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UMI
INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORY PRACTICES IN A MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto

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INVESTIGATION OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISORY PRACTICES IN A MULTICULTURAL CONTEXT

Master of Arts Program, 2001

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigates perceptions of the effectiveness of supervisory practices and the impact of cultural background, experience and age on supervision, from the perspective of the Toronto Catholic District School Board’s adult ESL instructors. The study serves as a quality assurance study, and the data are used as a basis for research with the objective to broaden the knowledge of supervision within specific contexts. Survey questions explored issues such as need for support, observation visits, evaluation, feedback, instructor involvement, qualities of supervisors, communication, and methods of achieving positive change.

Data indicate that most fundamental to the thesis of this study is instructors’ active involvement. As hypothesized, supervisors who are open to collaborative processes and respect the instructor scored high. The findings also point to instructors’ cultural background as a variable worth consideration. Situational approach emerged as an approach that best responds to diverse needs in multicultural contexts.
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# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

Literature review ........................................................................................................... 3

Nature and role of supervision ....................................................................................... 4

Do we need supervision? ............................................................................................... 4

Approaches and models ............................................................................................... 5

Developmental theories ............................................................................................... 10

Dynamic nature of supervision .................................................................................... 12

The supervisor and the supervisee .............................................................................. 13

Qualities of supervisors ............................................................................................... 13

Communication ............................................................................................................ 14

Common supervisory practices ..................................................................................... 17

Traditional methods of supervision .......................................................................... 17

Formal evaluation and evaluation reports ................................................................. 20

The teachers’ perspective ............................................................................................. 23

Need for a balanced approach ..................................................................................... 25

Evaluation systems for supervisors ........................................................................... 26

Reflective teaching: a non-directive method of supervision ..................................... 27

Techniques of reflective teaching ................................................................................. 30

Other methods of professional growth ....................................................................... 31

Supervision and culture ............................................................................................. 33

Wilson’s framework ..................................................................................................... 35
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research problem, questions, and hypotheses</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research problem</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research questions</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypotheses</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of terms</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current TCDSB's adult education program system of supervision</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study: methodology, data analysis, findings and conclusions</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection procedures and methodology</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study findings and discussion</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section A: initial in-service and ongoing support</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section B: supervisory practices and qualities</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section C: instructor involvement</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section D: observation visits</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section E: evaluation</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision across culture, experience and age</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues that emerge from written feedback</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for TCDSB Adult Education Program</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations for further study</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Final remarks .................................................................................................................. 87
References ....................................................................................................................... 88
Tables .............................................................................................................................. 99
  Table 1 ........................................................................................................................... 100
  Table 2 ........................................................................................................................... 101
  Table 3 ........................................................................................................................... 102
  Table 4 ........................................................................................................................... 103
  Table 5 ........................................................................................................................... 104
  Tables 6 and 7 ............................................................................................................... 105
  Tables 8 and 9 ............................................................................................................... 106
  Table 10 ......................................................................................................................... 107
  Table 11 ......................................................................................................................... 108
  Table 12 ......................................................................................................................... 109
Figures ............................................................................................................................ 110
  Figures 1-4 .................................................................................................................... 111
  Figures 5-9 .................................................................................................................... 112
  Figures 10-14 ............................................................................................................. 113
Appendices ...................................................................................................................... 114
  Appendix A: Observation visit report ........................................................................ 115
  Appendix B: Questionnaire ....................................................................................... 117
  Appendix C: Letter to instructors .............................................................................. 122
  Appendix D: Report for instructors ........................................................................... 124
List of Tables

Table 1. Instructors with over 10 years of teaching experience
Table 2. Responses used for research question on improvement of teaching
Table 3. Responses used for research question on effective supervisory practices
Table 4. Need for support versus teaching experience
Table 5. Ranking of effective supervisory practices
Table 6. Full time supervisor or a part time supervisor/part time classroom practitioner
Table 7. Supervisors’ encouragement of self-improvement practices
Table 8. Options that best help instructors achieve their full potentials
Table 9. Most effective methods of offering feedback
Table 10. Differences in responses between NS – NNS
Table 11. Differences in responses based on where university level was obtained
Table 12. Differences in responses between instructors younger than 41 and older than 41
List of Figures

Figure 1.   Age groups
Figure 2.   ESL teaching experience
Figure 3.   University level obtained in North America or elsewhere
Figure 4.   Native speaker/Non-native speaker
Figure 5.   More desirable option: full-time or part-time administrator?
Figure 6.   How beneficial are supervisor’s visits?
Figure 7.   To what extent do supervisor’s visits lead to improved teaching practice?
Figure 8.   Optimal length of observation visits
Figure 9.   Optimal frequency of observation visits
Figure 10.  After how many visits should evaluation forms be filled out?
Figure 11.  How effective is the current TCDSB Observation Report Form?
Figure 12.  How clear are the criteria for evaluation?
Figure 13.  Optimal frequency of formal evaluation
Figure 14.  Optimal frequency of formal evaluation (all respondents vs. experienced instructors)
List of Appendixes

Appendix A: Observation visit report
Appendix B: Questionnaire
Appendix C: Letter to instructors
Appendix D: Report for instructors
Introduction

Due to the significance of supervisory decisions, their critical impact on professional lives of all involved parties, and the complex nature of the process, supervision has received considerable attention of theoreticians, researchers, administrators and classroom practitioners. Discussions in the literature of supervision on how to achieve effectiveness and design acceptable and sustainable models have become a constant. Administrators are examining different aspects of supervision, seeking practices that set the basis for growth for teachers and ensure the best possible education for students (Hart, 1984; Stronge and Tucker, 1999; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). Classroom practitioners are contributing to a better understanding of supervision by clarifying their perspective. They have pointed out the significance of developing models that assist them in reaching their full potentials in a supportive and minimally stressful environment (Clark, 1992; Ponticell and Zepeda, 1998; Whaley, 1994). Finally, theoreticians and researchers are conducting a variety of studies, with the objective to seek a better understanding supervision, investigate the impact of supervision on teaching and learning, and search for solutions to administrators’ and teachers’ concerns (Carroll, 1997; Pajak and Glickman, 1989; Waite, 1993).

The three groups involved, however, are neither pleased with the existing systems nor easily able to establish new ones, acceptable and effective from the viewpoint of all three parties. It has been repeatedly stated in the literature that the theoretical frameworks of supervision do not always match practices, and that in spite of supervisors’ good intentions, supervision is not one of the successes of education (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1992). This is partly because designing theoretical frameworks is
considerably simpler than putting them into practice (Gebhard, 1984; Gitlin and Smyth, 1990; Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 1998; Holloway, 1995; Leithwood, 1992). The issue becomes even more complex when new models are implemented in practice, or when the existing systems are altered (Alfonso, 1986; Cromwell, 1991; Gullat and Ballard, 1998; Guskey, 1998; Scriven, 1988). According to a case study by Stronge and Tucker (1999, p.339), design and implementation of new systems of supervision is “emotionally laden and politically challenging”.

Despite administrators’ enormous efforts to create and implement an ideal model of supervision, such model is hard to find. The number of variables in supervision is so high that one model that fits all does not exist (Anderson, 1989). Discussions on what constitutes effective supervision continue and the only certain response to many dilemmas of supervision is still “it depends”.
Literature Review

Supervision as a topic has been broadly covered in the contexts of elementary and secondary school literature. However, there is very little coverage of supervision in specific educational settings, such as adult ESL non-credit programs. Thus the literature review in this thesis largely leans on insights gained from the field of elementary and secondary school literature.

Literature of supervision is frequently written from either the teacher or the administrator perspective. Many textbooks and articles on supervision are one-dimensional and lack one or the other perspective (Reitzug, 1997). In order to offer an objective picture, this literature review draws on publications written from both viewpoints. Concerns generated from supervisor and supervisee perspectives are examined and given adequate thought.

Depending on the focus, two broad categories of literature emerge:

1. Literature that focuses on the process of supervision and supervisory practices, the effectiveness of different models, and aspects of supervision, the role of supervisors, and summative versus formative evaluation dilemma (Gaies and Bowers, in Richards and Nunan, 1990; McGreal, 1982; Popham, 1988; Scriven, 1988). This literature is mostly written by supervisors for supervisors. The issue of cultural background and supervision is a recent addition that has attracted attention in the last decade (Morison, 1992; Morison, Rudderman and Hughes-James, 1992).
Literature that concentrates more on the role and position of supervisees. It emphasizes the significance of participatory nature of the process, and its underlying premise is that without teacher involvement, change is not about to happen (Clark, 1992; Fullan, 1991; Gitlin and Smyth, 1990; Hargreaves and Dawe, 1990; Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992; McLaughlin and Pfeifer, 1988; Sergiovanni, 1992; Poole, 1995). Commonly discussed issues are reluctance to accept externally mandated change (Bradley and Gould, 1994; Leithwood, 1992; Reitzug, 1997; Wells et al, 1994), and communication patterns (Laud, 1998; Pajak and Glickman, 1989; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000; Waite, 1993). Proponents of this view, who consider reflective teaching as a crucial and constituent part of the process, are both supervisors and classroom practitioners.

Theoreticians focus on different issues and frequently disagree on solutions to the challenges of supervision. However, similar issues are continually highlighted as crucial. These will be described in the literature review that follows.

Nature and Role of Supervision

Do we need supervision? One occasionally comes across idealistic visions of supervision, such as Sergiovanni’s vision (1992), which lays out that if certain conditions for change, such as professionalisation of teaching, collegiality, and emphasis on the importance of community work are fulfilled, supervision will no longer be necessary. Regardless of the fact that Sergiovanni’s dream sounds like an acceptable and simple solution to supervisors’ daily headaches, his vision is a conditional one and more utopian than pragmatic. There are three reasons for the unrealistic nature of such visions. The first one is associated with human nature. Most teachers are conscientious and hardworking professionals, who strive to serve the community to the highest possible degree.
However, assuming that this applies to all teachers is a stereotype. Commitment to effective and safe education makes supervisors responsible for the few teachers whose performance does not meet the criteria or standards the community has set. Secondly, unsupervised educational institutions are not a sustainable model in present circumstances, in which accountability in education is scrutinized more than ever before (Guskey, 1998; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). Since educators and supervisors bear an enormous responsibility for education and well being of children and other students, the public demands that educational practices be assessed and validated. A complete absence of supervision is not recommended (Szpin, 1992). “The aim of schools is to provide the best service to students and community,” Scriven stated. “There is no room in that formula for any party to avoid accountability…” (1988, p. 112). Even more importantly, “the responsibility of American educators is to children, not teachers”, Popham added (1988, p. 77). His statement applies to educators in different contexts all over the world, not only the States.

The third reason refers to effective, rather than ineffective teachers. Even the best educators in the teaching profession, similar to top athletes, need some indirect or direct coaching in order to reach their full potentials. The type of supervision they need may be entirely different from the supervision of their less effective counterparts, since it can be more self-directed. However, it can guide them in their professional growth (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000; Wells, 1994).

Supervision is still a necessity, and research continues for ways of enhancing its advantages through models and approaches that work.

Approaches and models. In an attempt to resolve the dilemmas of supervision,
theoreticians offer a variety of approaches that can be categorized into groups, based on the underlying theoretical premises. This section describes several such groups.

The first group includes the theoretical work of Scriven (1988, 1996) and Popham (1988), whose approach emphasizes the distinction between the supervision that focuses on support and improvement (formative) from one that focuses on evaluation (summative). Since the two types of supervision serve different purposes, Scriven and Popham advocated that they be separated and recommended that two different supervisors conduct them. Their rationale is that it is unreasonable to expect teachers to approach formative advisers about their weaknesses or problems they face in everyday work. In most teaching contexts the two types of evaluations are done by the same person, which, according to Popham (1988, p.58), is a "grave conceptual error". As a result, most teachers associate supervision and evaluation with its summative purposes only (Guskey, 1998).

Scriven recommended that the formative evaluator be an outside consultant. Even though this may be a common-sense solution to the formative-summative dilemma, two consultants double the already high costs of supervision, which in turn questions the sustainability of this model. In many contexts funding barely covers the necessary costs, and additional funding cannot be secured. Consequently, many theoreticians pursue work on developing models of supervision in which both support and evaluation is done by the same supervisor (Clark, 1992; Gitlin and Smyth, 1990; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000).

The other groups of approaches that follow accept the notion that both types of supervision are carried out by the same person and mainly focus on the roles of supervisees and supervisors. It is how the process is carried out that matters, rather than
how many administrators carry it out. Glickman and Tamashiro described three approaches, on different end of the spectrum (1980, in Cook et al, 1987). In the directive approach, the role of supervisor is to inform, provide directions and assess; change is mandated from above. The collaborative approach perceives supervision as a problem-solving activity in which supervisee’s input is crucial, and the supervisor’s role is to guide the supervisee. The premise of the third type, non-directive supervision, is the notion that learning is a personal enterprise, and teachers have to work on their own solutions in order to improve their classroom practices. The supervisor’s role is defined as that of an active but non-judgemental listener. The fourth one, directive informational approach, in which the supervisor lists the options and asks the teacher for input, was later added to the three-category taxonomy (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 1998).

Although the four approaches sound quite unlike each other, there is a high degree of overlap in the borderline areas due to the complexity of variables they depend on. As it is not possible to draw a clear line between them, some theoreticians identified more categories. Gebhard’s taxonomy (1984) includes a range of six approaches. They are: directive, alternative, collaborative, non-directive, creative, and self-help explorative supervision. Directive, collaborative and non-directive supervision are similar to Glickman and Tamashiro’s concepts. In alternative supervision, however, the observer’s role is to suggest a variety of alternatives to what was done in the classroom. Through self-help explorative supervision teachers discover classroom solutions by means of self-exploration. The role of the teacher is that of an active participant; the role of supervisor is merely that of a facilitator. Creative supervision allows the supervisor to select, mix and match different approaches, and use a combination that best responds to the situation
and the teacher’s need for support. Due to the dynamic nature of supervision and frequent changes in educational contexts, this model may be the most effective choice in diverse contexts due to its flexibility in addressing the constantly altering needs of educators.

The common denominator of many approaches is the emphasis on active involvement of supervisees. An example of such an approach is clinical supervision, which has received more attention than any other model in the past decades. The word clinical refers to face-to-face interaction between the supervisor and the teacher, since the crucial variable of this model is the notion that active teacher involvement in the collaborative and collegial process of supervision, rather than fault finding (Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). It emphasizes the participatory nature of the process, based on mutual trust, active involvement and candid communication (van der Linde, 1998). The process consists of four steps: pre-observation conference, observation, analysis and strategy development, and post-observation conference. These steps lead the teacher and the supervisor through a collaborative process, which involves setting the objectives jointly and examining the degree to which they have been achieved in practice.

The first frameworks of clinical supervision were designed in 1969-1973, and considerable effort has been devoted in the next decades to exploring its various models and aspects (Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, 1969, in Carroll, 1997). Most of these models are based on a structured ongoing process of observations and conferencing that focus on improvement of teaching practice.

The literature generally favors approaches that emphasize active supervisee involvement. It is often identified as a crucial variable in supervision, and its absence is
considered one of the most serious impediments to its effectiveness (Carroll, 1997; Holloway, 1995; Leithwood, 1992). The models of supervision that Sergiovanni (1992) labels as expect and inspect models, in which improvement is mandated externally and the teachers' actions are scrutinized without allowing teachers to develop their own solutions, may have a highly negative impact on teacher morale. When this occurs, teachers are reluctant to be active participants in supervision. The improvement of their teaching may be hindered, which turns supervision into a counterproductive practice (Grimmet, Rostad and Blake, 1992). It is not surprising, therefore, that studies that portray supervision from the teacher's standpoint advocate models with active teacher involvement. The findings of one such anonymous, qualitative study with 114 teachers, conducted by Zepeda and Ponticell (1998), indicate that teachers did not benefit from the system of supervision in which their involvement was minimal. On the contrary, if the participatory nature of the process is emphasized, and the teachers are encouraged to think about their strengths and weaknesses, brainstorm alternative ways of doing what they are doing in class, and engage in constructive discussions of what they think can improve their teaching, the likelihood of achieving improvement is much higher. As Cohen (1987, p. 32) put it, "articulate discussion of teaching is, itself, a manifestation of certain teaching skills".

Finally, in addition to exploring approaches to supervision generated within the educational literature of leadership, one could also draw on approaches designed in the literature of non-educational managerial work, such as the approach designed by Ouchi in 1981 (in Leithwood, 1992). It defines two types of organizations, type A and type Z, that differ in the emphasis they place on the participatory role of supervisees. In type Z
organization, the power is decentralized and based on participative decisions. The framework of Ouchi’s concept is similar to some of the approaches mentioned above, and in particular, to the clinical supervision model. Due to its emphasis on active supervisee involvement, and the fact that it is easily applicable to a variety of contexts, it has gained popularity in educational contexts as well.

*Developmental theories.* It is often suggested that the amount and nature of support offered to supervisees depends on the stage of development and the professional life cycle teachers have reached. Such dependency is particularly emphasized by developmental theories of supervision.

Back in 1982, and in the context of foreign/second language teaching, Donald Freeman explained that teachers go through three stages in their professional development. During these three stages the prominent questions that teachers ask themselves are “What do I teach?”, “How do I teach what I teach?” and “Why do I teach the way I teach?”. According to Freeman, the need for and the structure of supervision alters with each of these questions and each new stage. Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982) also distinguish three stages. However, their stages refer to teacher effectiveness and sense of success on the job rather than teachers’ immediate focus in their everyday work. The three stages are labelled as stagnation, confusion and integration, and the need for supervision changes as the teachers’ development progresses from stage to stage. In all developmental theories the most experienced group of teachers is the least in need of support. Consequently, supervisor can select the type of supervision according to the stage of development the teacher has reached (Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 1998; Holloway, 1995; Schechtman and Wirtzberger, 1999).
The varying need for supervisory attention has also attracted the attention of McGreal (1982), who suggests that there are three groups of teachers, rather than three stages of development. The first, “short form group”, is the group that requires least attention, since their effectiveness has been confirmed, and they display a great deal of autonomy in their performance. The second group, “long form group” are teachers who need more support and supervision than the first group due to various reasons: lack of experience, inadequate training, lack of materials, etc. The last group consists of 4 percent of teachers who may not be well suited for the teaching profession, for whom extensive documentation may be necessary, and who eventually may have to be asked to pursue their careers in the field other than education.

