
Chapter 23

Approaches to Supervision

by
Insaf Salem, Kamel Hyndiah
and Abdel Gayed Hafez

Outline

Introduction	394
Supervisors Are Important	394
Supervision in Egypt	394
Approaches to Supervision	395
• Judgmental Supervision	396
• Developmental Supervision	396
The Three Stage Model	397
• The Pre-Lesson Stage	397
• The Observation	398
• The Feedback Session	398
• What if I Don't Have Time for Such Meetings?	399
The HORACE Model	401
Learning to Teach	402
Mentoring	404
Conclusion	404
Key Terminology	405
Understanding Check	406
Resources	407
Summary Handout for Chapter 23	408

Introduction

A great deal has been written on supervision in Egypt and many projects have focused on Egyptian supervisors. In this chapter and the chapters that follow, we will try to learn both from the literature on good practice in supervision as well as from what has worked and continues to work in the Egyptian context. Our goal is to help supervisors to make their own principled decisions as to the best way of supporting the primary teachers for whom they are responsible.

In this chapter, we will:

- Look at what the literature on supervision tells us and what we, here in Egypt, can learn from it.
- Give an overview of the main issues connected with supervision in Egypt.

Supervisors Are Important

In Egypt, supervisors perform a range of important roles. They assess teachers both at pre-service and in-service levels. They can also be a powerful influence on student teachers in developmental terms. At the in-service stage, they are often the only source of teacher development available to practicing teachers. As such, if we want to effect any changes in English primary education, we need to look at the most effective approach to supervision. How can supervisors best perform their roles so that teachers continue to learn and develop and pupils in the classroom benefit from the improved teaching? This is the major question addressed in this chapter.

