ABSTRACT

Instructional supervision is the use of monitored service for preservice training. It is supervision of more experienced students in order to teach less experienced ones. As a pedagogy of counselor education, instructional supervision is supervisory because it monitors an actual client, and instructional because it uses supervision as a pedagogic tool. In this study, prepracticum counseling laboratory students observed and participated in the live supervision of a practicum counselor. The counselor showed videotaped client sessions to a supervisor who was also the lab students' teacher. Students followed the practicum case over the semester, meeting weekly with the counselor and supervisor to observe and participate in supervision. The model of instructional supervision proposed is a deployment of direct and vicarious learning opportunities defined as multiple roles and activities that vary for the same individuals. Roles are not assigned but emerge naturally as a result of overlapping tasks, interrelated perspectives, and group participation. The research of Goodyear and Bernard (1998) is used to examine the distinction between supervision and training. A brief review of instructional supervision literature within counseling supervision is presented. Finally, the model and theory of instructional supervision is described. The model is composed of four principal parts: target, purpose, format, and roles. Supported by the four principles, the model has the following attributes: vicarious and immediate observation; approximation; reflectibility and feedback; and alternative constructivism. The model may be described in terms of development and individual differences, cognition, affect, and professional acculturation. (Contains 80 references.) (MKA)
Live Supervision of a Counseling Practicum Student in a Prepracticum Counseling Laboratory Class: A Teaching Model

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Instructional Supervision

Live Supervision of a Counseling Practicum Student in a Prepracticum Counseling Laboratory Class: A Teaching Model

Instructional supervision is the use of monitored service for preservice training. It is supervision of more experienced students in order to teach less experienced ones. As a pedagogy of counselor education, instructional supervision is supervisory because it monitors an actual client, and instructional because it uses supervision as a pedagogic tool (Goodyear & Bernard, 1998).

In our study, prepracticum counseling laboratory students observed and participated in the live supervision of a practicum counselor. The counselor showed videotaped client sessions to a supervisor who was also the lab students' teacher. Students followed the practicum case over the semester, meeting weekly with the counselor and supervisor to observe and participate in supervision.

The model of instructional supervision that we propose here is a deployment of direct and vicarious learning opportunities defined as multiple roles and activities that vary for the same individuals. The roles are: lab student (or trainee), supervisee, professional colleague, supervisor, teacher, client, and counselor. Roles were not assigned. They emerged naturally as a result of overlapping tasks, interrelated perspectives, and group participation. For example, in the role of preservice trainee, students asked questions about counseling technique and timing. As participants in a quasi-case conference, the same students suggested treatment options and conceptualized the case. As surrogate counselors, students were supervisees. Observing the videotapes of an actual client, the students empathized with the client. Students enacted their own roles while observing others enacting theirs. Thus, by observation and vicarious participation, there was simultaneous multiple role enactment and perspective-taking. From another point of view, the practicum counselor was a student in the lab class, a more advanced professional colleague, a laboratory co-instructor, and, of course, a supervisee. The supervisor taught the lab class while supervising the counselor, and taught the counselor while supervising the lab class. Reflection and feedback were pervasive as participants responded to and asked questions of themselves and each other.

We owe to Goodyear and Bernard (1998) the valuable distinction between supervision and training, a distinction that hinges on the involvement of a real client. But it is just the interchangeability of training and supervision at an experiential level which they argue against at a definitional level that funds the educational opportunities of instructional supervision. The synthesis of instructional supervision in the laboratory can only be understood by its conceptual separation in the literature. Nowhere is the interchangeability of training and supervision more evident than the multiplicity and simultaneity of roles. By taking the role of professional colleague, the lab student tastes the sort of proprietary responsibility that only a counselor of an actual client usually feels. But as a lab student, the student is free to ask elementary questions of technique and timing. This telescoping of developmental stages by means of multiple perspective-taking is emblematic of the interchangeability of training and supervision that the model entertains. In terms of Nelson and Neufeldt's (1998) "pedagogy of counseling" which is really a propaedeutic, or Goodyear and Bernard's (1998) "lessons from the literature" which are really lessons for the literature, our students thought "outside the lines" by taking many roles (p. 71). Instructional supervision creates a multi-site situation (classroom, laboratory, clinic) in which identity and difference of roles, activities, and developmental stages is educational.
Instructional Supervision in the Literature of Counseling Supervision


It is unfair to portray this list as a roster of established schools or theories of supervision. Still, it does indicate the birth throes of counseling pedagogy as we slouch toward maturity. It is easier to add instructional supervision to this list than to fit it in it because the concept is so new. In fact, we have only seen one reference to it in the literature (and we have already misplaced it). A proper field placement of instructional supervision is beyond our scope, at least in the present exploratory form of this paper. However, we cannot pass up the opportunity to orient instructional supervision by four recent and compelling interpretations of counseling pedagogy. We refer to the evaluational stance of Bernard and Goodyear (1998) and Goodyear and Bernard (1998), the reflective phenomenology of Worthen and McNeill (1989), the professional reflectivity of Neufeldt, Karno, and Mitchell (1998), and the recursive sociocultural intersubjectivity of O'Byrne and Rosenberg (1998).

