

2021

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Recommended Citation

Glanz, J. (2022). Personal Reflections on Supervision as Instructional Leadership: From Whence It Came and To Where Shall It Go?. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 4 (3). <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.4.3.5>

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Personal Reflections on Supervision as Instructional Leadership: From Whence It Came and To Where Shall It Go?

Journal of Educational Supervision

66 – 81

Volume 4, Issue 3, 2021

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.4.3.5>
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/jes/>

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Abstract

The field of supervision has perennially struggled to define itself and, hence, find a niche within the larger field of education and, more narrowly, even within the field of instructional leadership. A sort of an odd, almost contradictory state exists, one in which precludes, in my opinion, the field of supervision from gaining traction as a field, but also, perhaps more importantly, as an influential practice in schools. Books on supervision seem popular, but only in title. In others words, publishers, for instance, prefer the word "supervision" as part of the title of books they publish on the subject, whereas scholars in the field tend to eschew the term in favor of a term, perhaps, more palatable such as instructional or pedagogical leadership. Scholars in our field have had to grapple with this bifurcation. This essay discusses some of the implications of the intractable nature of supervision theory and practice and its relationship with the emergence of newer, more preferred terms. This essay attempts to clarify the relationships among supervision, instructional leadership, pedagogical leadership, and some other terms bandied about in the field. Are there differences between and among them? What are the implications for the field of supervision, as well as for the world of practice?

Keywords

supervision and instructional leadership; educational leadership; transformational leadership

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Introduction

Carl Glickman, noted educational reformer, early scholar in the field of supervision, and co-author and original creator of the most popular textbook on supervision in history, once astutely commented, and I paraphrase, 'The reason everyone goes into education is to have a powerful influence on the educational lives of students.' Professionally prepared educators (teachers, supervisors, counselors, and administrators) want to make a difference through their work. Those uniquely talented who aspire to work with young children want to make a difference. They realize that they are in an optimal position to affect great change and provide for the larger "good." They are driven by an unyielding commitment to facilitate the conditions necessary to foster high achievement for all students, to foster positive character traits that aim to create caring, compassionate morally engaged young people, and to create intelligent citizens in a democratic society that heralds equity and excellence for all (Blankstein & Noguera, 2016; Brown, 2008; Schleicher, 2014).

When I entered the teaching profession in 1972, I was eager to fulfill the lofty aims of education noted above. I knew that serving in an administrative role would give me the opportunity to possibly do the most good for students. So after 15 years in the classroom, I thought I'd try to implement some of the theories and strategies I had learned during my graduate work at Teachers College in NYC. During this time, or shortly thereafter I was exposed to the literature of the supervision field. I was enthralled by the ideas and thoughts of individuals such as Sergiovanni, Glickman, Harris, Hazi, Pajak, Anderson, Firth, Alfonso, and Neville. After participating in some early Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS) conferences, I was not only intrigued but inspired to implement the kind of supervision promulgated by these scholars, and in some cases scholar-practitioners.

Assuming my first administrative position as an assistant principal in an inner city school in NYC afforded me the opportunity to employ some of that which I had learned. Supervision, as I explained at the time to my faculty on grades 4 and 5, was a process in which I'd engage with them as co-partners to improve teaching, not through dogmatic or inspectional practices, but via a differentiated approach to supervision that encouraged them to think deeply about their teaching. I would, I continued to explain, serve as "another set of eyes" (Acheson & D'Arcangelo, 1987) to share thoughts about their teaching in a conversational, non-evaluative, and unobtrusive manner. Ultimately, I explained, it was their responsibility to do whatever they wanted with the data I'd provide them. I explained that supervision, well-done, is aimed at instructional improvement best encouraged through instructional dialogue. I shared my conviction that supervision, as a reflective process, was essentially concerned with encouraging their thought and commitment to improving teaching. During this time, by the way, there was little or no mention in the literature of terms such as "instructional leadership," "pedagogical leadership," or "instructional coaching." "Supervision" or the "supervision of instruction" (Spears, 1953) was commonplace.