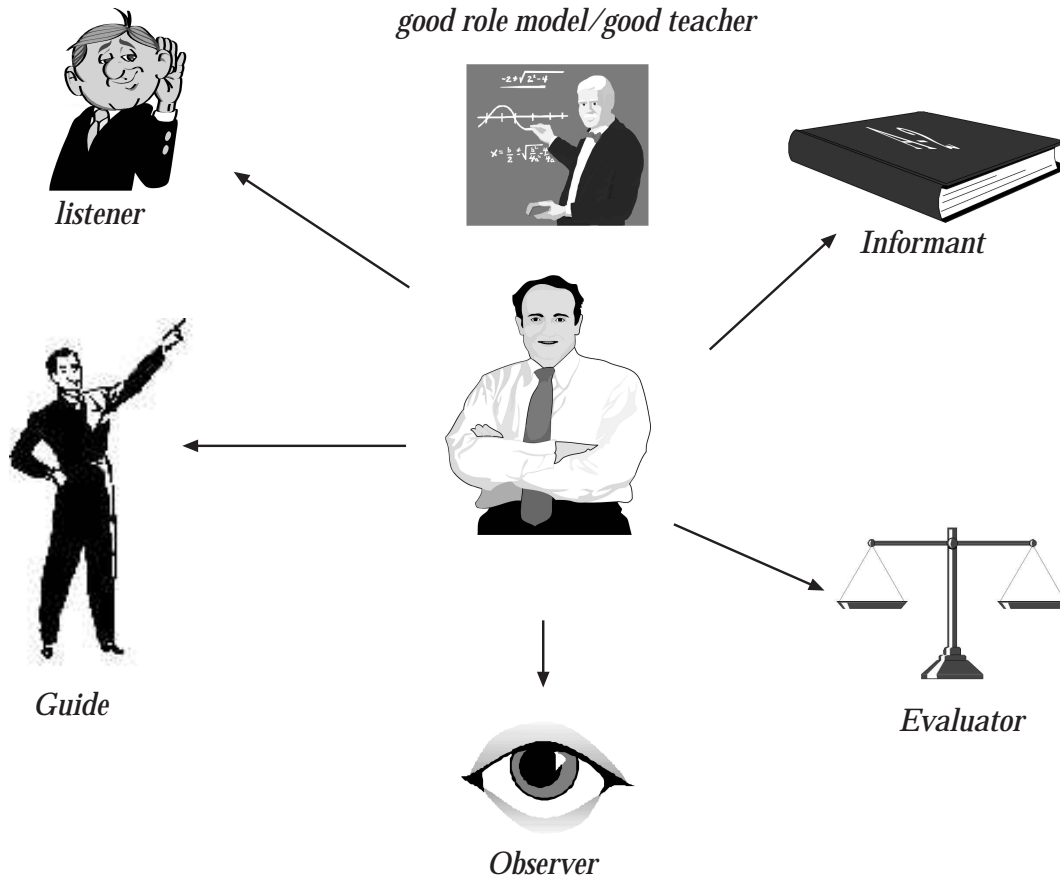
Supervision in Egypt

In Egypt, supervisors work in faculties with student teachers during teaching practice (pre-service supervision) and in the Ministry with serving teachers (in-service supervision). There are many similarities between supervision at pre and in-service level, but there are also some important differences. See

Chapter 27: *Tips for Novice Supervisors.*

However, there are a number of roles which are common to both the pre and in-service contexts:

Roles of the Supervisor



When you think of all the different skills involved in each role, you will see that it is no easy task to be a supervisor!! There have been a number of attempts to combine these roles within different models. Some writers have looked at styles of supervision to try to bring all these roles within one framework.

Approaches to Supervision

There have been many attempts to categorize styles of supervision. One of the better-known categorizations is by Gebhard (1990) who outlines various styles of supervision which include directive, non-directive, alternative and collaborative.

For our purposes in the Egyptian context, we will be considering two main approaches: Judgmental Supervision and Developmental Supervision.

Judgmental Supervision

In judgmental supervision, the evaluative role is the most important. The role of the supervisor is to evaluate the teacher's mastery of desirable teaching behaviors which have been defined beforehand. This approach has a number of disadvantages. If those being supervised feel that they are being judged, they lose the "right to be wrong". They lose the courage to try new ideas and to explore more than one alternative. Teachers are forced to comply with what the supervisor thinks they should do. This model of supervision may give rise to feelings of defensiveness and low self-esteem. Teachers who only do what they are told, who have no "ownership" of the teaching methods they use, will feel no responsibility if things are unsuccessful. They are quick to say, "I was only following orders".

Judgmental supervision is the logical conclusion of views of training as an "equipping process". In this view of training, we are simply equipping our teachers with the skills they will need to teach. In this view, the teacher educator knows which skills a teacher will need and all that is left is for the teacher to acquire those skills. Then the teachers undertake the tasks in the classroom while the supervisor checks whether they are performing according to the prescribed rules. If so, they are considered to be competent teachers. If not, they may be considered incompetent.

Features of Judgmental Supervision

1. There is a right way of doing things in the classroom which is decided by the supervisor.
2. The supervisor's role is to speak rather than listen to the teacher.
3. The focus is on teachers' weaknesses.

Judgmental supervision can be very stressful for teachers. As a result of this, many teachers want supervisors to visit them when they are teaching "good" classes where they are sure there are no discipline problems and nothing will go wrong. They may even repeat a lesson they have taught previously. Under these circumstances, it is difficult for the supervisor to observe a "normal" lesson and to get a realistic idea of the way the teacher usually teaches.

Developmental Supervision

In this type of supervision, the intention of the supervisor is to help teachers to teach better by helping them to pinpoint areas of strength and weakness and make decisions about improvements. This does not usually involve assessment of the teacher as individuals, but rather of the methods and the

techniques used and how these impact on student learning. The evaluative element of the supervision has as its purpose the improvement of teaching. The supervisor provides the teacher with feedback and helps him or her to reach decisions about further developments. Developmental supervision results in teachers who are able to take responsibility for what they do and develop a teaching style which best suits their teaching circumstances. Teachers are able to acknowledge any teaching problems they have and discuss these with the supervisor. This kind of supervision takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect unlike the tense atmosphere of judgmental supervision.

