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Chronicling Perspectives about the State of Instructional Supervision by Eight Prominent Scholars of Supervision

Jeffrey Glanz[1]

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to chronicle the views of eight prominent professors of supervision regarding the state of instructional supervision. A confluence of factors has influenced the evolution of supervision as a practice and incipient field. Issues involving its very definition, its scope and methods, its status as a field, and its future have been varied, and at times have been controversial. Surveying several developments in the field of supervision, this qualitative study, based on oral testimonies of eight prominent figures including four senior scholars and four more recent scholars, raises questions for supervisory practices and the future of supervision as a field. In this article, I first provide a brief historical context for the theory and practice of supervision, along with a theoretical background serving as a literature review that reflects supervision as instructional leadership. Second, I share three themes that emerged from my interviews and analyses. Third, I discuss these themes and draw three conclusions that reflect on the state of supervision as a field.

Keywords

instructional supervision, instructional leadership, supervision history

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Introduction

To provide a historical context, this article starts by providing some background information on the development of supervision as field. A confluence of factors has influenced the evolution of the practices of supervision, including its very definition, scope, and status as a field. Moreover, the future of supervision continues to be influenced by a variety of controversial philosophies enacted by policymakers, implemented by practitioners, and debated among scholars. As such, detailing the developments of supervision from a historical perspective is important to the field.

Autocratic supervision characterized the early development of supervision in the late nineteenth century with the emergence of school bureaucracy (Bolin & Panaritis, 1992). Glimpses of supervisory democratic practices occurred in the early twentieth century, primarily in the work of Jesse Newlon and advocated by people like James Hosic (Glanz, 1998). Yet it was not until the early 1950s that greater attention to participative and collegial functions of supervision emerged, primarily through the development of clinical supervision. Developed by Morris Cogan (1973) at Harvard University, clinical supervision was conceived as a "vehicle for developing professionally responsible teachers who were capable of analyzing their own performance [with an] emphasis on reflective problem solving" (Pajak, 2000, p. 5).

Goldhammer (1969), one of the early proponents of clinical supervision and a student of Cogan, stated the premise of clinical supervision was a prescribed, formal collaboration process between teacher and supervisor that could improve teaching. The literature of clinical supervision has been replete with concepts of collegiality, collaboration, assistance, and improvement of instruction. Bolin and Panaritis (1992) explained that clinical supervision "appealed to many educator"" because of its "emphasis on 'collegiality'" (p. 40). Clinical supervision favored collaborative practice over inspectional, fault-finding supervision which had dominated the supervision literature up until the 1960s. As such, traditional, prescriptive, and evaluative supervision (Mette et al., 2017), at least in advocated theory, took a backseat to this new approach that sought to engage teachers in meaningful and democratic conversations about their practice in the classroom.

Criticism leveled at educational bureaucracy through the 1980s further impacted the development and evolution of supervision (Firth & Eiken, 1982). Educators continued to consider alternative methods of supervision (Sullivan & Glanz, 2000), including mentoring, peer coaching, and action research. In the early 1980s, developmental supervision began to gain attention (Glickman, 1981), and by the end of the decade transformational leadership, which advocated that supervisors serve as change-agents, became highly popularized (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990). The publication of *Supervision in Transition* (Glickman, 1992) by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) marked a refinement in the changing conception of supervision as a democratic enterprise.

Glickman, editor of the yearbook, clearly set the tone by stating emphatically that the very term 'supervision' connoted a distasteful, even 'disgusting' metaphor for school improvement. Instead of even using the words 'supervision' or 'supervisor,' educators, or what Glickman called "risk-taking practitioners" (p. 3) were more comfortable with terms such as 'instructional leadership' and 'instructional leader.' The transition that Glickman and others envisioned was

one that valued collegiality. Sergiovanni (1992) concurred and added that supervision is "professional and moral" (p. 203).

