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SUPERVISORS' TALK: MAKING SENSE OF CONFERENCES FROM AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL LINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Much, though certainly not all, of the work of supervisors is carried out in face-to-face interactions with teachers, administrators, and others. The prevalent medium or channel for these encounters is talk. Supervisory conferences, especially pre- and postobservation conferences, have attracted the attention of researchers primarily because they are occasions for such face-to-face interaction with the ostensible purpose of improving instruction.[1] But how are supervisory conferences accomplished in actual practice and what meaning do they hold for participants?

Advances in anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics hold important implications for understanding supervisory practice. An anthropological linguistic examination of the supervisory conference as a unique type of talk reveals its particular characteristics, aids in understanding the participants' orientations, and informs the theories and practice—the praxis—of supervision. It is my hope that such an understanding will revitalize supervision and bring its practice more into keeping with current thinking on cooperation and collegiality than is currently the case.

Authors in the field of supervision have echoed Weller's early call for research on the *processes* of supervision; yet there have been few such studies.[2] Research on supervisory conferences has relied heavily upon coding schemes and their predetermined categories.[3] Often these protocols are simply adapta-

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[1]Richard H Weller, *Verbal Communication in Instructional Supervision* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971), p 4

[2]Richard H. Weller, *Verbal Communication in Instructional Supervision* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971) p. 1, Patricia E. Holland, "Implicit Assumptions about the Supervisory Conference: A Review and Analysis of Literature," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 4 (Summer 1989): 379; Edward Pajak and Carl D Glickman, "Informational and Controlling Language in Simulated Supervisory Conferences," *American Educational Research Journal* 26 (Spring 1989) 103, Kenneth M. Zeichner and Daniel Liston, "Varieties of Discourse in Supervisory Conferences," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 1 (No. 2, 1985). 171.

[3]For example, Arthur Blumberg, *Supervisors and Teachers. A Private Cold War*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley. McCutchan Publishing, 1980); Richard H Weller, *Verbal Communication in Instructional Supervision* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1971).

tions of classroom observation instruments not specifically designed for supervisory conferences.[4] Other research on supervisory conferences has examined simulations involving actors in the role of supervisor.[5] More qualitatively based research into supervisory conferences often has relied upon statistical aggregation of data or theoretical exegesis.[6] It seems that what Guba calls the "paradigm shift in education" toward more naturalistic study has only just begun to influence studies in supervision.[7]

Other fields of inquiry have long since employed qualitative methodologies. Anthropology, sociology, and linguistics have been in the forefront of research concerned with understanding the "object of study" with regard to the "subject's" own meaning system, a so-called "emic" perspective.[8] Advances in anthropological linguistics and sociolinguistics, for example, have contributed to our understanding of the nature of language and context. Such approaches are necessary to inform the discourse in supervision concerning its role and function in the lives of teachers *and* supervisors.

Some authors have already raised issues that could be explicated through qualitative study. Garman has raised questions concerning the ritual nature of the conference and its value as an "educative event."[9] Smyth, borrowing from Goldhammer, has advanced a definition of clinical supervision as a collegial relation between *teachers*.[10] Writing from a critical perspective based in the Australian experience, where the terms "administrator" and "supervisor" are still synonymous, Smyth forcefully argues for clinical supervision as

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[4]Kenneth M Zeichner and Daniel Liston, "Varieties of Discourse in Supervisory Conferences," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 1 (No 2, 1985): 157

[5]Edward Pajak and Carl D. Glickman, "Informational and Controlling Language in Simulated Supervisory Conferences," *American Educational Research Journal* 26 (Spring 1989): 93–106

[6]An example of the former is Kenneth M Zeichner and Daniel Liston, "Varieties of Discourse in Supervisory Conferences," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 1 (No 2, 1985): 155–174 Examples of the latter include Noreen B Garman, "Theories Embedded in the Events of Clinical Supervision A Hermeneutic Approach," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 5 (Spring 1990) 201–213, W John Smyth, "Problematising Teaching Through a 'Critical' Approach to Clinical Supervision" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990)

[7]Egon G Guba, "Introducing 'Qualitative' Research Concepts and Issues" (Presession of the Qualitative Research in Education Annual Conference, Athens, Georgia, January 1991) Notable departures from the prevailing paradigm include Noreen B Garman, "Theories Embedded in the Events of Clinical Supervision A Hermeneutic Approach," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 5 (Spring 1990) 201–213, Patricia E. Holland, "Stories of Supervision Tutorials in the Transformative Power of Supervision" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision, Athens, Georgia, November 1990), Murry McCoombe, "Clinical Supervision from the Inside," in *Case Studies in Clinical Supervision*, ed W John Smyth (Victoria, Australia: Deakin University Press, 1984), pp 45–57

[8]Kenneth L Pike, *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of the Structure of Human Behavior*, Part I, preliminary ed (Glendale. Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1954), p 8

[9]Noreen B. Garman, "Theories Embedded in the Events of Clinical Supervision: A Hermeneutic Approach," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 5 (Spring 1990): 211.

[10]W. John Smyth, "Problematising Teaching Through a 'Critical' Approach to Clinical Supervision," *Curriculum Inquiry* 21 (Fall 1991) 321–352, Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969)

a form of critical inquiry into the nature of teachers' work. For him, this process is facilitated only in true collegial interaction, devoid of the power differential that often characterizes teacher-supervisor interaction. In another report, Smyth has cautioned that "collegial" relations may serve technical and control functions at the same time that teachers become disenfranchised from curricular decisions.[11] This is congruent with the work done by Hargreaves and Dawe on "contrived collegiality."[12] Retallick has reported on a project he initiated to facilitate "enlightened self-knowledge for teachers in place of a hegemony of control" through supervisory structures that focused upon critical examination of "distorted communication brought about by unequal power relationships."[13]

These writings represent an important beginning. Considerable gaps in our understanding still remain, gaps that can be filled with more comprehensive, inductive studies of supervision, its contexts, and its accomplishments. So why has so much of the research on conferences focused upon supervisor-teacher *verbal behavior* by employing coding schemes and categories, when other, more qualitative examinations of teacher-supervisor interaction hold such promise?

