

**On Vulnerability and Transformative Leadership:
An Imperative for Leaders of Supervision**

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Paper presentation
Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS) Annual Conference
Athens, Georgia
October 29, 2005

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Setting the Tone

“Supervisor education has never occupied an important place in America’s colleges . . . , nor has supervision of instruction ever emerged as a systematic professional discipline [Speaking of supervision] [I]ts authors and students have constituted an energetic but dismayingly small, minority in the educational community. . . . In the schools, supervision has fared even less well than in the universities . . . the supervisee must generally mobilize himself [sic] against a dozen extrinsic dangers associated with the supervisor’s presence. Because it generally counts for so much, supervision often counts for nothing. Too often, its principal misfortune is that in addition to failing to improve conditions of learning for the children, supervision fails equally to enhance the teacher’s dignity or, for that matter, the supervisor’s. Too often, the supervisory relationship is mutually thwarting.” (Goldhammer, 1969, pp. vii-viii)

“Men feel vulnerable because their societies are contradictory within and because they are in danger of attack from enemies without. But they are also vulnerable from within their own society’s protecting walls if they do not behave themselves, and they are vulnerable from within because of unacceptable impulses; because of guilt, intolerable hostilities and the feeling that they have sold their selves down the river to get ahead. . . .” (Henry, 1973, p. 83)

“Let’s begin with the premise that a human personality tends to take on the psychological characteristics of its environment. This is no more than to say that if I am forced to exist in an environment filled with insanity, in time my own behavior will begin to incorporate the insanities that have surrounded me. If, as one suspects, this premise is valid, then some urgent questions follow for the school, for if we wish the youngsters to emerge from formal education as bright and healthy as can be, then we must ask whether the schools themselves tend to be basically sane and intelligent places. Our premise implies that if, in truth, the school becomes a stupid or crazy environment, it will tend to create stupid and crazy learners by the time it has held them captive for twelve or more years. (Goldhammer, 1969, p. 2)

“For a teacher, assertion of the self would involve saying what he thinks most enlightening to the students; refusing to use stupid books, or reinterpreting them to make sense; deviating from the embalmed curriculum; and so on. On the other hand, going it alone is foolish, not so much because of the teacher’s vulnerability but because if his [sic] ideas are good other teachers should share and express them; and if the majority of

teachers in the same school do, it is difficult to withstand them. If a teacher acts alone and is forced to lie down or quit, the sense of vulnerability is intensified throughout the school system. The sense of vulnerability functions in a school system to frighten teachers into becoming stupid; and since when they become stupid so do the pupils, we end up with the understanding that vulnerability in the teacher helps educate children to stupidity. In this way society gets what it wants.” (Henry, 1973, p. 94)

Abstract

This position paper argues that supervision as a field, in the main, remains susceptible and thus vulnerable to various forces, ideological and otherwise, that constrain its ability to play a significant role in instructional improvement. Adherence to inspectional and faultfinding supervision under the guise of standards-based and other practices has serious consequences for the improvement of teaching and student achievement. Unless those of us who are committed to the study of supervision in higher education, as well as school administrators and other practitioners who supervise teachers, are ready, willing, and able to assert responsibilities for best practice in supervision through transformational leadership the educational landscape will remain in its transitory and vulnerable state, inconsequential at best, destructive at worst. Relying on the social and educational critiques of Robert Goldhammer and Jules Henry, this paper seeks to raise the consciousness of those committed to instructional excellence by offering insights into ways supervision can serve to enhance teachers’ dignity, impact student learning, and transform our work, and even schools themselves, so that vulnerability turns into possibilities and stagnation into transformation.

Introduction

In an article I wrote in 2000 entitled “Supervision for the Millennium: A Retrospective and Prospective,” I concluded by saying that supervision as a “school-based or school-college based activity, practice, or process, at its best, engages teachers in meaningful, non-judgmental, and ongoing instructional dialogue for the purpose of improving teaching and learning” (Glanz, 2000, p. 16). Framed in this way, supervision, I hoped could become collaborative rather than hierarchical, dialogic not didactic, descriptive rather than judgmental, and supportive not punitive (also, see Waite, 1995). Examining our field in the past we’ve seen glimmers of best practices, but these efforts, however laudatory, if not noble, are oddities, blips on the radar screen, occasional glimpses of brilliance, if you will (see, e.g., Nadelstern, Price, & Listhaus, 2000; Pajak, 2004; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000; Zepeda, 2003). Supervisory practices that most of us would deem effective occur episodically, haphazardly, and unsystematically (and certainly not systemically). Many of us have written scholarly pieces or delivered papers identifying or at least documenting possible reasons for such a deplorable state of affairs (See, e.g., Harris, 1998; Hazi & Glanz, 1997; Poole, 1994; Smyth, 1991; Starratt, 1992). I see no need to rehash the plethora of explanations for the pitiful state of the supervision field, a field that cannot even sustain a journal of its own, nor the antiquated, reactionary, and hierarchical supervisory methods, under the current guise of standards-based education, that are all too commonplace in our schools nationwide. We know too well that

supervision as a process or field of study remains vulnerable and susceptible to larger, complex social, economic, political, and most especially ideological forces and factors. Supervision, historically and in the most crudest manner possible, has served as a tool or a means by which administrators and others could maintain the status quo and rigid adherence to bureaucratic mandates and practices. Supervision has served, and continues to do so in my view, to stifle individual initiative, denigrate innovation, and control teacher behavior in the classroom to conform to prescribed, standardized, and regimented ways of behaving and teaching.

Too many administrators and others (including some of those who study supervision) do not understand that teaching cannot be standardized or reduced into ready-made recipes or prescriptions (Chomsky, 2002). Nor do they see teaching as a highly complex and contextual intellectual activity that challenges and engages learners with concrete experiences, intellectual discourse, and reflective thought. They don't view knowledge as temporary, socially constructed, culturally mediated, and developmental. Learning, for them, is not seen in a constructivist frame in which students resolve their own cognitive conflicts with the keen guidance of teachers (Foote, Vermette, & Battaglia, 2001; Mintrop, 2002; Rodgers, 2002). Too many of us do not appreciate the complexities of teaching and learning (Neill, 2003; O'Day, 2002). Those who call for heightened accountability, favor high-stakes testing, pre-packaged curricula, and rigid adherence to standards also favor inspectional methods of supervision and a distilled, simplistic version of teaching and learning.