It was throughout the 1990s that the advent of "culturally-responsive" supervision (Bowers & Flinders, 1991) further advanced approaches in supervision. During this time teacher empowerment gained attention as a viable means for teachers to become active participants in decision-making processes in schools (Darling-Hammond & Goodwin, 1993), while peer supervision began to appear in the literature as an alternative to traditional supervision by "professionally trained supervisors" (Willerman, McNeely, & Koffman, 1991, p. 55), as did cognitive coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1994). Still other collegial and democratic supervisory methods continued to receive notice (Ovando, 2000).

Other models and conceptions emerged throughout the turn of the 21st century in an attempt to extend democratic methods to disassociate itself from bureaucratic and inspectional supervision. Clinical, developmental, and transformational, among other models of supervision, had a common bond in that they emerged to counter the ill effects of supervision's bureaucratic legacy. The historic struggle to eschew autocratic traditions of supervision in favor of democratic approaches has continued through the 2010s as a shift in emphasis, even semantics, has had unintended, yet welcomed consequences for the field.

The pervasive high stakes accountability movement (Jacobs, Burns, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2015), in which many schools are held accountable for promoting high student academic achievement, has curiously propelled heightened interest in supervision as instructional leadership. It is commonly understood that student improvement and achievement require high-quality instruction (Klar, Huggins, &. Roessler, 2016), and high-quality instruction requires constant instructional leadership and supervisory interventions (Arlestig & Tornsen, 2014; Mette, Range, Anderson, Hvidston, & Nieuwenhuizen, 2015).

Extant literature underscores the importance of supervision and instructional leadership as principals work with teachers on improving teaching and promoting student learning (Murphy, Neumerski, Goldring, Grissom, & Porter, 2016). Moreover, instructional leadership has also emphasized teachers themselves in thoughtfully reflecting on their teaching through alternative approaches including action research, appreciative inquiry, lesson studies, meaningful walk-throughs, etc. (Glanz & Heinmann, 2018). Many researchers have demonstrated the importance of instructional leadership as a necessary component of high-quality instruction (Neumerski, 2012).

As such, instructional leadership plays a vital role in school efforts to improve teaching. Printy (2010), for instance, found that higher teacher perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviors related to higher achievement in students. Devos and Bouckenoogh (2009) discovered that principals who work in climates that stimulate professional learning are strong leaders and prefer their role of instructional leader rather than that of administrator. Conversely, administrative-minded principals who consider organizational tasks more important and do not perceive themselves as instructional leaders often lead schools with weaker instructional climates.

As supervision of instruction is a part of an instructional leader's responsibilities, it is important to understand how leadership influences the professional development of both novice and veteran teachers. Classical clinical supervision emphasizes expectations for the principal or her designate to observe classrooms, understand quality teaching, have knowledge of the curriculum, and have the skills to provide constructive feedback to teachers. Conversely, supervision also supports the individualized professional needs of teachers in their practice that is tied to both teacher and student growth (Gordon, 2004). "When the focus of the teachers' conversations is on the quality of student learning…teachers adopt pedagogical practices that enhance students' learning opportunities" (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008, p. 463). Moreover, professional development within the framework of a professional learning community can be included as important supervision work (Zepeda, 2015).

Method

This study was qualitative in nature and provides rich descriptions of the complexities depicting participants' views of supervision, in general and more specifically instructional supervision. Thus, interview methodology and content analysis explored the meanings that participants attach to their views of the supervision field (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016). Using this methodological approach, I interviewed eight individuals on the state of instructional supervision. The interviews focused on past and current practices in supervision and sought to provoke insights into the state of supervision and the future. The interviews were initially conducted eight years ago, with a brief follow-up in 2017, with a few of the surviving scholars (e.g., Bob Anderson, Ben Harris, and Ed Pajak had passed on, and some others had retired and were inaccessible). This study represents a chronicle of the views of these scholars for both historical and, even, sentimental value to the field.