Features of Developmental Supervision

1. Assessment is based on progress from one lesson to another.
2. Supervisors take note of and build on teachers' strengths.
3. Supervisors listen to teachers' views.
4. Supervisors suggest alternatives rather than just giving one solution.

The Three Stage Model

If we agree that our general approach should be developmental rather than judgmental, this still leaves us with many decisions regarding how exactly we are going to fulfill this role. Most people agree that, as far as possible, we should aim to work towards the three-stage model consisting of:

- pre-lesson session
- classroom observation
- the feedback session.

As a supervisor, it is not enough just to go into the class, observe, and then deliver your verdict. Each stage of the teaching cycle has its own purpose and you, as a supervisor, have a different role at each stage.

The Pre-Lesson Stage

This phase depends on the time available for the supervisor and will inevitably vary according to the number of teachers supervised at any one time. However, if possible, you should meet with the teacher, however briefly, before the lesson. The issue of what you can do if you cannot meet is dealt with later in this chapter.

There are a number of important purposes to the pre-observation stage. One reason is to find out about teachers' intentions for the lesson. You can do this by looking at their lesson plan or by running through a lesson planning checklist such as the following:

- lesson topic
- lesson content
- objectives
- materials
- lesson development and closure
- students etc. (Okwen, 1999).

This will help you to make sure that you understand exactly what is going to take place in the lesson. If you meet with the teacher well in advance of the lesson, it will be possible to actually suggest changes to the lesson plan itself. However, meeting with the teachers immediately prior to the lesson will still be useful for the following reasons:

- To establish a shared understanding of the purposes of the observation. Okwen (1999) states that the observer and the teachers themselves should set a limited number of professional targets for the lesson. These may be selected from any aspect of the lesson. The pre-observation meetings are also a time to look back to the last lesson and link any plans established on the previous occasion to present targets. The supervisors should also share with the teachers any forms that they intend to complete.
- To put the teacher at ease. Observation and supervision can be stressful. This is a chance for the supervisors to let the teachers know that they are there to help as well as assess.
- To find out about the teacher's intentions for the lesson. Supervisors can ask the teachers about their aims and whether any problems are anticipated.

The Observation

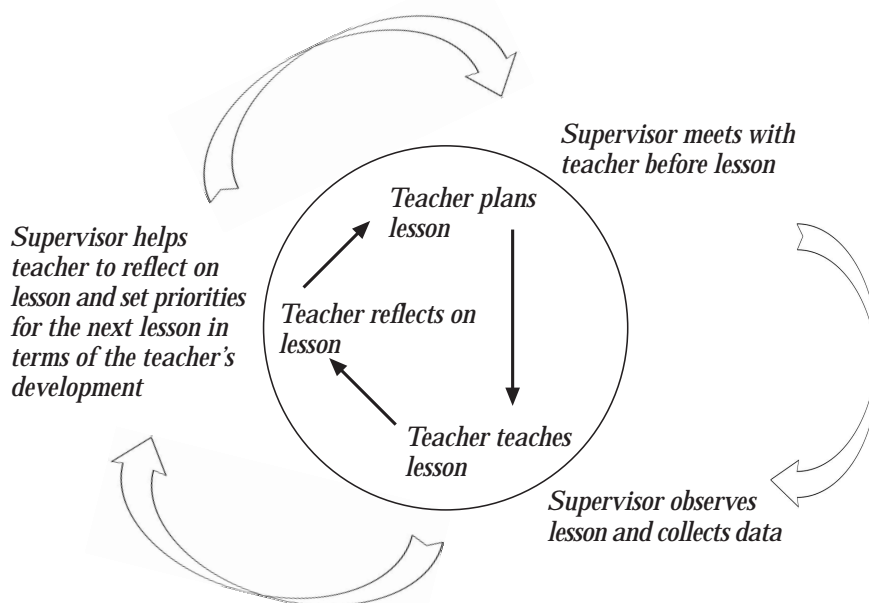
The observation is the second phase of the teaching practice cycle. At this stage, the observer focuses on the targets set at the pre-observation meeting and collects relevant data for the teacher's attention. The data collected constitute a vital part of the content of the student teacher's teaching profile. We talk at greater length about the tools for collecting this data in Chapter 24: *Teacher Observation*.

