to ask, yet wasn't dogmatic about the answers. He gave me enough rope, but I don't feel out on a limb alone.

From experiences such as this, we have synthesized the five phases of a positive supervisory experience as one way of charting the inherent conflicts of supervision and their resolution. Tom's story provides a framework for discussing the first three phases.

Entrance

In each phase, the supervisor and teacher are confronted with a number of tasks. For example, in the entrance phase, they must establish a structure for the supervisory process, which may resemble the preconference, observation, analysis and reflection, and postconference format suggested earlier. This task has the potential for blocking or stopping the supervisory relationship because of personal and professional conflicts. For example, in the entrance phase, the teacher who agrees to a particular supervisory format is submitting to the supervisor's judgment. This may foster in the teacher feelings of professional and personal inadequacy, which must be overcome if a positive supervisory experience is to occur. On the other hand, the supervisor also experiences the conflict of knowing that a structure is necessary but not wanting to impose constraints on the teacher.

Both supervisor and supervisee can block progress during any of the phases by not adequately resolving the professional or personal

conflicts inherent in the supervisory tasks. Blockage can also result from not accepting the tasks of supervision or trying to shortcut them. For example, Bill and Tom both agreed that the activity centers would be the focus of the supervision, thus allowing the process to continue. Because the task was clear and Bill and Tom agreed on it, there was no blockage.

By adopting a four-step clinical cycle of supervision, Bill and Tom completed the major task of the entrance phase—agreeing on a structure for supervision. The school district and teachers associations play important roles in the entrance phase, as they prescribe how supervision and evaluation will be structured for most employees of the district. When there is no structure in place, supervision may be difficult because there is no consensus on the supervisory format or structure. Conflicts will then surface around the supervisor's and teachers' attempts to set up a structure for supervision, and possibilities for a positive supervisory experience will likely be blocked.

When Tom accepted the supervisory cycle, he also accepted the legitimacy of Bill, the principal, as a person who conducts supervision. As Tom said, "Bill was the boss." While Bill's reactions aren't related in this story, he might also be experiencing tension from conflicts inherent in being a supervisor. He may question his own adequacy as a supervisor, even though he has been successful before. He knows that a new supervisory relationship means putting himself on the line; having to be cautious, yet open; hoping for good results, but knowing all the things that can go wrong.

Tom probably feels more at ease during the second cycle than the first, and the initial anxiety for both Tom and Bill is relieved somewhat as they create a relaxed atmosphere in which Tom's expectations can be discussed. Bill also indicates to Tom that he affirms Tom's intentions and capabilities. Tom states, "I was relieved that Bill thought I was doing a good job."

Diagnosis

The task of the diagnosis phase is to reach agreement on problems, strategies, and solutions for improving professional behavior. Bill started out on a positive note by discussing the work Tom had put into the activity centers. This provided continuity from the last supervisory cycle, and the centers had been on Tom's mind as he prepared for the preconference. Agreement was needed on the problems to be addressed during supervision.

The danger in the diagnosis phase is that the teacher will accept the supervisor's definition of the problem or that the supervisor will describe a problem that may not be appropriate or important for the teacher. Tom's reaction to the observation plan reveals a little of this

conflict: "Well, it sounded a little complicated, but I figured he knew what he was doing." Bill took a chance in defining the plan without Tom fully understanding the meaning of the data. As Tom put it, "I was curious and a little suspicious about the numbers." Nevertheless, there appeared to be sufficient trust in the relationship that Tom's suspicion did not block further progress.

It is during the diagnosis phase that data is usually collected, and that task may also create conflicts. Collecting data validates a problem if one exists, and validating a problem may be perceived as dangerous, breeding resistance and blockage. Tom says, "I would also have my defenses ready for using just numbers to determine my rating." The supervisor may use such resistance to diagnose problems between the supervisor and the teacher. In fact, Bill begins the postconference by explaining the data-collection method to Tom, thus addressing indirectly Tom's unstated conflict about the use of data. At other times, such resistance may be discussed directly between supervisor and teacher.