Participants

The first set of individuals (those whom I consider senior scholars of supervision) were selected for interviews for three reasons. The first criterion was based on experience and age as they were all over age 70 and had over 200 combined years of supervision scholarship among them. Having used oral histories in the past (Glanz, 2000), I wanted to hear from individuals in this field who could provide close knowledge of the era and times in relation to the development of supervision. A second criterion in selecting these four individuals was their prominence in the supervision field given their publications, positions held, and overall influence. Third, although there were other senior scholars I could have selected, these four were most readily available and willing to participate. A brief synopsis of each of their contributions are provided below:

Robert H. Anderson was a professor at Harvard University for 19 years and known as the "father" of team teaching and multi-aged grouping. He had much experience in working with teachers utilizing clinical supervision. As the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS) historian, its President in 1985-1986, and among its longest serving members, he mentored scores of young supervision scholars. He co-authored a widely used text on clinical supervision (Anderson & Snyder, 1993), among many other publications (e.g., Anderson, 1986).

Gerald R. Firth was a professor at the University of Georgia, the university considered by many as the center of the study of supervision for many years. He served as President of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) 1986-1987, and later as COPIS President from 1999-2000. In these roles, he mentored many supervision scholars. He co-authored one of the early textbooks solely focused on instructional supervision (Firth, Neville, & Alfonso, 1975). Additionally, he co-edited the *Handbook of Research on School Supervision* (Firth & Pajak, 1998), and published other important works in the field (e.g., Alfonso & Firth, 1990; Firth, 1986).

Ben Harris was a professor at the University of Texas and was the founding member of COPIS as well as its first President. Many considered him the "elder statesman" of the supervision field. He urged COPIS to widen its ranks to include teachers and other non-professors into the network. He, too, mentored many young scholars. Ben Harris was, at his death, the longest serving member of COPIS. Among his many publications is his popular book, *Supervisory Behavior in Education* (Harris, 1963; Harris, 1975).

Barbara N. Pavan was a professor at Temple University, as well as COPIS President from 1986-1987. She served as a mentor and role model for many women (and men) in the supervision field. She was best known for her support for classroom teachers utilizing collaborative, non-judgmental approaches to supervision (Pavan, 1973) and was widely acknowledged for her work in mentoring and professional development.

The second set of individuals, those whom are considered more recent scholars of supervision, were selected based on their extensive contributions to the field of supervision and their continued activity scholarly activity as indicated by the number of publications they have produced specifically related to supervision. While there were other scholars I could have selected who are equally as prominent, I chose these individuals based on my close professional contacts with them, as well as their ability to comment on recent changes in supervision. These participants were informed of the historical context of the work and agreed to participate. A brief synopsis of each of their contributions follows:

Stephen Gordon is a professor at Texas State University and has served in leadership positions in both COPIS and the American Educational Research Association's Special Interest Group (AERA-SIG), Supervision and Instructional Leadership. He has received the AERA-SIG Distinguished Achievement Award for outstanding scholarship in supervision and is a prolific scholar. Dr. Gordon has been a co-author of one of the best-selling supervision book of all time (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2017). His scholarship is broad and includes works in professional development (Gordon, 2004) and supervision standards (Gordon, 2006).

Helen M. Hazi is a professor at West Virginia University and has held leadership positions in both COPIS and the AERA-SIG Supervision and Instructional Leadership. She studied clinical supervision at the University of Pittsburgh under Morris Cogan and Noreen Garman where she learned how to help teachers collect data on their performance and to hold conferences where they learned to reflect on their practice and progress. She has established a significant body of work and is a prolific author on the relationship of school law, teacher evaluation, and instructional supervision (e.g. Hazi, 1994; 2018; Hazi & Arredondo Rucinski, 2016).

Ed Pajak, at the time of his death in 2014, was a professor at Johns Hopkins. Prior to that, he was a professor at the University of Georgia. He was widely acknowledged as one of the most respected supervision scholars in the field over the past 20 years. He held many leadership positions and influenced countless educators. His work focused on how to assist teachers improve their teaching and positively influence student learning. He was co-editor of the *Handbook of Research on School Supervision* (Firth & Pajak, 1998), among many other important works in the field (e.g., Pajak, 2000; Pajak, 2003).