What seems to be at issue is the definition of "conference." If conferences are defined as discrete, unconnected events ordered by physical laws, then "scientific" methods may be appropriate for their study. However, if conferences are seen to be nested within their contexts and understood to be human accomplishments, then it could be argued that only qualitative methodologies can make sense of them. Early on, Cogan suggested that "all working contacts between the teacher and supervisor are 'conference'" and proposed a " 'contextual definition' " of the conference.[14] But later researchers and writers in supervision have abandoned this contextual definition for a narrower view of the conference as a discrete event, amenable to scientific analysis.[15]

This article describes and interprets the processes supervisors currently use in conference. It attempts to resurrect and reconstruct a contextual definition of the supervision conference and suggests some implications for future supervisory study and practice. The following then is a report of an anthropological linguistic study of five supervisory conferences. The research com-

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[11] W John Smyth, "Instructional Supervision and the Re Definition of Who Does It in Schools," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 7 (Fall 1991) 90–99

[12] Andy Hargreaves and Ruth Dawe, "Paths of Professional Development. Contrived Collegiality, Collaborative Culture, and the Case of Peer Coaching," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 6 (No 3, 1990)

[13] John A. Retallick, "Clinical Supervision and the Structure of Communication" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990), pp 24, 12

[14] Morris Cogan, *Clinical Supervision* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1973), p 196

[15] For example, Richard H Weller, *Verbal Communication in Instructional Supervision* (New York. Teachers College Press, 1971) I imagine that such a view makes conference research much more manageable

bined observation, interview, and "hermeneutic dialectic negotiation" with conversation analysis, an analytical technique with roots in symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology and focused on talk-in-interaction.[16]

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

The supervisors and teachers in this study were participants in a graduate program for beginning teachers sponsored by a college of education in the northwestern United States The program was modeled after the Harvard master of arts in teaching summer school program.[17] The program director, a university professor, valued participatory, collegial teacher education.

Teachers admitted to the program attended summer courses on the university campus. They then left for their assigned districts, where they had probationary contracts for that year For two weeks before the start of their public school classes, these teachers met daily with their district supervisor to receive instruction designed to help them with the start of classes.

The understanding between the university and the participating districts was that the supervisors would make weekly visits to the teachers' classrooms and also conduct weekly seminars for them, generally held at their central office after school. The visits were to be formative. the supervisors were prohibited by contractual obligations and other, self-imposed restraints from formally evaluating their teachers for district administrators One supervisor, Faye, said she actively resisted the requests of principals to "stack them up like cordwood."

Though the supervisors, as their school district's liaison with the university, had originally identified the candidates to be interviewed for these positions, the building principal made the hiring decision At the end of the year the building principal decided whether to offer the teacher a regular contract.

Supervisors

The three supervisors in this study (Faye, Vern, and Kendra) held central office appointments, and each was charged with supervising five or six beginning teachers.[18]

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[16]Egon G Guba and Yvonna S Lincoln, *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Newbury Park, CA. Sage, 1989), p 151 The interested reader may wish to pursue these original sources. Harold Garfinkel, *Studies in Ethnomethodology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1967), Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual. Essays in Face to Face Behavior* (Garden City, NY Doubleday, 1967), Alfred Shutz, *Collected Papers*, vol. 1 (The Hague. Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), Alfred Shutz, *Collected Papers*, vol 2 (The Hague. Martinus Nijhoff, 1964)

[17]See Morris L Cogan, *Clinical Supervision* (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1973); Noreen B Garman, "Theories Embedded in the Events of Clinical Supervision· A Hermeneutic Approach, *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 5 (Spring 1990). 201-213, Robert Goldhammer, *Clinical Supervision Special Methods for the Supervision of Teachers* (New York Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969)

[18]All names are pseudonyms

Faye, whose district was a mill town, was a full-time central office administrator; supervision was an additional responsibility. Her early experience had been as an elementary teacher. She had been with this program for 15 years and her district was heavily populated with teachers she had supervised. She was two years from retirement.

Vern held a half-time appointment as a program supervisor and a half-time appointment as a personnel officer. His district included the international headquarters of many "high-tech" firms and was a "bedroom community" for the state's largest metropolitan area. His classroom experience was as a high school English teacher, and this was his second year with the program. He considered himself to be collegial in his working relationships with teachers.

Kendra, whose district was in the same area as a major research university with a large teachers college, was released from the classroom to supervise full-time with this program. She had an office at the university and one in the district central offices. She had taught in an alternative elementary school. Her teachers referred to her as "supportive."

Teachers

Bea, one of Faye's supervisees, lived in the area of her new teaching assignment and had done her student teaching there. She taught 5th grade. Her entry into the program was problematic because of irregularities with her basic skills tests. But administrators in her district had lobbied heavily for her inclusion in the program.

Ed was in his second year of teaching, having transferred from a more rural district to Vern's district. Ed also taught 5th grade. He and *Doug,* another of Vern's charges, were considered "affirmative action hires"—Ed was Chinese-Hawaiian and Doug was Vietnamese. Doug taught 1st grade. He was the only teacher in this program who did not have full responsibility for his own classroom; he was placed with another teacher because of peculiarities with his certification and, like a student teacher, was expected to assume greater responsibility as the year progressed.

Kari worked with Kendra in the university district. She was a younger teacher, in her mid-to-late-20's. Kendra told me that Kari had been hired by her principal to reinvigorate a staff whose modal age was near 50. She taught language arts in a middle school.

FIELDWORK

As assistant director for the program, I had established a professional relationship with the participants. To understand what supervisors did when they were "doing supervision," I asked to interview them and follow them as they interacted with their teachers. With each of the supervisors I conducted at least three "career history interviews" that centered on their professional

life histories and their definitions of supervision.[19] These interviews took place at the supervisors' convenience, generally in their office or while they fulfilled their professional responsibilities, and lasted an hour to an hour-and a half each. I accompanied each supervisor on at least one classroom observation. After the observation I conducted a "debriefing interview" with each supervisor, lasting an hour-and-a-half to two hours. These observations and interviews took place in May and June, near the end of the school year. I recorded five supervisory conferences in all. one pre- and one postobservation conference with Kari, the middle school teacher (occurring between periods), and post observation conferences with the elementary teachers Bea, Ed, and Doug. The conferences lasted from 5 to 28 minutes. Four of the conferences took place in the teacher's room, and the fifth, Doug's, was held on folding chairs in a storage room. I transcribed the conference tapes using a conversation analysis transcript notation protocol (see Table 1).