The strength of many developmental theories lies in the fact that they offer guidance to supervisors on how to approach different groups of teachers, which may be particularly helpful to novices in the field. Their pitfall is the premise of sameness – the underlying notion that all teachers require the same support and type of supervision when they reach a certain stage of development or if they belong to a certain group. I feel that this premise is somewhat one-dimensional and limiting; at any given stage of development the attention teachers should be allotted differs from teacher to teacher. It is not only dependent on the stage of their development, but also on other variables such as ability, talent and skills. To some extent, teacher learning, similar to student learning, can be viewed through the Vygotskian prism of the Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD (Vygotski, 1978). The learning curve is different for each teacher depending on his or her abilities and talents, which determine how broad their ZPD’s are. Rather than approaching teachers as a group that has reached a certain stage of development, and has
the same needs, I see the need for supervisors to approach every case individually and determine the type and amount of support that corresponds with their ZPD's. In order for supervisors' support to be meaningful, their expectations should fall within the zone of teacher's intellectual make-up. Another important variable is the situation-specific nature of teacher ability (Scriven, 1988), closely related to assignment and context appropriateness. Teachers perform better in some assignments than in others, depending on their abilities, personalities, motivation and preferences. Apart from determining the stage they have reached and their ZPD's, I feel that supervisors also need to determine to what extent assignment appropriateness limits or enhances their abilities. All these arguments support the premise that only situational approaches can address the varying needs of teachers.

In that sense, Gardiner's (1989) notion of supervisory relationships, explained in the context of pre-service teachers and based on similar principles, is more pragmatic than most developmental theories. It is based on two paradigms. In the traditional paradigm, development follows pre-set rules and procedures, which are the same for everyone involved. In the alternative paradigm, which relies on the fact that teachers learn in different ways at different times from different administrators, supervision has to be adjusted to teachers' individual needs. Gardiner's notion is easily applicable to the context of supervision of teachers who are already in the profession.

**Dynamic nature of supervision.** One more argument supports the importance of situational approaches. Educational organizations are places that constantly undergo modifications in terms of the staff, locations, policies, and methodologies (Stronge and Tucker, 1999). Due to these constant changes, needs for supervision alter with each new
generation of students and teachers. Most systems of supervision do not respond to these changing needs. Once the systems are established, they are just maintained, and it is an end in itself. The rationale for maintaining the status quo is simple: supervisory systems are costly, and modifications or experiments can only add to that cost. Lawton et al. (1988) argue that supervisory systems should constantly be assessed, updated and redesigned so that they fully respond to the dynamic nature of education. We need to explore ways of ensuring that supervisory systems constantly adapt in order to address the altering needs of supervisors, supervisees, and education.

The Supervisor and the Supervisee

Qualities of supervisors. As supervisors wear different hats and assume a variety of roles, they must be people of diverse abilities. The literature identifies a range of qualities and skills that effective supervisors need to possess, such as personal qualities, and solid communication, interpersonal, listening, and leadership skills (Chamberlin, 2000; Getz, 1999). Personal qualities identified through research are a positive attitude, friendliness, flexibility, inquisitiveness, empathy, and openness to change (Cook et al, 1987; Gebhard, 1984; Williams et al, 1993). Teachers who receive sympathetic supervision from supervisors with solid interpersonal skills are more effective, more inclined to remain in the profession, and more likely to experience job satisfaction (Anderson, 1989; Whaley, 1994). The literature also states that supervisors need to possess expertise - a solid knowledge of the subject matter – coupled with the knowledge of the theory and practice of supervision, and should be able to apply that knowledge in practice (Scriven, 1988).
The nature of supervisory practices is enormously complex and demanding. Apart from demonstrating positive personal qualities and expertise, supervisors need to be able to create a positive supervision environment. Frequent reference in literature is made to the significance of creating such an environment through collegiality and trust in the supervisor-supervisee relationship (Carroll, 1997). The effectiveness of this relationship, and consequently, of supervisory practices, is dependent upon the match between the two personalities and the personal chemistry that develops between them (Williams et al, 1993). In the event the match is positive, it results in a bond created between the supervisor and the supervisee. Bordin (1983, in Ladany, 1999) claims that if this bond is a strong and emotional one, based on respect, care, and trust, and on clearly defined goals established through collaborative processes, it ensures an effective partnership. A study conducted by Chamberlin (2000) proved that teachers perceived supervisor verbal and non-verbal behaviors of affiliation more trustworthy than those of dominance. Questions, suppressed judgements, gesturing, smiling, sustained eye-contact, head nodding, close distance, and direct body orientation imply a higher degree of trust in supervision, and are crucial in approaches that encourage reflectiveness.

The strongest and most sophisticated type of supervisor-supervisee bond is similar to the concept of charisma, in which leaders have a highly positive and meaningful impact on their supervisees. Sergiovanni (1991) refers to cases of leadership in which the supervisor's charisma touches the teachers so powerfully that it inspires and motivates them to perform beyond expectations. A similar concept is the "mothering" role that many mature and experienced supervisors take, particularly when interacting with novice or newly assigned teachers (Waite, 1990).
Communication. Many theoreticians point to the powerful role of communication in supervision and its impact on the quality of supervisor-supervisee relationship (Laud, 1998; Waite, 1993; Whaley, 1994). The type of communication used by supervisors in their interaction with supervisees usually derives from the type of approach to supervision used in an educational organization. It ranges from traditional, vertical communication, in which supervisor dominates, to level communication, where supervisor and supervisee talk time and input are balanced. Rakes and Cox’s model (1994) that leans toward vertical communication, and is based on using persuasion to convince supervisees that certain goals should be accomplished. The relationship these authors advocate is a supervisor-subordinate relationship; the compliance-gaining strategies they use are, among other ones, repetition and friendly reasoning. Hargreaves and Dawe’s approach (1990) is on the other end of the spectrum. They assert that unless supervisors and supervisees function as equals and establish trust and collegiality, communication is not effective, and growth from supervision does not occur. Taking into consideration the importance of teacher input in supervision, it is hard to accept the notion that teachers would willingly alter their behaviors if vertical communication were the dominant and only means of communication. The literature points out that in such models communication may be hampered by “fixed and negative supervisors’ agendas” (Waite, 1993, p. 697).

Very few studies explore teachers’ views related to the type of communication they prefer. One, mentioned in Cook et al (1987), tested the models that rest on principles described by Hargreaves and Dawe (1990). The study confirmed that supervisees prefer level to vertical talk, as it allows for more active participation and increases teacher input.
In order to maximize efficiency of their communication, supervisors need to turn vertical into level talk and shift the patterns toward collaborative styles of supervision (Cook et al., 1987). This can be achieved through systematic training that focuses on improving the effectiveness of supervisors' communication patterns. It includes practice in communication techniques with the emphasis on awareness of high-risk responses and common communication spoilers and barriers (Cromwell, 1991; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). Apart from training in communication, reflection on one's practices and analysis of transcripts may also help improve the effectiveness of communication (Laud, 1998). As this practice enables supervisors to self-evaluate the style and content of their communication, Pajak and Glickman (1989) and Waite (1990) advocate ethnography of supervision that assists the administrators to see their practices more clearly. As most supervisees do not heed directives, effective communicative patterns are collaborative ones during which administrators do not approach the process as resources of knowledge and expertise (Laud, 1998). The key to success in communication is in constructive dialogical relations and in true conversations, during which no one wins the argument and the participants work together to better understand the issues and find solutions. This model is referred to as an educative model of supervision that leads to empowerment (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990). Training can help supervisors avoid the futile type of communication based on advice and directives.

Among components of communication commonly listed as crucial to effective supervision are supervisors' listening skills. Literature emphasizes that supervisors should not silence the teachers, but instead act as active listeners, willing to hear what supervisees say during consultations (Laud, 1998; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). In order to
become active listeners, they need to observe several principles important for developing effective listening skills:

- listening with an open mind, without preconceived ideas about what the supervisee is probably going to say,
- demonstrating interest and warmth through facial expression and questions,
- paraphrasing what the supervisee is saying,
- asking for clarification, if necessary, and
- summarizing content and feelings (Cook et al., 1987).

When these practices become a constituent part of consultations, the channels of communication between the two parties become open and candid and supervisors are more likely to achieve the objectives of communication with supervisees (Whaley, 1994).

**Common Supervisory Practices**

*Traditional methods of supervision.* Most educational contexts have a system of supervision in place where an observation visit is followed by a formal evaluation through performance appraisal or a report. This is still the most common supervisory practice carried out to achieve a number of objectives, set by the educational institution. As such, it is a constituent element of most educational performance appraisal systems.

The scenario described by Gitlin and Smyth (1990) is a common observation visit scenario: the supervisor observes the teacher from one to several times a year with the objective to gather the data, provide support, make judgements about the performance
and/or file a report, using a rating scale or a descriptive type of observation report form. The data are usually discussed with the teacher through a post-observation conference. In some instances, a pre-observation consultation is held. It is a common element in many, but not all settings. The findings of a survey carried out by Lawton et al. (in Hickcox et al., 1988) suggest that 36% of the surveyed teachers in Ontario stated that pre-evaluation conference, which on average lasted for twenty minutes, was part of their evaluation, and many among them emphasized the importance and positive impact of such a conference.

Most theoreticians concur with the idea that supervisors should visit the teachers regularly (Gebhard, 1984; Gullatt and Ballard, 1998; Sullivan and Zirkel, 1999). However, they also suggest that supervision should not imply the notion of administrators only checking up on their subordinates, but rather, of visiting teachers and demonstrating genuine interest in what they are doing, the methodology they are using, the challenges they are facing, and the specifics of their circumstances (Whaley 1994). Observation visits have a purpose, depending on the priorities of the educational context. If the purpose is positive educational change, supervisors’ visits usually focus on diagnosing problematic areas in teaching and remedying them (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990; Gullatt and Ballard, 1998). Literature also offers other perspectives: Hart (1987) argues that what matters most in education is the least observable variable, the quantity of learning. Therefore, observation visits should focus on determining how much learning takes place, and the overall goal of supervision should be student learning.

An important variable in classroom observation is related to how supervisors act in the classroom during their visits. According to Grimmet, Rostad and Blake (1992, p.195), effective supervisors keep a low-key profile and function like “well-worn shoes
(not noticed when entering the room, but leaving a sense of purpose)". However, regardless of how hard supervisors try to maintain a low-key presence in the classroom, their presence always alters the situation. To observe a class means "to observe a class being observed" (Hart, 1987, p.16). Neither students nor the teacher act the same way they do as during a school day when there are no visitors in their classrooms. Another not very commonly mentioned variable may also alter the atmosphere. A study conducted by Chamberlin (2000) proved that supervisor's body language during the visits plays a critical role during observation visits.

The literature also includes qualitative studies with teachers' comments related to the way their supervisors act during visits (Ponticell and Zepeda, 1998). Even though some of the teachers' comments may be subjective, they bring to the supervisors' attention the impact of their practices, which may encourage them to minimize the potentially stressful nature of visits by conducting self-analysis of their practices. The scarce literature that exists on the topic of self-study of supervision suggests that supervisors should systematically examine their own practices during visits and reflect upon their actions (Sergiovanni, 1985; Waite, 1990). Effective feedback techniques can be taught and acquired. Sullivan and Glanz (2000) suggest a series of practice activities for supervisors conducted with the objective to reflect on each of the three approaches to feedback (directive informational, non-directive and collaborative) and to adopt the type of approach that best addresses the situation and the need of the teacher.

Post-evaluation conferences are a common occurrence during observation visits, and studies confirm that teachers feel comfortable about them (Chamberlin, 2000; Hickcox et al, 1988). Many theoreticians consider post – observation conferences a
mandatory part of the process, as they provide teachers with opportunities to discuss the issues and present their perspectives (Szpin, 1992). An important part of these conferences is feedback on teacher’s performance. A survey on supervision of more than 400 full-time faculty in intensive English programs throughout the United States was conducted by Rindler of Boston University with the objective to identify teachers’ expectations related to the type of feedback and the qualities of the supervisor who provides it. Two factors emerged from the survey findings. “Feedback that was detailed, informed and insightful was appreciated and received more positively; the more credible, trusted and knowledgeable the evaluator, the more persuasive and useful the observed teacher felt the feedback to be” (cited in Nikolic and Cabaj, 2000, p. 234). A potential pitfall of post-observation conferences is that they may turn into a ritual and thus become meaningless if the supervisors use the same questions after each visit (Waite, 1990). The two commonly repeated questions are, “What went well?”, or “What would you do differently?” Additional issues emerged from the findings of a focus group facilitated by Baldwin in Beirut. The teachers expressed a wish to be observed by the same person at least four times a year; they felt the observer should be a practitioner with considerable experience. In addition, they asked for an option to request another supervisor if they did not feel comfortable with the existing one. They also indicated that the conference should be preceded by a short consultation and followed up by a longer one (cited in Nikolic and Cabaj, 2000).

*Formal evaluation and evaluation reports.* Observation visits may be followed by performance appraisal reports. Although both parties should have the same understanding of the purpose of formal evaluation and the criteria for it, this is not always the case,
which results in a mismatch between the teachers' and supervisors' perception. It can be attributed to the fact that the intended objective of performance appraisal is not always clearly stipulated. It is suggested that the objective should be determined collaboratively during pre-observation consultation (Szpin, 1992, p. 15). In addition, for a model of supervision and evaluation to be viable, the participants need to know that the performance criteria have a clear rationale (Stronge and Tucker, 1999), as it ensures that they accept the validity of the system. The findings of the survey mentioned in Lawton et al. (cited in Hickcox et al, 1988) confirm that there was "reasonable congruence between the criteria teachers would like to see used and those they perceived as actually used." (p. 23). It is important that the criteria for evaluation be developed within the teaching context. If they are generated externally, they may not be relevant for the teaching circumstances in the institution where they are used (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990).

Many evaluation systems list a high number of criteria for evaluation, which may make the supervisees' foci too broad. Hickcox et al (1988) mention up to thirty criteria, and the same applies to Scriven's (1988) duty-based approach, which relies on a lengthy list of professional duties that teachers regularly have to perform and are expected to carry out effectively. Similarly, the Florida Performance Management System lists 121 effective teacher behaviors (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990). While it is important to have clearly defined criteria and standards for effective performance, administrators have to be careful not to overwhelm their teachers. In the event the lists are lengthy, teachers need to be aware that they will work on their mastery for years to come. The fact that the expectations are unrealistically high may be a turn-off for many and can actually jeopardize the effectiveness of the system. My experience is that novice teachers, in
particular, feel overwhelmed if expected to excel at a whole list of duties. It is crucial that the supervisors focus teachers' thinking on one or two areas of teaching at a time, and assist them in setting priorities. Literature states that this does not always seem to be the case in practice (Bradley and Gould, 1994). In order to avoid misunderstanding, teachers need to come to grips with the mechanics of the system and understand the purpose of evaluation. Most teachers perceive evaluation as a mechanism used for hiring and firing purposes, rather than as a means of bringing about positive change. One can argue that if improvement of the teaching practices is the main objective of performance appraisals at all levels, plans for improvement and follow-ups should be a constituent part the process. Only 14 percent of teachers in the already mentioned study (In Hickcox et al, 1988) indicated that the evaluation report resulted in a plan of any kind, or that, in the event the plan was created, it was not monitored later. Findings like these confirm concerns expressed by some teachers that evaluation is done only to comply with the policy, or for purposes other than achieving positive change. A qualitative study carried out by Zepeda and Ponticell (1998) with 114 elementary and secondary school teachers in Oklahoma and Texas lists a high number of responses confirming that this is so. "I've had great evaluations. I have gotten high points or all the boxes checked in and wonderful comments on my abilities," one of the participants states. "But I have never had an experience where I felt any valuable professional growth occurred" (p. 7).

Effective teacher behavior in one context may be considered less effective under different circumstances, and as a result, many officially created evaluation systems fail the validity test (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990). In order to prevent this from happening, Scriven recommends (1988) that supervisors identify the tasks that teachers perform in a
particular context, and then use multiple measures to estimate the extent to which the tasks have been carried out effectively. His duties-based approach focuses on teacher merit in four dimensions: the quality of the content of material and learning, the quantity of learning, teacher's professionalism and ethics. Even though it offers a carefully thought through and effective solution to the evaluation aspect of supervision, active teacher involvement could be given more attention.

Despite the time-consuming and high cost aspect of establishing and maintaining the process of formal evaluation, evaluation reports are rarely used once they have been filed, which means that the real purpose of evaluation reports is questionable. Most school board policies stipulate improvement as the purpose of evaluation, but they rarely specify how improvement is going to be measured over extended periods of time (Lawton et al., in Hickcox et al, 1988).

An additional important issue related to performance appraisal, already elaborated on in this Literature Review, is the fact that evaluation is commonly conducted by the same person who offers support, which is a conceptual error that causes a conflict between the roles of supervisor the support person, and supervisor the evaluator (Carroll, 1997; Popham, 1988; Scriven, 1996).

*The teachers' perspective.* The notion that one is being observed and evaluated can provide a variety of experiences for supervisees. Even though they should be a positive, learning experience, in reality they are often perceived as stressful, especially by novice teachers. In the worst-case scenarios, evaluation generates judgements that may damage careers, cause debilitating stress or affect the teachers’ stability and balance.
They may also turn students into victims of teacher’s frustration. Grimmet, Rostad and Blake (1992) explain that “powerless people have a tendency to become despotic toward their underlings. When teachers experience these feelings, their students become the innocent recipients of such defensive behavior.” (p. 186). Even though it is suggested in the literature that supervisors keep a low-key profile during visits, it seems that some supervisors take a different approach and make students in class well aware of the altered atmosphere. In extreme cases, their presence poses a burden for everyone in class.

The anonymous qualitative study conducted by Zepeda and Ponticell (1998), presents positive and negative aspects of supervision outlined by 114 teachers. The participants were asked to describe supervision at its best and its worst. Study findings reveal a variety of thought-provoking responses, pointing to individual cases of teachers who were treated unfairly during the process of observation visits or evaluation. A teacher noted that, “[The principal] went out of his way to draw attention to himself in such a way that it was almost impossible to keep students on task. He wanted to make sure that everyone knew he was in observing me.” (Ponticell and Zepeda, 1998, p.10). Another respondent described the principal who created an extremely stressful atmosphere by following the teacher around as she directed the choir, commenting what she was doing, and making corrections. The surveyed teachers recommend that supervisors do all they can to minimize the stress aspect of evaluations. In order to do so, they should analyze their actions the same way teachers analyze how they act and communicate with their students. An additional complaint indicates that consultations and evaluations are often conducted with no prior discussion with the teacher on what will be taught and how. In many cases no information is gathered on the difficulties the
teachers may be experiencing, and consequently, evaluators enter the classroom with little sense of classroom’s history (Carroll, 1997).