Sally J. Zepeda is a professor at the University of Georgia, and she is one of the most widely published scholars in the field. Her extensive work includes best-selling textbooks in supervision and professional learning along with many published articles in peer-reviewed journals on a wide range of topics, most of which have influenced the supervision field greatly. Zepeda (2017) argues that supervision should be "woven into" job-embedded learning and proposed that supervisory functions like clinical supervision could enhance such learning. She has continued to publish on issues of supervision throughout the 2010s (Zepeda 2011; 2015; 2017). Most recently, Zepeda (2018) co-edited (with J.A. Ponticell) *The Wiley Handbook of Educational Supervision*.

Research Questions, Data Collection, and Data Analysis

The interview protocol for this work consisted of several questions geared toward eliciting lengthy discourse about participants' background, experiences with supervision, and thoughts about past and current practices of supervision in schools. Since the researcher knew each scholar well, a rapport was already established, and discussions flowed smoothly and cordially. Each scholar was appreciative and willing to share experiences and opinions. All interviews for the present scholars were audio recorded and later transcribed. I assured content and consensual validity for the protocol.

Guiding research questions framed the interviews. I list below only those questions that are relevant for this present study as reflected in the historical background and literature review I cited earlier. The questions were as follows:

1. How have supervisory practices changed since your early work in the field?
2. What is your sense of the national move towards high-stakes accountability with particular reflection upon its impact on school supervision?
3. What does the future hold for instructional supervision as a field of study and practice?

I employed semi-structured interviews (Seidman, 2013) because I knew each of these scholars and thought such an approach would best facilitate dialogue. My goal was to enhance conversation giving both parties an opportunity to discuss ideas freely (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I realized that my personal relationship with these participants might affect any conclusions I might draw. As in any qualitative exploration, I attended to how my background and personal experience might inform theoretical and methodological perceptions concerning the inquiry. As reflective journals have been recognized as an important aspect of qualitative research (Ortlipp,

2008), I wrote a personal reflective research log throughout the study to ensure critical thinking. Regarding transcript accuracy, I gave each interviewee the final write-up of transcripts to indicate content accuracy. Each scholar acknowledged the accuracy of the recordings. Furthermore, two educational leadership professors evaluated and critiqued my assumptions, providing additional perspectives regarding data interpretation.

I tried to triangulate my sources because multiple sources are always more reliable than any single individual's perceptions and recollections (Denzin & Lincoln 2017). In analyzing data, I repeatedly sorted and coded, known as the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Categories and then themes emerged which were used to glean insights from the interviews. In addition to the two professors noted above, I had my doctoral students read transcripts to verify the categories and themes I developed. All standard ethical guidelines as well as rigors of analyzing qualitative data were followed (Saldana, 2015).

Limitations

I conducted the bulk of the interviews some time ago. I recently contacted, however, three of the participants and they agreed that little of substance has changed, especially in regard to the three research questions I previously posed. Some of them, however, did add some information that I address in this article. Also, interviews of "past" scholars were not recorded because the recording device I used at the time was defective, but extensive notes were taken, and accuracy was affirmed by those who were interviewed, as noted above.

Since a completely new study was not undertaken, the testimonies I write about, then, represents a chronicle of sorts. Given the ever-changing conditions and, at times, tumultuous progress of supervision including current proclivities and necessities, my intent in this study was to reflect on the contributions of some prominent theoreticians and researchers in the supervision field. As such, I hope this article may be instructive to understand past developments, current exigencies, and, perhaps, pave a path for future directions.

Findings

Based on the research questions, three themes emerged. I chronicle the themes below and provide a brief explanation of each. Within each theme are the voice of the participants, which provide a historical account of the evolution of supervision since the mid-20th century.