Evaluation and Reflection. For the Goodyear and Bernard team, evaluation is the hallmark of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998; Goodyear & Bernard, 1998). For them, evaluation separates supervision from counseling and consultation. It is not just the gatekeeping and safeguarding responsibility of the supervisor that informs and requires evaluation; it is also its instructional function. Instruction and evaluation are also present in instructional supervision. To show how they operate, it is perhaps useful to contrast the

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1 The theory of instructional supervision is a work in progress. The authors have much to learn about the literature of counseling supervision before fitting instructional supervision to it. That is why our References section is also a Bibliography.

2 The more closely diverse researchers study the same phenomenon, the more interleated their concepts become.
Bernard and Goodyear position with that of the reflectivists. The former define supervision as much by evaluation as the latter eschew it. For instance, in their study of supervisees’ experiences of supervision, Worthen and McNeill (1998) describe good supervision as empathic, nonjudgmental, validating, affirming, liberating, encouraging, exploratory, and experimental -- descriptors not often associated with semester grades or judgments of good and bad. Likewise, Neufeldt, Karno, and Nelson (1998) invoke experts’ conceptualizations of supervisee reflectivity in terms equally refractive to evaluative judgment and report cards: vulnerability, openness, humility, profound understanding at the meaning level, long-term growth, exploration, experience of the self, attention to emotions, active inquiry, and interpersonal interaction. Since both evaluation and reflection are present and yet seem mutually exclusive, how do they cooperate in instructional supervision? We contend that evaluation and reflection coexist, even thrive, because the supervisee is not the sole focus of evaluation, and because all participants, including the teacher-supervisor, engage in self-evaluation. Likewise, the supervisory relationship is continually open to criticism and self-disclosure, by the supervisor and supervisees themselves, but also by others. We disagree, however, that reflectivity is sequential (Neufeldt, Karno, & Nelson, 1996). A virtue of instructional supervision is the attenuation, telescoping, and dispersal of developmental stages, and their simultaneous immediate and vicarious enactment. Likewise, the professional reflectivity that Neufeldt, Karno, and Nelson (1996) advocate is alive and well in instructional supervision by virtue of the quasi-case conference format of participatory group supervision. In the vicarious roles of counselor and case consultant, laboratory students get to reflect about their surrogate-professional work.

Recursive Sociocultural Intersubjectivity. O’Byrne and Rosenberg (1998) argue for a sociocultural perspective on counseling pedagogy. The sociocultural processes they advocate include professional acculturation, apprenticeship, and reflective assessment. At the same time, they reject linear sequential stage models and normative templates of counselor growth, in favor of recursive cycles of growing and learning. By offering immediate and vicarious participation in clinical, case conference, and classroom activities, instructional supervision provides peripheral membership in communities of practice and opportunities for substitute professional apprenticeship. Likewise, the supervisory relationship models cocreation of meaning and reciprocal influence by critical co-disclosure and relational reflexivity.

Instructional supervision distributes Searle’s parallel process (1955) by providing direct, actual, multiple, vicarious, and simultaneous role participation. It enfranchises Haley’s (1963) relational control by endowing personal freedom with professional bonding. It disarms as it empowers Bordin’s working alliance (1979) by privileging reflective self-disclosure over uncriticized consensus, and by agreeing to disagree (Goodyear, Burkhe, & Guzzard, 1997). The transformational capacity of roles to create immediate and indirect learning opportunities, and to induct neophytes into supervision has received support in the supervision literature (Ellis, Chapin, Dennin, & Anderson-Hanley, 1996). The practice of instructional supervision brings the more reflective and introspective part of trainee development to the trainee (Goodyear & Bernard, 1998). It reciprocates Ward and House’s (1998) counselor-in-training as trainees-in-counseling. For all the same reasons that supervision is good for counselors, it is good for trainees; and for all the same reasons that instruction is good for trainees, it is good for counselors. Moreover, instructional supervision is a theory-based model of counseling pedagogy (Goodyear & Bernard, 1998), and represents research on pedagogical practices of counselor educators (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998). It mixes and matches Sexton’s (1998) primary activities of counselor education: supervision, teaching, and training.
Method

Participants

The study had two trials, one in the summer and one in the following fall. In both cases, the laboratory instructor and supervisor was a member of the faculty of the counseling department. The laboratory students were first-semester masters degree students in counseling and counselor education. The supervisee was a second-year masters degree student in counseling and counselor education, enrolled in a practicum course. Doctoral students in counseling psychology were participant observers and data collectors.

Measures

Before they began the instructional supervision, laboratory students were asked to write in open-ended fashion about their understandings and expectations of counseling, supervision, and case conceptualization. At the end of the semester, the students were again asked to write on these three topics. In addition to the self-report data, students in the second trial of the study were given a rank order assignment, asking them to rate eight aspects of the course (criticism of tapes, textbook, written self-portrait, class discussion, instructional supervision, videotaping, typescript-critique, and self-portrait presentation).