Suzanne Soo Hoo (2004), decrying what she calls a "sordid state of affairs" in public education today asks:

. . . why is it that the general public seems complacent with the government's conservative chokehold on education in this country? Why aren't more communities renouncing the narrowing of textbook selections, the profusion of scripted teaching, the obsession with standardized testing, the erosion of student, teacher, and community participation in decision-making processes, and other such exclusionary, discriminatory, and thus undemocratic trends? Where is the resistance? (p. 200)

Although my guess is that we all would decry such practices few of us, in the supervision field, have stood up and proclaimed, "To hell with this complacency; we will not stand for it any longer." Rather, an examination of the extant literature (e.g., Firth & Pajak, 1998) including publications, books and articles, and conference presentations (including my own by the way) have advocated for alternatives to supervision (e.g., Pajak, 2000; Sullivan & Glanz, 2000), recasting supervision (e.g., Glickman, 1992), or realigning supervision with current ideological and political mandates (i.e., standards-based supervision, see, e.g., Gordon, in press; Pajak, 2000). These approaches have not worked to fundamentally alter supervision practice in schools. They are reactive, not proactive; they are compliant, not resistant; they are superficial, not fundamental; they are ephemeral, not pervasive; they lack vision and conviction.

Several reasons seem probable why we have not “rocked the boat,” if you will. We may adhere to a conservative political and personal agenda that eschews methods and practices that frame supervision in non-traditional ways. We realize that “we cannot change the system,” so we work our best to, in the words of Maxine Greene (1973), “find apertures in the wall of a world taken for granted,” (p. x) in an attempt to achieve some modicum of success in schools or classrooms in which we work. We see ourselves not as systemic change agents or transformative leaders in a global sense. Rather, we may prefer to work one-on-one with a school or group of teachers. We may rationalize our position or actions by saying “change starts with one person or one school at a time.”

Beyond these apparent, obvious explanations, a more fundamental, latent reason goes far to explain how decent, committed, and hard working education professionals can fall prey to complacency and inaction. We are influenced or, in behavioral terms, conditioned by societal/organizational norms that work to thwart resistance to practices that do not conform to standard operational, mainstream procedures. Iconoclastic or subversive thinking and behaviors are punished in subtle, sometimes overt ways. Soo Hoo (2004) observes that conservative administrators “reward conformity and punish disobedience” (p. 203). This paper will allude to a concept known as “ideological management” (Spring, 1992) that explains how ideas, under certain conditions, can function to limit options, repress alternative ways of thinking, work to reinforce socially accepted practices, and shape human behavior in direct and indirect ways.

Moreover, from a psychological perspective the need or desire to avoid cognitive dissonance may explain why some of us do not take an oppositional stand to practices that one would otherwise consider anathema. We strive for “homeostasis” thus eliminating “psychological dissonance.” “Consequently, we take the path of least resistance by ignoring much of the world around us” (Soo Hoo, 2004, p. 202). Soo Hoo concludes by saying that such avoidance “allows us to disassociate ourselves with things like homelessness or war” (p. 202). To extend her thinking related to education, we too avoid complications or contradictions in our work. For instance, we accept practices of scripted teaching without challenging those who dominate or control curriculum and teaching (Apple, 1999).

In this paper I argue that our inaction or inattention to these matters leaves us vulnerable to the vicissitudes of social, political, and ideological phenomena that frame our work, and even worse, to whims of administrators and even non-educators who given their position of authority within the system attempt to stifle creativity and individual autonomy in favor of prescribed protocols for behavior. They articulate a program of standards and we ask “how many?” They prescribe a protocol for supervision and evaluation and we acquiesce by creating an even more prescriptive program. They challenge our ability to prepare future leaders in supervision and so we participate in designing alternative leadership institutes to suit their narrow requirements. The old maxim, “We have found the enemy and they are us” is apt in this context. Moreover, remaining oblivious or unconcerned with national movements and administrative fiats, for instance, that are politically, not educationally inspired makes us vulnerable to policies and practices that may be antithetical to our conception of good educational

practice and serves to disempower us and our efforts to establish sound learning communities. We are thus coerced to react and then comply, rather than to assume a transformative leadership role for positive change and practice.

Although many of us who enter the fields of supervision and administration do so for altruistic and even noble reasons wanting to affect large scale reform (something a teacher cannot do while remaining in the classroom), we are, by in large, a conservative group of individuals who demonstrate allegiance to the system and hesitate to “rock the boat.” I have seen school administrators (superintendents and their deputies), for instance, support new organizational, restructuring initiatives that are decried by most teachers as onerous, stifling, and unfair. They publicly defend their actions and those of the new reform but in private concur with teachers. We are reluctant to offer radical alternatives or even remain steadfast in our beliefs about good teaching and learning. Although the educational system operates to weed out incompetence, it also suppresses individuality and innovative thinking. We are the system, and the system is us.

Susceptibility to vulnerability stifles our interest or ability to transform schools. Remaining vulnerable lowers expectations for ourselves, and more importantly, for teachers and students. We are resigned to “doing the best we can” without realizing possibilities for transformational leadership at a fundamental level. We do not view ourselves as transformative leaders in our own right who can contribute much towards framing a conception of teaching and learning that is aligned with principles of constructivism and sound, reasonable pedagogical practices.

The paper, drawing inspiration from two great critics (as described below), indicates that if supervision, which as a process that addresses teaching and learning at their most primal levels, is to emerge as a viable entity in transforming classrooms that promote achievement for all students, then we must remove the mental and psychological yolk of vulnerability and proactively pursue a deliberate, concerted, and sustained effort at becoming transformative leaders who have the desire and will to promote best teaching practice.

Achieving this goal takes more than identifying problems and offering criticisms, no matter how incisive (Kohn, 2004a). It also means more than understanding that top-down (e.g., Fullan 1999) and district-wide reforms (e.g., Duffy, 2000) are as or more necessary than individual bottom-up initiatives. Certainly, a multifaceted approach to reform is necessary (Elmore 2004). Missing, however, from current critiques and restructuring or systemic reform discussions is a fundamental understanding of the mechanisms at play that influence the formation of ideas that, in turn, have the power to shape educational discourse and practice. Although this paper cannot fully address or answer the following questions, they are basic to the analysis in this paper and are raised to prompt discussion: How do ideas emerge that have the power to influence theory and practice at a macroscopic level? What confluence of factors comes into play that helps sustain such ideas? How are these ideas internalized, interpreted, and manifested in practice? How do new ideas and theories emerge that serve to transform taken for granted or established practices? What concrete strategies must be sustained to effect

change? How do such questions help those in the supervision field better understand their role as transformative leaders?

Robert Goldhammer's View of the Problems with American Education

Robert Anderson (1969) in his Foreword to Goldhammer's (1969) landmark book shared a "professional secret" with readers (p. iv). He revealed that given Goldhammer's controversial comments proffered in the first chapter, the book was almost not published. Presumably, reviewers questioned Goldhammer's sharp criticisms of public education and wondered what the relevance was for supervision of instruction. Anderson explained, as did Goldhammer, that the purpose of the chapter was to "dramatize the need for the model of supervision" that he thought would go far towards ameliorating many of the ills of public education, or what Anderson calls "the horrors which now exist" (p. iv). Anderson comments that Goldhammer's chapter achieves its purpose and "I am pleased that it is being included" (p. iv).