Although I tried to espouse collaborative supervisory approaches, my teachers, by and large, were suspicious of my motives having been exposed in the past to inspectional, even onerous methods by administrators who expected them to follow prescribed protocols and behaviors. Supervision, for them, connoted authoritarian, almost dictatorial methods. Earliest recorded

instances of the word supervision in Colonial America, in the mid-1600s, established the process as "general management, direction, control, and oversight" (Grumet, 1979, p. 193). As Spears (1953) explained:

The early period of school supervision, from the colonization of America on down through at least the first half of the nineteenth century, was based on the idea of maintaining the existing standards of instruction, rather than on the idea of improving them" (p. 41).

I shouldn't have been surprised that I had an uphill struggle no matter how collegial I tried to be.

At the same time, or thereabouts, supervision as a field of study and even as a practice, as such, was being attacked as outdated and authoritarian, at its essence, as reflected in the term itself ("super"vision). Detractors argued against even the perception of anything hierarchical or non-collegial relationships in regards to supervision. Evidencing this criticism was the ASCD Yearbook titled *Supervision in Transition* edited by prominent supervision promulgator, Carl Glickman (1992). Articles also appeared in the then-only journal devoted, in part, to supervision, *The Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, that questioned the usefulness of outmoded modes of supervision. The very term itself, lacked focus, according to Bolin (1987) in a piece entitled "On Defining Supervision." Scholars later posited that supervision as a term, concept, and theory needed revamping because its benefit to teachers was unproven and possibly detrimental to improving teaching. Consequently, some scholars indicated that supervision had to travel incognito (Hazi & Glanz, 1997). The term was losing popularity in the wake of the emergence of a new expression that was less foreboding and objectionable.

More favorable expressions emerged in the literature that seemed more appealing and even more accurate to describe the work of leaders (teachers, supervisors, principals, etc.) in their attempt to improve instruction. Hence, the literature was replete with articles, empirical studies, advocacy pieces, and theoretical expositions around "instructional leadership," and later pedagogical leadership, although less often used. A literature search indicates that while "instructional leadership" was most frequently employed, other expressions also appeared including, teacher mentoring, instructional coaching, instructional improvement, and even appending the word "instructional" to supervision, as in 'instructional supervision.' Supervision as a stand-alone term took a back seat to these newer, more palatable expressions in reference to the work school leaders do with teachers.

The proliferation of these new terms, however, further contributed to the obscure nature of what it means to work with teachers on improving teaching. Moreover, supervision as a term was still being used, even popular, especially by those who published books on supervision. This popularity, however, was only in the title. In other words, publishers, as has been my personal experience as an author, preferred the word "supervision" as part of the title of books they published on the subject because, as not just one publisher told me, "It is the term that most educators are familiar with, and using the term guarantees better sales." Parenthetically, I surmise that is the reason Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2017) retained supervision in their best-selling volume on the subject, even though Carl Glickman staunchly advocated for the term's demise many years earlier. While publishers preferred the word "supervision" to appear in

the book's title in some form, scholars in the field tended to eschew its use in favor of a term(s), perhaps, more palatable, as indicated above. Scholars in our field have had to grapple with this bifurcation, or seemingly contradiction. This essay discusses some of the implications of the intractable nature of supervision theory and practice and its relationship with the emergence of newer, more preferred terms. This essay attempts to clarify the relationships among supervision, instructional leadership, pedagogical leadership, and other similar terms. Are there differences between and among them? What are the implications for the field of supervision, as well as for the world of practice?

Broadly Tracing Supervision as Instructional Leadership

Before we examine the question "What is the relationship among instructional leadership, supervision, pedagogical leadership, and, professional development?" we need to trace the development of supervision as it emerged in several phases since its inception. This development, I think, is significant and, to my knowledge no one in the field, including myself who has written much on the historical development of supervision, has previously connected the dots that I, humbly, am about to do for the purpose of illustrating the 'maturing' of supervision and its relationship with more recent terminologies that in varying degrees address the improvement of teaching.

From a historical perspective 'supervision' has the longest history, originally framed as a mechanism for educational reformers of the late nineteenth century to gain control over schools. I have written much about this history in which supervision was framed as an inspectional function to ensure compliance with the emerging bureaucratization of urban schooling (Glanz, 1998). It wasn't until the work of Dewey (1903) that inspired others like him (Hosic, 1920) to begin talking about 'supervision' in democratic ways that advocated greater collegiality in the attempt to improve teaching. This shift from talking about supervision as an inspectional practice to one that emphasized instructional improvement occurred, most substantially in the 1940s through the 1970s. A perusal of textbooks and articles published during this time evidences such a shift (Ingle & Clark Lindle, 2019). However, in the 80s educators became dissatisfied with 'supervision' not only as a term but more fundamentally as a practice since vestiges of inspection in regards to supervision were still dominant in schools. The schism between advocated theory (i.e., democratic supervision) and theories-in-use (i.e., supervision as inspection) was readily apparent (Pajak, 1993).