ANALYSIS

The term *analysis,* when applied to a qualitative study, is somewhat misleading—implying, among other things, a discrete phase of a research project. I prefer the term *understanding,* or the plural, *understandings,* which speaks to the holistic, tentative, and ongoing process of making sense of what

Table 1. Transcript Notation

Symbol	Meaning
—	A dash signals a slight pause, generally of less than 2 seconds
° °	Superscript os enclose passages that are quieter than the surrounding talk
[ ]	Brackets enclose simultaneous talk, marking onset and resolution
______	Words underlined are given stress by the speaker
( )	Parentheses show transcriber's doubt, inaudible passages, and occurrences in the setting that are not part of the talk
> <	Arrows show passages spoken at a much quicker rate than surrounding talk
=	Latches show where one speaker's turn begins immediately after the preceding speaker's with no pause
	Colons show elongated sounds, generally, each colon represents a beat
CAPS	Capital letters show talk that is louder than surrounding talk
·h	This symbol indicates an audible in-breath

NOTE This protocol was derived from the work initially done by Gail Jefferson and reported in "Explanation of Transcript Notation," in *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction,* ed Jim Schenkein (New York Academic Press, 1978) xi–xvi

[19]Michael H Agar, *Speaking of Ethnography* Sage University Paper Series on Qualitative Research Methods, vol 2 (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1985), p 64.

the researcher has seen and heard.[20] This term is less restrictive than *analysis* in that it also allows for other knowledge, such as that gained through subsequent reading(s), to inform a particular study. This process is similar to what Guba and Lincoln describe as a "constructivist" or "hermeneutic" research process and to what Bakhtin terms "dialogue" or "dialogization"—internalized or externalized discourse among competing definitions of the same phenomenon.[21] The constructivist paradigm admits to a dialectical tacking back and forth between emic and etic conceptions.[22]

My understandings of supervision and supervisory conferences actually started with my experience as a graduate assistant charged with supervising student teachers. As I reflected upon that role, I was inclined to examine my face-to-face interactions with those teachers. Concern for my role and responsibilities drew me into classes on clinical supervision with Keith Acheson, coauthor of *Techniques in the Clinical Supervision of Teachers*.[23]

Upon entering the field to begin this study, I found I had as much "unlearning" to do as I did learning. My teachers, the supervisors mentioned, were gentle and patient, yet insistent that I understand them and their world. "Analysis" truly began upon entering the field. My understandings were continually checked with my informants and against the wealth of literature I uncovered that dealt with both supervision and supervisory conferences.

COMMON CONFERENCE PROCESSES

"Unboundedness"

Unlike previous researchers of supervisory conferences, I found conferences to be "unbounded."[24] By this, I mean that the conferences related to

[20]An excellent case is made for "understanding" as an appropriate goal of qualitative research in Harry F Wolcott, "On Seeking—and Rejecting—Validity in Qualitative Research," in *Qualitative Inquiry in Education The Continuing Debate*, ed Elliot W. Eisner and Alan Peshkin (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990), p. 146, and in Rosalie H. Wax, *Doing Fieldwork. Warnings and Advice* (Chicago The University of Chicago Press, 1971).

[21]Egon G Guba and Yvonna S Lincoln, *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Newbury Park, CA Sage, 1989), pp 89–90; Mikhail M Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, TX, The University of Texas Press, 1981), p 283.

[22]Egon G Guba and Yvonna S Lincoln, *Fourth Generation Evaluation* (Newbury Park, CA. Sage, 1989), p 84 Such a process is described by anthropologist Clifford Geertz as that between "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York Basic Books, 1983), p. 57

[23]Keith A. Acheson and Meredith D Gall, *Techniques in the Clinical Supervision of Teachers: Preservice and Inservice Applications*, 3rd ed. (New York. Longman, 1992)

[24]See, for example, Arthur Blumberg, "Supervisor-Teacher Relationships: A Look at the Supervisory Conference, *Administrator's Notebook* 19 (September 1970): 1–4, Arthur Blumberg, *Supervisors and Teachers. A Private Cold War*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA. McCutchan, 1980), Elizabeth L. Holloway, "Interactional Structure of the Supervisory Interview," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 29 (No 3, 1982): 309–317; George C. Kyte, "The Supervisor-Teacher Conference: A Case Study," *Education* 92 (November–December 1971): 17–25; Richard H. Weller, *Verbal Communication in Instructional Supervision* (New York. Teachers College Press, 1971). Morris Cogan is an exception

the contexts within which they occurred. Both the ethnographic material and the conversation transcripts provide ample evidence of the interrelationship of conference and context.

The literature of anthropological linguistics (e.g., Cook-Gumperz and Gumperz) and sociolinguistics (e.g., Cicourel, Mehan) reinforces this notion of context.[25] The anthropological perspective considers contexts to be "interpretative frames that are *constructed* by the participants in the course of discourse."[26] The sociological concept views contexts as phenomenological constructs created jointly by participants that are "continually renegotiated in the course of the interaction."[27] Such considerations of context eschew macro-micro distinctions for their artificiality and are more comprehensive than simple listings of the physical attributes of a setting or of the participants themselves.

As stated, every conference but one took place in the teacher's classroom, generally with students present. Doug's conference, however, was convened in a storage area adjacent to the music room, with strains of "My Favorite Things," as practiced by an elementary strings class, wafting in and out. The transcripts show repeatedly that participants were aware of the contexts in which they found themselves, often made reference to them, and could employ the contexts to accomplish their "moves"—that is, to realize their particular turns at talk. For example, the middle school teacher, Kari, terminated both her pre- and postobservation conferences by addressing her remarks to students in the room. Vern and Ed modulated the volume of their voices when speaking of sensitive matters or stopped conferencing altogether while Ed disciplined students during their conference, which was held at the front of Ed's 5th grade classroom as the students did seatwork. In so doing, these two established and reinforced their shared perceptions of each other as educators, a process known as "identity work"—"the behavior a person generates in an attempt to make sense of and to feel good about an ongoing situation."[28]

Another example of the unboundedness of conferences comes from the conference in which the teacher, Bea, mentioned her class outside.

Transcript Fragment #1

Bea (goes to window) I'm just concerned that my kids are out there (at recess) with no supervision.

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[25]Jenny Cook-Gumperz and John Gumperz, *Papers on Language and Context,* working paper no 46 (Berkeley, CA. Language Behavior Research Laboratory, University of California, 1976), Aaron V. Cicourel, *Theory and Method in a Study of Argentine Fertility* (New York Wiley Interscience, 1974), Hugh Mehan, *Learning Lessons. Social Organization in the Classroom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979)

[26]Charles L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research* (Cambridge, UK. Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 12

[27]Ibid., p. 25.

[28]R. P McDermott and Joseph Church, "Making Sense and Feeling Good. The Ethnography of Communication and Identity Work," *Communication* 2 (1976)· 122

3 Faye Oh! Well, you'd better get out there then.
4 Bea: No, he's still out there, that's good. (pause) Just let
5 me check and make sure, okay?
6

Notice the negotiation evident here. At this point in the conference, the teacher got up—actually "leaving" the conference momentarily—to go to the window. This occurrence followed two other "interruptions": an electronic bell (probably ignored on any conscious level) and another teacher stopping by to borrow a stopwatch. Later in the same conference the teacher monitoring Bea's class knocked on the door to confer with her. At this point, Bea again "left" the conference to negotiate another "three or four minutes" with the teacher (the conference actually lasted much longer).