Other commonly mentioned issues are associated with the evaluation tools. According to teachers, these should be neutral, rather than designed in a pro-administrator fashion (Scriven, 1988); evaluation should not be perceived as a way to gather data on ineffective teacher behaviors. It is recommended that supervisors gather data and offer feedback on both positive and negative behaviors (McGreal 1983, in Carroll, 1997). This may secure higher teacher motivation for evaluation, and ensure that fear is not the only motivator. In addition, evaluation is commonly seen as a cliché: teachers feel that the process of filling out a form is a routine they have to participate in according to well-established frameworks that bring in very little or no positive impact, and may never be used after the evaluation (Zepeda and Ponticell, 1998).

Need for a balanced approach. An objective image of supervision can be created only if the two viewpoints: the teachers’ perspective, in which the authors lament the position of teachers (Reitzug, 1997; Ponticell and Zepeda, 1998), and the supervisors’ perspective, which depicts teachers as patients in need of care (Bradley and Gould, 1994) are juxtaposed, and the concerns of both parties analyzed and taken into account. Many current models of supervision may be stressful for practitioners, and there is an agreement in the literature that the stressful aspect of the process should be eliminated or minimized (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Cook et al, 1987; Cromwell, 1991; Getz, 1999). On the other hand, the process of teacher supervision has been established in order to ensure that the children, adolescents and adult students are provided with solid and safe education, and one should take into account the administrators’, students’ and
parents’ perspective. Supervision protects them from exposure to very few ineffective
teachers whose performance does not comply with standards of the teaching profession,
or, in the worst-case scenarios, jeopardizes students’ well being. Theoreticians emphasize
that one of the roles of supervisors is to ensure that practitioners who are not suited for
the profession, are incompetent, or not willing to work on their growth and improve their
practices, pursue avenues other than education (Szpin, 1992). Even though the number of
such educators is extremely low, and this statement may sound unfair to numerous highly
committed and respectable members of the profession, the responsibility of the
community is primarily for children and students (Popham, 1988). They should always be
the starting point of all discussions on supervision.

What is necessary is a balanced approach. Education needs a system of
supervision that enables the administrators to act in extreme cases, but at the same time
treats the majority of individuals in the profession - a vast army of teachers who
demonstrate professional conduct and exemplary commitment to their profession - with
due respect.

_Evaluation systems for supervisors._ If supervision and evaluation are necessary
for teachers, and reflection is beneficial for classroom practitioners, supervisors should be
exposed to these processes in the same manner as the teachers are (Gardiner, 1989,
Sergiovanni, 1992). Accountability should be expected from both teachers and
supervisors (Scriven, 1988), and a model of supervision, which does not have a sound
system of evaluation for supervisors, is not ethically correct (Grimmet, Rostad and Blake,
1992). However, the reality is that supervisors’ performance is rarely evaluated the way
teachers’ performance is evaluated.
Closely tied to the issue of evaluation of supervisors is the issue of their professional development and training. Theoreticians point to the insufficient opportunities for formal training for supervisors, lack of effective training programs, and lack of meaningful continuous professional development (Getz, 1999; Scriven, 1988). Training programs for supervisors are a must, according to Popham, who developed the J-BTE evaluation system in California (1988). He claims that such programs should be established in all educational institutions to ensure meaningful formal training for evaluators. The need for training and constant reassessment of the training programs has also been confirmed as a means of ensuring that supervisors provide support based on social and educational development (Shechtman and Wirzberger, 1999).

Reflective Teaching: A Non-Directive Method of Supervision

As mentioned earlier, effective model of supervision is one that generates positive permanent change. It has been stated in the literature that genuine change rarely occurs as a result of supervisory visits or formal evaluation, despite supervisors’ best intentions (Grimmet, Rostad, and Ford, 1992; Zepeda and Ponticell, 1998). It occurs when teachers’ professional cultures reach a stage in which educators assume responsibility to themselves and their profession, and as a result, supervision emerges from within them (Alfonso, 1982; Sergiovanni, 1992; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). It is not the supervision imposed from outside, but rather, supervision generated from within, and monitored by teachers themselves.

If the assumption, that committed teachers can accomplish far more on their own than supervisors can force them to accomplish is on target, creating conditions for reflective teaching should be one of the priorities of supervision. Systematic work on
self-evaluation should be considered an ally of supervision (Begley et al, 1995), as reflection increases opportunities for improvement with minimal supervisory involvement, and lowers the need for formal evaluation.

The literature on reflective teaching is substantial, particularly literature published in the last decade, and it is easy to understand the numerous reasons for this increased interest in reflective teaching by both teachers and supervisors (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001; Clark, 1992; Wells, 1994). By far, opportunities for meaningful professional growth, and for altering ineffective teacher behaviors are the most commonly heard ones. Self-assessment is a more powerful means of achieving change than any other method of professional growth or supervision. Neither evaluation by supervisors nor in-service programs have been found to have positive lasting effect on teacher behaviors. It is through reflective processes, similar to scientists’ discoveries, that teachers learn about their teaching, and accomplish improvement (Wright, 1998). Teachers self-evaluate voluntarily, which ensures that they are motivated to change, and this change may be permanent (Freeman, 1998; Wells, 1994).

Another reason for the increased interest in reflective teaching is a loud public outcry for accountability in education on the North American continent. It is bringing teachers under increased pressure to continually question and examine their daily work, and compelling supervisors and theorists to encourage this form of professional growth (Andersen, 1989; Guskey, 1998). It is important that they do so, as the public frequently relates the issue of teacher accountability to a variable whose effectiveness may be improved through reflective teaching: student learning. Hart (1987) argues that the objective of working on improvement of one’s practices should be student learning, and
if supervisors perceive improvement of learning as the ultimate goal of supervision, reflective teaching should be highly encouraged. It is through reflective teaching, that teachers adjust their methods to ensure that teaching does result in learning (Huberman, 1991).

Positive change and improvement of teaching practices are complex notions that incorporate several variables: willingness to reflect on one’s practice, awareness, and motivation to change or take action as a follow-up to reflection (McLaughlin and Pfeifer, 1988). It can be convincingly argued that the teachers who are willing to explore their actions through self-evaluation, are also motivated enough to alter their practices where necessary. However, willingness is not enough - teachers also need to be aware of the practices they need to alter, since they can correct only those ineffective behaviors they are cognizant of (Freeman, 1988; Wright, 1998).

The question that emerges here is how most teachers actually become aware of the practices that need to be altered, improve them and achieve mastery in teaching. Huberman’s discussion of findings of a study carried out in Switzerland among 160 teachers offers a response to this query (1992). The objective of his study was to define the relationship of teachers’ professional life cycles and the degree to which they felt they have achieved instructional mastery. The findings indicate that most teachers do not reach instructional mastery through work with supervisors, but rather, through little experiments, trial-and-error technique, personal research, and work with small groups of colleagues. Therefore, Huberman concludes that the best scenario for satisfactory career development and instructional improvement is an alternative to supervision rather than a model of supervision, which he calls a “craft model”. Teachers are artisans who work on
their own improvement through trial-and-error techniques, or with a small group of colleagues, in informal and idiosyncratic ways. The role of supervisors is to create conditions which foster collaboration and experimentation within educational institutions.

However, despite the agreement on all benefits of reflective teaching, it is not used in practice as much as it could be. As proven by a study described by Lawton et al. (in Hickcox et al, 1988), self-evaluation was not commonly used as a component of teacher evaluation, even though supervisory staff felt it should be used to a considerably larger extent. There has been a subtle shift towards promoting reflective practices in the past several years, but supervisors still need to place more emphasis on encouraging their supervisees to embrace reflective practices with more enthusiasm (Guskey, 1998).

*Techniques of reflective teaching.* There is a strong indication in the literature that methods of reflective teaching, such as self-monitoring, journals, action research, video/audio self-evaluation, peer evaluation, self-help or teacher study groups, mentoring, coaching, team teaching, and systematic reflection on action are beneficial for both teachers and supervisors (Haertel, 1993; Morgan, 2000; Wright, 1998). All these methods incorporate several components: awareness raising, observation, systematic analysis, experimenting with teaching methods, and determining to what extent the practices have been improved. The end results can be so powerful that they can turn teachers into expert practitioners (Byra, 1994, in Wright, 1998; Cook et al, 1987; Nikolic and Cabaj, 2000; Nunan and Lamb, 1996). As the literature states, teaching can improve only to the extent that teachers themselves act as experts and struggle to achieve mastery; the supervisor’s role should, therefore, be turned into that of a facilitator who offers encouragement and support to teachers willing to self-evaluate and work on their own
(Gebhard, 1984; Prabhu, 1992). The supervisee is the one who can grow professionally and change; the supervisor is the one who should create conditions to facilitate that growth.

*Other methods of professional growth.* Literature also lists peer evaluation and self-help groups as effective methods of accomplishing positive change (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001; Hart, 1984), and as forms of professional development that are usually adopted with minimal resistance. When teachers voluntarily work on their improvement, and do it with the colleagues they feel comfortable with, their growth is self-directed and it is more likely to be successful. Their professional development is custom-tailored and meets the specifics of their needs (Clark, 1992). Leithwood (1992) associates self-help groups with supervision through his notion of transformational leadership. The concept functions through a collaborative culture in which teachers work together through goal setting. Teacher development is enhanced by facilitating group problem solving and by encouraging teachers to adopt objectives for future development. Grimmet, Rostad and Blake’s (1992) vision of effective supervision is also one that fosters transformation through reflection and self-help groups. The supervisor’s role is to assist teachers in organizing the groups by creating schedules and then participating in as many groups as they can. The purpose of these meetings is to generate solutions to immediate, local classroom problems. Teacher development is fostered within a culture of interdependent collegiality, and teachers can reflectively transform the knowledge of their teaching and their classroom experience. In order for such vision of supervision to materialize, teaching has to be treated as collective rather than individual practice, and supervision must rest on professional and moral values (Sergiovanni, 1992).
There are claims in the literature that the traditional methods of professional development such as “one-shot workshops and pre-packaged seminars … are insufficient for facilitating teacher collaboration” (Clair, 1998, p. 466). On the contrary, self-help, study groups and peer work or evaluation are described as promising methods of growth. Bailey, Curtis and Nunan (2001), three important voices of the theory of TESL, advocate specific forms of peer work: mentoring, in which an experienced teacher works with a less experienced/able teacher, coaching, where the individuals involved work together in an equal power relationship, and team teaching, which they compare with learning how to dance, and from each other. The processes involve teams of two or more teachers who are not in a supervisory relationship, working on improvement of their teaching and growth. In addition to creating opportunities for peer work, Murphy (2000) elaborates on benefits of creating access structures for teacher development such as risk logs, mini conferences, and publications for teachers to write in, which all assist teachers in becoming contributing and more effective professionals.

In order to see themselves as others see them, teachers are often encouraged to tape themselves. Video self-evaluation is frequently labelled in the literature as the most objective method of reflection and as such is highly advocated in the literature (Haertel, 1993; Morgan, 2000; Richards, 1990; Wright, 1998). If followed by a systematic and focused viewing and analysis of transcripts, it offers a realistic image of one’s practice and provides teachers with valuable sources of data. This technique differs from methods of supervision that involve human observers in that it provides factual data, without any judgements, and leaves the judgment role to the teachers themselves (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001).
Another commonly mentioned form of non-directive supervision, and a means of achieving positive change is professional development (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001). Initiated or organized by supervisors with the overall goal to improve classroom practices, it can take a variety of goal-driven activities, such as participation in conferences and workshops, involvement in courses, reading professional publications, or contribution through presentations or publications. It is emphasized in the literature that supervisors too often assume that teacher participation in professional development can be taken for granted. In reality, many teachers reject or reluctantly accept professional development initiatives that come from supervisory teams as something that is imposed onto them (Clark, 1992). In order to be accepted, professional development initiatives should come from classroom practitioners. In that sense, practitioner-expert models of professional development with "the self as source" (Bailey, Curtis, and Nunan, 2001, p. 1), based on teachers’ interests, proposals, and active participation, addresses that issue by shifting the onus on classroom practitioners. The role of supervisors is to turn the professional development opportunities into meaningful practice by examining whether they make a difference in teaching and assists educators in reaching high standards. They also need to verify to what extent professional development for teachers makes a difference in the other important: student learning (Guskey, 1998).

Supervision and Culture

An old Yiddish proverb, that states that we are all made of the same dough, but not baked in the same oven, implies that places and people we grow up with profoundly influence the way we think and act. Consequently, they may influence the way we act as teachers, supervisees, and supervisors, and the way we perceive supervision. This notion,
confirmed in the literature of supervision through recognition of the need for multicultural perspective in practice, is one of the most important contributions of recent literature on supervision (Fong, 1994). The need for multicultural perspective is ignored in most contexts, and as a result, the bias that all teachers act and react in the same manner, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, applies to all supervisees (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992). Recent literature also isolates race as an important factor and suggests that it has an impact on a number of variables in supervision. In particular, it influences the expectations related to empathy, respect and congruence, as well as the supervisee's perception of preferences (Leong and Wagner, 1992, cited in Fong, 1994). As all supervisory practices incorporate multicultural and racial issues to a lesser or larger extent, supervisors need to be proficient in multicultural competencies (Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis, 1992).

These contributions to the literature are particularly salient in the spectrum of the changing teacher population. The end of the twentieth century has witnessed a trend of increasingly diversified cultural backgrounds of teacher population on the North American continent, and that trend is expected to continue. Hodgkinson (1992, cited in Fong, 1994) predicts that by the year 2010 twelve of the most populous American states will have a very significant minority population. If the same prediction is translated into the Canadian context, especially in light of the current immigration trends and numbers, one can assume that the number of teachers - non-native speakers of English in Canada - will then be notably higher than today. This is becoming a variable worth consideration in supervision, since teachers-non-native speakers usually bring along different cultural beliefs and values, which in turn, may influence their preferences of supervision,
communication, style and effectiveness. Unfortunately, there is not enough research or empirical knowledge to support these assumptions, regardless of the fact that it would be worthwhile to investigate them further. My decision to investigate the impact of cultural background on the NNSs' perceptions of supervision effectiveness in this study was driven by an observation in my daily work related to a group of teachers of the same ethnic background, who reacted to supervision differently than other ethnic groups.

Wilson's framework. There is not enough research on cultural background and supervision. However, some attention has been allotted to the issue in recent educational literature, and substantial attention in non-educational literature (Morrison, 1992; Morrison, Ruderman and Hughes-James, 1992; Trompenaars, 1993). It is geared toward promoting the understanding of various issues, which resulted in frameworks that help supervisors learn more about the culturally conditioned views of workplace-related issues. One such fairly systematic framework was designed in 1996 by Wilson et al at the Center for Creative Leadership in Greensborough, North Carolina. Applicable to any multicultural working environment, it was designed with the objective to empower supervisors with knowledge on how to manage effectively across cultures. The group of authors from Greensborough drew on research in anthropology, psychology and international business management in order to bring to supervisors' attention the issues that may emerge within multicultural working environments. The authors argue that cultural differences among employees have a significant impact on supervision, and that due to the beliefs and upbringing, supervisees do not respond to supervisory practices in the same manner. In order to develop a better understanding of why this is happening, supervisors need to have a solid understanding of the cultural values of their supervisees.
Wilson's framework proposes seven dimensions through which culture surfaces. It identifies behaviors that characterize their extreme sides. The dimensions are related to whether the employees:

- belong to the individualist or collectivist cultures
- achieve their goals in a tough or tender manner
- recognize the authority as their equal or unequal
- accept ambiguity and change in a dynamic way, or have difficulty accepting them
- acquire knowledge in an active or reflective fashion
- consider time scarce or plentiful
- strive for mastery over nature or for harmony with nature

Wilson et al (1996) argue that these seven dimensions can assist supervisors in identifying their own and supervisees' preferences in three domains of human behavior: relating to others, accomplishing work and responding to change. Several of Wilson's examples illustrate those preferences. People willingly accept large inequalities between individuals of different power and status in some cultures, manifested in different domains of life. Interaction is one of them. The subordinates act as patient listeners who tolerantly wait for their turns, and long pauses are quite common during the interaction. On the contrary, participants in conversation in other cultures feel uncomfortable about silence, and expect to participate in discussions. Another example illustrates the differences in status. In some cultures individuals of high status enjoy privileges that are
automatically granted to them in many different aspects of life. Elsewhere, the differences are minimized, privileges downplayed, and people of different status considered close to equal or equal. This refers to the use of first name when addressing the supervisor, unthinkable in many cultures and widely accepted in others, or the manner in which the supervisee interacts with the supervisor. In addition, in some cultures active participation in manual labor in household chores by well-placed supervisors is the norm, which would be unacceptable elsewhere. Differences can also be tracked down in the way supervisees perceive change and ambiguity. While people in some cultures are dynamic, easily adapt from position to position and are always prepared to move along or from one place of living to another, in still others people react the opposite way. They become nervous and anxious when encountering change and usually prefer the status quo. Numerous such examples can be found in the literature.

Wilson et al. hypothesize that supervisors' effectiveness in multicultural environments may be dependent on their ability to see situations from multiple points of view. Their argument is that “working together effectively in business situations requires real cultural and personal insight” (1996, p. 30). The differences may not surface during social interactions with employees from different cultures, but they usually surface during supervisory practices, and supervisors have to be aware of the possible challenges. An example of such a challenge is related to post-observation conference, which may be influenced by the communication patterns developed within and adopted by one’s culture (Waite, 1990). In collectivist cultures, the role of supervisor is the role of an expert who possesses wisdom and demonstrates and displays it, while the subordinate watches, listens and learns. In the culture of Athapaskans of Alberta, people who possess wisdom
usually share that knowledge with the less experienced members of their society, and novices are expected to be patient listeners, as opposed to the situation in the North American society is quite opposite (Waite, 1990). Such practice may be considered offensive or even rejected by the native speakers, due to the implication that the supervisee lacks expertise.

The points described in the literature raise awareness of culture as an important variable in supervision. Wilson et al argue that the “capacity to create conditions under which a diverse group of individuals can succeed is quickly becoming a crucial managerial skill” (1996, p.31). In order to effectively manage diverse groups, supervisors must be cognizant of the issues and able to create adequate conditions to address the challenges of diversity (Morrison, 1992).