Around the same time, perhaps a half-decade later, the literature preferred terms such as 'instructional leadership,' later 'pedagogical leadership' over supervision (Shaked, 2018). The term instructional leadership was used as a generic term to indicate a school leader's responsibility to lead overall instructional improvement that would include, for instance, curriculum development, professional development, community-building and not just in-class observation of teaching. A major thrust of the literature on instructional leadership aimed to promote teacher professional growth in various ways including, but not exclusively, to improve teaching and promote student learning for all students (Murphy, et al., 2016). Yet, to understand the emergence of instructional leadership, one must examine the emphasis in the literature on transformational leadership which led, historically, to the emergence and proliferation of

literature and research on instructional leadership. This connection has not been made explicit in prior literature and research in the field.

Transformational leadership emerged from the change literature in an attempt, to more broadly, reform and improve schools. It relied on the literature of "change knowledge," partly promulgated through Michael Fullan's (2008) work in his discussion of the "key drivers for change" specifically related to attending to and transforming a school's culture. Transformational school leadership theory provided the support for such efforts.

Transformational leadership, according to Northouse (2003), was "first coined by Downton" (1973 as cited by Northouse, 2003, p. 131). Yet, it is acknowledged widely that James MacGregor Burns amplified this approach to leadership in a landmark book titled, simply, *Leadership* in 1978. Burns, according to Northouse (2003), identified two types of leadership: transactional (managerial) and transformational (visionary). The former represented the everyday interactions between manager and follower. Offering an incentive, for instance, to a follower for procedural compliance to school policy reflects transactional leadership. In contrast, transformational leadership engaged people around an ethical and moral vision of excellence for all.

Another version of transformational leadership emerged with the work of House (1976), interestingly around the same time that Burns published his work. House's leadership construct focused on a personality trait of a leader known as charisma. Charismatic, transformational leaders possess personal characteristics that include "being dominant, having a strong desire to influence others, being self-confident, and having a strong sense of one's own moral values" (p. 132). Later, a version of transformational leadership emerged in the work of Bass (1985). Bass extended House's work by placing greater attention on the needs of followers rather than the leader and that charisma by itself did not encapsulate all there is to know about transformational leadership. His model also more explicitly addressed how transformational leaders go about their work. According to Northouse (2003), "Transformational leadership helps followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the group or organization" (p. 137). Transformational leadership did not provide a recipe for leading but rather a way of thinking that emphasizes visionary and participatory leadership.

Transformational leadership received much attention in the educational leadership literature (see, e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Although transformational leadership had been examined by other theorists (e.g., Bass, 1997; Burns, 1978; House, 1976), Leithwood and Jantzi (2005) addressed implications of transformational leadership for schools. According to them, "three broad categories of leadership practices" could be identified: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. The authors explained that setting directions is a "critical aspect of transformational leadership . . . [by] . . . helping staff to develop shared understandings about the school and its activities as well as the goals that undergird a sense of purpose or vision" (pp. 38-39). They explained that people are more likely to participate when they have had a say in developing ideas and practices. Transformational leaders realize that anyone can set a direction for an organization, but it is the effective leader who considers and solicits the participation of other key school personnel to share in the development and actualization of the institutional vision and purpose.

It was based on these latter two categories that greater emphasis was placed on transforming a school's instructional program. Those who advocated transformational leadership realized that although change was needed at the organizational level of a school, equally essential was attention to the 'inner-core' of a school; i.e., the school's instructional program whose purpose was to raise student achievement.

This work on transformational leadership, in my view, led, more so than ever before, to a reexamination of a school's commitment to teacher quality, teacher growth, instructional excellence, and student learning. Although the ensuing work in the field addressed a number of different areas, attention to what became known as the "instructional core" became the lynchpin of the literature on instructional leadership. In other words, transformational leaders were to work to alter school culture by nurturing a professional learning community (Sullivan & Glanz, 2006) in which leaders would serve as change agents or facilitators of change to actualize their vision for instructional excellence (Fullan, 2006). Instructional quality became the main focus in an effort to transform teaching and learning (Shava & Heystek, 2021). The implications for supervision became evident.