The Feedback Session

The feedback session or post-observation meeting is the final phase during which the teacher and observer look back at the lesson and the data gathered. Some educators suggest that data should be presented in the most non-judgmental manner possible giving the teacher the chance to analyze the data

and to make decisions. Others suggest that positive feedback should be given to create a good climate for further discussion of the lesson and to give the student teacher a sense of accomplishment. Still, others say that "good" points of the lesson should be pointed out to the teacher while the "bad" ones should be given in the form of suggestions for improvement. We will examine these alternatives in greater detail in chapter 25: *Giving Constructive Feedback*. However, we need to look at these three stages more as a cycle than as a linear process. During the feedback session, the supervisor will, together with the teacher, identify priorities for future development.

Stage Model



What if I don't have time for such meetings?

Many supervisors claim that they have insufficient time for meetings with teachers either before or after the lesson (Abu Hagggar, 2001). One alternative devised by supervisors in the Ismailia governorate is to use forms such as the ones below when face-to-face meetings are not possible. Instead of getting information by speaking to the teacher, the teacher is asked to write down what he or she would like the supervisor to know. In this way the supervisor is not going into the lesson "blind" but rather has the necessary information about the teacher's aims and concerns.

The Planning Conference

What is the aim of the lesson? _____

How will you achieve this aim? _____

What difficulties do you think your students may face? _____

How will you overcome these difficulties? _____

Is there anything else you would like me to know? _____

Is there anything special you would like me to watch out for in the lesson? _____

NAME OF TEACHER _____

NAME OF SUPERVISOR _____

Likewise, if you don't have sufficient time to talk to teachers and get their perceptions, you can use a form such as the one below. In fact, even if you do have time for meetings before and after the lesson, the form might be helpful, since it gives the teacher a chance to reflect on the lesson prior to the meeting with you. ¹

Feedback Conference

What practices would you repeat if you were to teach this class again?

What would you change if you were to teach this class again?

What did the students learn?

What did you learn?

NAME OF TEACHER _____

NAME OF SUPERVISOR _____

The HORACE Model

There are many other models of supervision. The HORACE Model, described below, was developed in Egypt.

HORACE: A GUIDE TO TEACHER COUNSELLING

HEAR and OBSERVE
RECORD and ANALYZE
CONSIDER and only then EVALUATE

Hear - Observe - Record - Analyze - Consider - Evaluate
"HORACE"

(Bowers, 1987, p.139)

Let us consider each of the terms of H.O.R.A.C.E. First of all, the supervisor needs to hear the input from the teacher. This is the most important first step. You cannot possibly know everything about the class and what the teacher intends to do.

The next stage is the observation. Bowers (1987) suggests that this should be done as if you were "a fly on the wall." You should never interrupt the lesson.

The third stage is the recording of the lesson. Bowers (1987) makes the point that "no one observational technique is in itself adequate; all techniques have their strengths and weaknesses" (p.144). He suggests using a range of techniques but points out that whatever observation instrument we do use should be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Relevance.** Is the instrument useful to collect data about the particular area you wish to focus on?
- **Acceptability.** Are student teachers likely to accept the findings that the form yields?
- **Comparability.** If two different supervisors use the form, will they get similar results?
- **Economy.** How long will it take you to learn to use the form? How long will it take to fill it out? Is this an economical use of the supervisor's time?

(The above criteria spell out RACE, another mnemonic for remembering the criteria). After the supervisor records the information, some observation instruments further require a phase of analysis to transfer data into a form meaningful to the teacher.