However, a word of warning against making this matter simplistic needs to be added here. An ethnic or racial group does not act as one, and every member of the group does not always blindly follow the beliefs nor accepts the values of the culture. Also, there are situations in which race does not have an impact (Leong and Wagner, 1994), which points to the need for a balanced approach. The importance of culture as a variable in supervision should neither be overemphasized nor downplayed.
Research Problem, Questions, and Hypotheses

Research Problem

The majority of researchers and theoreticians agree with the premise that supervision is a necessity (Anderson, 1989; Scriven 1988 and 1996), however, a great deal still remains to be investigated, as there is no consensus on how to address many issues. Among these issues, the manner in which supervisors try to enhance positive change and improvement through practices such as in-service, support, observation and formal evaluation, seems to be a particularly pertinent one. Another crucial issue is related to what constitutes effective supervisory practices (Cook et al, 1987; Fullan and Hargeaves, 1991; Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992; Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon, 1998; Huberman, 1992; Scriven, 1988 and 1996; Sullivan and Glanz, 2000). Even though the literature offers a variety of solutions and approaches developed in response to the issues (Anderson, 1989; Begley et al, 1995), very few dilemmas have been resolved.

This study investigates the effectiveness of a range of supervisory practices and the issues discussed in the literature, such as the variables that contribute to or hinder the effectiveness of supervisory practices (Alfonso, 1986; Bradley, 1994; Gullatt and Ballard, 1998). In particular, the manner in which supervision is carried out seems to be particularly important as it determines how teachers react and respond to supervision (Bradley and Gould, 1994; Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992; Lambert, 1998; van der Linde, 1998). Pertinent to this study is also the investigation of the impact of cultural background on supervision (Fong, 1994, Wilson et al, 1996), and the importance of alternative, non-directive methods of supervision classified in the literature under the
umbrella concept of reflective teaching (Clark, 1992; Cromwell, 1991; Gitlin and Smyth, 1990; Leithwood, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992; Wells, 1994). The proponents of reflective teaching refer to it as a more effective means of achieving permanent positive change than traditional supervisory methods. The study explores the extent to which classroom practitioners feel this holds true.

**Research Questions**

The literature of supervision abounds in descriptions and definitions of effective supervisory practices, which makes our theoretical knowledge of such practices broad (Cook et al, 1987; Cromwell, 1991; Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992; Gullat and Ballard, 1992; Laud, 1998; Scriven, 1986). However, our knowledge of effective practices in specific contexts and from the teachers' perspective is quite limited (Stronge and Tucker, 1999; Ponticell and Zepeda, 1998; Whaley, 1994; Williams et al, 1993). Thus a need exists for studies that explore practices from the supervisee perspective within specific teaching settings.

This study attempts to fill in this gap by exploring the effectiveness of supervisory practices within the Toronto Catholic District School Board’s Adult Education Program, and the instructors’ perception of these practices. It focuses on the following question:

What supervisory practices do adult ESL instructors employed by the TCDSB consider effective?

Additional questions that the study attempts to answer are:
To what extent is the Adult Education Program’s current system of supervision considered effective by TCDSB instructors?

If it needs to be remedied, what adjustments need to be made so that the system fully addresses the instructors’ needs?

To what extent do instructors feel that certain supervisory practices generate positive change?

To what extent are the instructors’ cultural backgrounds related to their perceptions of supervision?

To what extent is the instructors’ teaching experience related to their perceptions of supervision?

The study has a dual purpose: it serves as a quality assurance study within the TCDSB Adult Education Program, and as such may lead to improvement of these practices through recommendations for adjustment in the current Adult Education Program’s system of supervision. The data are also used as a basis for this thesis, with the objective to gain a better understanding of supervision from the supervisee perspective, and to broaden knowledge of effective supervisory practices.

Even though many principles of good supervision may be applicable across a variety of teaching contexts, the findings cannot be generalized. The study refers to a very specific teaching setting, and the findings will serve as a basis for a set of recommendations for the TCDSB Adult Education Program, rather than recommendations for supervisory systems in general.
Hypotheses

The hypotheses of this study are based on the theoretical premises listed in the literature review. They are also influenced by my understanding of supervision and my personal experiences both as a supervisee and a supervisor. The hypotheses state that supervisory practices are effective and more readily accepted by supervisees when

supervisors create conditions for active, participatory involvement of supervisees in the processes of in-service, support, observation and evaluation

self-evaluation of both parties is the constituent part of the process

collaborative cultures and a professional relationships, based on confidence and mutual respect for people involved in the process and profession, are developed between supervisors and supervisees

supervisors understand that the cultural background has an impact on one’s perception of supervision.

Definitions of Terms

In order to avoid conceptual ambiguity, some general and supervision-related terms used in the study need to be clarified. The definitions that follow are based on my understanding of these terms. I opted for creating my own definitions rather than using those from the literature after having carefully considered them, with a rationale that some of the crucial terms (e.g., supervision and supervisory practices) refer to a specific context and as such may have a slightly different meaning in other contexts.
The first group of definitions is related to the identity of the instructors and includes the following terms: native speakers, experienced instructors, culture and cultural background. *Native speakers* of English are defined in the questionnaire as people who were born and educated in an English speaking country. Instructors with three or more years of teaching experience in the field of adult ESL are considered *experienced teachers*. *Culture* is defined as a set of beliefs and values that influences the way of life of individuals belonging to a certain group, and that is reflected in their behaviors and practices. The sense of belonging to a group from a country or a region, where beliefs and values are distinguished from other cultures falls under the rubric *cultural background*.

The second group of definitions is associated with supervisory practices. For the purpose of this study, *supervision* is defined as a process, which involves an array of practices carried out by administrative staff with the overall objective to improve classroom practices. The process includes support, observation visits, feedback, formal evaluation (also referred to as performance appraisal), and pre- and post-observation conferences. All these activities and practices are usually aimed at creating conditions for teacher behaviors that are necessary in order to achieve the organizational goals, and are coherent with the philosophy of education adopted by a particular teaching context.

Supervision may also include assistance with *non-directive forms of supervision* offered to teachers who are willing to assess and evaluate their teaching on their own. These forms include self-evaluation, analysis of strengths and weaknesses, setting performance goals, monitoring of one's practice, writing reflective journals or
video/audio self-evaluation. In addition, supervision may entail facilitation of self-help groups or peer evaluation.

Support entails offering advice or assistance with the subject matter, materials and methodology through conferencing, problem-solving, discussions, meaningful questions about the program, etc., with a purpose of either providing teachers with solutions to the problems they face or assisting them in generating their own solutions.

Evaluation, also referred to as performance appraisal, includes observation visit(s) followed by an evaluation report on teacher's performance. It entails making judgements about the performance, and identifying, in writing, the teacher's strengths and weaknesses, as well as making comments on the overall effectiveness of the program.

Even though supervisory duties may entail a large number of additional activities depending on the teaching context, supervision in this thesis will be referred to as it relates to the practices listed above, which most accurately define the scenario of supervision within the TCDSB. Since the focus of this study is effectiveness of supervision, it may be worthwhile to add a point related to the term effectiveness. If the overall objective of supervision is positive change, effectiveness should be directly proportionate to improvement in teaching. However, improvement is a variable that cannot be measured. It can only be investigated indirectly. Therefore, the extent to which instructors feel certain practices assist them in reaching their full potentials or generate positive change will be considered as an indicator of effectiveness of supervision.
Current TCDSB Adult Education Program’s System of Supervision

TCDSB Adult Education Program’s supervisory team employs nine Program Consultants and a Program Coordinator. Three consultants are employed as full-time administrators, while the remaining six are part-time supervisors who consult two days a week and teach three days a week. This classroom practitioner-supervisor model, which has been implemented for the last decade, was designed for two reasons. Firstly, it was an attempt to ensure that consultants are aware of the issues their instructors face, since they face similar problems in their own classrooms. Secondly, feedback and support provided by consultants who are still classroom practitioners is usually more down-to-earth than that of full-time administrators. It is uncertain, however, whether this model will be preserved, as the TCDSB instructors have joined the CUPE and are currently negotiating a collective agreement. According to the existing collective agreements in the other school boards, instructors cannot be both administrators and instructors - members of CUPE.

Each consultant is responsible for 17-18 instructors per consulting day per week, which means that a consultant with two consulting days a week oversees up to 36 instructors annually. Their duties involve providing initial in-service and ongoing support, conducting observation visits and pre/post-observation conferences, and writing evaluation reports. Observations are unannounced, and the rationale for not announcing the date and time of visits is that they are conducted with the objective to see an ordinary teaching day. During these observations, which last between an hour and a half to two and a half hours, consultants focus on a number of teaching areas outlined in the observation reports: classroom appearance, materials, methodology, classroom
atmosphere, interaction, and feedback and praise (see Appendix A). They also focus on instructors’ daily and long-range plans. The number of visits varies with the instructor, and depends on different variables, such as the length of teaching experience in the program, instructor’s performance, student attendance, and factors related to the location. As a general rule, consultants tend to invest more time into novice instructors, especially during the probationary period of one year, and on those instructors whose performance is lacking. Experienced instructors who have successfully taught in the program for more than several years usually get less attention and a lower number of visits (usually one per year). The exceptions are Language Instruction for Newcomers Program (LINC) classes for which the funder (Federal Government) insists on several visits per year regardless of the instructor’s experience.

Evaluation reports are filed after two or three visits. Instructors sign them to confirm the receipt of the report and add their comments in the space provided on the form, if they wish to do so. Even though each instructor should be provided with one such report annually, it does not always occur in practice due to other administrative duties consultants have to attend to.

It is expected that consultants work on their own professional development through involvement in courses, presentations at conferences, publications, and other forms of professional growth. They are also expected to create and foster a climate of enthusiasm for professional development among instructors by continually encouraging them to become contributing professionals and present or participate at conferences and in-service workshops. In that sense, TCDSB’s Adult Education Program has been considered the most successful adult ESL provider, as its presenters, both instructors and
consultants, dominate all local Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL) events, volunteer for the TESL organization and are active participants at American TESOL Conferences.
Study: Methodology, Data Analysis, Findings, and Conclusions

Methodology

Data collection procedures and methodology. In order to obtain responses to research questions and verify whether and to what extent my hypotheses hold true, I designed a questionnaire based on the issues that emerged from the literature review. The preliminary version of the questionnaire was piloted among thirty instructors in April 2000. To ensure a variety of age groups, years of experience and cultural background of the instructors of the pilot group, six locations were selected as sites from which volunteers were recruited. The volunteers’ feedback was analysed and the questionnaire adjusted according to their suggestions.

The final version of the questionnaire (see Appendix B) was mailed out in May 2000 to all three hundred and twenty instructors employed in a part- or full-time capacity by the Adult Education Program at that time. As clearly indicated in the cover letter to the instructors (see Appendix C), the questionnaire was anonymous, the participation was optional, and there were no consequences for those who did not wish to participate. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaires and return envelopes were not marked in any way, and instructors were reminded not to sign their names.

Apart from the general information section, the questionnaire sections corresponded to the issues related to different areas of supervision and supervisory practices described in the literature. These are: initial and ongoing support, supervisory practices and qualities, effectiveness of supervisory practices, observation visits, methods of offering feedback, formal evaluation, and instructors’ involvement in reaching their
full potentials. In addition to responding to questions by means of placing checkmarks, instructors were encouraged to type up additional comments on separate sheets to discuss additional issues or offer suggestions.

The study has been designed as a quantitative research based on data generated by the questionnaire. The reasons for selecting this type of research are the large size of the target population (320 instructors) and the need to check the responses of subgroups (NNS, experienced instructors, and mature instructors). SPSS software was used to tabulate the data, and a single database of instructors' responses was created. Responses to all questions were checked section-by-section first, and descriptive statistics and frequencies were obtained for each of the sections. These were used as a basis for obtaining general information questions and interpreting all other questions in which respondents used a likert scale with four categories (1-4) and the category "unsure" to rank the options. The exceptions were sections on observation visits and evaluation, where several options were offered and instructors were asked to select only one among the offered responses. Those responses were described, interpreted, and ranked where appropriate, and research questions related to the effectiveness of the current TCDSB system of supervision tested by examining them.

The study explored several single variables. One variable examined the extent to which the instructors' classroom experience in teaching adult ESL influenced their perception and the need for support. Another variable analyzed effectiveness of supervisory practices from the viewpoint of non-native speakers of English, as compared to the native speakers' understanding. Finally, the third variable was related to the extent age impacts on the perception and need for supervision. Data related to these groups for
all three variables were isolated and responses compared with the responses of instructors from the counter-groups. Effective practice was defined as practices that scored the highest. The responses with the highest means were further analysed and interpreted, and paired \( t \) tests were done wherever appropriate. In most instances, the differences were found to be statistically significant and meaningful. In those where this was not the case, the data were interpreted by using a common sense approach and pointing to the means of highest rated options as the most important.

Some research questions could not be addressed by checking only responses to one section, but were rather verified by cross-referencing questions from different sections. This particularly refers to the main research question related to what supervisory practices instructors consider effective, where responses from the following sections were examined: supervisors' qualities and practices, methods of offering feedback, observation visits, and evaluation (see Table 3).

The research question associated with improvement of teaching and positive change could be measured only indirectly. In order to determine the extent to which supervision leads to improved teaching practice, conclusions were drawn from responses related to practices that imply the notion of improvement of teaching, such as responses from the section on instructor involvement in reaching their full potentials, and the section on options for achieving their full potentials. Besides those sections, the section on observation visits and evaluation, where instructors were asked directly to what extent those practices lead to improvement, were also considered (see Table 2).
One more query had to be addressed by analysing several sections of the questionnaire. The research question on what (if anything) needs to be adjusted in the current TCDSB system was resolved by looking into responses that together depict the instructors' perception of the current system, such as observation visits and evaluation, sections on supervisory qualities and practices, and methods of offering feedback. Some questions in the survey referred specifically to current practices (observation visits, evaluation) and they were very helpful in this respect, but at the same time many questions referred to supervisory practices in general and could not be used to generate a description of the TCDSB practices. Therefore, conclusions were drawn by comparing the responses to the description of the current TCDSB system of supervision.

Population. The whole population of three hundred and twenty TCDSB adult ESL instructors teaching in May 2000 was sent the survey. A total of one hundred and three responded within a period of six weeks. There are no reliable ways of verifying to what extent the respondents are representative of the whole population, or determining to what extent the responses would have differed if non-respondents participated. Thus one hundred and three responses provide only an overview of the perception of effective supervision of a large group of instructors, and the missing responses from other instructors are considered one of the limitations of this study. Instructors were not asked to identify their sexes due to fear that the response rate could be lower, as there are considerably fewer male than female instructors.

The data reveal that respondents belong mainly to the mature instructor population within which the following age groups dominate: 41-50 \((n = 44, 43.1\%)\) and 51 and up \((n = 32, 31.4\%).\) The remaining respondents belong to two groups: the age
group between 31-40 and a small group of relatively young instructors between 25 and 30 (see Chart 1). The question to ponder here is why mature instructors above the age of 41 ($n = 76, 74\%$ of respondents) constitute the majority, while relatively few responses were obtained from young instructors. One may be tempted to make an assumption that the breakdown of percentages depicts the TCDSB instructor population in terms of age. Unfortunately, it is not possible to verify the actual age composition and check to what extent this assumption is correct.

The ESL teaching experience aspect of the respondents’ profile shows that age and years of experience in ESL do not necessarily correspond. Even though the majority of respondents have considerable other-than-ESL teaching experience, and all respondents have at least some teaching experience, $53.5\%$ ($n = 53$) have only 3-10 years of ESL teaching experience, followed by $21.2\%$ ($n = 21$) of instructors with 10-20 years. The other two groups, represented similarly with only slight differences in numbers (see Chart 2), are made up of instructors with either more than twenty years of experience or less than three.

Many respondents who belong to higher age groups do not have the corresponding years of ESL teaching experience. My experience with the program confirms that the trend of adopting adult ESL as a second career is a reality for many instructors in adult ESL contexts. Compared with 29 instructors who have over 10 years of adult ESL teaching experience, the number of instructors who have over 10 years of experience in teaching other than ESL is slightly higher ($n = 32$) which means that some instructors have taught in other contexts prior to their adult ESL careers. In particular, adult ESL seems to be the second career for non-native speakers of English ($n = 25$
versus \( n = 7 \) among native speakers of English; see Table 1). As pointed out by Amin (2001), many foreign-trained teachers pursue careers in adult ESL due to less rigorous degree requirements and inability to compete for positions in the regular school system without retraining. According to my observations and experience, they also find it easier to adjust to the adult ESL teaching environment than to elementary or secondary school contexts. Many find the culture of students in Canada and overseas entirely different. Amin's study of ESL services in Ontario carried out in 1998 (cited in Amin, 2001) supports the notion that ESL is the second career for many non-native speakers. It also proved the previously mentioned point that the typical ESL teacher in Ontario has a good deal of teaching experience.

The majority of respondents obtained their university degrees outside of North America \( (n = 51, 53.1\%) \). These instructors, coupled with additional two percent of instructors among those educated in North America, consider themselves non-native speakers of English (NNS). The remaining 44.8\% of respondents \( (n = 43) \), are native speakers of English (NS), who appear to be somewhat younger and less experienced than their NNS counterparts. It is interesting that the percentage of NNS is even higher among experienced instructors (with more than ten years of ESL teaching experience, 63\%). Charts 3 and 4 provide visual representation of responses related to where university level degree was obtained, and illustrate the NNS versus NS distribution among the participants.

*Study Findings and Discussion*

*Section A: Initial in-service and ongoing support.* The objective of this section of the questionnaire was to determine the instructors’ views of the need for support at
different stages of their professional development. Questions were inspired by
developmental theories of supervision, according to which the need for supervision varies
at different stages of professional development.

Data indicate that novice instructors feel they need substantial support in all areas
of teaching, and the differences in preferences of one area over the other are somewhat
expressed. Support with materials and activities were ranked as number one, followed by
support with curriculum implementation, methodology and planning. The numerical
differences between some areas are less explicit with the second group of instructors (3-10 years of experience), with materials again being the most emphasized area, followed by support with the overall organization of the program, and methodology respectively.
Finally, the most experienced group with over 10 years of ESL teaching experience feels that they need less support than the previous two groups. Their preferences of the areas of support corresponded with the preferences of the previous group. Only the least experienced group asked for support with curriculum implementation (see Table 4).