Goldhammer begins his Preface by emphatically attesting to the fact that supervision of instruction has not "emerged as a systematic professional discipline" (p. vii). Although he acknowledges that some recent attention has been paid to supervision, in the final analysis other fields (such as teaching, administration, and counseling) have received greater notoriety and attention. Perhaps proffered as some solace to those of us who work in the field he observes that authors and students in the supervision field "have constituted an energetic, but dismayingly small, minority in the educational community" (p. vii). Goldhammer also observes that supervision has fared less well in schools. He says, "supervision remains a bugaboo for many teachers, an experience to be avoided at all costs" (p. vii). Highlighting essential faults in supervision he astutely comments that supervision "fails to improve conditions of learning for the children" and "fails equally to enhance the teacher's dignity or, for that matter, the supervisor's" (p. viii). In Zen-like fashion, he states boldly that supervision "generally counts for so much, . . . yet counts for nothing" (pp. vii-viii).

Getting to heart of the field's woes, Goldhammer's strident commentary on the state of the supervision field, offered in the 1960s, may very well reflect many current problems and fuel conversations today about ameliorating problems we face. Not ignoring "external" factors that contribute to the vulnerability (not his choice of word) of the field, he focuses on "internal" problems:

The problem is . . . that in the absence of some cogent framework of educational values and powerful theoretical systems, operational models, extensive bodies of case material to consult, rigorous programs of professional training, and a broad literature of empirical research, supervision has neither a fundamental substantive content nor a consciously determined and universally recognized process – both its stuff and its methods tend to be random, residual, frequently archaic, and eclectic in the worst sense. (p. viii)

Expounding further on what he calls “deficiencies” of those who supervise, Goldhammer highlights three problem areas: First, supervisors lack an instructional methodological approach that is sophisticated, unique, and that goes beyond superficialities. Supervisors, he says, merely address “technicalities” of teaching. Supervisors too often merely rely on their own experiences in the classroom as a basis for providing instructional leadership (again, not a phrase he uses but the point is similar). Second, Goldhammer cites an “almost universal deficiency among supervisors” by calling attention to “their inability to deal with the emotional ramifications of teaching, and learning . . . and of being supervised” (p. viii). Placing the blame for this situation on pre-professional training programs, Goldhammer states that it’s “little wonder” that supervisors have such a lack of sensitivity to the personal and instructional needs of teachers and even of themselves; “they have not, as a rule, been trained in such things” (p. viii). Third, and perhaps most scathingly, Goldhammer lays the blame for the pitiful state of affairs in supervision at the feet of supervisors themselves. Supervisors, he says, often “fail, in their own supervision, to exemplify the principles of good teaching that they profess, . . .” (p. viii).

Perhaps, an optimistic utopian; that is, an optimist but in the long run, Goldhammer nevertheless sees “a growing optimism among educators for supervision’s future” (p. viii). “My desire to write this book,” he says, “has arisen partly from unhappiness with the past and partly from excitement for the future” (p. ix). Perhaps a bit too celebratory and even naïve that his form of “clinical supervision” could single-handedly alter the educational landscape (although he later suggests that “clinical supervision is no present panacea” p. x), Goldhammer’s work must be viewed within the historical context of which he was writing. The 1960s was marked by a plethora of national social, economic, and political transformations against the backdrop of the very controversial Vietnam War. Although a sizeable literature emerged criticizing conventional standards in many fields, an overall sense of optimism prevailed buttressed by a conviction that the individual can indeed make a difference in changing societal wrongs. Such a perspective, by in large, characterized the 60s and 70s, but was quickly replaced by a sense of complacency, if not disenchantment in the three decades that followed. Still, Goldhammer’s prescient comments are as relevant today as they were back then. His ideas, in part, provide a context or a frame in which to examine the current malaise in the supervision field. While some improvements have occurred, much remains unchanged. Analyzing his sharp critique may serve as a catalyst in the 21st century for at least an awareness of what needs to be done, if not for change and deep transformation.

Goldhammer was quite aware that his first chapter critique would raise ire among many educators of his time. He acknowledges their reaction and tempered his comments by stating:

In the first chapter, I have offered some personal perceptions and impressions of the schools, a *weltanschauung* intended to provide reasons for the existence of clinical supervision as I conceptualize it. The writing in this section is intentionally kaleidoscopic, shifting randomly from this to that in much the same fashion, I propose, as classroom experiences are likely to for the children in them. In certain respects, the picture I have tried to create is neither balanced nor just.

To some readers, it may seem distorted; to some, offensive; for some, it may ring true, and for others it may seem excessively emotional. It is not as important to me for this chapter to satisfy the scholarly traditions of historical writing, which it certainly fails to do, as it is to report experiences that have been true, at least some of the time, for me and for children, students, teachers, and supervisors whom I have known. (p. x)

Goldhammer begins by informing readers that he does not deal “with supervision explicitly” in the chapter. Rather, his intention is to “set the stage by generating images of what school can be like, particularly in the children’s experience” (p. 1). Off to a shocking or at least jarring start, Goldhammer explains that individuals are affected deeply by their environment implying that if “the school becomes a stupid or crazy environment, it will tend to create stupid and crazy learners by the time it has held them captive for twelve or more years” (p. 2). Disemboweling the sterile way we view curriculum, Goldhammer charges that curriculum presents a “priggish, distorted, emasculated representation” (p. 3) of reality. A curriculum of “The Family” that provides a prudish, pristine view without the flaws and foibles of family life is potentially destructive and at the very least disingenuous, according to Goldhammer. He suspects that children are smarter than we think and that they will soon realize that the “curriculum is phony” (p. 3). In the next seven to eight pages Goldhammer continues his tirade against a problematic curriculum. Among the problems he addresses are irrelevant, outdated curricula. He says, “Should the curriculum comprise studies of ancient pasts or distant futures, it is likely to seem vacant of existential meaning. Left by itself, ancient Rome simply does not turn me on” (p. 5). He also decries curricula that are culturally remote (“The mystique of samurai is so impossible to understand that I cannot understand it” p. 5), overly abstract and complex (e.g. “unvisualizable algebra, an infinite celestial universe, a statistical genetics, etc.” pp. 5-6), and emotionally laden (e.g., Freudian symbolism” p. 6). He also points out that the way curricula are organized is “arbitrary” and having “no relationship at all to natural sequences of human learning or natural processes of human cognition” (p. 6). Citing other curricular problems, Goldhammer summarizes by saying that the curriculum is “frequently unauthentic, remote . . . , arbitrarily selected, arbitrarily organized, inconsistent with natural learning, vacant of systematic study by the learner of himself, . . . unresponsive to the learners’ individual requirements” (p. 10).