Instructional Quality as the Core Work of Instructional Leaders

To provide a theoretical frame for discussion of instructional quality, see Figure 1 that highlights the key components of instruction: teaching, curriculum, and professional development. Instructional quality is achieved through excellent teaching, facilitated by cutting-edge practices in professional development, and an articulated and deep understanding of the content skills and values embedded in the curriculum.

Figure 1

The tripod view of instructional quality in a school

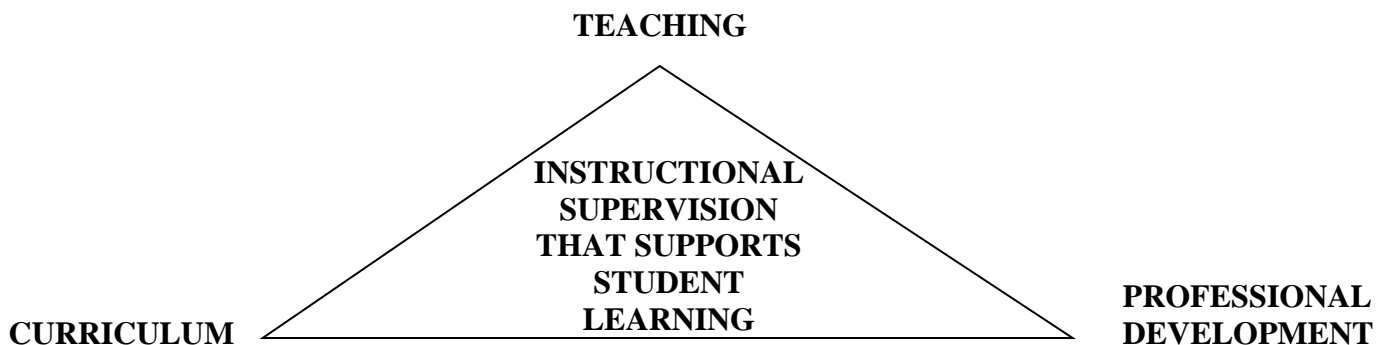
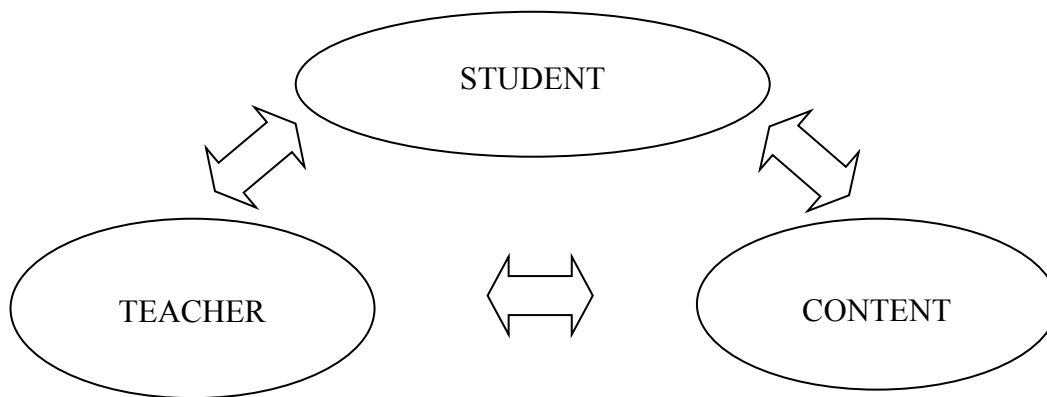


Figure 1, however, is inadequate by itself to comprehend fully the import of the instructional process without turning attention to a deeper level of the instructional process, called the "instructional core" (City et al., 2009). The instructional core (see Figure 2) is "composed of the teacher and the student in the presence of the content" (City et al., 2009, p. 22). A reciprocal relationship exists between each component (i.e., between student and teacher; teacher and student, student and content, and teacher and content). The aforementioned authors explain:

Simply stated, the instructional task is the actual work that students are asked to do in the process of instruction – *not* what teachers *think* they are asking students to do, or what the official curriculum *says*..., but what they are *actually* doing. (City et al., 2009, p. 23, emphasis in the original)