Theme 1: Supervision is collaborative, nonjudgmental, and supportive of teachers developing reflective practices to improve instruction

Especially in its clinical version, participants described supervision as collaborative and nonjudgmental with the aim to assist the teacher in examining teaching behavior and practices in the classroom. Participants acknowledged and welcomed the historic move away from authoritative, inspectional supervision characterized by the early development of supervision towards a much more nonjudgmental approach. Each of the scholars indicated that clinical supervision played a significant role in this shift.

Participants also agreed that supervision, as a practice, needs greater attention within schools to focus on working with teachers to reflect on instructional practices, whether performed with or without a supervisor, through peer coaching, etc. Moreover, several participants highlighted the skills of an experienced supervisor as axiomatic in a clinical supervision cycle, such as observation and the ability to accurately record information. However, there were some differences in beliefs regarding the manner in which clinical supervision should be implemented.

Ben Harris felt that "supervision is an applied field of practice that has an array of scientific bases, but enormously important are the interpersonal skills and empathy that are much more artistic in nature." For example, he explained, "the ability to sense when a teacher wants to be listened to" is an artist's skill too many take for granted. Furthermore, "knowing when and how to probe and frame questions" is also an essential supervisory artful skill. Beyond mere observation and the concomitant data collected, two additional supervisory phases are critical. Bob Anderson explained that "supervision as a science, or whatever you call it, has three phases: One, to observe and collect information; two, to reflect; and three, to change one's practice."

Barbara Pavan emphasized reflection, as noted above in Anderson's second phase. "I am a devoted clinical supervision person." Clinical supervision involves, she said, "reflecting back to the teacher what is happening in the classroom." "Clinical supervision," she continued, "is essentially an art in interacting with the teacher, although you could say the science part involves selecting and using techniques to collect data from the classroom. [It] is not a mechanical process…it's intuitive," she explained. "I believe in and used Goldhammer's model because it was more intuitive" [than the Cogan model]. "Clinical supervision is an ongoing process."

Herein we see a bit of divergence of opinions among scholars. For Pavan and Harris, providing teachers with objective data to reflect upon was axiomatic. Anderson and Firth were more open to giving teachers more directive feedback through the clinical supervision cycle. Anderson emphatically stated, "Supervision starts with gathering information." Then, he explained, "As a supervisor I would come away with a good understanding of what is happening in that classroom…I don't mean to say I have the absolute truth, uh, a scientific understanding, but I do have a good sense, enough to start meaningful discussion with this teacher. I don't intimidate, I elucidate…I care, suggest, and offer suggestions," he explained.

The more recent scholars articulated that a one-size fits all approach does not work. Rather, some teachers need more directive measures and others much less so. Zepeda best represented the recent scholars:

> There are a lot of changes that have occurred. We've aborted the clinical model of supervision, where there's a pre-observation, an observation, and a post observation. Very often we go in and observe for twenty minutes and leave. Pre- and-post observation conferences are optional, only if requested or if there's a problem in a teacher's classroom. I think what we've done is we've shortchanged a lot of teachers from numerous opportunities to learn.
>
> Supervisors can't be like Marcus Welby. Marcus Welby had all the answers, except for Steve Brolan who came in as his side kick. . . . versus. now if you watch ER, there's 8-9

> doctors working on a single patient because no one doctor can know all the answers. I think we have to begin looking at complimentary practices to help support clinical supervision and help bolster the processes.

Although precise definitions of supervision varied somewhat among the participants, there was consensus attesting to the importance of supervision as a collaborative, democratic enterprise aimed to assist teachers in improving teaching and promoting learning.

Theme 2: The high-stakes accountability movement is antithetical to the aim of quality supervision, and yet also led to the emergence of supervision as instructional leadership

The instructional leadership framework, currently in vogue in the research literature, has its origins within the context of the accountability movement based on the call for teacher quality and student academic achievement (Murphy et al., 2016). In analyzing participants' responses in connection to the accountability movement's influence on supervision, a clear divide or difference is apparent. Senior scholars of supervision lamented the move towards national accountability on the entire education spectrum, with particular mention of supervision. On the other hand, recent scholars commented, in various ways, that the emergence of instructional leadership was a positive development for the field of supervision.