Goldhammer continues his analysis of the educational landscape by decrying practices by teachers that he characterizes as stifling, prescriptive, monotonous, inane, and authoritarian. Going into some depth into what he calls “incidental teaching” (i.e., unintended learning or what we know as the ‘hidden curriculum’) and the problem of “motivation” (that according to Goldhammer can often be manipulating), Goldhammer laments that teachers often contribute to the very problems they see in their students. He gives several examples; one suffices:

Teacher D unconsciously persecutes several children and is heard to remark that a strong tendency toward scapegoating exists among his pupils. If, by his own unpremeditated acts, the teacher creates conditions that foster poor discipline, it is

also forlornly true that his own undisciplined and unanalyzed behavior sometimes interferes with the pupils' productive thinking and sometimes makes such thinking impossible. His wise and thoughtfully conceived strategies are frequently eclipsed or canceled by the incidental learnings he promotes. (p. 21)

Goldhammer doesn't end his diatribe here. He continues at length to decry the "ritualism" ever-present in teaching. Students, he says, are made to follow blindly prescribed lessons without been given the opportunity for input based on interests. The crux of the problem, he continues, is that a teacher is expected to possess mastery of the "curriculum to be taught" (p. 24), or what we would call today content knowledge. Such knowledge may be insufficient. He explains, "Our observations on the curriculum suggest that, in large measure, he has mastered various caricatures of knowledge, make-believe disciplines consisting of fictitious and distorted facts, conscienceless omissions, archaic puritanical values, and other intellectual junk" (p. 24). The problem is further exacerbated by the fact that such presumed knowledge positions the teacher as the final arbiter of knowledge acquisition. Lecturing, he says, makes sense with such an understanding of knowledge. The teacher, in this way, becomes a "pretender, a posturer, or a propagandist, but in no worthy or legitimate sense am I a teacher" (p. 25). Assuming an authoritarian role, Goldhammer posits, has negative consequences for student learning. Students remain passive absorbers of information. The teacher as authoritarian, for Goldhammer, means that the teacher must hurriedly work through the curriculum without taking time to have students think, reflect, or question. He says, "Above all, explicit reasons must be avoided. There is no time for them, no reason for them, no value in them and, indeed, the question of 'reasons' - particularly of 'reasons why' - threatens to undermine the system's very foundations. The professional fabric could be torn by them" (p. 25).

In perhaps even harsher, more pointed language Goldhammer makes the connection between such teaching and the curriculum:

Authoritative teaching and the content curriculum, to which it is handmaiden, result in certain advantages to the scholastic status quo, namely, the reduction of students to a condition of docility, dependency, and ignorance; that is, a condition in which they are nonthreatening. In such a system, the teacher is invariably king of the mountain; because the subject matter, the questions, the answers, the books, and the tests are his, and because the students are really in class by his sufferance, the teacher exists in a universe that is almost perfectly free, internally, from competition or attack. (p, 26)

After expounding on this educational problem in detail, Goldhammer then turns his attention to evaluation and testing. "Perhaps the strangest of all school rites are those associated with testing and evaluating the pupils" (p. 32). Highlighting the many ways teachers use tests to grade student work, Goldhammer points out testing inconsistencies, confusing language used in evaluation, or the very meaning of grades. On the latter point, he says, "Never, in my entire school career, am I likely to be made privy to the secrets of what A's and F's mean or of how they are determined. All I know is that A's

are very important and that, somehow or other, I must manage to get them” (p. 37). Consequences of testing and evaluation are a concern for Goldhammer. Emphasis on grading may lead many students to cheat. Test results provide educators with presumably concrete data on which to place students in various tracks or ability groups that in many cases stifle their academic success. Goldhammer spends the next seven pages providing in depth examples of the tyranny of testing, not his choice of words though.

Goldhammer concludes his incisive chapter by reviewing the “scholastic legacy” of schooling. He charges, in part, that students are coerced or conditioned into docility by a fragmented yet authoritarian instructional program. Teachers too are made docile and dependent by the educational system. About educators he says:

We have strong dependencies, particularly upon authority. . . . One result (or cause?) of our dependency is that we exhibit little confidence in, or affection for, ourselves or for other students like us. . . . We are so cluttered with scholastic pedantry that a straightforward approach is often the last one that occurs to us. Instead of talking patiently with a child to find out what he feels about school, what worries him, what he likes, what he wants, and the like, we are inclined to show him inkblots Our thinking tends to be single-tracked rather than pluralistic. . . . We cheat, having been taught to do so by the school’s priorities. . . . We tend to distrust and to disparage people who are different from us. We may be bigots. We depend heavily on other people’s evaluations of our behavior. . . . we tend to make major decisions on the basis of minimal data and analysis. . . . We lack fluency. . . . We listen poorly We are frequently afraid. . . . We are often bored. . . . It makes us fearful to have our work observed. . . . We clamor for freedom of choice but feel threatened by having to make choices.” (pp. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49)

Summarizing his own dogmatic assessments, he says, “My comments have focused primarily on our intellectual deficits, the limits of our knowledge, the sparseness of our reasoning skills, the dullness of our critical faculties, the recalcitrancy of our biases, the impoverishment of our incentives to learn, and the helplessness with which we confront unknown knowledge” (p. 49). He admits his cynicism but still laments “supervisors who are martinets, curriculums to choke on, teachers who do not like children,” etc. (p. 50). Continuing his diatribe against mediocrity in education, Goldhammer ends by informing readers that this schooling context is critical to best understand how “constructive supervision” is to occur. He surmises that the remainder of the book will explore how supervision can help to “rectify some of the misfortunes noted” in his chapter (p. 52).

Jules Henry’s View of Vulnerability in Society and Education

Jules Henry (1973) first presented his ideas on vulnerability at a talk given in Graham Chapel, Washington University in December 1964. He spoke of the vulnerability we as humans face whether or not we realize or acknowledge it. Vulnerability for Henry is part of human nature. He says at the outset, “Mankind [sic] is a vulnerable animal and suffers

from feelings of vulnerability day in and day out, awake and in his dreams” (p. 82). Henry then gives four related reasons for human vulnerability:

Men [sic] feel vulnerable because their societies are contradictory within and because they are in danger of attack from enemies without. But they are also vulnerable from within their own society’s protecting walls if they do not behave themselves, and they are vulnerable from within because of unacceptable impulses: because of guilt, intolerable hostilities and the feeling that they have sold their selves down the river to get ahead. It is along these four lines that I shall examine the feeling of vulnerability in our society. (p. 83)

For Henry, vulnerability is sustained by an economic system that is foundational and pervasive. Economics instill “fear” and “bring men [sic] to their heel” (pp. 86, 87). The unpredictability of the economic system goes far towards creating a sense of confusion and vulnerability. How this disempowering state of affairs occurs is explored by Henry, who cites anthropological and psychological evidence, albeit concisely and abstrusely. Implicit in his discussion is the fact that a “system” operates to reinforce vulnerability, but the individual too contributes to a personal sense of vulnerability, as will become clear soon.

Citing a first example from education, Henry states “The child’s vulnerability is sustained and intensified by the elementary school, where he is at the teacher’s mercy.” It is not simply that a teacher represents authority and thus functions as such. The teacher too, according to Henry, is vulnerable. “The teacher, clearly through no fault of her own, is the agent of vulnerability; and she transmits the sense of it to the child through two weapons thrust into her hands, sometimes against her will – discipline and the power to fail the child” (p. 89).