Procedure

The laboratory instructor/practicum supervisor sat with the practicum counselor-supervisee in front of the lab class. The practicum counselor showed his videotapes, and the supervisor conducted supervision. In the beginning, the lab class observed for the first half-hour and participated the second half-hour. By mid-semester, however, the class, the supervisor-teacher, and the counselor-supervisee were interacting for the entire hour.

The Model and Theory of Instructional Supervision

The model is composed of four principal parts: target, purpose, format, and roles. Supported by these four pillars, the model has attributes: vicarious and immediate observation, approximation, reflexivity and feedback, and alternative constructivism. Finally, the model may be described in terms of development and individual differences, cognition, affect, and professional acculturation.

Target. The primary target of the instructional supervision was laboratory students in counseling who received counseling instruction. The secondary target was the practicum counselor who received counseling supervision.

Purpose. Our aim was to promote the learning of counseling laboratory students in four key areas: skills and attitudes, case conceptualization, supervision readiness, and self-reflection.4

3 The data were not analyzed for this paper.
4 After reviewing our data but also after writing this paper, we discovered a fifth and sixth area in which we believed we could claim to have promoted trainee learning, namely, consultation, and its occupational exponent, professional acculturation. Four of these areas are included in Nelson and Neufeldt's (1998) nine "training areas" of counseling pedagogy (p. 72). Not included in their scheme is supervision readiness.
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**Format.** The format combined fishbowl observation of live supervision and live, participatory group supervision. The group supervision alternated irregularly between laboratory classroom and quasi-case conference. This model of group supervision adds the preservice trainee dimension to Holloway and Johnston’s (1985) definition of group supervision.

**Roles.** The model has four sets of roles. Each set of roles is expressed as a core relationship: the classroom relationship (student-teacher), the apprentice relationship (supervisee-supervisor), the clinical relationship (client-counselor), and the consultation relationship (professional colleague-colleague). All seven individual roles (student, teacher, supervisee, supervisor, client, counselor, and professional colleague) are serial, simultaneous, reflexive, complementary, and parallel. The model may also be described by role variance. That is, the same students assume different roles. Significant learning opportunities exist in the multiplicity and overlap of roles.

**Vicarious and immediate observation.** Because students observed a live supervision as well as participated in it, their learning opportunities were immediate, actual, and vicarious. Vicarious learning opportunities deserve particular note (Berger, 1962). Vicarious learning was instantiated by observation of an actual client for whom one is only peripherally or hypothetically responsible, thus combing maximum professional meaningfulness and personal freedom. Because supervision was a group process, students were also exposed vicariously to others’ roles while enacting their own.

**Approximation.** Role adoptions, self-reflections, feedback, modeling, and evaluations were all considered approximations of truth. All activities and conversations were considered to be experiments, explorations, and approaches to understanding.

**Reflexivity and feedback.** All instructional supervisory conversation was encouraged to contain feedback and self-reflection. The co-disclosed and co-criticized supervisory relationship was considered to lower supervisee and trainee reactance (Stoltenberg, Ashby, Leach, McNeill, Eichenfield, & Crethar, 1996).

**Alternative constructivism.** Reflexive and feedback formulations were considered not only approximate but also alternatively constructed, that is, continuously and adventurously construed and held open to fresh reconstruction (Kelly, 1997).

**Development and individual differences.** The model is composed of nonlinear, recursive, and simultaneous development, represented by the different developmental stages of faculty instructor-supervisor, doctoral participant-observer, practicum student, and laboratory trainee. Developmental and individual differences emerge in the group supervision and quasi-case format, and the multiplicity of roles. There is also feedback and reflexive critique of the development of the case, the counselor, the student, and the supervisory relationship.

**Cognition.** Cognitive operations are situated, observational, vicarious, participatory, and collaborative. Cognition is also inquiry and problem-based.

**Affect.** Affective learning opportunities emerge from the reflexively and interactively examined and expressed experiences of empathy and emotion.

**Professional Acculturation.** There is professional apprenticeship by virtue of the observed supervision and the proprietary conferencing of an actual case.
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Discussion

Instructional supervision is assisted learning that assists learning. Like any theoretical model that relies heavily on an actual model, however, the quality of observed model is crucial. One of the great unknowns of the theory of instructional supervision is the variability of model quality.

A second limitation is assessment. We are not content with the measures we have for the model. Students rank ordered various aspects of their experience, including the instructional supervision component. We also have pre and post data on their understandings and anticipations of counseling skill and attitude, case conceptualization, and supervision. We are still looking for ways to analyze these data, and other measures to take.

If the supervisory relationship is the linchpin of supervision, on what does the training relationship pivot? If supervision teaches inservice counselors, what teaches proxy counselors, the laboratory trainees?

Theory orients but also interrogates practice. We are hopeful that counselor educators and researchers will continue to build and adjust the theory and practice of instructional supervision.
References and Bibliography


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