Figure 2
The Instructional Core



According to the authors, learning occurs in the interaction among these three vital components. For instance, if we match the level of content to the student's ability level, then learning is more likely to occur. As teachers' knowledge of the content and skills in delivering it increases, students are more likely to learn. If students themselves are engaged in learning (e.g., on task, challenged, monitored), then learning is more likely to occur than without such attention to student engagement. City et al. (2009) say it plainly, "If you are not doing one of these three things, you are not improving instruction and learning (p. 24). Accordingly, the structures employed to encourage learning (e.g., learning communities, differentiation, grouping, coaching, block scheduling, individualization, instructional prompts, professional development, etc.) do not, by and in themselves, improve learning. Rather, these structures must influence the instructional core for learning to occur. City et al. (2009) explain:

At the very best, when they are working well, they *create conditions* that influence what goes on inside the instructional core. The primary work of schooling occurs inside the classrooms, *not* in the organizations and institutions that surround the classroom. Schools don't improve through political and managerial incantation; they improve through the complex and demanding work of teaching and learning. (p. 25, emphasis in the original)

Whether instructional supervision, professional development or any other intervention is employed, four questions in the instructional process are of concern:

1. How will this affect teachers' knowledge and skills?
2. How will this affect the level of content in classrooms?
3. How will this affect the role of the student in the instructional process?
4. How will this affect the relationship between [and among] the teacher, the student, and content? (City et al., 2009, p. 27)

Accordingly, when teachers are observed by peers or supervisors, the observer, if s/he wants to know if learning is occurring, must examine the instructional core and ask:

1. What are the teachers doing and saying?
2. What are the students doing and saying (in response to teacher behavior)? What is the task? (City et al., 2009, p. 88)

To further this discussion of 'connecting the dots, I am asserting that supervisory practices of the past gave way to considering more democratic, participatory, and instructionally-focused efforts to improve teaching. The literature on transformational leadership provided the impetus for such an effort bolstered by the literature on instructional leadership (e.g., Barnes et al., 2010; Hallinger, 2003; Neumerski, 2013) that focussed, in part, on the 'instructional core.'

Supervision and its Relationship to Instructional Leadership

The literature on the instructional core gave impetus and enhanced focus to the work of those engaged in instructional supervision. Despite this focus, the field of supervision remained somewhat incognito in the sense that it became and remains confused with other processes aimed at the improvement of teaching. Other terms and concepts have been bandied about in the literature without a clear explication of their similarities and differences as well as, in this context, their relationship to supervision.

Examining research and literature in the area of the improvement of teaching the following six terms, although there are others, are commonly emphasized, listed in no particular order: instructional supervision, instructional leadership, pedagogical leadership, professional development, educational leadership, and instructional coaching. How do these terms relate to one another and, especially in the context of this essay, how does supervision fit in? In an attempt to gain some clarity, I will highlight some of the more prominent discussions found in extant literature that can hopefully elucidate these ideas or concepts.

According to Shaked (2021), instructional leadership is an educational leadership model in which principals are directly and continually involved in curricular and instructional issues. His study attempts to provide a basis for instructional leadership work in four areas: (1) with leaders themselves; (2) with school middle leaders; (3) with teachers; and (4) with external stakeholders. Shaked's work is representative of current research and literature that indicates two ideas. One that *instructional leadership* is part of the larger theoretical frame known as *educational leadership*. In other words, educational leadership, as demonstrated by a review of the literature in extant books and journals, encompasses many, more broad areas including, among others, leaders who work in varied contexts, not just schools, and leaders who lead in multi-faceted ways including managing the organization, fund-raising initiatives, and financial and legal matters. Instructional leadership, then, is viewed as one particular arena in which educational leaders may operate; i.e., in the realm of matters related to the instructional process.

But what does the instructional process entail? To more fully understand the instructional process comprehensively and at its best, two contrasting conceptions or approaches to education,

at large, should be discussed. From a modernistic perspective, education is a static process of transmitting knowledge, skills, and values of society. Teaching, then, becomes necessary to impart these knowledge, cultural expectations, and ideals. The teaching-learning process is best conceived as a "banking concept," as articulated by Paulo Freire (1974). In other words, teachers talk and students listen. Learning is a process of accepting ready-made bits of information that the student must recall on examinations. Supervision, I might add, in this context becomes an inspectional process to ensure compliance with mandated curricula.