The supervisor's initial focus in the diagnosis phase is on the teacher's interaction with students. Thus Bill suggests a continuing focus on activity centers. Bill also shows respect for Tom's authority and integrity by listening to his diagnosis of the problem without making judgments about his actions. The supervisor may experience the problem of making judgments about the teacher's situation but still indicating acceptance of the teacher. Bill handles this conflict by explicitly stating his judgment—that the centers were not working out as well as Tom had expected—in a way that confirms Tom's intuition. Bill also states the goal—keeping students involved in reading—while reinforcing Tom's efforts in that direction. This strategy overcomes potential conflicts, as Tom had prepared well for the observation.

Technical Success

During the third phase, the supervisor and teacher experience success by improving instructional patterns. The supervisor initiates active interventions in areas where the teacher needs assistance and is ready to learn. Bill's intervention is to propose generating a list of the differences between the learning centers and teacher-directed instruction. Because Bill and Tom had successfully completed the tasks of the entrance and diagnosis phases, success was more likely here. Bill was able to meet Tom's need for a rather loose structuring of the situation without giving in to any feelings he might have had about making sure all areas of improvement were covered. Thus, the supervisor must consider the teacher's ability to learn and change successfully without imposing the supervisor's own time schedule. This may be tricky, as some teachers block progress through delay or by always acquiescing to the supervi-

sor's wishes. In this case, Bill felt Tom was not resisting and would follow through because of his commitment to improving the centers.

Technical success focuses on improving students' learning, and the supervisory experience should be judged mainly on those terms. We assume that Tom's changes in the classroom will increase student engagement in academic activities. With such a focus, supervision avoids conflicts about who is right or wrong, and who won or lost.

The supervisor's relationship with the teacher is a model that is often copied by teachers in their relationships with students. In this case, we might assume that Bill's strategy of letting Tom decide how to implement ideas generated during the conference will transfer into Tom's allowing more flexibility in students' use of the learning centers. Tom states, "There didn't seem to be any reason why kids had to work alone at the centers, or even wait for me to check their worksheets." Bill has allowed control to be vested in Tom, just as Tom is allowing more control over the learning process to be vested in his students.

Technical success is supported in an environment in which mistakes can be made without fear of failure, and feelings can be explored without questioning the worth of individuals. The relationship focuses on future improvements, rather than on detailed analysis of past mistakes. Bill, for example, suggests that Tom try a few of the ideas and report how they turn out, allowing Tom to deal with the problems in ways he deems appropriate. Tom can accept or reject those ideas on the basis of his own criteria. Bill makes available professional knowledge—such as suggesting that Tom face the class while working in small groups—without dominating the discussion. The supervisory experience deepens as success builds trust and confidence. Tom recalls, "I am beginning to trust Bill a little more. . . . He gave me enough rope, but I don't feel out on a limb alone."

Bill's Story

In the next story, Bill, the principal, reports on his experience while supervising Mary, a tenth-grade English teacher with three years of experience. Bill describes part of a clinical supervisory cycle concerning a conflict between Mary's standards for her students' writing and her encouraging their success—an important area for improving students' achievement. Bill examines his own patterns of behavior and thought in his professional and personal life and begins to change the way he interacts. Such a change indicates he is in the fourth phase of positive supervisory experience, examining personal and professional meanings for himself. Later he integrates these learnings and his professional life returns to "normal"—thus describing the fifth phase of positive supervision, reintegration.

Our preconference ended with Mary stating quite adamantly that her standards for writing were not going to change. We had agreed, during the ten-minute preconference, to take a look at students in her tenth-grade class who were successful in meeting those writing standards. The observation would be held in three days' time, when students would be working in groups correcting their writing assignments. The classroom observation was only one part of our data collection effort. We were also collecting folders of student compositions to take an in-depth look at students' progress in writing during the past six months, a project initiated by the English faculty. And we also used Mary's grade book.

We had known each other professionally for three years and had successfully completed a number of supervisory cycles. Her classes were pleasant, orderly, and task oriented, and she was able to convey a real feeling for the beauty of the English language to her students in ways that they could understand. At times, her classes were slightly mechanical, but no one would question her competence and dedication. In light of our previous experience, then, her adamant reaction about maintaining standards appeared incongruous to me.