The study indicates that one has to be cautious when trying to generalize
theoretical notions and apply them to practice in specific contexts. The findings do not
correspond to Freeman’s notion of three stages of development (1982) during which, as
teachers gain experience, the focus shifts from materials and course content to
methodology. According to the survey, respondents consider support with materials a
priority at all stages of their development. Securing solid sources of appropriate materials
is a burning issue for instructors of all three groups. Contrary to Freeman’s notion that
support has a different focus at different stages, the dominant focus for TCDSB
instructors is, “Do I have appropriate material for my Monday class?”, rather than, “How
do I teach what I teach on Monday?” A possible explanation for this puzzling finding is that the Adult Education Program frequently undergoes changes in terms of course content in order to address the changing needs of students. Due to continuous student intake, newcomer students and modifications in class composition are a constant. In such an environment, instructors are forced to respond to program modifications by ceaselessly searching for new resources. An additional difficulty lies in the fact that the same groups of students often remain in provincially funded-classes for prolonged periods of time, and since the program is very intensive (25 hours a week), having a comprehensive collection of materials at hand is crucial. The findings do not correspond to Freeman’s ideas, but they confirm an observation from my daily work that support with materials especially to newly assigned staff, regardless of how experienced in teaching they are, is absolutely essential. The more support with materials is offered, the sooner are instructors able to focus on their methodology, or even on designing their own activities and materials.

My hope with this section of the questionnaire was to determine how and to what extent instructors’ need for support changed over time, as suggested by McGreal’s (1982) and Holloway’s (1995) theories related to differing needs of teachers at different stages of development, and findings of a study conducted by Shechtman and Wirzberger (1999) with Israeli counsellors. The group that could best verify the hypothesis that change occurs over time was the group of twenty-nine respondents with over ten years of ESL teaching experience. However, this segment of study was fraught with difficulties. The first one was that the sample was relatively small. It comprises of only twenty-nine instructors. Another problem that arose was that only eighteen respondents out of this
small sample of twenty-nine followed the instructions correctly and filled out all three columns of the chart (see Appendix A, Part II, A.). Among them, nine instructors stated that the need for support differed considerably at different stages, while for additional four instructors, the need changed over time to some extent. For five instructors the need for support was the same during all stages.

Regardless of difficulties with that particular group, the comparison of data for different areas of support for the most and least experienced groups confirms McGreal’s (1982) and Holloway’s (1995) theoretical premises on two fronts. Firstly, the means of selected cases point to the fact that the need for support decreases consistently with years of experience in almost all areas, which indicates that the most experienced group is the least in need of support in all areas. In the areas of planning, methodology, activities and curriculum the need for support is found to be statistically significant (see Table 4). Secondly, the need for frequent observation visits declines with experience, which is supported by the data generated in two other sections. The section on observation visits reveals that respondents with more than ten years of ESL teaching experience expect a somewhat lower number of visits per year than their less experienced counterparts (for example, 30 % versus 43.3 % twice a year). Responses related to the optimal frequency of formal evaluation in the section on evaluation reveal that the need for frequent evaluations also decreases with experience (see Charts 8, 9, 13, 14).

Section B: Supervisory practices and qualities. Although there is a growing consensus in the literature about the objective of supervision – improved teaching practice - much disagreement still exists about how it can be achieved (Anderson, 1989; Begley et al., 1995). This prompted me to focus on practices that are considered effective
from the supervisee perspective, with the assumption that those are ones that are likely to contribute to improvement of teaching practices.

Similar to respondents in Zepeda and Ponticell’s study (1998), TCDSB instructors seem to be quite clear on what they want and expect from supervision, and have no difficulty identifying qualities of efficient supervisors or recognizing effective practices. According to the opinions of all respondents, regardless of their years of experience, an effective supervisor is one who (in order of importance, respectively):

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<td>demonstrates respect for the instructor</td>
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<td>possesses good listening skills/creates conditions for open communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>is knowledgeable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provides feedback in a positive and constructive manner</td>
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<tr>
<td>demonstrates professional conduct</td>
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<td>takes into consideration the specifics of their teaching context</td>
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In order to verify this ranking, the mean of the six highest ranked practices (3.64) was compared to the mean of the rest of the practices (2.91), and the difference was found to be statistically significant.

Other desirable practices are making an effort to build the instructor’s confidence (3.45) and demonstrating empathy for the instructor (3.38; see Table 5). The most praised
qualities and practices in this section fall in the categories of respect and care, feedback, and knowledge (respectively). This confirms the theoretical premise that effective supervisors are those who respect teachers and demonstrate knowledge through constructive feedback and professionalism (Cook et al., 1987; Ladany, 1999; Williams et al., 1993). The study also confirms the importance of supervisors' listening skills and the quality of communication (Whaley, 1994). The fact that instructors expect that their supervisors possess solid listening skill implies willingness to hear their supervisees and use the level type of communication as the preferred style (Hargreaves and Dawe, 1990, in Zepeda and Ponticell, 1998; Laud, 1998). Other issues, related to practices such as encouraging instructors to work on peer evaluation or resolving staff conflicts, are considered less important, with statistically more explicit differences. Emphasis on the supervisor's authority is considered least important.

Instructors were also asked to state whether the fact that the supervisor is still a classroom practitioner, rather than a full-time administrator, makes a difference for them. Findings confirm that it does, as respondents' preference is on the side of a supervisor - classroom practitioner (see Figure 5 and Table 6). Unfortunately, instructors were not asked to elaborate on their reasons, and one can only guess that they may be related to the notion that supervisors with one foot in the classroom are more down-to-earth than their counterparts who have no contact with students and do not face classroom problems themselves. It is interesting that non-native speakers and instructors with over ten years of experience feel even stronger that the supervisor should be a classroom practitioner, which implies that they feel less threatened by an administrator-classroom practitioner.
In addition to focusing on effective practices, this section of the questionnaire sought instructors' feedback on the area of supervision considered most important. Instructors were asked to rank the areas of supervision. They ranked instructors' and supervisors' professional development as the most important ones, followed by supervisors' professionalism, feedback, knowledge, communication, and respect and care. Even though individual practices associated with respect, communication and knowledge are considered important, when it comes to overall evaluation of the areas of supervision, professional development and conduct seem most important from the instructors' viewpoint.

Section C: Instructor involvement. Active involvement of instructors in the process of supervision, emphasized over and over in the literature (Carroll, 1997; Fullan, 1991; Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992), was overwhelmingly confirmed as an important factor. When asked about its significance, 34.7% of instructors stated that their involvement in the process was absolutely crucial, and 46.3% consider it important. Subsequent to this initial question on the importance of active involvement, the section was broken down into statements related to practices through which it can be achieved. The responses in this section differ more explicitly and statistically more significant in terms of their numerical values than responses to any other section of the survey (see Table 7). According to respondents, the best way of ensuring active involvement is supervisors' encouragement to instructors to work on their improvement independently, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. The second and third most preferred methods are working with colleagues on professional development and reflection and analysis of one's teaching. These findings can be linked with theories of reflective
teaching that state that only teachers themselves can generate lasting positive change (Grimmet, Rostad and Blake, 1992; Huberman, 1992; Wright, 1998).

The responses, in which reflection is emphasized as an essential component for improving one’s practice, may have been partly enhanced by consistent efforts of Adult Education Program administrators to foster reflection and cooperation as crucial components of one’s professional development. During the past several years, the department leaders have worked systematically on introducing techniques of reflective teaching through professional development initiatives. However, regardless of the efforts dedicated to promoting video self-evaluation, there seems to be a complete absence of interest for this technique, otherwise referred to in the literature as the most effective and objective method of reflection (Haertel, 1993; Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001; Richards, 1990; Wright, 1998). Responses imply that the initiative the TCDSB supervisory team has undertaken (the purchase of a video-camera; development of a video self-evaluation package with guidelines for self-study; repeated invitations through the Monthly Memo to staff to use the video camera) has not reaped the desired success. Considerable support accompanied this initiative: instructors were offered to be in-serviced on the use of video camera, and encouraged to use video-recordings of their lessons for analysis carried out on their own, without supervisory involvement. Regardless of all these efforts, instructors’ responses imply reluctance to use video/audio taping, which surfaced both in this and in the next set of questions. Although one third of instructors (n = 37) state they consider this technique beneficial, the same number feels that it is not helpful at all. It seems to be surrounded by uncertainty and possibly even anxiety, as it generated the highest number of “unsure” responses in the whole questionnaire (n = 25). The lack of
interest for video self-evaluation can be attributed to several factors, one of them being fear of seeing one’s own teaching from a perspective that most teachers do not want to see it (Morgan, 2000; Wright, 1998). Watching oneself teach may be an eye-opener that confirms that the perception of one’s teaching differs from the actual practice, and that there may be areas in need of improvement. Other possible explanations are fear of the equipment, or time constraints: teachers’ schedules are already extremely busy, and adding one more task to these usually poses an additional burden. Some other practices surfaced as relatively unpopular among respondents. Writing reflective journals is considered least beneficial; clarifying instructors’ own approaches to teaching to their supervisors, in the event those differ from the Board’s approach, is not popular either.

One more set of questions was dedicated to achieving one’s full potential. This time the questions were associated with ways of accomplishing it in practice (see Table 8). While interpreting the data, these questions were linked with the notion of improved teaching practice, since reaching one’s full potential implies improvement. Responses point to professional development as the most efficient generator of improved teaching practice. Majority of instructors reach their full potentials through workshops, consultation with colleagues, courses, and/or literature. Many among them are willing to explore their teaching on their own and experiment through reflection and/or trial-and-error techniques. It is interesting that in the previous section (on active involvement) a vast majority emphasized the highly beneficial nature of reflection. However, this section discloses that there is a discrepancy of what is perceived as effective and what they actually apply in practice, as many instructors who consider self-assessment beneficial state that they actually prefer utilizing professional development options (workshops or
consultation with colleagues) to achieve their full potential. Thus implementing approaches to professional development such as Huberman’s, described as the teacher-as-the-artisan model (1992), may be more complex than it seems. There is a big leap from accepting a theoretical notion to actually implementing it in practice, regardless of the fact that approaches such as Huberman’s offer a solid theoretical framework applicable to the TCDSB context.

Consultation with supervisors is not perceived as one of the methods that lead to reaching one’s full potential to a high degree, and neither is video self-evaluation. Even though instructors state that it helps them to some extent, and do not consider it inefficient, many embrace it with less enthusiasm and interest than other techniques.

Section D: Observation visits. Most theoreticians agree with the notion that supervisors should visit the teachers regularly, however, they disagree when it comes to defining how the visits should be conducted (Cook et al., 1998, Cromwell, 1991; Gitlin and Smyth, 1990). The goal of this section of the questionnaire was to identify the type and frequency of visits that instructors consider desirable.

The first question in this section attempted to identify the degree of usefulness of observation visits and determine whether they lead to improved teaching practice. Most instructors feel that observation visits are beneficial or highly beneficial (52% altogether), and additional 36.3% feels that they are somewhat beneficial. However, the overall sense is that visits rarely result in change for the better. The perception of only 13% of respondents is that visits lead to improved teaching practice a great deal, followed by the responses of almost half of the instructors who state that they are beneficial only to some
extent (see Figures 6-10). These two sets of data disclose that current observation visit practices may need to be adjusted in order to better serve their purpose. If the objective of supervision is improved teaching practice, and there is an agreement among most theoreticians that this is so (Haertel, 1993; Kilbourn, 1991; McGreal, 1982; Poole, 1995; Scriven, 1988), then observation visits should contribute to this objective. The dilemma for the TCDSB administrators to resolve is how to maximize the quality of visits, so that they generate positive change.

Other questions in this section were related to elements of observation visits, such as pre-and post-observation conferences, and setting objectives for visits. Responses confirmed the importance of all three. Pre-and post-observation conferences are considered desirable, with post-observation conference identified as more significant. Setting objectives for each of the visits is also considered desirable. Instructors feel that this practice should be an element of the TCDSB supervisory practices, similarly to the practices of clinical models of supervision, in which setting the objectives jointly is considered an important variable (Carroll, 1997; Cogan, 1973).

When asked about effective methods of offering feedback, instructors identified collaborative methods as the most favourable (see Table 9). They enjoy working on solutions together with their supervisors, who are expected to create conditions for the instructors’ input. In the event direct feedback is provided, they want positive areas to be pointed out first, followed by areas that need improvement. Surprisingly, they do not mind receiving open and candid feedback. The practice they are least interested in is related to supervisors’ questions about the program, regardless of the fact that this
practice usually implies supervisor's genuine interest in what the instructor is doing in the classroom.

Section E: Evaluation. Even though instructors overwhelmingly perceive observation visits as beneficial or somewhat beneficial, they feel that they lead to improved teaching practice only to a very limited degree (see Figures 6 and 7). In search of responses for these contradictory findings, one may again explore the literature of reflective teaching. It repeatedly states that only teachers themselves, providing they are aware of the practices they need to improve, can actually achieve permanent positive change (Freeman, 1998; Wells, 1994). Instead, supervisors "leave teachers dependent on supposed experts", rather than encouraging them to be in charge of their own growth (Gitlin and Smyth, 1990, p. 83). Most current systems of supervision are based on the notion that change cannot be achieved without supervisory presence, nor as a follow up to observation visits and evaluations.

Response to the question about optimal frequency of being formally evaluated reveal that the need for frequent evaluations decreases with experience. The large majority of instructors indicate that it is once a year (38.4%; see Figures 8 and 9), while some feel it should be done twice a year, or once in two years. Formal evaluation should be conducted after two visits (41%) or one visit (37%) once a year (see Figures 13 and 14). The existing Evaluation Report form (see Appendix A) is considered fairly effective. It is good according to 63.6%, or great according to 16.2% of respondents, while some respondents feel it needs improvement (see Figures 10 and 11). In terms of effectiveness of the current evaluation report forms, more than half of the instructors feel that these reports lead to improved teaching practice to some (54%), or very little extent
The clarity of criteria is a salient variable that helps teachers accept the validity of the system (Stronge and Tucker, 1999). The criteria of the TCDSB current evaluation form are fairly comprehensible to the large majority of instructors: it is considered very clear (27.7%), clear (41.6%), or somewhat clear (24.8%). Very few instructors stated that it was not clear at all (see Figure 12).

The question in this section that generated a great deal of uncertainty is the question on whether instructors should use the blank space on the Evaluation Forms to write their comments, which implies that they are either not comfortable about doing so or not convinced of its importance. Half of the instructors never write comments on the evaluation form, and some do so occasionally (35.7%). There is no agreement on whether the supervisor should encourage instructors to write comments. Furthermore, the idea of writing a self-evaluation report that would be attached to the supervisory one is not supported among instructors. One may be tempted to assume that NNS of English would be more reluctant to write self-evaluation reports than NS, taking into account that these forms are filed, but the findings do not confirm this assumption. On the contrary, it is the native speakers who feel stronger that filing a self-evaluation report would not be beneficial. Experienced instructors with over ten years of ESL teaching experience feel even stronger about it.

Supervision across Culture, Experience and Age

This section examines the impact of culture, experience and age on the instructors’ perceptions of effectiveness in supervision. The TCDSB instructor population is represented by instructors of a range of cultural backgrounds from all over the world, which opens up the door to a variety of cultural beliefs and values that the instructors
bring along. This diversity prompted a hypothesis that the perception of effectiveness and the degree of acceptance of the authority and supervisory practices may fluctuate among instructors depending on the contexts they were brought up and educated in. It was tested by comparing responses to all questions provided by the native speakers of English (NS – forty-four percent of instructors brought up and educated on the North American continent) to those provided by the non-native speakers of English (NNS - fifty-four percent of instructors brought up and educated elsewhere). This analysis of responses in the spectrum of possible culturally derived differences was prompted by the frequently emphasized need for multicultural perspective, mentioned in Fong (1994), Medgyes (1994) and Wilson et al. (1997), and coupled with my personal observations. Since the differences emerged in some responses to the survey, only these responses are discussed in this section (see Table 10). The differences are related to:

The issue of supervisor's authority: non-native speakers have less difficulty accepting the authority, while NS are more reluctant to accept it;

Working on solutions together: non-native speakers are more confident than native speakers that the supervisor and the instructor should work as a team on finding solutions in order to generate effective classroom practices;

Peer evaluation: non-native speakers are more convinced that supervisors should encourage instructors to work on this form of professional development;

Staff conflicts: non-native speakers feel more strongly that it is important that the supervisor be involved in resolving the conflicts.
Further differences are related to non-native speakers' perception of supervisor's visits as more beneficial than that of native speakers, and belief that these visits result in improvement of teaching practices. These findings confirm claims from the literature that obedience and respect for people higher in rank are accepted as a maxim in collectivist cultures (Wilson et al., 1994). In individualist cultures, however, the hierarchy may be questioned, and consequently, native speakers lean more towards reflective practices. They also have less difficulty accepting the video/audio self-evaluation (even though neither of the two groups is enthusiastic about using this method, as explained in the section on instructor involvement). It may be hypothesized that reflective teaching is more emphasized in teacher preparation programs on the North American continent than elsewhere. To some extent, evidence for such a hypothesis can be found in comparison of the data of instructors who obtained their university level on the North American continent and those who obtained it elsewhere. It indicates that the first group believes in benefits of standing back and reflecting more than does the other group, and feels slightly less reluctant about video self-evaluation (see Table 11). In addition, instructors educated in North America perceive consultation with their colleagues as a beneficial practice to a larger extent than their counterparts educated elsewhere. No significant interaction was found between responses to other sections, except the fact that native speakers are more concerned about the supervisor's attire than non-native speakers.

As noted earlier, most differences in perception of various aspects of supervision between the two groups can be interpreted through the culturally conditioned theories of supervision described in the literature review (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Fong, 1994; Medgyes, 1994). Most NNS instructors come from collectivist cultures in which
authority is accepted for granted and hardly ever questioned, and where working together
towards goals that are important for the group as a whole is a must. Therefore, their
responses may be rooted in the spirit of collectivism and the strong sense of belonging to
the group. The same theoretical premise may account for the responses to questions on
the importance of working together on solutions and supervisor involvement in resolving
staff conflicts. On the other hand, interest in reflective teaching and tendency or
willingness to work on one’s teaching independently can be explained as an expression of
individualist cultures.

The mentioned responses attest to the diversity of the TCDSB instructor
population and encourage supervisors to ponder how culture may impact on their
professional relationship with instructors of different backgrounds, and how to adjust
their practices accordingly. However, as mentioned in the Literature Review section, one
should not make matters simplistic and fall in the trap of attributing all teacher behaviour
to culture. Culture is a variable worth consideration, but should not be overemphasized.