The last two stages in the HORACE model are to consider and evaluate. Consider means taking the time to review the evidence, again listening to the teacher before jumping in with criticism or praise. There may be specific reasons why teachers have done things in a certain way. You should consider not only your own perspective of the lesson, but also the teacher's point of view. Last of all, comes the evaluation stage of the lesson. According to this model, teachers are evaluated against three criteria:

1. Individual level. Teachers are evaluated against the standards that are appropriate for them as individuals. You may have different standards for student teachers just beginning their teaching and for teachers who have been teaching for many years.
2. System level. Here you will want to see whether teachers are fulfilling the requirements of the educational system in Egypt. Are they following the curriculum as prescribed? Are the children learning what they are supposed to learn?
3. Professional level. The third level is the professional level. Is the teacher teaching at a level appropriate to being a member of the teaching profession?

Learning to Teach

Our job as supervisors is to help teachers to develop as best they can. We need to understand how teachers learn to teach so we can help them along in the process. Much of what has been written about supervision neglects the role of teacher learning. This is very similar to looking at teaching techniques without thinking of their effect on the learner (Thornton, 1998; Randall & Thornton, 2001).

Thornton (1998) looks at one model of learning to teach based on teacher life cycle studies. These studies tell us that most teachers go through well-defined stages in their careers of learning to teach. Each stage is characterized by certain types of behavior.

Stages of Teacher Development	
Stage	Behaviors
Novice	Novices focus on classroom survival by acquiring individual techniques. Their planning is extremely short term and often very detailed.
Advanced Beginner	The teachers at this stage have managed to acquire certain classroom routines which they can apply automatically. At this stage, teachers are often very hungry for new techniques and are looking for ways of making their teaching more interesting.
Competent	Whereas at the previous stages, teachers focused on their own performance in the classroom, now they are increasingly focused on ways of improving student learning.
Proficient	At this stage, teachers start to have an intuitive grasp of the best way of organizing the learning experiences for students. Teachers are able to appreciate that decision-making in the classroom will be based on a number of variables - what time of day it is; how the children are feeling etc. and that there is not necessarily one right answer to every question in teaching.
Expert	Experts are characterized by their ability to anticipate classroom events rather than simply react to them. Expert teachers appear to teach in an effortless and fluid way, and their planning is characterized by a much more flexible attitude.

A further stage that has been identified in the literature is that of burnout. Teachers may become so stressed or overwhelmed that they simply do not function at their best with the same degree of enthusiasm they did earlier. Sometimes, teachers have simply been in the same job for too long. They are competent, but they may have become disillusioned and they have little motivation to improve themselves.

Although no research that we know of has been carried out in Egypt, supervisors have confirmed that they recognize these stages both in themselves and in others. They also pointed out that teachers at different stages of their careers require different sorts of help.

Mentoring

A further recent development in the field of teaching practice supervision has been that of mentoring (Thornton & Cajkler 1998). Mentoring has been variously defined in the literature:

Mentoring is a process by which an older and more experienced person takes a younger person under his/her wing freely offering advice and encouragement (Jeffrey & Ferguson, 1992, p.4).

The role of the mentor is to act as 'wise counselor', guide, adviser to younger or newer colleagues (Smith & West-Burnham, 1993, p.2).

The term itself implies a warm, sympathetic, and experienced guide. The term was traditionally used to describe the experienced teacher in the school who was helping and tutoring the teacher in training. It has recently been used more widely to signify a new role for supervisors – that of helpers and guides willing to share their knowledge and experiences with teachers.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have looked at approaches to supervision from a largely theoretical perspective. We feel it is important for supervisors in Egypt to have a basic overview of what is happening in the field in order to make informed choices about their work. In Chapters 24-7 we will look at the applications in practice of some of the approaches we have mentioned here.