This teacher never again mentioned her group outside, but the supervisor, Faye, did. Near the end of this face-to-face encounter, and after she had attempted to leave by employing other leave-taking strategies, Faye brought up the group outside (lines 4, 5 and 7):

Transcript Fragment #2

1 Faye (to observer) Well, Duncan, do you want to go or are you
2 going to stay here? I'm walking out of here and he's
3 staying here (laughs) and he's watching me leave.
4 (to teacher) It's because I'm thinking you need to be out
5 on that playground.
6 Bea I'm going out. I'm gonna take=
7 Faye: =I see you looking out there so [frequent]ly
8 Bea: [I'm gonna t-]

This shows that the group outside—part of the larger, physical context—held continuing conversational relevance for the participants throughout the conference. Again, contexts influenced the conferences, though perhaps never as explicitly as in the preceding example.

Conference Phases

Another common characteristic of the conferences I observed was what I refer to as "phases." In these conference transcripts I noted three phases: (1) the supervisor's reporting phase, (2) the teacher's response phase, and (3) a programmatic phase.[29]

In the first phase, the supervisor's reporting phase, the supervisor took the floor to report on what had been observed in the lesson. Both supervisor

[29] I do not mean to imply that phases are discrete; participants slipped in and out of these phases. The attributions of phases were assigned according to these criteria: who initiated topics, who succeeded in any overlap or competition for the floor, and who conceded, which participant, the supervisor or the teacher, had the most and the longest turns at talk, which participant's turns were simply "acknowledgment tokens." See Charles Goodwin and John Heritage, "Conversation Analysis," in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 19, ed. Bernard J. Siegel (Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews Inc., 1990), p. 288. Further discussion of conference phases is found in Duncan Waite, *Behind the Other Set of Eyes: An Ethnographic Study of Instructional Supervision* (doctoral diss., University of Oregon, 1990).

and teacher seemed oriented to this reporting as the role and responsibility of the supervisor and as being the primary, ostensible purpose for a conference. That is why, of all three phases, the supervisor's reporting phase came at the beginning of the conference and the teacher took an acknowledging posture. Literature in the field of instructional supervision supports this interpretation.[30]

This reporting was usually done chronologically—beginning with the first bit of data the supervisor had written and continuing until either the end of the data was reached or other topics were introduced and exhausted. If other topics were introduced, the supervisor often initiated a return to the reporting function at a later time.

The conference between Kendra and Kari provides strong support for my assertion that the participants were oriented to the opening of the (postobservation) conference as a time for the supervisor's report:

Transcript Fragment #3

1 Kendra: (excited voice) I just took down all kinds of stuff here
2 (pause) Uhm.
3 Kari Okay
4 Kendra. I first, I started doing a little breakdown of time for
5 you
6 Kari· Um hum

Note that the teacher's assent (lines 3 and 6) demonstrates an orientation to the fact that the supervisor should begin with just such a report. The supervisor implied that she had collected data *for* the teacher (lines 4 and 5).

During this phase of the conference, supervisors reported upon classroom occurrences from their particular points of view. One supervisor, Vern, saw a gender issue develop. Another, Kendra, saw a management issue with a boy who was acting out. Faye saw the teacher not focus the group or clarify the intent of her questions.

Supervisors had the floor for most of this phase and they initiated most of the topics. Some of these topics were only loosely associated with the data· Vern's discussion of the gender-equity issue as it relates to science and math education is an example of this. In the course of the discussion, he mentioned his trip to Harvard, works by the author Carol Gilligan, cultural constraints and norms that operate against inclusion of girls in science lessons, an anecdote about a teaching colleague—a woman—who crumpled up and threw away the "consumables" from her science curriculum, and more, all not directly related to the supervisor's "observation."

[30]For example, Madeline Hunter, Six Types of Supervisory Conferences, *Educational Leadership* 37 (February 1980). 408–412, John A. Retallick, Clinical Supervision and the Structure of Communication (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990), p 22

During the reporting phase, the teacher's turns at talk were filled with acknowledgment tokens, such as "uh huh" and "um."[31] Teachers seldom interrupted and hardly ever initiated discussion of a new topic during this phase.

Supervisors also employed various strategies, alone or in combination, to retain the floor: raised voice, increased speed, overlapping, repetition, and elongation of utterances or use of "floor holders" such as "um." Transcript fragment #4 is an example of the supervisor's use of raised voice in overlap to keep the floor—an interruption (note line 4):

Transcript Fragment #4

1 Faye: The intent of this question is (slight pause) if you
2 were=
3 Bea: =oh, I forgot to take ⌊my ( )
4 Faye: IF—YOU WERE TAKING⌋—°a pencil.
5 At the end,° see what you're after here IS THEM to think.

Once this supervisor was certain she had indeed retained the floor, once she was "in the clear" after a slight pause (denoted by a dash), she lowered her voice.

Some supervisors quickly employed these strategies at the slightest hint that the teacher may have been making a bid for the floor—for instance, when the teacher may have "misplaced" an acknowledgment token in midturn instead of at the "appropriate" juncture. Transcript fragment #5 is an example: lines 5 and 7 demonstrate how the supervisor, Vern, increased his speed to retain the floor; line 8 demonstrates how he signaled his intention to continue speaking with an inhalation (h) and continued over Doug's acknowledgment.

Transcript Fragment #5

1 Vern. You know you did it again and you got Tim to go back to
2 his desk. There's a kid who was being resistant but you
3 were persistent. Okay? That was good. You did not
4 choose to ignore that, because, you know, sometimes it's
5 easiest to ignore it when they don' ⌊t do it >sometimes
6 Doug: um hum⌋
7 Vern. they QUIT< (slight pause) but they don't in-, you know,
8 he might have quit misbehaving⌊'h but he do esn't ignore
9 Doug: um hum ⌋
10 Vern it And the moment he ignores one of a command, when
11 you make a command at that strength and that commitment
12 other kids are watching.

Supervisors worked at retaining control of "their" conference phase.

[31]An acknowledgment token, while technically a turn at talk, is definitely *not* an attempt to take and hold the floor On the contrary, an acknowledgment token "projects (but does not require) the continuation of another speaker's talk. Simultaneously it usually displays an analysis of the other speaker's prior talk as being incomplete so far " Charles Goodwin and John Heritage, "Conversation Analysis," in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol 19, ed Bernard J Siegel (Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews Inc, 1990), p. 288.

Some worked harder than others. Perhaps the amount of work necessary depended on how much the teacher shared the supervisor's orientation as to the function of the conference and their roles in it. This may explain the contentious nature of the conference between Faye and Bea, why Bea constantly "interrupted" the conference, and why—according to Faye—she was prone to "arguing." This explanation is bolstered by Herbert Blumer's discussion of the importance of gesture for symbolic interactionism:

> When the gesture has the same meaning for both, the two parties understand each other. . . [Gesture] signifies what the person to whom it is directed is to do; it signifies what the person who is making the gesture plans to do; and it signifies the joint action that is to arise by the articulation of the acts of both. . . . If there is confusion or misunderstanding along any one of those three lines of meaning, communication is ineffective, interaction is impeded, and the formation of joint action is blocked.[32]

The concept of resistance offers an equally persuasive interpretation for the contentious nature of this conference. Following this line of reasoning, because of the control Faye exerted over Bea and the conference, the only option Bea had to assert herself was in "breaking the frame" of the conference.[33] Comparison between an interview and a supervisory conference is problematic; however, certain analytical insight is gained by considering Briggs' discussion of the social roles in interviews:

> The typical interview situation grants the interviewer principal rights to topical selection by virtue of her or his provision of the questions. He or she further determines whether a response counts as an answer by choosing whether or not to reiterate the question during his or her next turn . . . In sum, the interviewer maintains a great deal of control over the interaction; the respondent's principal means of subverting this power lies in breaking the frame of the interview.[34]

Further, Briggs states that "when the system is working properly, the participants accept the roles assigned to them by the structure of the interview."