The second variable is related to the question about possible implications of age
on survey findings. One can assume that the mature group of instructors may have been
exposed to a variety of systems of supervision in their previous workplaces, and may
have clear preferences of the effectiveness of certain practices. Their feedback is indeed
more definite in some responses (see Table 12). One such response is related to effective
methods of offering feedback, where mature instructors feel somewhat stronger about
their choices than the rest of the instructors. They are less convinced that the supervisor’s
authority should be felt, and feel more strongly about the importance of collegial
collaboration and instructors’ active involvement.
The preference of instructors younger than 41 is on the side of a knowledgeable supervisor who works on professional development. They feel very strongly about this preference: responses to these two questions received the highest overall scores in the whole questionnaire, probably due to the fact that younger instructors are more cognizant of the fact that they still have a great deal to learn, which transpires from many of their responses. Probably for the same reason they want more direct input from their supervisors, and have less difficulty accepting the authority. For them, observation visits lead to improved teaching practice more than for the other groups of instructors. They feel very strongly that they do not want to write comments on the Evaluation Report forms, and they are not as determined as the other groups of instructors that their input needs to be heard. They state that they want to receive open positive and negative feedback. Another proof that the emphasis on supervisors' input leads to a learning experience for them is the fact that they want supervisors to share with them the alternative ways of doing what was done in class during the observation visits. In addition, probably due to a stronger emphasis on video-self evaluation during their teacher training programs, they have less difficulty accepting it than any other group.

Additional discussion of experienced instructors' feedback on the need for supervision can be found in Section 4.1.

*Issues that emerged from written feedback.* Overall, a very limited number of additional comments were attached to the responses. The large majority of instructors responded by using checkmarks only. Even though these few comments attached to the questionnaires are not numerically significant and can be interpreted only as individual feedback, they are worth mentioning. This in particular refers to those comments in
which instructors elaborated on the issues not dealt with in the survey. The points below highlight the type of feedback offered by instructors.

Several comments are related to the fact that observation visits are unannounced. If instructors were informed about when the consultant was coming, the visit would not generate the negative feeling of being checked on. In particular, instructors who consider themselves hardworking and conscientious dislike the feeling of waiting for the supervisors to come, which confirms the point suggested by Whaley (1994) that supervision should not imply the notion of administrators checking up on the teachers.

Rapport with supervisors emerged as a variable that some instructors consider very important. One instructor explained that in the event the rapport is solid and the relationship positive, there is no threat admitting that one needs support.

Supervisors should focus on those instructors whose performance is lacking. The method of support varies with the instructor.

More communication between consultants in situation where the same instructor has two consultants is recommended.

Supervisors' professionalism is considered as another variable worth mentioning. One instructor was concerned about the lack of professionalism of some supervisors.
One instructor pointed out possible problems with the quality of teaching of substitute instructors, whose conscientiousness varies a great deal. This instructor was concerned that there was no system of supervision for substitutes.

Several comments praised the quality of the questionnaire, while one suggested some changes in it. It was described as an excellent, thoughtful, and professionally done questionnaire ahead of consultative methods in most programs. One instructor expressed confidence that the results will have a positive effect. However, another instructor pointed out that several questions in the questionnaire should have included options relative to individual rather than absolute categories.

**Limitations**

Several limitations of this study should be noted. The first one is associated with the response rate. The findings are indicative of the opinions of one third of the instructors, but caution is required if an attempt is made to generalize them for the entire instructor population or other teaching contexts. There was no possibility of finding out how the responses would differ if all instructors responded. In addition, section A of Part II of the questionnaire (Appendix A), related to support, generated very few responses among the most experienced group of instructors. As mentioned earlier, conclusions drawn from this segment of the data should be taken into account with caution.

The second limitation lies in the difficulty with responding to the research query on what, if anything needs to be remedied in the current TCDSB system of supervision, and in the impartiality of this response. The response was obtained by comparing the
instructors' perception of supervision to the existing supervisory practices. The challenge was how to generate an objective description of the TCDSB current practices. I created a description for Section 4; however, my description only outlines how the current system of supervision functions in ideal circumstances. Despite my best intentions to write it objectively, I could not verify to what extent the circumstances are ideal and the description presents an accurate account of the actual practices.

The next limitation is associated with identifying the categories that would show a distinction between instructors of different cultural backgrounds and obtaining a response to the research question on the impact of culture on supervisory practices. The wording of this particular question was given a great deal of attention based on comments from the pilot group instructors. They expressed concerns that the two questions that defined NNS as people born and educated outside of the North American continent will not generate an accurate picture of cultural backgrounds. After careful consideration, I opted for the two broad categories, native and non-native speakers of English, as I realized it was not possible to define it in any other way. There are numerous subcategories within the two categories, and these could not be tapped into due to two reasons. One is the confidentiality issue: if the instructors were asked to identify their cultural backgrounds or sex, and it would be possible to guess the identity of many respondents. Disclosing, for example, that an instructor is a male from Sierra Leone would point fingers in only one direction. An invitation to instructors to identify their country of origin would also create a huge number of categories with a small number of teachers in each (due to the diversity of their backgrounds) and would make this distinction highly impractical.
An additional limitation was related to issues and practices from the literature that served as a basis for the questionnaire. Practices that clearly sounded ineffective or negative could not be listed for obvious reasons. Thus most listed practices that instructors were asked to rank were positive supervisory practices, and one could assume that they would be important to a lesser or higher degree. As a result, the differences in ranking of some practices appear to be minimal and statistically insignificant.

The last set of limitations is associated with the questionnaire design: as it usually happens, respondents had difficulty with fitting some responses into absolute categories offered in the questionnaire. The objective was to design a set of questions that covers as many options as possible. However, it is impossible to anticipate all possible scenarios and variables unless extensive qualitative study is carried out along with the quantitative one. Interviews or focus groups would have generated additional issues and variables. Since such a study would considerably increase the scope of this project, it was not carried out. Consequently, this study relies only on quantitative data and is subject to all limitations of such research.

Conclusions

The purpose of this section is to verify to what extent the instructors’ viewpoints on supervision confirm the assumptions outlined in the hypotheses, and to list arguments generated through data analysis. If the survey findings presented in the previous sections are on target, the conclusions of this study support the following arguments:
A. Instructors consider certain supervisory practices more effective than others, which supports an argument that if these practices are encouraged or reinforced, the likelihood of achieving positive educational change is higher.

Even though one cannot state that if the practices instructors consider effective are encouraged, teaching and learning will be improved, it can be hypothesized that the likelihood of positive educational change is higher if this is so. Supervision conducted in harmony with the instructors' perceptions of effectiveness implies maximized opportunities for achieving positive change.

What are those practices? As outlined in the data analysis section, the type of supervision that adult ESL instructors employed by the TCDSB consider effective implies three notions: fostering the climate of active instructor involvement, promotion of reflective teaching, and meaningful professional development. Literature considers all of these practices fundamental to the effectiveness of supervisory systems (Bernard and Goodyear, 1992; Guskey, 1998; Huberman, 1992) with an underlying assumption that supervision cannot be effective if it is perceived as a one-way phenomenon (Waite, 1993), nor if imposed on teachers (Bradley and Gould, 1994; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991). There is considerable evidence in this study that respondents regard their active involvement as a salient variable in the process. Supervisors can reinforce it by encouraging instructors to take on the responsibility for their own professional growth by adopting reflective practices. Instructors clearly state that they want to be encouraged to stand back, reflect, and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Another route are meaningful professional development opportunities, organized at the supervisory level.
These include workshops, courses, and consultations with colleagues, as instructors believe that these initiatives assist them in accomplishing positive change.

B. In order to maximize the effectiveness of supervision, collaborative cultures and professional relationships based on confidence and mutual respect for individuals involved in the process have to be developed between supervisors and supervisees. Such relationships entail comparable expectations of both supervisors and supervisees in terms of their professionalism, and point to the importance of supervisors' commitment to self-study.

The importance of collaborative cultures and professional relationships, stated as a condition in the hypotheses, was confirmed to a large extent in the study. Responses related to demonstrating respect for the instructors, creating conditions for open communication, providing feedback in a positive and constructive manner, and demonstrating professional conduct, have all been ranked very highly. The type of supervisor who received highest overall rating for effectiveness in the study is a respectful professional who possesses solid listening skills, rather than imposes control on the teacher. The type of supervision ranked highly is one where supervisors work together with instructors on solutions to the immediate classroom problems, by eliciting those collaboratively with the instructor.

Professional relationships usually imply certain expectations on both sides. The supervisor-teacher relationship can be effective and fair only if the expectations associated with openness to growth are the same for both supervisors and teachers. Most theoreticians understand teaching and growth as a lifelong learning process shaped by the
individuals that teachers work with, circumstances they operate within, and their willingness to work on their mastery (Freeman, 1998; Wells et al., 1994). Not unlike teaching, supervision is an idiosyncratic practice limited and defined by many factors and boundaries, such as personalities supervisors work with and their own personalities, contexts, but also the degree of willingness to work on improvement of their own practices. Effective teachers behave like professionals “using their knowledge and experience to make their own judgements about what and how they teach” (Wells et al., 1994, p. 3), and see themselves as intentional learners. Teachers are often reminded to observe and listen so that “they are able to respond in ways that assist the students to solve the problems they meet” (Wells et al., 1994, p. 3). The same expectation is applicable to supervisors, who should see themselves as intentional learners and demonstrate the ability to listen to teachers the same way teachers are expected to listen to students. In order to achieve this, supervisors have to demonstrate readiness to question their actions and change. As Chamberlin (2000) rightly points out, supervision cannot be learnt through afternoon workshops or packaged in ten-easy-step types of books, neither can it be thought up by theorists separated from the circumstances they work in. The findings confirmed it can be learnt through positive and constructive relationships between teachers and supervisors, based on professionalism and lifelong reflection on their own practices.

C. Cultural background is a variable worth consideration in multicultural contexts; within specific settings age and experience may be less important variables than culture.
The study raised the question of the extent to which culture has an impact on the perception of effectiveness of supervision. Culturally driven differences in responses surfaced in some, but not all sections of the questionnaire. The perception of the authority appears to be an issue, particularly with NNS who are more willing to accept it without questioning it, and more inclined to see supervision as a beneficial practice. Working with supervisor as a team, activities that foster group building, and assistance with conflict resolution, are also considered beneficial. The data point to the fact that the focus of supervisors' work with NNS should be different than work with NS. NNS may need more assistance and encouragement in order to develop the ability for self-study and start the process of reflection. In addition, their knowledge base, gained through educational institutions in different contexts, may differ from the knowledge base of the other group. Supervisors need to be able to determine where the possible gaps in education are, how they relate to the philosophy of teaching the institution has adopted, and consequently, adjust their professional development initiatives to address those gaps.

Age and experience have a salient impact on supervisory practices in many contexts; however, these variables have an impact on supervision in the TCDSB context only to a certain extent and in a limited number of issues. This refers to findings that indicate that experienced instructors feel that they need less supervision overall, but their responses with respect to different areas of supervision do not significantly differ from the responses of other instructors. On the other hand, their younger colleagues want more direct input from supervisors with regards to many areas of supervision.
Even though the findings support the premise that culture is a variable worth exploring, the study of this scope verifies that the responses are conditioned by culture to a certain degree and within a very specific context.

D. Diversity of responses to many questions by different groups of instructors and within different variables (see tables and charts) raise the issue of whether a single approach to supervision can match the variety of needs of teachers in diverse contexts.

Not unlike teaching, supervision is highly idiosyncratic. It is embedded within a multitude of circumstances and operates within an array of variables. Practices that work for certain supervisors and supervisees in certain contexts may be ineffective in others. The facts that the word "depends" appears twenty-seven times in written responses added next to questions and in additional comments, and that there are many significant differences in responses related to the variables, point to the idiosyncratic nature of supervision. To some extent, instructors' differing responses in this study confirmed Gardiner's, Gebhard's and Anderson's theoretical premises outlined in the Literature Review Section, and raise an important question. If one approach cannot address all needs, what, then, is the solution in diverse contexts such as TCDSB? As Gardiner argued in 1989, (in Hawkey, 1995) teachers learn in different ways at different times from different supervisors. There are no solutions in supervision that are applicable to all contexts and work well for all individuals on both supervisors' and supervisees' ends. In light of this argument, Gebhard's concept of creative supervision (1982), or Anderson's notion of situational supervision (1991) may be a sustainable solution in many contexts. They suggest that the supervisors mix and match approaches in order to adapt them to the
needs of their staff, depending on the variables such as the supervisors’ and supervisees’ personality traits, cultural backgrounds, age, experience, teaching context, etc.

Situational approach is one of the possible solutions for the TCDSB context, as it allows supervisors to adopt the elements of different approaches, in search of the right balance of elements with a particular individual and context in mind. Such an approach could be particularly pertinent in the spectrum of culturally derived differences among instructors, the large segment of who are non-native speakers. However, selection of such an approach raises another salient question, i.e., to what extent can the approach to supervision in large educational systems such as the TCDSB be left to the individual supervisor’s discretion, without its being misinterpreted at the same time? One has to ensure that supervisors are provided with comprehensible guidelines based on a clearly defined philosophy of supervision as its underpinning principles. Supervisors who are provided with such guidelines can make decisions on how to approach individual teachers, and base their decisions on the teachers’ identities and needs.

Recommendations for TCDSB Adult Education Program

Although there is some commonality in how supervision is organized in different contexts, and many principles of effective supervision apply across a variety of educational settings, one has to bear in mind that the sample for this study was drawn from a single teaching context. Since generalizations may be problematic, the recommendations are kept within the boundaries of the TCDSB context. With this in mind, the implications of the study are discussed in this section in terms of changes that could contribute to the improvement of the TCDSB practices with respect to the research question about supervisory practices that need to be remedied.
It is important that the TCDSB instructors’ perceptions of what constitutes effective supervisory practices shape the design of supervisory practices within their system of supervision. The fact that the instructor viewpoint counts, and that all reasonable suggestions for change are taken into account, can guarantee a greater degree of acceptance of that system. It may also guarantee that the supervisors and supervisees more willingly take the ownership of the process and share the responsibility for its success. It is not certain, however, to what extent it will be possible to implement the suggestions listed here, as the TCDSB instructors are in the process of negotiating a collective agreement. It will outline their expectations of supervision, and the recommendations may be taken into account only if they do not conflict with the agreement.

A growing body of evidence shows that systems of supervision, once in place, do not change for prolonged periods of time (Caroll, 1997; Lawton, Hickox, Leithwood and Mussella, 1998), despite the fact that the responsibilities and roles of supervisors become increasingly complex and demanding over time due to changes that inevitably impact every teaching context. The current TCDSB system of supervision has undergone minor alterations during the past several years, which points to the need to re-examine it. For this reason, it may be advantageous for the management team to analyze the instructor feedback and create a list of modifications that would contribute to achieving a match between effective supervisory practices and improved teaching practice. The pertinent questions they need to ponder are:

How effective is the TCDSB program of supervision from the instructors’ viewpoint?
To what extent does the supervision in its current form contribute to improved teaching practices?

What needs to be done so that it does lead to improved teaching practices?

In response to the question related to the TCDSB instructors' perceptions of supervision, one can assume that instructors' responses partly derive from the lack of emphasis of certain practices in the current system of supervision, or practices that are somewhat lacking in effectiveness. Support with materials could be one such practice, as the instructors' feedback points to the need for more support in that area at all stages of development. Therefore, TCDSB supervisors may need to focus more on directing their teachers to sources of appropriate materials, and on fostering a climate in which effective materials are shared among instructors, particularly those who are teaching similar types of programs. Such sharing could be facilitated indirectly, through self-help groups, or directly by supplying instructors with effective materials. A more costly alternative would be establishing a one-on-one system of consultations where instructors would be offered support with newly published and other existing materials through a consultant in the role of a resource person. The TCDSB currently has such a consultant, but with a very limited number of hours (five hours per month) and in a different role. A more effective solution would be a resource consultant who would keep the current role of networking with publishers and writing book reviews for the Monthly Memos, but would also be visiting classes and providing support with materials to instructors in need of such support.
Findings associated with consultation with supervisors imply the need for improvement of this practice, or for more emphasis on alternative methods of professional growth, as instructors believe that those help them improve their practices. They include reflective teaching through the process of systematic reflection and self study, or trial-and-error techniques. These practices should be further reinforced. There is also room for more work on promoting video-evaluation as an effective method of professional growth. Findings indicate that there is not enough interest for it, regardless of how beneficial it is considered in the literature (Bailey, Curtis and Nunan, 2001; Richards, 1991).

TCDSB Program Consultants should also focus on ways of developing collaborative cultures during observation visits so that they are more likely to lead to improved teaching practices. Since instructors consider supervisors’ visits as beneficial only to a limited degree, the implication is that the TCDSB supervisors should focus on improving the quality of their visits in terms of instructor involvement in the process, and custom tailor their support to address the points listed in the questionnaire responses, in order to fully meet the expectations of the staff. This point is especially important in light of the fact that the majority of instructors are non-native speakers of English, who come from collectivist cultures. Organizing opportunities for collaborative work towards the objectives important for the group as a whole may be an appealing way of responding to this particular group of instructors. Elements of transformational supervision (Grimmet, Rostad and Blake, 1992), in which self-help groups and reflective practice play an important part, may be a model to think about. Instructors are interested in collaborative initiatives, such as workshops or peer learning through consultation with their co-workers.
(see Table 8). An initiative such as sharing sessions of small groups of instructors who teach the same type of program or the same level, where instructors are involved in material sharing or problem solving, would be an effective response to their request for assistance with materials and more emphasis on collaboration with their colleagues. In addition, addressing the need for specific practices that transpired from responses of certain groups of instructors may be a worthwhile investment. For example, instructors older than 41 and non-native speakers need more encouragement for video/audio self-evaluation than other instructors; younger instructors want more direct support, and so on. The model of supervision aimed at addressing the instructors' needs should incorporate addressing the differing needs. Taking into account the complex situation and diversity of the TCDSB instructors, one can again point to the need for a situational approach in which the balance of practices and elements is based on variables involved in individual cases.

Continued effort in organizing meaningful professional development is essential. A practitioner-expert model similar to one advocated by Murphy (2000) or Wells et al. (1994), where teachers are treated as lifelong learners, researchers, presenters, and writers, has been implemented for the past decade within the TCDSB, and has been considered one of its successes. Instructors have constantly been encouraged to become contributing professionals by pursuing courses, publishing their work, submitting classroom ideas in the Monthly Memos or TESL Newsletters, presenting at monthly inservice workshops and conferences, and volunteering their work for their professional associations. In particular, TCDSB has been particularly successful in generating presenters for local conferences and wider. During the past couple of years, TCDSB
Instructors have dominated all local and other ESL conferences (TESL Ontario, TESL North York, TESL Toronto, TESL Peel Halton, TESOL USA conferences), largely due to the fact that they were encouraged by their supervisors to present, reminded to submit proposals for conferences and provided with support and incentives (preparation days) for their workshops. In addition, supervisors themselves regularly present at conferences, which sets a good role model. This aspect of the TCDSB supervision needs to be maintained and further reinforced.

