Supervision through Observational Visits to the Classroom

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SUPERVISION THROUGH OBSERVATIONAL VISITS TO THE CLASSROOM

A Research Paper
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
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In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Kenneth Lee Howerton
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THIS PAPER IS APPROVED AS MEETING
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COMPLETION OF A RESEARCH PAPER.

____________________________________________
Donald J. Murphy
FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY
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CHAPTER I

I. INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The observational visit to the classroom is one of the oldest types of supervision. "There is no supervisory technique that demonstrates more clearly the developmental stages of supervision than the technique of class supervision" (17:126).

Authorities in the field of administration and supervision have various opinions concerning the value of classroom observational visits as a means of improving instruction. They do reach general agreement, however, that "observation is in disrepute with many teachers because of the ways in which it has been used. In fact, its misuse has done more to discredit supervisors than has any other activity" (19:304).

It is generally accepted that evaluation processes of some types are necessary, if not desirable, for improving instruction. This study investigated one of these processes, the improvement of instruction through observational visits to the classroom.

II. THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this study to (1) review the evolution of supervisory attitude toward the observational
visit, (2) determine how it may improve instruction, (3) discuss the establishment of rapport between the supervisor and the teacher, (4) present some types of classroom observational visits the principal as a supervisor may use, and (5) present and discuss the value of the post visit conference between teacher and supervisor.

III. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It was not the intention of the writer, to determine to what extent various types of visits are used. Nor was it an objective of this study to review individual or group reaction to this supervisory technique. Specific considerations in the actual execution of an observational visit have also been excluded.
CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF EVIDENCE

I. EVOLUTION OF SUPERVISORY ATTITUDE TOWARD THE OBSERVATIONAL VISIT

The terms "supervision" and "classroom visitation" frequently have been held to be synonymous (13:504). J. M. Hughes found that

When teachers are visited by some official in the school for whatever purpose, they tend to feel that they are being supervised. If, on the other hand, they are not visited, regardless of how much help they are receiving in other ways, they are likely to feel that they are receiving no supervision at all (12:39).

"In its earliest concept, supervision was classroom visitation, but gradually supervision has assumed a more comprehensive meaning" (5:374).

The whole theory of supervision is in a gradual state of evolution. At one time, supervision was a directing and judging activity. In the 1910's and 1920's writing in the field of supervision recommended directing and telling and checking up to see whether or not people had done as they were told (19:5).

Much recent literature indicates changes in classroom observation and its purposes. Harman speaks of the new concept in these words:

In place of emphasizing inspection or teacher rating, major attention is placed on class visitation as related
to identifying and solving teacher's problems, pupil problems, and questions of the curriculum (11:39).

Few people intimately acquainted with public education will question the value and importance of a supervisory program designed to improve the learning situation by helping teachers release their full potential (19:11). George Kyte represents the feeling of many teachers and administrators: "The greatest need in the elementary school today is for more and better supervision. It is the major function of the principal" (15:241).

However, as already indicated, authorities express a variety of opinion concerning the value of classroom observational visits as a means of providing this supervision. There does seem to be, however, some general agreement that any values attributed have been seriously impaired by improper use.

Many supervisors have no doubt overworked classroom visitation as a supervisory technique. Adams and Dicky rise to defend the worth of this device:

Overwork and overemphasis are not valid reasons, however, for discarding such a valuable means of learning of the actual work teachers perform with pupils; neither are they sound reasons for the supervisor's minimizing the usefulness and importance of the observational visit. Rather, the misuse or abuse of this valuable technique of supervision should be the cause for giving it a proportionate place and for striving to maintain balance in the supervisory program. Because the observational visit is a valuable and important means of seeing teachers and pupils at work, it is not likely that it will soon be replaced by other supervisory devices. It seems reasonable to expect, then, that the
classroom observation will continue to be included as an integral part of the modern program of supervision. In the light of this idea, the supervisor can ill afford to do less than become a master of the more important principles upon which good observational visits are based (1:108).

Harman concludes:

In the final analysis, it is apparent that classroom visitation can be a highly effective part of the supervisory process. It attains this desirable goal when a cooperative spirit prevails among supervisory leaders, teachers, and others; when the capacities, attitudes, and personalities of individuals are carefully respected, and when the major purpose of visits and conferences is focussed upon helping pupils to grow as individuals and as groups (11:78).