The other conference phases seemed to belong to the teacher. In the teacher response phase, the teachers' turns at talk were lengthy, and the supervisors usually took the acknowledging posture, punctuating the teachers' turns with such phrases as "um hum." Though the lengths of the teachers' turns were relatively unrestricted, the teachers' choice of topic was heavily restricted—generally to responding to teaching behaviors originally identified by the supervisor.

The programmatic phase may be particular to these conferences and this program, though I suspect other supervisory conferences have similar, non-observation related elements that may be termed "rapport building," for

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[32] Herbert Blumer, "Symbolic Interaction," in *Culture and Cognition: Rules, Maps, and Plans*, ed. James P. Spradley (San Francisco: Chandler, 1972), p. 73.

[33] Charles L. Briggs, *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 56.

[34] Ibid.

example.[35] In this phase teachers and supervisors discussed class assignments, upcoming mock job interviews, and future career opportunities. My warrant for assigning "ownership" of the programmatic phase to the teacher is that, though the turns at talk were relatively equally distributed in both length of time and turn order, the teacher generally initiated the topics during this phase.

Questions

Another feature of supervisory conferences is the participants' use of questions. Generally, the conferences began with a supervisor question

Questions can perform several tasks, but they usually require some response. The question-answer dyad has been labeled "an adjacency pair" by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson.[36] According to these authors, a specific "first-pair part" makes relevant a particular "second-pair part" (for example, a greeting makes a return greeting relevant). Moreover, people orient to the lack of the second-pair part: if a question is asked, the lack of an answer becomes apparent. More complex questions may require an account as a response.

These teachers seemed oriented to answering the initial supervisor question with an account. Generally, these global accounts comprised a debriefing of the lesson. One such initial supervisor question is shown here.

Transcript Fragment #6

Vern. (How did you) feel about the various parts of the lesson?

These early questions call for global, not specifically detailed, accounts. This may be why the teacher took only one to three turns at the beginning of a postobservation conference before topic control reverted to the supervisor. The supervisor got the floor back after the teacher responded to the question. The supervisor then may elaborate on the teacher's response; may clarify the question; may call for a further account; or may actually provide candidate,

[35]In counseling interviews Frederick Erickson and his associates found that "the institutional objectivity of the gatekeeping situation is easily overridden by extra-institutional factors" such as co-membership in groups or organizations outside the immediate context. See Ron Scollon, *Human Knowledge and the Institution's Knowledge* (Final Report on the National Institute of Education Grant No G-80-0185, Washington, D.C., 1981), p 4 Scollon continues: "These personal factors have the power to override the purely institutional considerations to such an extent that they may be thought of as *the primary determinants* of life chances in institutional gatekeeping encounters" (emphasis added). See also Frederick Erickson, "Gatekeeping and the Melting Pot· Interaction in Counseling Encounters," *Harvard Educational Review* 45 (February 1975). 44–70, Frederick Erickson and Jeffrey J. Shultz, *Talking to "the Man" Organization of Communication in School Counseling Interviews* (New York: Academic Press, 1981).

[36]Harvey Sacks, Emmanuel A. Schegloff and Gail Jefferson, "A Simplest Systematics for the Organization of Turn Taking for Conversation," in *Studies in the Organization of Conversational Interaction,* ed Jim Schenkein (New York: Academic Press, 1978), p. 28

or alternate, and equally acceptable responses before continuing with the supervisor report phase.

SPECIFIC CONFERENCE PROCESSES

Mitigation of Criticisms or Suggestions

Supervisors often lessened the force of their criticisms or suggestions. While Pajak and Seyfarth call this "inauthentic supervisory behavior," I will not render such a judgment.[37] Rather, I will simply describe the phenomenon and offer an explanation of how and why this may occur in the face-to-face interaction between supervisor and teacher.

I found that supervisors lessen, or mitigate, the force of their criticisms or suggestions in at least two distinct ways: (1) through the use of "I" statements and (2) through the use of modal auxiliaries, such as "might." These verbal strategies were often used in combination.

In the example below, the supervisor began her suggestion with "you," then switched to an "I" statement in mid-turn (line 2):

Transcript Fragment #7

1 Faye. And the intent of this question (slight pause) is to deal
2 (slight pause) sometimes you th- it helps me to word them
3 into another (kind of) question.

The use of "I" statements may show respect for the professional autonomy of teachers while allowing them to benefit from the classroom experience of the supervisor—if the teachers so choose. It remains up to the professional judgment of teachers whether to accept the suggestion. They may conclude that a particular suggestion is not best for this group at this time, or that it does not fit their teaching style. In other words, teachers are left with the option of thinking "yes, *you* may; but I am not you."

Another explanation for these "I" statements is that supervisors may use this strategy to emphasize their solidarity with the teacher. Brown and Gilman have written of this as the usage of "pronouns of power and solidarity."[38] They wrote that a shift in pronominal usage—for example from the formal V (for *ústed*) to the informal T (for *tú*) in Latin-based languages like French, Italian,

[37]Edward Pajak and John T. Seyfarth, "Authentic Supervision Reconciles the Irreconcilables," *Educational Leadership* 40 (May 1983) 20–23.

[38]Roger Brown and Albert Gilman, "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity," in *Language and Social Context*, ed. P Giglioli (Baltimore. Penguin, 1972), pp 252–282 Here I must beg the reader's indulgence, as there is no similar phenomenon in English other than that presented to make my case. Old English, of course, employed "thou" and "thee" to make such distinctions Courtney Cazden also discussed the pronouns of power and solidarity in school language, and their effect: "There is accumulating evidence that power relationships exert a constraining effect on the language of the less powerful person" Courtney B Cazden, "How Knowledge About Language Helps the Classroom Teacher—Or Does It: A Personal Account," *Urban Review* 9–10 (1976): 88

and Spanish—signified a shift in the relationship for the speaker A shift from the formal to the informal indicates that the speaker wishes to emphasize solidarity and de-emphasize any power differential between the speaker and listener. Following this line of reasoning, in adopting the "I" perspective, supervisors make the most radical pronominal shift possible and, in a sense, take the teacher's voice. In effect, the supervisor is saying, "I'm just like you."