Gerald Firth lamented the era of high stakes testing and accountability that "repudiates all that I believe in." "Schools," he said, "are cookie-cutters." Supervisory practices, he explained, simply reflect the standardized era in which it finds itself.   More pointedly even, when asked about the educational scene, Bob Anderson was quite vociferous in his opposition to practices he considered "outrageous." "The testing industry," he explained, "has blown a huge hole in good education…people are crazy with numbers." "If I was powerful, I'd get rid of all those tests. Testing should be helpful, not judgmental." Regarding supervision, Firth observed "Teachers today do not get good feedback about their teaching. They simply give back what the supervisors want to see, objectives written on the board, standards followed…very prescriptive. It's very sad."

Although differing in temperament, Pavan and Harris similarly agreed that high-stakes accountability, in regard to its impact on supervisory practice, was lamentable. "I'm against," Pavan stated, "saying to teachers, 'you must do this or do that.'" "Supervision is not prescriptive," nor can it be, she implied. Harris said, "Politicized slogans for 'accountability' are shameful because we neglect the needs of teachers and especially kids." He concluded by saying that a recent issue of the *Harvard Business Review* critiqued accountability methods in business because it "destroys innovation and morale." "The same thing occurs," he said, "in education." Reiterating and underscoring his advocacy of meaningful supervision, Harris stated, "We need careful, thoughtful observation…not quick checklists." Principals, said Harris, learn from observing deeply. "These checklists deprive principals themselves of an invaluable learning opportunity…principal learning is sacrificed for efficiency."

On the other hand, recent scholars, realizing potential limits of the accountability movement in terms of supporting meaningful supervision, envisioned a positive influence. Ed Pajak felt that broadening supervision within the context of instructional leadership had many benefits. "Some

of the old stigmas associated with supervision tend to disappear by viewing its practice as part of instructional leadership." He continued, "We still employ the same collaborative, democratic approaches from supervision we've always advocated, but now…it's couched within a more acceptable framework."

Sally Zepeda argued that the accountability movement is "here to stay." Further, she explains, "instead of running away from it, now more than ever, teachers need support and supervisors need to know how to supervise in a coherent way." She emphasized that the demands for improved teacher quality and increased student achievement was an invaluable opportunity to "emphasize instructional leadership practices."

Steve Gordon credited the 1992 ASCD yearbook (Glickman, 1992) mentioned earlier in the historical section, as "starting to help us think about supervision as instructional leadership." He continued, "Even within the milieu of accountability in education, the re-emergence of supervision as instructional leadership has provided many excellent opportunities to improve teaching." Instructional leadership, he felt, broadened supervision beyond its clinical form by incorporating, for instance, "collaborative walk-throughs." Gordon explained:

> The principal will get 6-8 teachers freed up for one period and a whole group will do walk through classrooms and each one will be given a different task. One might focus on what the teachers are doing, others may focus on what the students are doing, others may focus on how the classroom is organized, and so after they do the walkthrough they meet and each share what they've observed that might help them become better teachers. That becomes a follow up to a collaborative walk-through as a dialogue among the supervisors and teachers about some of the neat ideas they saw going on in the classroom they visited.

As such, accountability can lead to improved instructional outcomes, but it is the collaboration between teachers and administrators that helps build morale and supports the development of innovative instructional practices, not simply the use of high stakes tests.

Theme 3: Scholars were cautiously optimistic about the state of future of supervision, however more research on supervision is needed

Senior scholars of supervision spoke a great deal of the beginnings of supervision as a field of and on its own. They pointed to the creation of COPIS in 1975 as the starting point in drawing attention to the serious study of supervision. Anderson and Harris acknowledged that the original reasons for forming COPIS were "Simply for those individuals who had written books and had articles published" to get together informally to share ideas and experiences. Later, Pajak explained, "more formalized discussions took place…and we met regularly." COPIS became a forum, he continued, "for young scholars to test out their ideas." "It was, at times, nerve racking to get pummeled by senior scholars…questioning taken-for-granted notions that we as younger members of COPIS had." Anderson and Firth were less enthusiastic for the need to promulgate supervision as a unique field. Firth explained, "We need to continue our work…the rest will come." Hazi was less optimistic, stating supervision as a field "traveling incognito, being overshadowed by school administration" and the functions of evaluation.