In their current form, both observation visits and formal evaluation contribute to improved teaching practices and positive change to a very limited degree, which confirms claims from the literature (Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1992). The evaluation form itself does not need to be changed – its criteria are clear to most instructors, possibly because it has been in use for such a long time and it has been revised on a number of occasions. However, since most instructors feel that it leads to improved teaching practice to a very limited degree, alternative ways of supervision that lead to improved teaching practice to a higher degree, such as reflective practices and professional development, should be emphasized. Instead of spending the time on observation reports once a year for every instructor, supervisors could do it once in two years and use the gained time to focus on professional development opportunities or support with materials. This may be an avenue to pursue in the transition period before the Collective Agreement with CUPE is in place or is negotiated.

Instructors’ preferences related to the supervisor’s personality traits and behaviours should prompt the TCDSB supervisors to enhance those traits. Respondents
describe effective supervisors as supervisors who are knowledgeable, respect instructors, and help them work on their professional growth.

If the listed practices indeed constitute effective supervision and may eventually lead to improvement of teaching practices, TCDSB supervisors can achieve mastery by focusing on them. Their effectiveness can be maximized in ways similar to ways teachers use to improve their practices: through continuous professional development, reflective practices, and life-long learning and training.

It is up to the TCDSB’s Adult Education Program to make a decision which of these routes to place the emphasis on. The recommendation of this study is to focus on all of them: design appropriate frameworks for professional development, and create conditions and opportunities for reflective action for both its teachers and supervisors.

Recommendations for Further Study

Several needs for future research need to be listed in this section. One clear need for more studies lies in conducting research on effective supervisory practices in a variety of teaching contexts and exploring the variables that contribute to the effectiveness of practices in different settings. Such research would lead to a better understanding of the variables involved. In addition, more research and empirical studies that prove to what extent supervision can be taught successfully and to what extent reflection is beneficial for supervisors are needed.

Additional need for research lies in the area of supervision and teachers’ cultural backgrounds. In particular, large-scale studies that examine how teachers of different cultural backgrounds perceive and react to supervisory practices are needed to determine
to what extent they differ from those of the native speakers. Within this particular area very little has been done on exploring the extent to which the multiple identities of teachers – non-native speakers - cause misunderstandings in the supervisor-supervisee relationships. As pointed out by Braine (1999) and Liu (1999), many non-native speakers have difficulty determining where they belong, particularly if they strive to adopt the identity of their native speaker counterparts. Another issue that could be explored is whether the possible lack of shared cultural knowledge, necessary to be able to successfully operate within a supervisory system in a new cultural environment, influences the non-native speakers’ ability to effectively co-operate with supervisors who are native speakers of English (Liu, 1999). Finally, almost no work has been done to explore the other end of the spectrum: the world of supervisors – non-native speakers of English, and the variables influenced by their cultural backgrounds.

Another direction in which future studies can go is research of the correlation within the triangle of teacher’s talent, maximum growth, and supervision. Since the scope of teacher growth within this frame is limited by the aptitude, ability and talent, development and growth of a particular area of teaching can go only as far as these factors allow. This implies that the supervisory influence is also limited by these factors, and it may be worthwhile to explore to what extent this is so. Closely linked to this issue it is another area that future research could explore: the extent to which supervisors adjust their practices to accommodate this limitation.

Finally, a substantial body of literature in recent years (Sergiovanni, 1992; Grimmet, Rostad and Ford, 1992; Freeman, 1998, Wright, 1998) has focused on reflective teaching, but most of it relies on teachers’ personal accounts or action research
experiences. Statistically significant findings of the hypothesis that reflection leads to
effective teaching practices are seldom found. Moreover, studies that prove the
interrelatedness of reflection of supervisors’ on their work and improvement of their
practices are even less frequent, as pointed out by Laud (1998), Sergiovanni (1985), and
Waite (1990). Thus a great deal more work on empirically proving the thesis that
reflection is beneficial for both teachers and supervisors is urgently needed. Researchers
should focus not only on individual case studies, but also on examining reflection on a
broader scale in terms of the extent to which it fosters supervisor and teacher learning,
and ultimately the extent to which it fosters student learning.

Final Remarks

This study attempts to broaden supervisors’ understanding of their effectiveness
and the factors that contribute to them. It also encourages them to continually question
the quality of their practices. Its value for the author is in bringing viewpoints other than
one’s own into the perspective. The value for instructors lies in the fact that their
supervisors demonstrate genuine interest in their opinions. As such, this study may
trigger modifications in the system of supervision, which, in turn, will help better address
the constantly changing needs of instructors in the TCDSB multicultural context.
References


Tables
Table 1. Instructors with over 10 years of teaching experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of instructors with over 10 years of ESL teaching experience</th>
<th>Number of instructors with over 10 years of any teaching experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>( n = 29 )</td>
<td>( n = 32 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native speakers Non-native speakers</td>
<td>Native speakers Non-native speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( n = 9 )</td>
<td>( n = 7 )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( n = 20 (68.9%) )</td>
<td>( n = 25 (78.1%) )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Responses used for research question on improvement of teaching

**RESEARCH QUESTION:** “To what extent do TCDSB instructors feel that certain supervisory practices generate positive change?” addressed by examining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Questions (response obtained indirectly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Involvement in reaching one’s full potential (Question 2)</td>
<td>How important do you feel it is that the supervisor encourages the instructors to ... (7 options)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Observation visits (Question 6)</td>
<td>Which of the following options best helps you achieve your full potential ... (6 options)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Direct questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Questions (response obtained indirectly)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C. Involvement in reaching one’s full potential (Question 1)</td>
<td>How important do you feel is your active involvement in the process of observation and evaluation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Observation visits (Question 4)</td>
<td>To what extent do supervisor’s visits lead to improved teaching practice?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Evaluation (Question 8)</td>
<td>To what extent do Observation Reports lead to improved teaching practice?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. Responses used to obtain research question on effective supervisory practices

**RESEARCH QUESTION:** “What supervisory practices do TCDSB instructors consider effective?” addressed by examining

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section ...</th>
<th>... and item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Initial inservice and ongoing support</td>
<td>Type of support ranked as most important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Supervisory qualities and practices</td>
<td>Practices considered crucial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of offering feedback ranked most important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Involvement in reaching one’s full potential</td>
<td>Practices related to active involvement considered effective and beneficial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Observation visits</td>
<td>Highest ranked options related to the optimal length and frequency of visits; importance of pre- and post-observation conference and setting objectives for visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Evaluation</td>
<td>Highest ranked options related to the number of visits prior to conducting formal evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Need for support versus teaching experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support with...</th>
<th>Instructors with up to 3 years of experience</th>
<th>Instructors with 10 years of experience</th>
<th>Instructors with more than 10 years of experience</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-range</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5. Ranking of effective supervisory practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Effective supervisor is one who…</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>provides feedback in a positive and constructive manner.</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>points out the areas of teaching that need improvement.</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>offers praise for effective areas of teaching.</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and care</td>
<td>respects the instructor.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>works on building the instructor’s confidence.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>is caring and demonstrates empathy for the instructor.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>takes into consideration the teaching context and its limitations and advantages.</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>is willing to listen to the instructor’s point of view.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>establishes conditions for open and candid communication.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>establishes a sound bond with the instructor.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ensures that his/her authority is felt.</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>assists in resolving staff conflicts.</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>encourages the instructor to work on self-assessment.</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td>encourages the instructor to work on professional development.</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>works on his/her own self-assessment.</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>works on his/her own professional development.</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>encourages the instructor to work with colleagues on peer evaluation.</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>is knowledgeable and up-to-date in the area of adult ESL.</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provides the instructor with useful material.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>provides the instructor with useful information and ideas.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>demonstrates professional conduct.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>keeps a low-key profile during observations.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dresses appropriately.</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Full time supervisor or a part time supervisor/part time classroom practitioner?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Instructors' experience</th>
<th>Instructors' Age</th>
<th>Instructors' native language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL experience</td>
<td>3-10 years of</td>
<td>Over 10 years</td>
<td>41 or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESL experience</td>
<td>younger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time suitable</td>
<td>53.3 %</td>
<td>53.3 %</td>
<td>58.3 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>preferred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. Supervisors’ encouragement of self-improvement practices

Section C, Question 2. How beneficial do you think it is that supervisor encourages the instructor to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...identify strengths and weaknesses</td>
<td>2.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...stand back and reflect</td>
<td>2.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...work with colleagues on professional growth</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...set annual objectives</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...write reflective journals</td>
<td>1.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...explain their approach to teaching</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...video-audio tape their teaching</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. Options that best help instructors achieve their full potentials

Section D, Question 6. Which of the following options best helps you to achieve your full potential?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional development through workshops, courses, conferences, professional literature, etc.</td>
<td>3.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with colleagues</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trial-and-error technique/experiments with different aspects of teaching</td>
<td>2.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematic process of reflection</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with a supervisor</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video-audio taping of classes followed by self-analysis</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Most effective methods of offering feedback

Section B. Question 3. How do you feel about the following methods of offering feedback to the adult ESL instructor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both parties have equal input and work together to find solutions.</td>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After the instructor has been praised for all the positive areas, the weak areas (if any) are pointed out.</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The supervisor creates conditions for a great deal of input from the instructor.</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both positive and negative (if any) feedback are communicated to the instructor openly and directly.</td>
<td>2.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback focuses on sharing with the instructor the alternative ways of doing what was done in the classroom during the visit.</td>
<td>2.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor is given a chance to analyse his/her teaching by focusing on one area s/he is good at, and one area that s/he could be better at.</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The supervisor asks relevant questions about both the effective and ineffective areas (if any).</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10. Differences in responses between NS – NNS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions where responses between NS and NNS differ</th>
<th>Native speakers (means)</th>
<th>Non-native speakers (means)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important is it that ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor's authority is felt</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>2.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor and instructor work together on solutions</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor asks relevant questions</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructor to work on peer evaluation</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructor to stand back and reflect</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor's professional attire is up to standards</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observation visits and reports

| How beneficial are supervisors' visits?                | 2.07                    | 2.57                         |
| How effective is the current TCDSB Observation Report form? | 1.56                    | 2.12                         |
| To what extent do supervisors' visits contribute to improved teaching practice? | 1.87                    | 2.83                         |
| To what extent do Observation Reports contribute to improved teaching practice? | 2.44                    | 2.94                         |
Table 11. Differences in responses based on where university level was obtained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important is it that ...</th>
<th>Responses of instructors who obtained univ. level degree on the North American continent (means)</th>
<th>Responses of instructors who obtained univ. level degree elsewhere (means)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructors to stand back and reflect</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructors to video/audio tape their teaching</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor achieves full potential through video/audio self-evaluation</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor achieves full potential through consultation with colleagues</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12. Differences in responses between instructors younger than 41 and older than 41

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions where age impacts on responses</th>
<th>Instructors older than 41 (mean)</th>
<th>Instructors younger than 41 (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How important is it that ...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor's authority is felt</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor resolves staff conflicts</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructor to work on peer evaluation</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor creates conditions for instructors’ input</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive and negative feedback communicated openly</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor focuses on alternative ways of what was done</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>3.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructor to explain their approach to teaching</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be helpful if instructors wrote self-evaluation reports</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor encourages instructor to write comments on Evaluation Reports</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figures
Figures 1-4

Figure 1: Age group

- 51 and up: 31%
- 41-50: 43%
- 31-40: 21%
- 25-30: 5%

Figure 2: ESL teaching experience

- More than 20 years: 8%
- 10-20 years: 21%
- 3-10 years: 54%
- 1-3 years: 16%
- Missing information: 1%

Figure 3: University level degree obtained in North America or elsewhere

- Elsewhere: 53%
- In North America: 45%
- Missing information: 2%

Figure 4: Native speaker/non-native speaker

- Native speaker of English: 44%
- Non-native speaker of English: 55%
- Missing info: 1%
Figures 5-9

Figure 5. More desirable option: full-time or part-time administrator?

- It does not make a difference: 32%
- A supervisor who is a f.t. administrator: 11%
- P.t. administrator/p.t. practitioner: 57%

Figure 6. How beneficial are supervisor’s visits?

- Highly beneficial: 7%
- Beneficial: 45%
- Somewhat beneficial: 36%
- Missing information: 1%
- Could be more beneficial: 11%

Figure 7. To what extent do supervisor’s visits lead to improved teaching practice?

- A great deal: 14%
- Some: 48%
- Very little: 13%
- Little: 23%
- Missing information: 2%

Figure 8. Optimal length of observation visits

- Certain percentage of teaching time: 12%
- One hour: 29%
- One and half hour: 29%
- Two hours: 14%
- Two and half hours: 11%
- Other: 5%

Figure 9. Optimal frequency of observation visits

- Once a year: 39%
- Four times a year: 4%
- Three times a year: 14%
- Once in two months: 2%
- Once a month: 3%
- Twice a year: 38%
Figures 10-15

Figure 10. After how many visits should evaluation forms be filled out?

Figure 11. How effective is the current TCDSB Observation Report form?

Figure 12. How clear are the criteria for evaluation?

Figure 13. Optimal frequency of formal evaluation

Figure 14. Optimal frequency of formal evaluation (all respondents vs. experienced instructors)
Appendixes
Appendix A: TCDSB Observation Report
INSTRUCTOR'S NAME: 

SCHOOL/LOCATION: 

PROGRAM: 

NO. OF STUDENTS ON THE REGISTER: 

ATTENDANCE: 

PROGRAM CONSULTANT: 

DATE: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PROGRAM CONSULTANT</th>
<th>INSTRUCTOR</th>
<th>PROGRAM CONSULTANT'S SIGNATURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLASSROOM APPEARANCE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATERIAL:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLANNING:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>METHODOLOGY:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDENT PARTICIPATION/CONSIDERATION OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLASSROOM ATMOSPHERE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMENTS: PROGRAM CONSULTANT

COMMENTS: ADULT EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR

NOTE: The Instructor's Signature Acknowledges Receipt Of This Report Only.
Appendix B: Questionnaire
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

The objective of this ANONYMOUS questionnaire is to determine what supervisory practices you consider effective. *It is important that you carefully read the instructions for each question and think about all of the options before making your selection.*

**PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION**

*Please place an X in appropriate boxes.*

1. You belong to the following age group:
   - ☐ younger than 25
   - ☐ 25-30
   - ☐ 31-40
   - ☐ 41-50
   - ☐ 51 and up

2. You obtained your university level (undergraduate) degree:
   - ☐ in North America
   - ☐ elsewhere

3. You consider yourself a ☐ native speaker of English
   - ☐ a non-native speaker of English

4. Your teaching experience:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>in adult ESL includes</th>
<th>☐ 1-3 years</th>
<th>☐ 3-10 years</th>
<th>☐ 11-20 years</th>
<th>☐ more than 20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>in any other area of teaching</td>
<td>☐ none</td>
<td>☐ 1-3 years</td>
<td>☐ 3-10 years</td>
<td>☐ 11-20 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART II: SUPERVISORY PRACTICES**

**A. INITIAL INSERVICE AND ONGOING SUPPORT**

1. Reflect on your personal experience and identify which of the following types of inservice and support are important for the listed categories that apply to your number of years of teaching experience in adult ESL. *Please place an X in appropriate boxes.*

| If you are an instructor with more than ten years of adult ESL teaching experience, fill in columns A, B, and C | Column C: Instructors with more than ten years of teaching experience |
| If you are an instructor with 3-10 years of adult ESL teaching experience, fill in columns A and B | Column B: Instructors with 3-10 years of experience |
| If you are an instructor with up to 3 years of adult ESL experience, fill in column A only | Column A: Instructors with less than three years of teaching experience |

For this group of instructors, support in the area of 

| The overall organization of the program | Extremely important | Important | Of minor importance | Not necessary | Unsure | Extremely important | Important | Of minor importance | Not necessary | Unsure |
| Long-range and daily planning | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Methodology | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Materials | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Activities | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Curriculum implementation | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Other: | | | | | | | | | | | |

---

1 Defined here as a person who grew up and was educated in a non-English speaking country
Please do not sign your name. Your honest feedback will be highly appreciated.

# B. Supervisory Qualities and Practices

1. Please indicate how important you consider these supervisory practices. Place an X for each point in appropriate boxes (absolutely crucial - unsure).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of supervision</th>
<th>An effective supervisor is one who...</th>
<th>Absolutely crucial</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Of minor importance</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>provides feedback in a positive and constructive manner.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>points out the areas of teaching that need improvement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>offers praise for effective areas of teaching.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect and care</td>
<td>respects the instructor.</td>
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<td>works on building the instructor’s confidence.</td>
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<td>is caring and demonstrates empathy for the instructor.</td>
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<td>takes into consideration the teaching context and its limitations and advantages.</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
<td>is willing to listen to the instructor’s point of view.</td>
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<td>establishes conditions for open and candid communication.</td>
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<td>establishes a sound bond with the instructor.</td>
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<td>ensures that his/her authority is felt.</td>
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<td>assists in resolving staff conflicts.</td>
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<td>Professional development</td>
<td>Encourages the instructor to work on self-assessment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>encourages the instructor to work on professional development.</td>
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<td>works on his/her own self-assessment.</td>
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<td>works on his/her own professional development.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>encourages the instructor to work with colleagues on peer evaluation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>is knowledgeable and up-to-date in the area of adult ESL.</td>
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<td>provides the instructor with useful material.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>provides the instructor with useful information and ideas.</td>
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<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>demonstrates professional conduct.</td>
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<td>keeps a low-key profile during observations.</td>
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<td>dresses appropriately.</td>
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Now rank the order of importance of these areas of supervision by writing a number next to them (1-6). Use number 1 for the area you consider most important, and number 6 for the least important area.

Feedback ___ Respect and care ___ Communication ___ Professional development ___ Knowledge ___ Professionalism ___

2. Which of the options do you consider more desirable (please select only one option)?

- [ ] A supervisor who is a full-time administrator.
- [ ] A supervisor who is part-time administrator and part-time classroom practitioner.
- [ ] It does not make a difference.
3. Please indicate how you feel about the following methods of offering feedback to the adult ESL instructor.

| Both parties have equal input and work together to find solutions. | Highly effective | Effective | Some-what effective | Ineffective | Unsure |
| The supervisor creates conditions for a great deal of input from the instructor. | | | | | |
| Both positive and negative (if any) feedback are communicated to the instructor openly and directly. | | | | | |
| After the instructor has been praised for all the positive areas, the weak areas (if any) are pointed out. | | | | | |
| The instructor is given a chance to analyse his/her teaching by focusing on one area s/he is good at, and one area that s/he could be better at. | | | | | |
| The supervisor asks relevant questions about both the effective and ineffective areas (if any). | | | | | |
| Feedback focuses on sharing with the instructor the alternative ways of doing what was done in the classroom during the visit. | | | | | |

(If you wish to elaborate on any of the questions in this or next sections, please use an additional page.)