The students were not fulfilling Mary's expectations in written composition. There may have been a number of reasons, including Mary's instruction, the meanings she gave to the idea of standards, or the amount of time the students were spending on the activities. Perhaps there is an inherent conflict between helping students succeed and also requiring that they be graded according to whether they attain a certain standard. Schools, after all, sort students (pass and fail) as well as assist in their learning. Those are two hats that are difficult to wear, as I know from my previous role as vice-principal for discipline. The same feelings came across that I felt when I first took the "disciplinarian" job: "We must have clear rules. We must enforce them. Otherwise, the school will go out of control. It will be my fault for not enforcing the rules." The same kind of tension may be at work in Mary's classroom.

During the classroom observation, Mary reviewed the writing standards from an overhead transparency and then divided the kids into pairs to correct each other's papers. This appeared to be a frequently used proofreading routine. I went around the room to the students identified at the preconference to see what they were doing and talk with them. I also reviewed their folders. Mary went where students asked for help. I made a note on the seating chart Mary had given me of who Mary helped, and I made brief notes on what was in the cumulative writing folders.

Let me summarize some of the patterns I noticed in Mary's class—I'm sure there were also others—then backtrack to some of my own feelings and reactions and the meanings I attached to those patterns. (1) There did not appear to be any purpose for pairing the students. For example, two students who both had spelling problems were paired together, and they had a difficult time catching each other's mistakes. (2) There was no explanation required of or given by

students to each other about their mistakes. (3) Neither the class nor individuals appeared to be moving toward any specific goals. (4) From data in the folders of the successful students, all appeared to be meeting the standards, but they appeared to have had this ability from their first composition. (5) From the students I talked to, about 60 percent of the students in the class felt the idea of standards was an imposition on them. It was an onerous task, and they didn't see the point. Well, while some of that is just griping, there seemed to be genuine confusion in the students' minds about the purpose of the writing standards. (6) Mary's own explanation to students was, "You'll need this for college or to get a job." It was odd that Mary should still be supplying a rationale to gain commitment to these writing standards when they had been the focus of class attention for some time.

On leaving the class, I understood a little more about Mary's frustration with the writing standards. However, I surmised that the standards weren't the salient issue at all. The fact was, these tenth-grade students weren't cooperating and, indeed, weren't learning and succeeding. Neither was Mary. Mary's frustration stemmed from the students' resistance to learning—at least that was my hunch. She may see the students' actions as a rejection of what she is trying to teach, perhaps even a rejection of herself as a teacher. Her adamant posture in the preconference may be another indicator of her feelings of frustration.

Perhaps there is a cycle here. Her students aren't succeeding; she feels frustrated that she isn't succeeding; she keeps trying, though less and less. Thus, class activity descends into ritual. Perhaps I should mention this in the postconference. The six patterns I identified would support doing so.

I played out such a conference scenario in my mind. I felt depressed. Mary has probably tried to get out of this cycle and failed. Bringing it up would reinforce the failure. I mean, why can't she see what is happening? I feel frustrated and angry with her in my own imaginary scenario, in the same way I suspect that she feels frustrated with her students.

It's at this point that something clicks—my own patterns of reaction become clear to me. I am looking for frustration rather than success, because that is what Mary directed my attention toward. In the scenario, I have reinforced that through the patterns I observed in the classroom. I was not conscious or aware that Mary's definition of the problem was becoming my own. I needed to recognize this in order to be able to break my own pattern, and to break the cycle of frustration for myself with this new understanding.

I had fooled myself into thinking I was looking for success: the observation of students who were succeeding, the gaps I identified in the instruction of students not being paired with a purpose, the emphasis on Mary's justification of the standards. Yes, they were all patterns, but all patterns that reinforced the students' lack of achievement and Mary's frustration.

I decided those were not the patterns to share in the follow-up conference. Instead, I thought back to the observation to look for patterns that did show

success. There were the writing standards and Mary's concern about them. The students did have folders for a cumulative record of their writing. The students did go through the motions of correcting each other's papers, certainly saving the teacher much time. Some students had mastered the standards—a potential resource. The standards were written down and shared with the students. It was beginning to fit together in my head. Now, the problem was how to get Mary to see and use the potential of these positive patterns during the conference.