Supervisors sometimes used modal auxiliaries (such as *might've, could've,* or *would've*) when criticizing or suggesting alternatives to teachers (line 1, below):

Transcript Fragment #8

1 Vern: You might've wanted to uh- be doing there as Brent did
2 not give you the correct response, if you recall He
3 gave a confuse [d resp ond . [an-
4 Ed: different] respon se]

This supervisor, Vern, employed this strategy again, a bit later (lines 1–4):

Transcript Fragment #9

1 Vern One of the things you <u>might</u> want to have <u>done</u> when you
2 were doing that active participation piece was to have
3 <u>moved</u> around and listened to what they were talking about
4 because you <u>would've</u> heard it range everything from these
5 two over here, who didn't know so they were polite but
6 they were silent, listening, to these two over here. He
7 probably knew
8 Doug Uh huh

This strategy also may allow the teacher some professional autonomy in decision making. Notice the difference in force between the possible ways to state the same suggestion or criticism, between "you should have" and the less forceful "you might have" or "you could have."

As stated, these strategies also were used in combination (lines 3, 6, and 8):

Transcript Fragment #10

1 Vern And I think we practiced this one, because one (chuckle
2 in voice) of the things that I was going to mention in
3 watching that was (slight pause) <u>I: might've</u> because they
4 had been on the carpet before=
5 Doug: =um hum=
6 Vern =when <u>I might've felt</u> a need for physical change, and at
7 that point in time your only option for physical change
8 <u>would've</u> been to have them go back to their desks, and
9 then have them in their individual seats while you gave
10 instructions.

A functional explanation for these strategies is found in Brown and

Levinson's discussion of "face threatening acts."[39] Face threatening acts (FTAs) are speech acts that may entail a loss of face for participants in a conversation. For the listener (the teacher, in this case), these FTAs can be orders, requests, suggestions, advice, remindings, threats, warnings, dares, expressions of disapproval, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults, contradictions or disagreements, and/or challenges.

Brown and Levinson portray some relevant strategies for performing an FTA. One such strategy, performing the FTA with "redressive action" and employing "positive politeness,"[40] seems to explain one supervisor's strategy in conference. During our debrief, Faye commented to me that the lesson we had just witnessed was "the poorest role-play of any of them." However, in conference with the teacher, she said this:

Transcript Fragment #11

1 Faye But it would be good for her (another teacher) to be able
2 to see yours, because <u>she</u> would say, "Oh, I should've
3 done that." Or, "Yep, that worked really well." And it
4 would probab|ly be good for <u>you</u> to be able to see <u>hers</u>
5 Bea. yeah| um
6 Faye: if
7 Bea: <u>I'd</u> LI|KE—to do <u>that</u>
8 Faye: IF she's willing| to exchange.
9 Bea Yeah, okay We can talk about i|t
10 Faye <u>AL</u>|RIGH<u>T</u>=

This supervisor had videotaped all her teachers' role-play lessons and suggested that Bea view that of another teacher (lines 3–4) Notice that she implied that the other teacher could learn something from watching the videotape of Bea's lesson (lines 1–3). The supervisor's strategy seemed to be to help Bea grow through watching the other teacher's videotape. Still, Faye felt she needed to give attention to Bea's "face" in making the suggestion. Notice how enthusiastically the teacher latched on to her suggestion (line 7)—it gave her a readily acceptable plan of action.

The Role of Data in Supervisors' Conference Strategies

In a comprehensive review of the literature, Holland discusses the implicit assumptions surrounding supervisory conferences.[41] One aspect of her treatment deals with the assumptions concerning the role of observational data in conferences, another relates to supervisor preorganization or preparation for the ensuing conference. The views cited include Hunter's prescription

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[39]Penelope Brown and Stephen C Levinson, "Universals in Language Usage Politeness Phenomena," in *Questions and Politeness: Strategies in Social Interaction,* ed Esther N. Goody (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1978), p 65

[40]Ibid., pp 74–75.

[41]Patricia E. Holland, "Implicit Assumptions about the Supervisory Conference A Review and Analysis of Literature," *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 4 (Summer 1989). 362–379

for highly structured conferences based upon the observational records and that of Sergiovanni and Starratt, who suggest that the supervisor prepare with tentative objectives and processes "but in a manner that does not program the course of the conference too much."[42] Holland notes that this last view seems to reflect Cogan's original position that the supervisor should not completely preplan the course of the conference because it could not be predicted what concerns the teacher would bring.[43] In my role as an ethnographer of supervision, I was interested to see how "data" were dealt with in the conferences I witnessed.

Faye entered her conference in a highly structured manner. she employed a checksheet. She thought this was necessary because of her perception of the teacher, Bea, as highly "distractable." Faye's comments to me were informative:

> As soon as I mention a change or a situation, she starts what I call "arguing," where she'll say, "But this is what I thought da-da-da-da-da-da." By the time she goes through this long explanation of why she did what she did about something, we lose the whole intent and purpose. I do best in my conference with her when I have a guide, like a checksheet, because it guides our discussion. Otherwise, time is gone and you haven't gone anyplace with the discussion.

And so throughout this conference, Faye worked to keep Bea focused through her use of the checksheet as an observation instrument and by referring to it in the dialogue.

Vern and Kendra, the other supervisors, employed different observation techniques and conference processes. Vern talked about the strategy he used in his conference with Ed:

> [The focus] unfolds somewhat naturally I never had intended in that science class to see the boy/girl thing going on, but it gave me a chance to talk about an issue that's very near and dear to my soul—girls in terms of science instruction.
>
> In a postconference I try to talk about just some of what I would call "basic teaching act" things that were good—Ed's use of some vocabulary words. And Ed's perceptive. Rather than just say, "Oh, thank you," he said, "But can it be too confusing?" So I used the teaching part: if it's a new concept, then to do what he did might muddy the waters, it's a bird walk. My goal was not to strategize about the girls today. My goal was twofold Initially, when I first picked that up, my mind was going, "Oh, this is how it is and this is how it will unfold " As I said, though, Ed called on about 60 percent girls. So at that point, I realized that when he questions kids he does a good job of breaking it down boy/girl. That took care of one of my concerns. The second issue was how does he get the girls to be more involved in those situations and discussions You know, bringing up Carol Gilligan's work out of Harvard was an intellectual way of dealing with it;

[42]Madeline Hunter, "Six Types of Supervisory Conferences," *Educational Leadership* 37 (February 1980). 408–412; Thomas J. Sergiovanni and Robert J Starratt, *Supervision. Human Perspectives,* 4th ed (New York. McGraw-Hill, 1988), p 360

[43]Morris L Cogan, *Clinical Supervision* (Boston. Houghton Mifflin, 1973), p. 197

something he might come to eventually. I talked about the cooperative learning things My goal today was at the awareness level, it wasn't mastery of a new concept.[41]

However, in his conference with Doug, his other teacher, Vern saw a different focus:

I wanted to talk with Doug about—I want to use the word more "global" issues, but that's not the word. I wanted to talk to him about essential classroom management issues and I didn't have to quote him lines He himself was aware of how many times he had to say to the students, "Sit down," and those sorts of things

With him, I retaught the lesson. I did a "reteach the lesson," and with that—except to generally refer to what he was doing—I don't need to say "Doug, you said that, then you said this " I assume that's in his mind. I didn't do any counting in his, you know. One time I did show him the notes. It was because I had drawn a very quick diagram of what the seating arrangement in the class looked like to me

I took verbatim for the most part, or "modified verbatim" as I call it

Vern compared the observations he'd made and the conferences he'd had with Ed and Doug:

It was the same style of notes [in both observations], but for what I wanted to talk with Doug about, I didn't feel the need to refer to them as much.