In contrast, a post-modern perspective, views education as an ongoing, spirited engagement that a learner undertakes. Education is best viewed from its etymological Latin context meaning "to draw out or to lead." The goal of a teacher is to draw out that latent potential within every student. Representative of such a view, for example, is the work of Nel Noddings (1992) who made the point, "We should educate all our children not only for competence but also for caring. Our aim should be to encourage the growth of competent, caring, loving, and lovable people" (p. xiv).

Instruction, the core process that can actualize society's goals via the process of schooling, be it based on a modernistic or post-modern perspective, accomplishes its stated aims via a mechanism we call curriculum. Instruction and curriculum are inextricably connected. Instruction is the process that translates, if you will, the curriculum into practice. It involves an understanding of the process in which people learn, it includes teaching practices to ensure that learning occurs, and it involves other ideas that support teaching and learning. These may include, among others, administrative policies, ethical and legal imperatives, and more closely connected to teaching and learning, the supervision of instruction.

A review of the literature over the past fifty years or so indicates that instruction, erroneously, became associated or synonymous with the teaching act itself. The emergence of a new concept known as *instructional leadership* helped clarify previous misconceptions and broaden knowledge about how best to promote student learning. Instructional leadership, then, entails a variety of leadership initiatives aimed at promoting student learning and achievement. Therefore, instructional leaders, among other initiatives, may help facilitate curriculum development, establish a conducive organizational culture or climate to support instruction, create a meaningful teacher evaluation program, create a professional learning community to unify individuals involved in promoting instructional excellence, and set up a supervisory process that encourages teachers to reflect upon and improve their teaching. In other words, instructional leadership involves supporting the school, instructionally, on macroscopic and microscopic levels. In contrast, as discussed below, supervision is more focused on supporting teachers in the classroom.

Parenthetically, a term sometimes employed in the literature is 'pedagogical leadership.' Based on my research it seems that pedagogical leadership has the closest connection to instructional supervision or, simply *supervision* because when used in the literature it examines the nature of teaching in the classroom. So, why not use that term rather than supervision? After all, its use mitigates the negative history associated with the field of supervision. While that might be true, *pedagogical leadership* is most often associated with the act of teaching exclusively without attention to the other elements of the instructional core. Pedagogical leadership attempts to

clarify various approaches to pedagogy such as constructivism, collaboration, and reflective inquiry. Therefore, the use of the term *supervision* or even *instructional supervision*, more accurately describes an emphasis on the instructional core.