Even months later, I am still reflecting on this incident, particularly my own reactions. While supervising Mary, I had allowed her way of looking at the situation to become my own. Her frustration was transferred to me, so that I saw frustration in our supervisory relationship. In a sense, I let her use me to confirm her own meanings until I began to recognize the pattern and did something to break out. I had to break the pattern before she could. I guess what a supervisor does is to "see beyond." Luckily, Mary was able to break the frustration cycle.

In interacting with other teachers, I am now aware that they might try to transfer their frustration to me, and I need to ask if the reality they define is one that allows for professional growth and for their own success. I need to understand the teacher but not lose myself, not let go of my own perspective.

While thinking about these dynamics, I also realized that I might transfer my own frustration and insecurities to the teacher. Focusing on those six classroom patterns would have been a sure way to keep Mary frustrated in her teaching of writing. In fact, by highlighting and emphasizing those patterns, I may have created my own problems. Mary is, after all, a sensitive person and a very hard worker.

The success I finally experienced with Mary during this particular supervisory cycle is overshadowed by what I am learning about my own interaction patterns and the dynamics of the supervisory process. Indeed, I almost can't help but extend thoughts about professional behavior into my personal life. For example, what expectations do I project for my own wife and children? Do we construct our worlds in ways that allow us options for success? How do I promote or take back options in my own interactions? Not that I think about this all the time, but such thoughts do occur to me.

Mary made a similar comment the other day. "I don't know whether you realize this, but when you shared with me your own reactions to my frustration in teaching writing, it made a lot of sense to me. I think what may have happened was that I was feeling a lot of frustrations with my six-year-old at the time—he just won't listen—and perhaps a bit of that frustration spilled over into my class and my teaching." She didn't go into much more detail, and I really didn't feel comfortable knowing too much more. However, those kinds of comments are rewarding because they let me know I'm on the right track.

Mary has become less dogmatic with her students, and I feel I haven't been as rigid with the teachers I supervise. My relationship with Mary is easier, too. There isn't as much tension—perhaps because we were able to successfully deal

with the writing standards and all they symbolized, both for her and for me. I know we both learned from our experience. The positive approach to supervision has taken on new meaning for me.

Personal and Professional Meaning

From reports like these, we have synthesized some ideas that appear in most positive supervisory experiences during the fourth phase—examining meaning for self—and the fifth phase—reintegration.

During the fourth phase of a positive supervisory experience, the focus of the interaction shifts from concentration on the teacher's interaction with students, to examination of the personal meanings evolving from the teachers' or the supervisor's improving professional practice. Thus Bill has shifted his concentration from assisting Mary with her teaching to examining his own patterns of interaction with her.

In examining the meanings of improved professional practice, the teacher or supervisor may reveal personal conflicts and uncertainties, as well as personal history, expanding the range of content that is acceptable between teacher and supervisor. Both may become aware of how specific feelings, beliefs, and attitudes can interfere with or facilitate interactions with the others in the professional setting. For example, when Bill played out the scenario of the postconference, he felt depressed. Rather than go ahead with the conference anyway, Bill used this feeling as a basis for examining his own reactions. By using this approach to reduce his internal conflict, Bill experienced a change in professional skill, knowledge, and self-perception. He recognized the influence Mary was having on his patterns of interaction with her, then generalized that to interactions with future supervisees.

Personal and professional growth for both supervisor and supervisee evolve from this shift to a more personal level, and the supervisor-supervisee relationship is deepened. For example, even after a couple of months Bill still values what he learned while considering Mary's postconference. This shift to a personal level also affects Mary. As Bill explains, the relationship is easier, and there isn't as much tension. Mary is able to share with Bill her source of frustration, and Bill considers Mary's increased technical competence a validation of their success.

In a positive supervisory experience, the supervisor is aware of this shift and explores personal meanings to improve professional performance. Personal concerns are not necessarily resolved, however. Although the content of the supervisory sessions has expanded, the supervisor controls the depth of involvement, thus maintaining the objectivity necessary to reflect on further changes in a professional manner. For example, Bill shares with Mary the processes he has used in

deciding how to structure the postconference, but he does not share these interaction patterns with his own wife. Neither does he inquire further about Mary's six-year-old. Again, the supervisory experience is aimed at promoting professional, not personal, growth. Personal growth should be only a secondary outcome of a positive supervisory experience.