Ed also tends to sit down. I have the sense he likes the notes there, and he likes me pointing things out to him. Doug has not given me that sense of need. I think Doug is more formal by nature. Our conference tends to be more formal—our body language and things I'm sitting there across from him. With Ed, I'm always at the table next to him, and we both lean on the table With Doug, there tends to be a whole different approach going on

Vern has found Ed to be a satisfactory teacher on a number of counts. he calls on the appropriate number of girls in science, and "Ed's perceptive"—he asks questions in conference that raise the level of the discussion But other considerations may have contributed to Vern's different conference styles. He had expressed concerns to me about Doug's English language proficiency, prompted by parental complaints—evidence that Doug was not being accepted by the community of parents as qualified to teach their children. There were definite cultural overtones here. Vern may have felt prohibited from discussing these issues with Doug and instead may have felt it more acceptable to fault Doug's teaching on the more technical aspects of the job.

Another translation from "data" to conference commentary came in the interaction between Kendra and Kari. At one point in the conference Kendra began to list the positive behaviors she thought Kari had displayed in the lesson. She had listed these on her data sheet—a single sheet of "NCR" paper that automatically produces three copies, one of which I kept. What was listed

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[41]The alert reader will have noticed that Vern had been heavily trained in the Madeline Hunter model of teaching and supervision, hence, such terms as "bird walk," and his explicit attempt to praise Ed for those things he felt he had done well.

there as "appropriate reinforcement given to student responses" became (lines 2–5, 7, and 9):

Transcript Fragment #12

1 Kendra. I commented on (slight pause) your relaxed manner (slight
2 pause) appropriate reinforcement, you were giving (slight
3 pause) really appropriate reinforcement to some. You
4 were saying, "That's interesting," or, "I hadn't thought
5 about that before."
6 Kari: Uh huh.
7 Kendra: "Good idea."
8 Kari. Uh hum.
9 Kendra. You were doing a lot of that.

This change from the written to the verbal comment shows changes made in response to the interactional demands of the conference—the context. Kendra didn't mention all of the positive points she had on her list at that time; she brought up another nearer the end of the conference. In that instance, the written phrase "good questions" became (lines 1–3):

Transcript Fragment #13

1 Kendra Anyways, I was pleased And your level of questioning
2 (slight pause) was excellent. There was some big
3 thinking going on in here today.
4 Kari Um hum.

Also note the supervisor's positive global evaluation in line 1.

This supervisor departed from her data in other ways. Though she had listed the times along one side of her data sheet, she referred to them in vague terms ("about," "there was one point") or in clearly erroneous terms (line 4):

Transcript Fragment #14

1 Kendra. And look how long the discussion went. Now this is
2 my [clock.
3 Kari. This is a lo: [ng tim [e.
4 Kendra: nine th [irty. No, no I mean they
5 did well Clear up to
6 Kari: Yeah
7 Kendra: ten fifteen

Kendra erroneously mentioned the starting time as 9.30 (line 4), when according to the data sheet the discussion began at 9.41. Notice how in this transcript fragment (lines 4–5), Kendra—as supervisor—quickly sought to repair Kari's misunderstanding of her previous remark. Apparently, Kari took it as an implied criticism and demonstrated her agreement (line 3). Kendra seemed anxious that Kari not be left with that mistaken impression; though erroneous and vague, Kendra was, nonetheless, supportive.

Only *after* Kendra had shared her list of positive lesson points with Kari did she turn the floor over to her with a question calling for a global evaluation·

Transcript Fragment #15

1 Kendra. Anyway, (slight pause) uh, overall did it go the way you
2 wanted it to?

Conference Focus

Ron Scollon's notion of "focus" in talk provides insight into conference processes.[45] Scollon writes of a continuum of focus, dependent on the "amount of negotiation possible among the participants about the nature of the situation."[46] Focus has three variables that limit negotiation among participants: time restrictions, the number of participants, and the medium of communication. I include "agenda" as a variant of the medium of communication. Agenda as an aspect of focus has to do with the supervisors' concerns, how they intend to approach the conference (their amount of planning, organization, or structure), and what they seek to accomplish in the conference

Because these conferences were dyadic, that variable was constant. The time restrictions differed, as did the media of communication, the supervisors' agenda. Faye entered her conference with Bea with a strong agenda: she intended to keep Bea focused and on task through her use of a checksheet. This conference was under a moderate time restriction, but Bea eased that by negotiating more time with the teacher monitoring her class on the playground. Kendra had assumed that she and Kari were to have a whole planning period to conference; it was not until students began coming into the classroom that she realized her assumption was mistaken. Also, Kendra's agenda was relatively weak because it was so near the end of the school year, and she already knew Kari would be returning the next year. The different effects of agenda are highlighted when comparing Vern's two conferences. Vern had accepted Ed. They had each contributed to a mutually constructed perception of themselves as competent educators. Their conference reinforced this. Lacking a strong agenda, and with a relatively weak time restriction because the students were there in front of them doing seatwork, their conference tended to be more of a discussion among coequals and more rambling. However, Vern had already sensed Doug was not accepted and had developed "global" concerns—"essential classroom management issues," he had said. His agenda was stronger in his conference with Doug, and he exerted much more control.

DISCUSSION

I have demonstrated the processes supervisors use to exert control over conference direction and over teachers while in conference. The elements of control supervisors manipulated were (1) control of the floor during the

[45]Ron Scollon, "Tempo, Density, and Silence. Rhythms in Ordinary Talk" (Fairbanks. University of Alaska, Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, 1981)

[46]Ibid., p 17.

supervisor report phase; (2) topic selection during this phase, and its continued relevance during the teacher response phase; (3) supervisor questions; and (4) supervisor ownership of and presentation of data.