Supervision

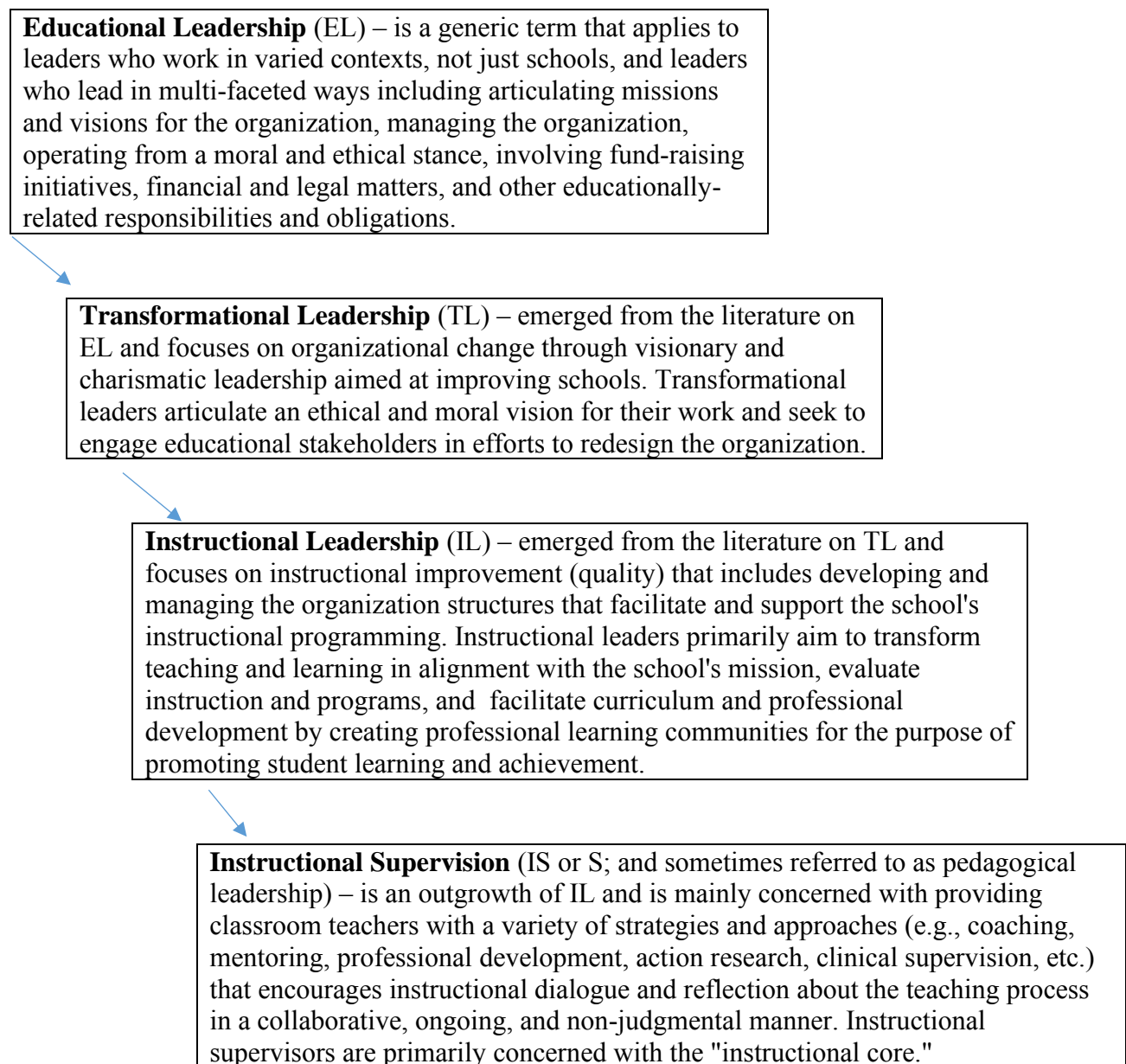
Based on extant research and literature in the field (Firth & Pajak, 1998; Glanz & Zepeda, 2016; Zepeda & Ponticell, 2019), supervision, a sub-set, if you will, of instructional leadership, is a collaborative, ongoing, non-judgmental, and developmental process that encourages instructional dialogue and reflection about teaching practices. Supervision functions to provide teachers (in all school-related settings including teacher education, K-12, and college) with "super"vision (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2007) that is meant to lead to changes in teacher behavior which in turn affects student learning and achievement. Supervision, however, is multi-faceted. In other words, it employs a variety of strategies and approaches. Below, is a brief explication of some of these areas (in no particular order) that those involved in the supervision process might employ to facilitate dialogue about teaching in the classroom:

- a. Clinical Supervisory Model – Among the oldest, well-researched, and highly advocated approaches, this model involves the pre-conference, short observations, and a post-conference process that encourages deep, reflection about teaching practices. With this model, supervisors, do not “tell” teachers what is “right” or “wrong” but rather offer data through the use of observation forms or instruments to teachers and then begin an instructional conversation with teachers encouraging teachers to reflect on their practices in the classroom (See Garman, 2020, the most recent commentary on it).
- b. Demo Lessons and Videotaping – Among the important supervisory strategies is the analysis of videotaped (or recorded) teaching episodes. As an assistant principal, mentioned earlier, trying to advance such practices, I volunteered to have myself videotaped teaching a class, and then my faculty and I viewed and discussed the session. Such practices build trust and a learning community in the school (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2009).
- c. Mentoring and Induction – Beginning teachers are frequently not offered sufficient support to achieve success (Irby et al., 2020). A formal program of mentoring is necessary as well as an induction program that offers support to new teachers from years 2-4. Various models for mentoring and induction can be found nationally.
- d. Intervisitations – Most teachers rarely have seen a colleague teach. Providing release time for colleagues to observe each other and then providing time for discussion is recommended.
- e. Peer coaching – A pair of teachers alternate periods observing each other and use data to engage in conversations. Peer coaching may differ from the strategy above in the sense that such observations are long-term (Miller et al., 2019; Trusedale, 2009).
- f. Action research – Encouraging teachers to engage in a project in which they identify (on their own or with a colleague) a problem they are experiencing in the

classroom, compose some research questions, gather data to answer them, reflect on findings, take actions, etc. is an invaluable supervisory asset (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010; Glanz, 2014).