Henry waxes psychological in his commentary on vulnerability, but what is of most interest and of great relevance are his views on “vulnerability in the educational system.” For Henry the hierarchical, bureaucratic structure of public education contributes to fostering a sense of vulnerability of all who work in schools. Authority and the power to punish those who do not comply with bureaucratic mandates are at the core of vulnerability. The state board of education can punish a school board who in turn can punish a superintendent who can do likewise to a principal. The principal’s authority over the teacher is axiomatic as is the teacher’s authority over students. Up to this point, Henry has argued that vulnerability is not only part and parcel of the human condition but that institutions also play a significant role in perpetuating vulnerability. Bombarded by external societal and organizational forces, the individual internalizes external pressures that further exacerbate and extend a sense of vulnerability. Vulnerability serves to psychologically weaken the individual into “stupidity,” if not uneasiness. Fear and fear of failure, according to Henry, are consequences that play havoc on the individual.

In schools, the “vulnerability system” functions unremittingly. Given the hierarchical, distant, and unemotional ways people in school systems relate to one another, vulnerability is not only manifest but pulsates in egregious ways. According to Henry,

“The sense of vulnerability functions in a school system to frighten the teachers into becoming stupid; and since when they become stupid so do the pupils, we end up with the understanding that vulnerability in the teacher helps educate children to stupidity. In that way,” he continues, “society get what it wants” (p. 94). Henry posits that complacency and subservience to the controlling forces of society that function to keep people in line, and thus sustain the status quo are the chief goals of society. Henry clearly indicates that one of the major consequences of vulnerability “is to prevent social change” (p. 97). People are reluctant to speak out against injustice because of fear of punishment or more simply, and perhaps devastatingly, they have been conditioned into numbness or complacency. After presenting a couple of cases that illustrate the negative consequences of vulnerability, Henry reviews his theme of vulnerability.

Given this background and reality, for Henry, he asks a most foundational question: “How shall a person who wishes to assert his *self* in the school system become invulnerable or at least reduce his vulnerability?” (pp. 93-94). Assertion of the self doesn’t mean that a teacher should simply scream at the principal. For Henry, self assertion is much more subtle, profound, and enduring. “By assertion of the self I mean doing and saying what is in harmony with a self that is striving for something significant; for something that would be a step in the direction of self-realization; . . .” (p. 94). Not providing concrete examples of this self-assertion in the world of practice, the reader is left guessing. Henry ends his overly pessimistic perspective of life within society or more specifically in schools on an almost sophomoric, naïve, utopian note. After his scathing critique questioning the fortitude of people to withstand psychological, economic, political, and social pressures, he ends his talk/chapter with three sentences that leaves his readers in wonderment:

The moral of all of this is that we must know our strength. Nobody is invulnerable but nobody is as weak as he thinks he is either. Let everyone, instead of saying to himself, “I am afraid,” say instead, “I may be stronger than I think.” (p. 103)

Implications for Supervision

At first glance, the writings of Goldhammer and Henry appear disconnected and unrelated. Certainly, Henry does not even mention supervision and he only deals with education tangentially. Goldhammer’s critique is a bit odd as well. He presents a scathing critique that appears on the surface unrelated to the work of supervisors. More careful analysis, however, reveals subtle and not so subtle similarities in the writings of these two scholars. Their critiques are unusually scathing and insightful. They raise issues beyond apparent domains. They attempt to shatter taken for granted ways of conducting business in education and in schools especially. Henry reminds readers of their susceptibility to vulnerability and the role they play, consciously or not, in perpetuating conditions that serve to maintain the status quo. Although he cautions against complacency, he calls attention to human endeavors that might circumvent bureaucracy and build new visions of possibilities that could help create educational landscapes of meaning and success. Goldhammer, along the same vein, criticizes educators for not attending to practices and policies that aim stifle individual initiative

and that maintain taken for granted notions of education. He too offers possibilities for hope.

Such possibilities for hope, however, are premised on an awareness of the role played by ideas that shape our thinking and work in schools. According to Spring (1992), ideological management is a concept that highlights the degree to which ideas are controlled by media and other forms of social agencies including newspapers, television, and advertisements. Ideas are often prompted and reinforced by political factors. Those with vested interests towards a particular agenda, ideological, political, or personal, attempt to lay claim to knowing what is in the best interests of clients and others. These influencing ideas are sometimes reinforced by economic and social conditions that serve to rationalize or explain certain efforts or agendas. Historical trends also play a factor in shaping ideas currently in vogue. According to ideological management theory, ideas play a powerful influence on human thought, behavior, and action. A few examples help make the point.

Historian John Weiss (1997) has made us aware that ideas can kill. Two ideas contributed to the most murders in the twentieth century. Both communism and Nazism, as ideological frameworks, were responsible for mass and selected murders of individuals and targeted groups (Prager, 1996). Nazism, for instance, heralded the false idea that certain groups of people (Gypsies, Poles, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and most especially Jews) were *untermenchen*, sub-human and did not deserve the same treatment as the "pure race." Supported by institutional mechanisms and agencies, the idea that one group of humans is inherently superior to another and that inferior groups deserve extermination became ideologically, intellectually, and socially engrained. Given ideological precursors to the Holocaust such as pervasive and persistent antisemitism, race biology, and social Darwinism, such ideas held sway of an entire society and contributed to the death of six million Jews and five million others. Clearly, ideas are powerful influences on human behavior. Parenthetically, most Americans, in my view, did not fully appreciate the role of ideological management (more simply put in this context, that an idea can kill) until 9/11. That someone or group thousands of miles away, and socially and culturally distinct could hate Americans so much as to cause the unthinkable havoc that was 9/11 was not within the consciousness of many Americans. That someone would be willing to kill you simply because you espoused different values or ideas was not fully understood before 9/11, in my estimation. Indeed, the notion that an "idea" can cause others to kill is now readily embedded in the consciousness of most Americans.

Media too influence and reinforce certain ideas. The idea that the medical profession, for instance, has a monopoly on providing health care is often taken for granted. Many physicians are influenced by pharmaceutical companies. These companies, whose primary aim is to make a profit often, and we have seen this played out in the news over the past year or so, influence physicians and the lay public (through television advertisements and even offering free samples of medications in doctors' offices). Sometimes profit is so much a motive that a drug is placed on the market without sufficient trials with disastrous results (e.g, Vioxx, etc.). The idea that certain

medications are essential to our recovery is promulgated in systematic and persistent ways. Non-traditional remedies or alternatives to prescriptions, for instance, are denigrated, for the most part, by these companies and the medical profession at large. Most of us have been conditioned to accept the notion that the medical profession possesses the “truth” about health and illness. Those who present contrary or alternative views to established ideas and practice are summarily dismissed as incompetent charlatans, or sometimes punished (e.g., taken to court and sued, or professionally ostracized) (See, e.g., Null, Dean, Feldman, & Rasio, 2003; Trudeau, 2005). Entrenched ideas are difficult to debunk.