Senior and recent scholars alike, however, attested to the fact that supervision would not become a recognized field of its own without a rigorous research agenda. Pajak lamented that "Since the publication of the handbook of supervision in 1998, there has been very little research." "There is a lot of opinion, ideology," he continued, "but I don't see much if any research." Zepeda concurred, stating, "I don't know of any empirical research. I know that there are probably 3-4 people who do research in the field of supervision." Zepeda and Hazi pointed to the demise of ASCD's *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* as a "troublesome development for the field."

Pavan, Zepeda, Harris, and Pajak indicated that the future of supervision rests with its connection to practice and practitioners. Zepeda best represented this notion:

> I think for a field of practice, we need to put supervision back into practice. That is, get the message out that we have to get back to our roots of clinical supervision, but we also have to be open and be able to meld more practices of supervision such as book study, critical friends, peer coaching, mentoring, and those types of things so it becomes a safety net of support. I think that's what we have to do for the field of practice.

Anderson believed that the field or 'craft' of supervision needs to return to its origins, and by this he meant working collaboratively with teachers in the classroom to improve teaching and promote student learning. Participants in this study, by in large, agreed.

Discussion

In regard to the degree to which supervision has changed over time, my analysis indicates a distinct move away, in advocated theory by those interviewed, from the autocratic origins of supervision towards the emergence of democratic approaches (i.e., supervision as a helping, non-evaluative function). Initially clinical supervision was the vehicle, so to speak, to promulgate such a shift. Later other collaborative, nonjudgmental forms of supervision emerged. This finding is in agreement with supervision literature.

Curiously, none of those interviewed mentioned the ubiquitous disconnect between advocated theory and actual practice, or what Osterman and Kottkamp (2004) called espoused theory versus theories-in-use. In other words, supervision scholars advocated for supervision as a helping function, but seemed not to emphasize the realities of supervision as practiced in many schools based on older, more traditional conceptions of supervision, wherein a supervisor enters a classroom to observe and then writes a report to the teacher highlighting positive aspects observed along with a host of suggested improvements. Known by practitioners as the 'dog-pony' approach to classroom observations, such practices do not encourage instructional dialogue and reflection in a serious fashion, as advocated by study participants.

Although this theory-practice gap was not discussed much during the interviews, perhaps because I did not explicitly raise the issue, these scholars are *not* oblivious to the problem. All of them, to varying degrees, have written about this issue elsewhere. For instance, Hazi (1994) posits that while supervision scholars and supervisors differentiate supervision from evaluation, teachers do not. She added that attempts by those in the field to differentiate between

supervision and evaluation through "linguistic maneuvering" (e.g., informal vs. formal, formative vs. summative) only lead to additional entanglement. Although these and other scholars offered their opinions about this theory-practice dichotomy, little empirical research studies have been conducted to deeply identify and explore its manifestation. This seems to be a gap in the research literature, although it has been noted by some researchers (Barnes, Camburn, Sanders, & Sebastian, 2010; Mette et al., 2017; Zepeda, 2015).

In regard to the impact of accountability on supervision, senior scholars indicated that the advent of accountability in education was conducive to fostering a continuation of inspectional, judgmental supervisory practices. Later scholars, however, indicated that the emergence of instructional leadership in the research literature arose, at least in part, due to a desire to improve teaching practices in order to promote increased student achievement. Supervision, then, becomes a useful and important process to encourage deep conversations with teachers, in a variety of ways, to improve teaching. The literature review earlier indicates the importance of instructional leadership, of which supervision, according to those interviewed, plays an important role. They said its aim, within the democratic climate, is to work with teachers to promote quality instruction. Instructional leadership practices, highlighted in the literature review, were reflected by the participants in my interviews with them.