- g. Lesson studies – Teachers collaboratively plan a lesson (perhaps in association with the curriculum mapping process), each presents the lesson to a class, and then meet together to discuss successes, questions, and challenges (Stepanek et al., 2007).
- h. Instructional rounds – A small group of teachers and others visit a classroom of a colleague. There are various models used for such rounds (see approaches, for instance, of City et al., 2009).

Figure 3: The Emergence of Instructional Supervision



I end this sub-section with a summary (see Figure 3) that illustrates the historical, conceptual, and definitional progression of the key terms referred to in this article. My hope is that these definitions and associated parameters will foster reflection, debate, and dialogue in the field, especially related to how we should define supervision and what practices should be considered part of – and separate from – supervision.

Implications and Conclusion

Viewing and understanding supervision within the larger framework of instructional leadership will help practitioners and the field to sharpen and focus their work in schools. Supervision should not be viewed broadly or it may become as it has in the past, confused with other instructional processes thus losing its focus and potentially beneficial impact. Other programmatically-related structures such as block scheduling, curriculum development, and promoting positive school climate do not, directly influence learning, although they certainly can provide, if implemented properly, the conditions for high learning to occur. Rather, based on a historical investigation alongside the emergence of newer terms that may encompass other important aspects of instruction (e.g., nurturing school culture) it is supervision, whether performed by supervisors or those concerned with the supervision process that has the greatest potential to influence teaching and learning, but only if it remains cognizant of the instructional core.

I think this relationship between 'supervision' and 'instructional leadership' was considered when, for example, the American Educational Research Association's (AERA) Special Interest Group (SIG) on Supervision and Instructional Leadership was formed. Apparently, those concerned with the formation and name change for this SIG, understood the difference between the two terms, yet felt that calling the SIG simply "Supervision" might not be broad enough to attract enough proposals. Including 'instructional leadership' allowed more proposals and papers to be accepted and delivered. Yet, a consequence of this decision resulted, in my view, in a diminishment, if not dissolution to the study and practice of 'supervision' per se. Others might argue that the SIG would not have survived without the inclusion of 'instructional leadership' in the title since the term had gained much popularity in extant research and literature.

A perusal of the literature on educational supervision indicates a lack of differentiation made between supervision, per se, and research in school or educational leadership, in general. Some writers in the field either eschew such a discussion or are oblivious to subtle, yet important distinctions that should be made. Yet, there are those who do a better job in situating supervision within the larger context, historically and theoretically, as is reflected, most recently, in the work of Drago-Severson and Blum-DeSatefano (2019) and Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2019), both of whom explicitly discuss the importance of leadership that supports supervisory approaches such as clinical supervision, peer coaching, mentoring, job-embedded learning, etc.

I conclude with what I perceive to be a dilemma in our attempt to carve a niche for supervision by encouraging further empirical and other types of research in the field. For decades the field published work decrying the lack of attention to supervision in academic journals resulting in a dearth of research. To this day, a dearth remains, to some extent. I recall how at an editorial

board meeting O. L. Davis, Jr., the editor of the *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, who himself was a prominent curriculum person, responded to criticisms as to why more articles on supervision weren't published in his journal. He responded, and I paraphrase, "I can only publish manuscripts that I receive." He implied that he did not receive sufficient high-quality manuscripts about supervision.

However, we now have the *Journal of Educational Supervision*, which is the only journal devoted to supervision, in its various facets. Even though the term 'educational supervision' in the title implies that research from a broad perspective is welcome, an overwhelming majority of the manuscripts published in volumes one to four have been focused on supervision, which is a very good sign. I wonder, though, how we might encourage research and manuscripts on supervision, per se, and the instructional core, specifically, which I believe is where emphasis is primarily needed to improve teaching in the classroom in a practical rather than theoretical sense. Articles about the interface of supervision with teacher education, teacher evaluation, curriculum, and wellness, or on whiteness to encourage culturally relevant teaching are all very important contributions to the field at large, as is exploring the field's history or decrying the sorry state of the field, both of which I have written about. While all the aforementioned topics need attention, we need to focus our research (for ourselves and by encouraging our doctoral students) on empirical studies that more directly impact the lives of teachers teaching in the classroom.

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