Supervisor initiation of the conference, the chronological presentation of the data, and the complementary introduction of topics have ramifications for what gets discussed and who introduces topics, that is, who "controls" the conference. Because of the usual linear progression of conference topics, teachers seldom have an opportunity to introduce topics of their concern. One can easily imagine a scenario whereby the conference time runs out before the teacher gets a free turn at the floor, that is, one that isn't a response to supervisor-initiated topics. This chronological discussion of data may, then, impose on the teacher's time and may very well limit what gets discussed; it may, in fact, severely limit teacher reflection.

I have also described several moderating influences on supervisor control. These included (1) supervisors themselves mitigating their suggestions or criticisms through the use of "I" statements and modal auxiliaries; (2) supervisors attending to the teacher's "face" needs; and (3) conference contexts, including conference foci, when seen as being interpersonally constructed and negotiated throughout the conference.[47] The influence these phenomena have on teacher reflection and growth is still unresolved.

One implication of this study is readily apparent: "collegial" relations between supervisor and teacher are highly problematical, though perhaps not impossible. Supervisors who take the lead in the presentation and analysis of observational data severely limit the teacher's potential for participation, reflection, and growth. This is a result of the technical control other authors have discussed.[48] This interpretation seems to lend support both to Smyth's position that a power differential is endemic to supervisor-teacher relations and to Retallick's view that such differences are reproduced in conference discourse.[49]

Though it would seem that there is a propensity for such unbalanced power relationships, I suggest that it *does not have to be so;* it is much more

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[47]Related to the use of "I" statements is Fairclough's observation that the "use of 'we' can be manipulative, it can claim a spurious solidarity, for instance when a politician uses it to convince people that she is 'one of them'." See Norman Fairclough, *Language and Power* (London, UK. Longman, 1989), p. 15 Though this is a distinct possibility, and one supervisors should be aware of, my interpretation of this corpus did not support such a conclusion, and I would be irresponsible if I were to allege that these supervisors were so motivated.

[48]John A. Retallick, "Clinical Supervision. Technical, Collaborative and Critical Perspectives," in *Learning About Teaching Through Clinical Supervision,* ed. W J Smyth (London, UK: Croom Helm, 1986), pp 85–101, and Henry St. Maurice, "Clinical Supervision and Power. Regimes of Instructional Management," in *Critical Studies in Teacher Education Its Folklore, Theory and Practice,* ed Thomas S. Popkewitz (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1987), pp. 242–264.

[49]John Smyth, "Problematising Teaching Through a 'Critical' Approach to Clinical Supervision," *Curriculum Inquiry* 21 (Fall 1991). 321–352; John A. Retallick, "Clinical Supervision and the Structure of Communication" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990)

complicated than these authors suggest. I have shown that teachers have resources they may use to counteract a supervisor's hegemony. Supervisors themselves do not always baldly exert control in face-to-face encounters with teachers; the interactions of Kendra with Kari, and Vern with Ed support this contention. Variables other than power also affect the processes and outcomes of supervisory conferences.

Glickman has written of supervisory behaviors as being nondirective, collaborative, directive-informational, or directive-control.[50] This study shows that the most uncommon of these is the nondirective supervisory behavior, possibly because it is the most difficult to practice even with the best of supervisor intentions. It also seems difficult to achieve a truly collaborative conference or relationship. Complications arise from the structures of "normal" conferences and the behaviors that result from the participants' role perceptions and expectations. To effect a change in conferences and, thereby, teacher participation and reflection, practitioners of supervision would need to be aware of these phenomena so that they might counteract their negative effects. Supervisors interested in accentuating their own nondirective or collaborative behaviors would do well to practice them in supervision classes and in the field. This would be facilitated if professors of supervision encouraged extended practice of these behaviors and reflection on them in class, before their students conducted their first conference. This alone would require professors to reconstruct their own roles and values concerning the relation of "intellectual knowledge" and "practical knowledge."

Though I have discussed how data were used in conference, I have not addressed what role data *should* play. What are the alternatives? I have no answer. Perhaps answers to this and related questions may be sought in the orientations of the participants in supervision, especially the supervisor. How supervisors view their role will determine to what extent they perceive themselves to be arms of the organization or, when organizational and individual goals are incongruent, to what extent they are concerned with fostering or empowering individual teachers' growth apart from, or in opposition to, organizational goals. Agenda and data play a strong role here. Supervisors would do well to seriously consider these questions.

For both supervision practitioners and theorists these questions could be addressed through further qualitative, constructivist research, research in which supervisors and teachers take part. Such efforts would imbue the contexts of supervision with norms that favor learning by all the schools' participants—students, teachers, supervisors, and, quite possibly, administrators. It would resurrect supervision as it was envisioned by Cogan and Gold-

[50] Carl D Glickman, *Supervision of Instruction A Developmental Approach*, 2nd ed (Boston Allyn & Bacon, 1990)

hammer and likely resolve the criticisms of current practice as voiced by authors such as Garman, Retallick, Smyth, and myself.

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Wasley, Patricia A. *Teachers Who Lead: The Rhetoric of Reform and the Results of Practice.* New York Teachers College Press, 1991. 209 pp. $41.95/$17.95

Case studies of three teacher leaders appear in this book, which includes analysis of their roles, similarities and differences in constraints and supports for their work, major unresolved issues, problems they continually faced, and some of the paradoxes and possibilities inherent in their leadership positions The author also gives a definition of teacher leadership and makes recommendations for building meaningful teacher leadership positions.

Murphy, Joseph. *Restructuring Schools. Capturing and Assessing the Phenomena* New York. Teachers College Press, 1991 131 pp $35.95/$16.95

The author provides a comprehensive analysis of three components of restructuring schools—the redesign of teachers' and administrators' roles and responsibilities, the decentralization of organizational and governance structures, and the restructuring of the teaching-learning process. Analysis of the third component focuses on strategies and practices in curriculum, instruction, equity, delivery structures, and student engagement.

Smyth, John *Teachers as Collaborative Learners. Challenging Dominant Forms of Supervision* Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1991. 156 pp. $75.00/ $29.95

Smyth has crafted from several of his previously published articles a coherent book on supervision within a critical perspective. Chapters deal with critical consciousness, supervision as a field of study, a critique of top-down supervision, an educative view of supervision, teachers as collaborators and critical learners (the central chapter), critical teacher education, and doing critical pedagogy The central thesis concerns teachers' taking charge of their own teaching and development as professionals

Page, Reba N. *Lower-Track Classrooms. A Curricular and Cultural Perspective* New York: Teachers College Press, 1991. 272 pp. $47.95/$22.95.

By contrasting regular-track and lower-track classrooms in two high schools, Page shows through detailed ethnography examination and analysis the variations that exist within tracks as well as the similarities between them. She looks at lessons, classroom dynamics, curriculum, and school and community cultures and concludes by cautioning policy makers not to decide between assumed tracking/no-tracking options, but to permit deliberation in schools and classrooms on whether, how much, and what kind.

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