The role of ideological management is no less influential in education (see, e.g., Apple & Weis, 1983). The idea that teaching means that teachers talk and student listen has been difficult to overcome. The notion that teachers are weak and need direction has held sway too long in education. That teachers are professionals who reflect on their practice for the purpose of analyzing teaching and finding ways to best promote student learning is an idea that has not always been accepted. On a more macroscopic plane, ideas are generated and reinforced by the federal government. Federal influence, most recently, has taken the form in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 that has created a system or culture in which high stakes testing, rigid accountability measures, and prescriptive standards are the norm. Parenthetically, the NCLB legislation must be viewed within a historical context that probably dates back to the Nation at Risk report during the early years of the Reagan presidency that initiated much debate and prompted various top-down reform measures. Use of federal funds serves to pressure, if not coerce states to comply with federal mandates. State governments, often abrogating their constitutional right of influence over education, in the words of Henry remain susceptible and vulnerable to dictates of the federal government. In such cases, states react by establishing academic standards, curriculum guidelines, licensing procedures, accountability measures, and other prescriptive and punitive guidelines so as to comply with NCLB. Classroom teachers and even school building or district supervisors are heavily influenced by such federal acts with concomitant policies and regulations. These educators had little say in promulgating such conceptions of “best education,” yet are responsible to translate these ideas, onerous some would say, into practice (see, e.g., Kohn, 2004a). If Henry and Goldhammer had the opportunity to share their views of NCLB they too would point to the pervasive culture of vulnerability that stifles individual and school initiative, and the prescriptive and punitive measures that can result from non-compliance as anathema.

Oppositional voices are often muted. Yet lone critics do decry such practices. Joel Spring calls NCLB a “political fraud” (Spring, 2006, p.198), whereas Alfie Kohn (2004b) is no less critical. Kohn cautions us on a number of fronts. About standardized testing, he says, the “testing mania . . . constitutes the most serious and immediate threat to good teaching, such that freeing educators and students from their yoke should be our top priority” (pp. 46, 53). He is no friend of NCLB as you might imagine. National currents to standardize curriculum and calls for greater accountability via high-stakes testing, the mainstay of NCLB, might be in vogue, but to paraphrase Alfie Kohn (2004a), “We don’t have to hop on board.” Jonathan Kozol (2005) recently offered a very strident yet

succinct comment: “The kind of testing we are doing today is sociopathic in its repetitive and punitive nature” (p. 14).

These ideas have serious consequences for freedom itself according to some critics. The period of international and national stress (i.e., war and terror threats) we are all experiencing seems to parallel threats to academic freedom, professional integrity, and sound educational practice, threats many feel that must be challenged to protect our democratic traditions. As John Dewey posited: “Since freedom of mind and freedom of expression are the root of all freedom, to deny freedom in education is a crime against democracy” (Dewey, 1936 cited in Nelson, 2003, p. 66)

Thomas Nelson, editor of the *Teacher Education Quarterly* recently lamented “people in power who are clearly not experts in the field of education . . . to control . . . what content is deemed appropriate and how that content is to be taught. . . .” (p. 3). He continues:

To believe that all students should be learning the same material in the same way at the same time (as seen in teachers using formula-based curriculum scripts written by others), taught by teachers who are prepared under the same exact standards (which are minimal at best), is to believe in the end of a truly public education system. (p. 4)

Measuring student learning simplistically by relying predominantly on scores gleaned from standardized tests relegate teachers to mere technicians who simply deliver content to students.

Supervision too is under assault. As a process meant to engage teachers in meaningful, non-judgmental, and ongoing instructional dialogue and reflection for the purpose of improving teaching and learning, supervision is in jeopardy. Supervision was on the verge of a historic comeback as a means of influencing good teaching practice in schools. Many schools have made strides in engaging teachers in meaningful dialogue and professional development activities to improve teaching through reflection and action. However, the growing, almost monolithic influence of high stakes testing and the emphasis on implementing rigid national, state, and local standards have served to stifle teacher initiative, and mitigate innovative and effective instructional supervision. Supervision within a standards-based environment, unless attended to thoughtfully and sensibly, tends to resort to mechanistic, bureaucratic means, aimed not at instructional improvement but to implementing narrowly prescribed measures of performance.

As I understand the supervision field, its historic problems and current necessities, the words of Henry and Goldhammer not only resonate with familiarity but point to future steps that need urgent attention. Both scholars, implicitly confront schools as cultural institutions that shape identities and thus prescribe acceptable or unacceptable modes of operation (Wink, 2005). Both Goldhammer and Henry, although certainly not utilizing a critical theory mode of inquiry, do question practices and conditions that serve to maintain the status quo in education. Critical theory or pedagogy, however, is a very useful lens that helps us look at fundamental or, even taken for granted, issues of power

and organization, and how they play out or relate to our work in supervision. Anyone familiar with the state of supervision for any period of time can readily relate Henry and Goldhammer's views to their own work and experiences.

Both Goldhammer and Henry would have much to say about current practice in schools. Our penchant for quick fixes of complex problems, an over-reliance on scripted approaches to teaching, and lack of attention to providing teachers with sufficient in-classroom support to promote student learning have had consequences for supervisory practice. Those given authority to supervise teachers have continued to rely on inspectional practices under the guise of standard-based supervision (e.g., Downey, Steffy, English, Frase, & Poston, Jr., 2004). Insufficient time has been allotted for meaningful supervision work with teachers. Stifling accountability regulations have tied the hands of instructional leaders. Principals often complain that they cannot find enough time to work with teachers due to burdensome reports and other administrative exigencies. Educators may espouse a commitment to instructional excellence, but often theories in use (Osterman & Kottkamp, 2004) tell quite a different story. A litany of other problems can be cited that aim to thwart attention to instructional leadership and improvement. Henry would remind us of our vulnerability, both personally and organizationally. Feelings of fear and a lack of self-efficacy underscore our "incompetence" (Henry, 1973, p. 105). Goldhammer would support Henry's assertion of institutional and personal vulnerability, although not in so many words. He would, however, admonish those who work in and with supervision to avoid "educational panaceas" (Goldhammer, 1969, p. 368). Rather, focused, attentive, and continuous emphasis on matters of great importance to the classroom teacher is vital. A supervisor, he would say, must maintain a commitment towards examining and critiquing curriculum, teaching methods, and so on in order to keep instructional improvement the number one priority in a school.

The foremost implication of Goldhammer and Henry's analyses rests not only on their optimistic view of the future, although sometimes veiled, but on their advocacy of the potential for human action to reverse pathetic conditions that exist in schools. It is to this latter potential that the remainder of this paper is addressed. We do have the ability to transform our work by not only becoming aware of social, political, economic, and other factors that influence our work in schools, but also by taking proactive measures; i.e., taking steps towards praxis and action (Freire, 1970; McLaren, 2002).

I think both Henry and Goldhammer would support Giroux's notion of resistance. In his *Theory of Resistance: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*, Giroux argues that resistance can, in the words of Spring (2006) "be a vehicle for developing an educational method that will empower students and teachers to transform society" (p. 64). How this notion of resistance leads to the need for transformational leadership and relates to our work in supervision is the topic for the concluding section of this paper.