C. Your involvement in reaching your full potential

1. How important do you feel is your active involvement in the process of observation and evaluation? Please place an X in appropriate boxes.

☐ absolutely crucial ☐ important ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important

2. How beneficial do you feel it is that the supervisor encourages the instructors to:

(please place an X in appropriate boxes)

| Highly beneficial | Beneficial | Somewhat beneficial | Not beneficial at all | Unsure |
| set annual objectives for professional growth and reflect on the results. | | | | |
| identify their strengths and weaknesses. | | | | |
| stand back and reflect on their teaching. | | | | |
| video or audio tape themselves and self-evaluate. | | | | |
| write reflective journals. | | | | |
| explain their own approach to teaching, if it differs from the board’s approach. | | | | |
| work with their colleagues on professional growth. | | | | |

D. Observation visits

Please select only one response by placing an X in the box:

1. The optimal length of the observation visits is:

☐ one hour ☐ one and a half hour ☐ two hours

☐ two and a half hours ☐ certain percentage of teaching time: ___% ☐ other: ___

2. The optimal frequency of supervisor’s observation visits is:

☐ once a month ☐ once in two months ☐ four times a year

☐ three times a year ☐ twice a year ☐ once a year

3. In your particular case, how beneficial do you find supervisors’ visits?

☐ highly beneficial ☐ beneficial

☐ somewhat beneficial ☐ could be more beneficial

4. To what extent do supervisors’ visits lead to improved teaching practice?

☒ a great deal ☐ some ☐ little ☐ very little

5. How important do you think it is that the supervisor does the following:

a) conducts pre-observation conference

☒ very important ☐ important ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important
Please do not sign your name. Your honest feedback will be highly appreciated.

b) conducts post-observation conference
- very important
- important
- somewhat important
- not important

c) sets clear objectives for each of the visits along with the instructor.
- very important
- important
- somewhat important
- not important

### 6. Which of the following options best helps you to achieve your full potential?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Works best for me</th>
<th>Helps me a lot</th>
<th>Helps me to some extent</th>
<th>Not helpful at all</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation with colleagues</td>
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<td>Consultation with a supervisor</td>
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<td>Systematic process of reflection</td>
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<td>Video-audio taping of your classes followed by self-analysis</td>
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<td>Professional development through workshops, courses, conferences,</td>
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<td>professional literature, etc.</td>
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<td>Trial-and-error technique/experiments with different aspects of</td>
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<td>teaching.</td>
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**E. EVALUATION**

Please select only one response by placing an X in the box:

1. What is the optimal frequency of being formally evaluated?
   - [ ] Twice a year
   - [ ] Once a year
   - [ ] Once in two years
   - [x] Other: _______________

2. Evaluation forms should be filled out after
   - [ ] One visit
   - [ ] Two visits
   - [ ] Three visits
   - [ ] More than three visits
   - [ ] Other: _______________

3. Compared to your vision of an effective Observation Report form, the form that TCDSB currently has in place is
   - [x] Great
   - [ ] Good
   - [ ] Needs improvement

4. How clear to you are the criteria for evaluation?
   - [ ] Very clear
   - [ ] Clear
   - [ ] Somewhat clear
   - [ ] Not clear at all

5. Do you use the space on the Observation Report to write your comments?
   - [ ] Always
   - [ ] Sometimes
   - [x] Never

6. Do you feel that the supervisor needs to encourage instructors to write their comments?
   - [x] Yes, definitely
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

7. Do you feel it would be helpful if the instructor wrote a self-evaluation report to be attached to the supervisor's report?
   - [x] Yes, definitely
   - [ ] No
   - [ ] Unsure

8. To what extent do Observation Reports lead to improved teaching practice?
   - [ ] A great deal
   - [ ] Some
   - [ ] Very little
   - [ ] Not at all

**PART III: COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS (optional)**

If you wish, list some of the positive and some of the less effective aspects of the TCDSB Adult Education’s current system of supervision. Feel free to make any suggestions or comments on (an) additional page(s), and do not forget to indicate the section and question number you are commenting on. To maintain anonymity, you are encouraged to type up your responses for this section.

Thank you!
Appendix C: Letter to Instructors
Dear instructor,

The questionnaire attached to this letter has been created with the objective to determine, with your help, what supervisory practices in the areas of initial and ongoing inservice, observation visits, and evaluation adult ESL instructors consider effective.

Participation in this anonymous questionnaire is optional. There is no penalty or negative consequence if you choose not to complete the questionnaire. However, if you do choose to participate, your responses will help us better understand our views about effective supervisory practices and may lead to the improvement of these practices.

It will take you approximately fifteen to twenty minutes to fill out parts one and two of the questionnaire. Part three is optional. If you wish to participate, please complete and return this questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope by June 3, 2000 to Holy Name School.

Anonymity and confidentiality will be fully respected. The questionnaire has been designed in such a manner that it does not reveal the respondent’s identity, and the envelopes are not marked in any way. Responses and the raw data will be kept confidential, but the overall survey findings will be made available to all instructors in the fall through a report in the Monthly Memo.

The data will serve a dual purpose: to conduct a quality assurance study within our program, and as a basis for my thesis in the Master of Arts program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, supervised by Loma Earl. If you wish to obtain any additional information, feel free to contact Lorna Earl at (416) 923 – 6641, ext. 2420, or leave a message in my voice mail (416) 397 - 6073.

Four individuals will have access to the raw data: myself, a representative of instructors, a representative of administration, and Lorna Earl. Upon completion of the study, the data will be kept in a locked file at Dundas LINC Education Centre for five years starting with the date mailing was done. Anyone wishing to use the data for secondary research will have to obtain permissions from the Senior Manager of Adult Education Program and myself.

Please note that the questionnaire was designed outside of my working hours. Thank you for your time and participation,

Vesna Nikolic,
Program Consultant
INTRODUCTION

Due to the significance of supervisory decisions and the complex nature of the process, supervision has been granted extensive attention in the literature, which covers its various aspects, outlines a large number of challenges that teachers and supervisors face during the process, and offers a variety of solutions and approaches in response to these challenges. Despite the fact that there is no consensus among theoreticians on how to address the challenges, and that very few dilemmas of supervision have been resolved, there seems to be an agreement that supervision is a necessary process, that its overall objective should be positive lasting change, and that permanent improvement is not likely to be achieved without teachers’ active involvement. Most theoreticians agree that the crucial issue in supervision is the effectiveness of supervisory practices. The manner in which supervisors approach the process, offer support or try to enhance improvement determines how teachers react and respond to that process and to what extent they accept it willingly (Popham, 1988; Anderson, 1989; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Grimmet, Rostad & Ford, 1992; Huberman, 1992; Szpin, 1992; Begley et al, 1995; Gullat & Ballard, 1998). Other issues continually highlighted in the literature are:

✓ qualities that supervisors need to possess
✓ the role of supervisors and supervisees
✓ effective communication patterns/listening skills of supervisors
✓ models of supervision
✓ responding to change in educational systems by adjusting the models to current needs
✓ lack of active teacher involvement and teacher perspective
✓ reluctance among teachers to accept externally mandated change
✓ factors that contribute to effectiveness of supervisory practices
✓ separating summative supervision (focuses on evaluation) from formative supervision (focuses on support and improvement)
✓ professional growth opportunities designed for supervisors.

Several more recent additions to the existing discussions in the literature need to be mentioned. One of them is the emphasis on the variety of alternative, non-directive methods of professional growth that could be classified under the umbrella concept of reflective teaching: self-evaluation, video/audio evaluation, peer consultation and evaluation, reflective journals, etc. Many theorists claim that, if committed to professional growth, teachers can accomplish considerably more by working on their own than by being forced “from above”; they assert that supervisors should encourage the teachers to systematically reflect on their practice (Begley et al, 1995; Cook et al, 1997; Gitlin & Smith, 1990; Cromwell, 1991; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Clark, 1992; Huberman, 1992; Leithwood, 1992; Sergiovanni, 1985 and 1992; Whaley, 1994). Another recent addition to literature is the recognition of the need for multicultural perspective. It is currently ignored in practice in most contexts, and as a result, the myth of sameness, or the notion that teachers of all cultural backgrounds respond to supervision in the same fashion, is applied to all regardless of their background. In collectivist cultures people tend to accept inequalities between individuals of different status more willingly than in individualist cultures, and they also may consider working together for the benefit of the whole group more important (Alfonso, 1986; Waite, 1990; Fong, 1994; Wilson et al, 1996). The issue of sameness is usually also applied to the length and quality of teacher training teachers have received in their countries: there may be considerable differences and, consequently, the needs related to supervision and professional development may be diverse. Finally, the focus of supervision and the need for it may vary at different stages of professional development, and in that sense developmental theories of supervision have contributed significantly to focusing the supervisors' attention on those varying needs (McGreal, 1982; Gebhard, 1984; Huberman, 1992; Grimmet, Rostad & Ford, 1992).
An anonymous questionnaire was mailed out in May 2000 to three hundred and twenty instructors employed by the TCDSB Continuing Education’s Adult Education Program in part-time or full-time capacity. As clearly indicated in the cover letter, the participation was optional.

The instructors’ feedback was sought in the following categories: initial and ongoing in-service, personal qualities of supervisors and their practices, observation visits, formal evaluation, instructors’ involvement, and methods of professional growth instructors use to achieve their full potential. In addition to obtaining the responses to questions by asking the participants to place checkmarks, instructors were encouraged to provide longer responses in the event they wanted to point out additional issues not listed in the questionnaire.

The main objective of the questionnaire was to gain better understanding of supervision from the instructors’ perspective, and in that sense, the findings can be used as a quality assurance study within the TCDSB Adult Education Program, and to broaden our knowledge of effective supervisory practices. Findings may lead to improvement of these practices through recommendations for adjustments in the current Adult Education Program system of supervision.

The responses were obtained from one hundred and three adult ESL instructors. Even though findings cannot be generalized for the entire instructor population, the sample is fairly representative: one hundred and three responses can provide a solid, if not complete, overview of the instructors’ perception of effective supervision.

The responses are interpreted in this report as they relate to the variables of classroom experience in teaching adult ESL and native speakers’ versus non-native speakers’ reaction to supervision.

Who were the respondents?

The following pie charts illustrate the profile of the respondents.
Questions in the first section of the questionnaire were based on the developmental theories of supervision according to which the need for supervision may be different at various stages of professional development. The findings confirmed this theoretical premise. Novice instructors feel they need substantial support with all areas of teaching, but the differences in preferences of one area of support over the other are minimal. Support with materials, however, was ranked as number one, followed by support with activities, planning and methodology. The differences are somewhat more explicit with the second group of instructors (3-10 years of experience), with materials again being the most emphasized area, followed by support with the overall organization of the program, methodology, and activities respectively. Finally, the most experienced group (over 10 years of ESL teaching experience) feels that they need considerably less support than the previous two groups. Their preferences of the areas of support corresponded with the preferences of the previous group.

It is interesting that all three groups consider support with materials a priority. The question "What to teach?" is obviously the question that most instructors are focusing on during all stages of their professional development. The Adult Education Program is an intensive program with continuous intake, where change is a constant. Consequently, instructors are in constant search of new resources trying to respond to those changes quickly and effectively by using appropriate materials.

Instructors were asked to rank six areas of supervision: feedback, respect and care, professional development, professionalism and knowledge.

Overall, the highest ranked areas are:
1. Professional development
2. Professionalism
3. Feedback
4. Knowledge

Instructors were also asked to define the practices that make a supervisor effective. According to the opinions of all instructors, regardless of the years of experience, an effective supervisor is one who (in order of importance, respectively) demonstrates respect for the instructor, possesses solid listening skills, creates conditions for open communication, is knowledgeable, and provides feedback in a positive and constructive manner. In addition, it is helpful if supervisor demonstrates professional conduct, and takes into consideration the specifics of a particular teaching context.

Their preference is the supervisor who is still a classroom teacher, and the pie chart below illustrates the percentages. It is interesting that non-native speakers and instructors with over ten years of experience feel even stronger that the supervisor should be a classroom practitioner (67.9%, 66.7% respectively).
As indicated in one of the pie charts above, fifty-four percent of the respondents consider themselves non-native speakers of English\textsuperscript{1} versus forty-four percent who consider themselves native speakers. Sixty-seven percent of respondents among experienced instructors (with more than ten years of ESL teaching experience) consider themselves non-native speakers of English.

Responses to many questions between the two groups - native vs. non-native speakers - differ only insignificantly. However, there are several areas where the perception of what effective supervision entails is significantly different. The differences are related to:

- The issue of supervisor’s authority: non-native speakers have less difficulty accepting the authority
- Peer evaluation: non-native speakers feel that the supervisor should encourage instructors to work on this form of professional development
- Working on solutions together: non-native speakers are more confident than native speakers that the supervisor and the instructor should work as a team on finding solutions for effective classroom practice
- Staff conflicts: non-native speakers feel more strongly that it is important that the supervisor be involved in resolving them

Further differences are related to the fact that non-native speakers perceive supervisor’s visits as more beneficial than native speakers, and are more confident that these visits may result in improved teaching practice. Native speakers, on the other hand, lean more towards reflective practices, and have less difficulty accepting the video/audio self-evaluation (even though neither of the two groups is enthusiastic about using this method, as explained later). One additional point: native speakers seem to be more concerned about the supervisor’s attire.

The most effective method of supervision, according to the respondents, is working together on solutions. When it comes to offering feedback, the instructors feel that the positive areas should be pointed out first, and that conditions should be created for instructor’s input. Furthermore, the majority of instructors feel that instructor involvement in the process is important or crucial (46.3\% and 34.7\% respectively). Also, supervisors should encourage the instructors to identify their strengths and weaknesses by standing back and reflecting on their work, or to work with their colleagues on professional growth.

The least accepted method of professional growth is video/audio self-evaluation. This reluctance on the part of instructors to video/audio self-evaluate is confirmed one more time later in the survey, when instructors indicated that it was the least common option they used to achieve their full potential. The most common methods of achieving one’s full potential are workshops, courses, and consultation with colleagues, but also reflection and trial-and-error technique (respectively).

The percentages in the pie charts below illustrate instructors’ feedback on observation visits.

\textsuperscript{1} Defined here as individuals who grew up and were educated in a non-English speaking countries
In addition to the information presented in the pie charts, findings reveal that respondents with more than ten years of ESL teaching experience expect a somewhat lower number of visits per year (30% twice a year; 43.3% once a year).

Both pre-and post-observation conferences are considered desirable, with post-observation conference ranked as more significant. One more issue was pointed out: instructors feel it is crucial that supervisors and instructors set objectives for each of the visits.

In how many visits should evaluation forms be filled out?

After how many visits should evaluation forms be filled out?

More than three visits 2%
Three visits 13%
Two visits 41%
One visit 37%
Other 7%

How effective is the current TCDSB Observation Report form?

Missing information 2%
Great 16%
Good 64%
Needs improvement 18%

Not what extent do supervisor's visits lead to improved teaching practice?

A great deal 14%
Some 48%
Very little 13%
Little 23%

What is the optimal frequency of observation visits?

Optimal frequency of observation visits

Once a month 3%
One in two months 2%
Three times a year 14%
Twice a year 38%

What is the optimal length of observation visits?

Optimal length of observation visits

One hour 29%
One and half hour 29%
Two hours 14%
Two and half hours 11%
Certain percentage of teaching time 12%
Other 5%

How beneficial are supervisor's visits?

How beneficial are supervisor's visits?

Beneficial 45%
Somewhat beneficial 36%
Could be more beneficial 11%
Missing information 14%
Highly beneficial 7%
As the last chart indicates, experienced instructors feel that they need to be formally evaluated less frequently than experienced ones.

Self-evaluation reports are not well liked among instructors. The majority feels that filing a self-evaluation report, in addition to the ones filed by supervisors, would not be beneficial. Experienced instructors feel even stronger that those reports would not be a beneficial option.

The word “depends” was used both in responses added to questions in the questionnaire and within additional comments numerous times (twenty-seven!), which confirms the idiosyncratic nature of supervision.

Overall, there were very few additional comments, and the points below are highlights of the type of feedback that the instructors provided:

**Visits:**

- Visits should be announced to avoid the negative feeling of “being checked on” or “caught out”.
- Supervisors should conduct surprise visits to “those who have been neglecting their duties, and not those who are conscientious and hardworking”.
- “I dislike the feeling of waiting... Therefore I suggest that ... instructors with excellent record ... should not be “checked on” so frequently, let’s say, once every two years.”
- “Visits should not be pre-arranged. Also, visits should not occur on Monday morning or Friday afternoons.”
"At first, observation visits help a great deal. After, very little."

"In a positive relationship, there is no threat admitting that one has a problem. In a negative relationship, that is not likely to be the case."

"the method will vary with the instructor, i.e., generally those who are doing well are already "self-observant" and "self-correcting" and "seeking helpful comments and suggestions" to continue to develop. But many instructors who are not ... "on target", are lacking in self-awareness, so they unfortunately believe things to be better than they are."

Miscellaneous:

"Consultants could sit together and lay out all the mistakes they observed from different instructors and then figure out all the possible solutions and then hold a conference... and pass the information on. In this way we would learn through other teachers' mistakes..."

"I don't know if there is a system of supervising substitute instructors in effect, but ...their conscientiousness varies a great deal."

"...some supervisors, not my own, do not always seem professional."

"The Board is too much in love with the communicative approach is not honest to acknowledge that it has outlived itself and there are no magic methods after all."

"One of my concerns is the role of IIC vis-à-vis the role of Program Consultant, since the former is there on a daily basis, while the latter only visits occasionally. I have seen how comments made by the Instructors-in-Charge are taken as interference and usurping of power, and how well deserved negative comments are taken as nit-picking because of personality conflicts..."

More communication between consultants is needed (in the event one instructor has two consultants).

Questionnaire:

"A couple of questions in the questionnaire need to include options relative to individual rather than absolute categories."

"This is an excellent questionnaire and definitely ahead of consultative methods in most programs."

"This is a thoughtful and professional questionnaire. I'm sure the results will have an effect that is positive."

Questions or comments?
Leave a message at (416) 397 - 6073