In this phase, the supervisor examines the changing nature of his or her role with the teacher, feeling both more freedom and more caution in the relationship. The supervisor is gratified by the increasing technical competence of the teacher and thus feels that the format and content of supervision can be less structured. For the supervisor, there is a heightened sensitivity to the teacher, and the relationship deepens as a result.

Reintegration

During the fifth and final stage, both supervisor and teacher consolidate the knowledge, the increased professional performance, the heightened self-awareness, and the self-examination of the earlier phases into their professional repertoires and personal lives. The fourth stage's constructive tension of dealing with professional concerns through personal conflicts is now reduced. Satisfaction is communicated.

Bill has become more aware of his own patterns when dealing with a teacher's frustration. By looking at these patterns on both a personal and a professional level, Bill has learned more about himself and the process of supervision.

Summary

A positive supervisory experience happens when a supervisor and a teacher can overcome the conflicts that are inherent in each phase of the supervisory experience. These conflicts are summarized in Figure 3.

To recapitulate briefly, during the entrance phase, the supervisor must provide enough structure to get started without dampening his or her relationship with the teacher. The teacher, on the other hand, wants to improve but must submit to judgment in order to do so. During diagnosis, conflict centers on the issues of disclosure, judgment, and trust. The technical success phase is characterized by conflicts in overcoming procedural difficulties. During the personal and professional meaning stage, conflicts arise over efforts to maintain a balance between personal and professional issues. Finally, during the reintegration phase, conflict centers on reducing the supervisor's and teacher's

dependence on each other, which develops naturally as part of any positive supervisory relationship.

Supervisors and teachers who can successfully address involvement, success, and coverage and resolve the conflicts inherent in the supervisory process are likely to improve student achievement as well. What's more, they are likely to view the entire experience as a positive

Figure 3. Examples of Conflicts in Supervisory Experiences.

Phases of Supervision	Teacher's Conflicts	Supervisor's Conflicts
Entrance Example of a Task: A structure for supervision (in other words, clinical supervision is discussed)	Being judged vs. knowing one could improve	Establishing appropriate formats and structures so that the teacher feels comfortable, while maintaining avenues for future growth
Diagnosis Example of a Task: The focus of supervision is decided upon; an agreement to work on that focus is made	Fear of disclosure of personal and professional inadequacies vs. professional concerns, trusting the supervisor	Sensing teacher's conflicts/problems while not making judgments
Technical Success Example of a Task: Supervisor and teacher experience success on the focus of supervision	Justifying the status quo vs. accepting, trying, and overcoming difficulties	Resisting imposing a "personal" schedule on the teacher, while ensuring that success (in the teacher's terms) happens, and encouraging teacher's continued growth
Personal and Professional Meaning Example of a Task: Supervisor and teacher examine what implications the success has for their professional roles and personal lives	Disclosure to the supervisor of the more personal meanings of technical success	Controlling depth of involvement with teacher's more personal concerns while maintaining balance with professional change
Reintegration Example of a Task: Consolidation of meanings for professional and personal self, integration of technical success into professional repertoire, and disengagement from supervisory relationship	Feeling comfortable in using newly acquired skills and understanding while resolving conflicts about dependence on the supervisor	Letting go in a successful relationship while wanting to continue in this powerful stage

one that will enhance the effectiveness of the classroom and the school. The result for both supervisor and teacher is increased technical competence in performing a professional role.

Learning and growth are evident in the supervisor, the teacher, and the student. The feedback from students continues to be positive, and problems move toward a solution. The teacher has become aware of how specific feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors can interfere with or facilitate interactions with students. The teacher has also come to assess changes in his or her behavior in terms of their impact on the students, rather than in terms of winning the supervisor's approval. The teacher experiences competence, self-confidence, and trust in his or her professional judgment. The teacher and supervisor have explored and come to a fuller understanding of personal conflicts that affect the performance of a professional role. Both are more open and less dogmatic. This expanded conception of the self by the teacher or supervisor has been integrated into the professional practice of each. The supervisor's positive experience validates and reinforces his or her philosophy and approach to supervision. The supervisor generally becomes more trusting and open to the supervisory relationship and process. The teacher-supervisor relationship has come to resemble that of colleagues. Both teacher and supervisor have become more autonomous.