Key Terminology

The Three-Stage Model of Observation	Also called the three-stage approach A cyclical approach to supervision that emphasizes the importance of the pre-lesson and post-lesson stage as well as the observation itself.
Developmental Supervision	An approach to supervision where the emphasis is on helping teachers to improve and grow.
Judgmental Supervision	An approach to supervision which emphasizes the evaluative role of the supervisor
HORACE	An approach to supervision based on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing • Observing • Recording • Analyzing • Considering • Evaluating
Feedback	Data collected during the observation is conveyed to the teacher as feedback during the post observation conference.
The Teaching Practice Cycle	The model of observation described above which is cyclical. The post lesson stage will give feedback which enables the teacher to plan for the next lesson
RACE	The criteria for evaluating observation instruments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance • Acceptable • Comparable • Economy
Life Cycle Studies	Studies which look at teachers' overall careers and the stages they move through
Mentoring	When an experienced professional provides sympathetic guidance to a younger colleague

Understanding Check

1. Are these supervisor behaviors typical of a judgmental or developmental approach?
 1. The supervisor elicits self-evaluative comments from the teacher
 2. The supervisor assesses teacher based on progress made from one lesson to another
 3. The supervisor knows that there is only one right way to do things in a classroom
 4. The supervisor involves the teacher in analyzing the lesson
 5. The supervisor feels that his or her main role is to give advice and information
 6. The supervisor bases his or her judgment on teacher performance within one lesson
2. Complete the table below

STAGE	SUPERVISOR ROLE
Pre-observation	
Observation	
Feedback	

1. Look at the descriptors of the stages of teacher careers. Do you think these stages exist in teachers in Egypt? Do you recognize any of these stages in yourself? What relevance does the work on teacher life cycles have for your role as a supervisor?
2. Look at the definition of a mentor in this unit? Have you ever been mentored? Have you ever mentored others? How applicable is mentoring in the Egyptian context?

Resources

Abu Haggar, K. (2001). Personal Communication. January 2001

Barzun, J. (1945). In R.D. King, *Teacher in Texas*. Retrieved June 15, 2001 from the World Wide Web:
<http://www.utexas.edu/admin/opa/discovery/disc1997v14n4/disc-texas.html>

Bowers, R. (1987). Developing Perceptions of the Classroom: Observation and Evaluation, Training and Counseling. In R. Bowers, (Ed.), *Language Teacher Education: An Integrated Programme for ELT Teacher Training*, pp. 138-179. London, UK: Modern English Publications in association with the British Council.

Gebhard, J. (1990). Models of Supervision Choices. In Richards, J. & Nunan, D. (Eds.). *Second Language Teacher Education*, pp. 118 -131. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jeffrey, H. & Ferguson, S. (1992). *The Mentoring Guidebook*. North London College, UK: The Mentor Program.

Okwen, T. (1999). Lesson Observation. *English teaching forum*. 34 vol.2, pp. 12 -13.

Randall, M. & Thornton, B. (2001). *Advising and Supporting Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thornton, B. (1998). A teacher Centered Approach to Mentor Training. In *Popowo papers*. Warsaw, Poland: The British Council.

Thornton, B. & Cajkler, W. (Eds.). (1998). *Perspectives on Mentoring*. Prague, Czech Republic: The British Council.

Smith, P. & West-Burnham, J. (1993). *Mentoring in the Effective School*. London: Longman.

Summary Handout for Chapter 23: Approaches to Supervision

The Three Stage Model of Supervision	
Stage of Supervision	Supervisor Activity
Pre-lesson stage	Hears
Observation stage	Observes and Records
Post-lesson stage	Analyzes, considers and evaluates

Judgmental vs. Developmental Supervision	
Judgmental	Developmental
There is one right way to teach which the supervisor decides	Assessment is formative - based on progress
The supervisor speaks and gives advice	Supervisor listens to teacher's views
The focus is on teacher's weaknesses	Supervisor notes teacher's strengths and offers alternatives rather than just one solution

Learning to teach

We cannot really help teachers unless we have a good understanding of how teachers learn to teach.

Life cycle studies that describe the stages teachers pass through in their careers are one way of trying to describe how teachers become competent.

As a supervisor, you will need to give different types of guidance to teachers at different stages in their careers.