The Transformational Leadership Imperative

“To exercise leadership in this climate of change will require deep convictions, strong commitments, and clear ideas about directions for changes in the form and content of schooling.”

Robert J. Starratt

Supervisors and those who work in the supervision field can no longer remain content working in the classroom one teacher at a time. Nor should they (we) remain unaware of organizational and ideological forces that serve to control and thus limit supervisory practice. We need to acknowledge our vulnerability, as Henry would have us do, and then deal with it assertively. We need to challenge mandates and other administrative fiat dictates, regardless of their origin, by questioning their effectiveness for promoting student learning and a healthy workplace for all educators and parents, as Goldhammer would urge. We need to proactively confront bureaucratic policies that do not serve the best interests of students and teachers and take responsibility for our own work to break through taken for granted notions of what is feasible and what is not. Before we can confront systemic issues that contribute to problematic aspects of schooling and nonsensical practices, supervisory or otherwise, we need to affirm personal beliefs and values that match our vision for best practice.

We must exhibit courage in our work in schools. What does it mean to be a courageous leader? The word “courage” conjures up military motifs such as heroic acts, daring exploits, and dramatic displays of fearlessness. What do bravery, gallantry, and valor have to do with educational and supervisory leadership? Are there really inspiring acts of heroism displayed by leaders in schools? Why must we personify courage to be considered effective leaders?

Although many forms of courage exist (e.g., physical, mental, or moral), the kind of courage necessary is the willingness to stand up despite opposition (Hare, 1993). What is needed is the courage to speak out despite the constraining, formidable forces that are ever present and serve to stifle individual initiative. The forces that urge, if not compel, conformity to the status quo are certainly substantial. To remain subservient to those individuals in positions of power and authority or even to people who aggressively argue their position, in most cases wrongly, is abhorrent. Also, to be shunned is not confronting ideological proposals and practices that go against every idea we know not to be in the best interests of students and teachers. To be courageous as a matter of principle must be valued and affirmed by principals, their assistants, supervisors at all levels, curriculum directors, teacher leaders, school district administrators, and professors of education and supervision. By showing oneself to be principled one is displaying immense strength of character. It is this strength of character, courage, that both Henry and Goldhammer would applaud. We need leaders who will gallantly assume responsibility for ensuring that the rights and dignities of others, especially the disenfranchised, are recognized and upheld. Speaking out against injustices such as unfair tracking placements, racist practices, and homophobic attitudes are just a few examples of courageous behaviors. Pertaining to supervision work, we must confront scripted teaching practices, incessant

testing practices that drain the emotional and physical spirit of students, teachers, and parents, . . . and administrators too. We must assume our responsibilities as instructional leaders and undertake supervision work that we know is meaningful. We must struggle to find ways to carry on such work. We must work with administrators to set up structures that support good supervision. We must raise these issues with our professional organizations and then develop strategies for action. We must also work with politicians and other local, state, and even federal officials to ensure that the voices of reason and justice are affirmed. Certainly, most of us have not even thought about this responsibility since it's not been part of our job description. As transformational leaders, however, we must think and then act out of the proverbial box.

These aforementioned examples of courage are the manifest ones. As leaders we display courage also in less visible ways. On a daily basis we are expected to display more subtle forms of courage. We must be willing to do what others prefer not to do. The courage to confront difficult and uncomfortable situations is certainly not easy. The courage to remain steadfast in one's beliefs is a moral leadership imperative. Leaders on a daily basis may not exhibit physical bravery (e.g., confronting a knife-wielding assailant) but every day we have to affirm our beliefs about what is most educationally sound. Leadership is not about acquiescing; it's about reflection and action. Courage comes into play when our beliefs and attitudes about teaching, learning, students, supervision, and schools are called into question. Remaining faithful to one's educational and moral principles is what courage is all about.

A courageous leader, therefore, should have a well-reasoned, articulated belief system that supports and affirms the rights and dignities of all learners, of all people. In this sense, then, courage is integral to the effectiveness of supervision leadership. Why is courage such a vital virtue? Without courage, we become mere technicians, administrative guardians, nothing more than custodians of the institution. Leading is about making the right decisions to benefit students, parents, and community. Schools are confronted by a plethora of demands that require us to remain steadfast to our beliefs that support, most fundamentally, student learning. Courage to stand up for what is right will safeguard the beliefs we hold so dear and true. Courage, then, is defined, as the ability to stand behind one's principles thus displaying immense strength of character.

How can we ensure that prospective and current educational leaders in supervision are courageous? Well, first of all we should value courage and begin to identify acts or behavior patterns of individuals who want to be or who are currently in leadership positions. There is no quick and easy survey to administer, although some exist (see, e.g., Glanz, 2002). Begin by asking and looking for instances in which leaders have demonstrated courage. Such an approach will move us a little closer towards understanding whether someone possesses this important quality. Then, identify individuals who articulate firmly held beliefs that affirm the values the institution of schooling holds in high esteem such as democracy, fraternity, and justice for all people.

As courageous leaders, we must begin to transform the educational landscape; we must engage, with passion, in transformational leadership. According to Northouse (2003), the

term was “first coined by Downton” (1973 as cited by Northouse, 2003, p. 131). Yet, it is acknowledged widely that James MacGregor Burns, quoted above, amplified this approach to leadership in a landmark book titled, simply, *Leadership* in 1978. Burns, according to Northouse (1997), identifies two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. The former represents the everyday interactions between manager and follower. Offering an incentive, for instance, to a follower for procedural compliance involves transactional leadership. In contrast, transformational leadership “refers to the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (Northouse, 2003, p. 131). Northouse provides an example of such a leader, drawn from the work of Burns, “Mahatma Gandhi as a classic example of transformational leadership . . . raised the hopes and demands of millions of his people and in the process was hanged himself” (p. 131). In this sense, transformational leadership is very much connected to visionary leadership wherein the leader identifies a course of action based on a view or image of the future.