 I found it most curious that several participants indicated that the effort to seek high quality instruction was very much aligned with accountability expectations. Their thinking, that had honestly alluded me prior to this study, was that if instructional leadership ultimately aims to improve student learning, then supervision, framed as engaging teachers in deep conversations about pedagogy, is a valued enterprise to accomplish the aims of greater accountability. What is lost in the current practices of accountability is that educators are beholden to the test *outcomes* rather than the *process* of accountability – that teachers' reflections on instructional practices and pedagogies should lead to greater outcomes for students. The problem, though, is that if one examines the literature of instructional leadership, the word 'supervision' is rarely mentioned. Euphemisms abound, but it seems to me that instructional leadership has supplanted supervision in practice, despite the insistence of those interviewed that the two processes align. I would posit that this lack of emphasis may be attributed to the lack of research in supervision, as is noted below and throughout this article.

Finally, participants in this study reported that in spite of renewed interest in supervision via the rubric of instructional leadership, a lack of ongoing, consistent research in supervision persists. Lack of consistent and aggregated research into instructional supervisory practices remains problematic, participants reported. Although forums to discuss supervision occur through COPIS and the AERA Supervision and Instructional Leadership SIG, a lack of a publication outlet singly devoted to supervision of instruction was viewed as regrettable and, in effect, has constrained the field of supervision. Recent information gleaned by three of the four recent scholars, however, indicate that the publication of this new journal in supervision (i.e., the *Journal of Educational Supervision*) could signal increased attention to supervision as a practice and a field of serious study.

Conclusions

My conclusions are aligned with the study's three research questions. First, participants unambiguously affirmed instructional supervision (or leadership) as a school-wide 'helping' process in which teaching and learning becomes the core of the school's mission. When I recently followed up with a few of the participants, they highlighted the importance of developing a professional learning community that supports such supervision work (Zepeda, 2015). Creating professional learning communities (PLCs) within schools gives opportunities for instructional supervision to thrive, especially in professional development initiatives (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2017). That said, PLCs should have a focus on collaborative learning and collective inquiry into best practice (Zepeda, 2012). Supervision as a practice finds likely justification within such a milieu. Clearly, according to participants, supervision as instructional leadership has moved away from its bureaucratic legacy.

Second, within the accountability movement, we can conclude that the senior scholars lamented its intrusion in education, as a whole, and into supervision, in particular. More recent scholars were cautiously optimistic given the emergence and, even, popularity of instructional leadership. Perhaps supervision, per se, has now been transformed or reconstituted into the larger rubric of instructional leadership. It seems to me the point is moot as long as supervisors or others work towards improving teaching practices along democratic lines.

Third, in my conversations with the scholars of the past, it was apparent that they were less concerned about 'supervision as a specialized field of study' or gaining prominence or acceptance from others (e.g., professors of educational administration) than maintaining a professional, collegial, conversation among those professors of supervision. Bob Anderson told me "We are, essentially, a small community of scholars…and, that seems good enough, doesn't it?" His colleagues, I think, would concur. More recent scholars, although not all, were more vociferous in their hope and expectations for increased attention to the study of supervision, and catapulting supervision as a respected field. The conclusion here, then, is that without increased research, empirical or otherwise, along with a unique forum to publish findings, supervision may continue to lose its identity and may even become irrelevant as such.

An analysis of the historical development of supervision teaches us that there were ebbs and flows regarding the prominence of supervision as a field of study. Many years ago, I advocated the need for a journal singly devoted to supervision (Glanz, 1995). I, along with many colleagues felt that supervision would not be recognized as a distinct field of study without its own journal. Perhaps, we are headed for greater attention to the study and practice of supervision with the advent of this new journal. Time will tell. Regardless, scholars of supervision, past and present, who were interviewed for this study would unanimously agree that the vitality of supervision must be maintained to benefit teachers, their students, and teaching as a profession.

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