Another version, if you will, 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. Basing his work on Weber’s (1947) theoretical classic model, House (1976, as cited by Northouse, 2003) “suggested that charismatic leaders act in unique ways that have specific charismatic effects on their followers” (p. 132). 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). House’s charismatic theory highlights four types of leadership behavior: serve as dynamic role models to foster their vision; appear competent to others, especially their followers; espouse points of view that have strong moral implications; and communicate high expectations for performance. As a consequence of such leadership, several effects that are a direct result of charismatic leadership include:

...follower trust in the leader’s ideology, similarity between the follower’s beliefs and the leader’s beliefs, unquestioning acceptance of the leader, expression of warmth toward the leader, follower obedience, identification with the leader, emotional involvement in the leader’s goals, heightened goals for followers, and follower confidence in goal achievement. Consistent with Weber, House contends that these charismatic effects are more likely to occur in contexts in which followers feel distress, because in stressful situations followers look to leaders to deliver them from their difficulties. (cited by Northouse, 2003, p 133)

A more recent 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 charismatic by itself doesn’t encapsulate all there is no know about transformational leadership. His model also more explicitly addresses how transformational leaders go about their work. He describes four kinds of influences they utilize:

1. Idealized influence – refers to qualities a leader possesses to persuade or inspire others to action. Such leaders possess a charismatic quality that attracts followers. These followers depend on the leader's vision and high moral standing. Charismatic leaders can transform a system by rallying others around their vision by convincing followers of the necessity of the work that needs to be done.
2. Inspirational motivation – refers to the use of emotional appeals to encourage involvement in the ideal vision or ultimate goal. Inspirational leaders are articulate and encourage others through their words and deeds (e.g., through the use of symbolic leadership).
3. Intellectual stimulation – encourages followers to take responsibility for their actions. Such leaders encourage reflection and value input. Follower involvement is critical usually accomplished through problem solving activities and projects.
- 4 Individualized consideration – demonstrates empathy and caring for the individual. Much time is spent nurturing, supporting, speaking with others, advising, coaching, and mentoring others.

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 doesn't provide a recipe for leading but rather a way of thinking that emphasizes certain principles, as noted above.

The work of Bennis and Nanus (1985) also addressed transformational leadership. As a result of their extensive research into transformational leadership, four common approaches used by such leaders to accomplish their objectives have been identified and are relevant to our work in supervision:

1. Transformational Leaders as Visionaries – Although visions emerge from the leader, it is supported and reinforced by others. Leaders cannot be successful if others do not buy in to their vision. Have we articulated such a vision for supervision?
2. Transformational leaders as social architects – They know how to work with people and groups of people. They navigate the organization with aplomb and are familiar with the politics of their job. Do we “work the system” to provide support for classroom teachers?
3. Transformational leaders engender trust and confidence - They are transparent in a positive sense. They are predictable and can be relied upon. Would the teachers you work with affirm your trust?
4. Transformational Leaders Possess Self-Regard – They know their strengths and weaknesses, and they can accentuate their positive qualities. Do you?

Summarizing how transformational leadership works, Northouse (2003) explains: “Transformational leaders set out to empower followers and nurture them in change. They attempt to raise the consciousness in individuals and to get them to transcend their own self-interests for the sake of others” (p. 142). Northouse highlights the following characteristics of transformational leaders: serve as strong role models, have a highly developed sense of moral values; a self-determined sense of identity; visionary,

confident, articulate; willingness to listen to followers; engender trust in followers, and act as change agents within and for the organization.

Transformational leadership has received much attention in the educational leadership literature (see, e.g., Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Although transformational leadership has been examined by other theorists (e.g., Bass, 1997; Burns, 1978), Kenneth Leithwood and Doris Jantzi have more recently addressed implications of transformational leadership for schools. Their ideas find relevance for our work in supervision. According to the authors (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), “three broad categories of leadership practices” can be identified: setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. The authors explain 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 explain that people are more apt 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

Although no theory of leadership is without criticism (Northouse, 2003, see pp. 144-146), transformational leadership informs our work in supervision whether we serve in the schools or at institutions of higher learning. We cannot and will not make much difference unless we engage in transformational leadership. As leaders of supervision we possess vision, look to the future, and build hope for teacher and student success. As such, we transform taken for granted notions of accepted practice. More practically, transformational leaders are astute politicians. We realize the influence of politics in our work and know that building political alliances is necessary to transform schools. Moreover, we see change as positive and necessary. In fact, we serve as change agents or facilitators of change in order to actualize our vision for instructional excellence.

Transformational leadership is also concerned about the creation and use of knowledge by leaders to accomplish their objectives for high achievement for all students. Michael Fullan (2003) has culled Brown and Duguid’s ideas about a knowledge community and created a list of their beliefs about the effective use of knowledge:

- Knowledge lies less in its databases than in its people (p.121)
- For all information’s independence and extent, it is people, in their communities, organizations, and institutions, who ultimately decide what it all means and why it matters (p.18)
- A viable system must embrace not just the technical system but also the social system – the people, organizations, and institutions involved (p.60)
- Knowledge is something we digest rather than merely hold. It entails the knowers understanding and having some degree of commitment. (p.120)

Transforming schools is easy if done superficially. Such change however is ephemeral. Unfortunately, much change, says Fullan (2003), occurs at this superficial level. In fact

he says, much of the change in schools in the 1960s around innovative instructional and curricular practices were short-lived because they were implemented on the surface without a deep change in people's beliefs and behavior. Both Fullan (2003) and Starratt (1995) concur that change without addressing a change in core beliefs and values is doomed to remain temporary and superficial. "Transformational leadership," says Starratt (1995), "is concerned with large, collective values . . ." (p. 110). Leadership is predicated on the foundation of changing core beliefs and values. Fullan (1991, cited by Fullan 2003) has identified "five crucial mind and action sets that leaders in the 21st century must cultivate: a deep sense of moral purpose, knowledge of the change process, capacity to develop relationships across diverse individuals and groups, skills in fostering knowledge creation and sharing, and the ability to engage with others in coherence making amidst multiple innovations" (p. 35).

Strategically minded supervisory and other leaders want to transform their work in schools deeply, not artificially and superficially. Doing so takes time and effort within a collaborative and empowering paradigm. Our work in this area is fundamental and morally imperative. Such work, moreover, is necessary because transformational leadership has been linked to student achievement. Cotton (2003), who has conducted one of the most extensive reviews of the literature in the field, states quite emphatically:

Not surprisingly, researchers find that transformational leadership is positively related to student achievement and is more effective than the deal-making between principal and staff that characterizes the transactional approach alone. (p. 61)

What is our moral commitment to such ideals? What are we willing to sacrifice to actualize our beliefs? Are we willing to display acts of courage despite personal risks? Do we really believe our work in supervision matters? Have we acknowledged our vulnerability and taken steps to play a significant role in instructional improvement? Do we decry in very concrete ways inspectional, faultfinding supervisory practices? Is supervision in our schools a "bugaboo" (Goldhammer, 1969, p. vii) for teachers? Are we cognizant of how we, ourselves, may indeed contribute to a sense of teacher disempowerment? Does a sense of vulnerability function to "frighten" teachers "into becoming stupid" (Henry, 1973, p. 94)? Are our schools "sane and intelligent places" (Goldhammer, 1969, p. 2)? Do we rally against high-stakes, standards-based education and other practices that simply do not make pedagogical sense? Are we committed above all else to spend the time to work with teachers, at all levels of experience, in order to improve teaching and promote student achievement? Are we willing to make such efforts a priority? Are we able to justify our work to the extent that Henry and Goldhammer would affirm our efforts? Within the standards-based era we find ourselves, and are likely to for some while, we must remain committed to instructional excellence by offering insights into ways supervision can serve to enhance teachers' dignity, impact student learning, and transform our work, and even schools themselves, so that vulnerability turns into possibilities and stagnation into transformation.

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