II. PURPOSES OF THE OBSERVATIONAL VISIT

The following statement of purposes is obviously not exhaustive, but it represents some of the thinking of noted authors in the field of administration and supervision. Harl Douglass proposes that observational visits to the classroom be used by the principal to (a) keep himself oriented in the problems of the school, (b) to keep in touch with the pupils of the school and know how they are reacting to the educational program, and (c) to be better able to assist his teachers (8:118).

Lawson and Stoops suggest that the supervisor use the visits to observe not only the teaching procedures but also the physical arrangement of the room and the personal characteristics of the teacher in action. They also suggest that the supervisor ask himself these questions during the
course of the visit:

Are the facilities adequate in this room? Check visual aids, instructional materials, and bulletin boards. Is the room comfortable? Note general appearance, temperature, lighting, and ventilation. How do the pupils react to their teacher? Are they interested in the activity? Are they being motivated? Is their attention being held? Are all of the pupils participating? Does the teacher handle her class well? How does she maintain discipline? Is the teacher personable? Observe her appearance, voice, mannerisms, personality, and enthusiasm. Is she emotionally healthy (16:49)?

Elsbree and McNally regard the observational visit as an opportunity for the principal to provide new teachers with continued on the job training. They maintain that teachers now enter the classroom with an appreciable amount of pre-service preparation. "These teachers themselves," they assert, "are interested in doing a better job; the purpose of classroom supervision is to teach them how to do it" (9:150).

The following seven points from Improving Instruction Through Supervision, by Briggs and Justman, summarize what many authors feel are the important purposes in a sound observational program geared to improve instruction.

1. "To discover the needs of teachers" (6:317).
Some teachers will report needs to the supervisor they believe competent to help. Others may conceal needs through fear that their acknowledgement will be regarded as an admission of an existing weakness. Often there are important needs, too, of which a teacher may not be aware. The supervisor must be alert to recognize and understand these needs.
During the observation and later in the individual conference the supervisor must analyze these needs, find their causes, and devise a cooperative and satisfactory solution (6:319).

Another point, so closely associated with this purpose that it does not merit separate consideration, was suggested by Kimball Wiles: "they [classroom observations] enable the supervisor to know which teachers are experiencing the same difficulty and provide a basis for suggesting the organization of study groups within the staff" (19:310).

2. "To develop a sound basis for teacher evaluation" (6:315). Unfortunate as it may be, teachers must be realistic enough to realize that a primary responsibility of the supervising principal is to know what each teacher is doing and how effective his efforts are. It may seem paradoxical to include this as a purpose for classroom observational visits after repeated references to the effect that observation is not primarily to evaluate the teacher but to assist in improving the learning situation. However, in many districts the principal is obligated to prepare evaluation reports on his teaching personnel. Where does he obtain the information upon which he basis this evaluation? Obviously, he relies heavily upon the observational visit. Justman declares, "The most reliable means of obtaining this information is first-hand observations, but that is not primarily their purpose" (6:318).
3. "To discover the strengths of teachers" (6:316).

Every teacher does some things better than others, and his contribution to the effectiveness of the school is determined in a large part by his being assigned to those duties that he can do best. One characteristic of efficient supervision is the ability to discover the peculiar talents and aptitudes of each teacher and the ingenuity to devise means of using them most effectively. What the most promising possibilities are, the supervisor can discover best by constantly looking for them when observing class teaching (6:316).

4. "To get material that will determine what the school program should be" (6:316). A supervisor cannot devise the best possible program for a school unless he knows intimately the work of each teacher and the needs that it manifests.

The classroom is the place to see the children and the teacher at work, and to ascertain the needs which the supervisory program should aim to meet—educational needs of the children and professional needs of the teacher. It is essential that some of this information be acquired through first-hand experience (6:320).

5. "To aid in integrating and unifying the school" (6:316). An important responsibility of the supervisor is to assist teachers in working cooperatively toward common objectives. To do this, he must learn what the practices of each teacher are, how they contribute to the approved objectives of the school, and how they articulate for this purpose with the practices of all other teachers. After the teachers, under the guidance of the principal, have decided on a program of integration, the principal will need to follow it up by observing groups and individuals.
6. "To develop confidence in the supervisory program because the teachers realize that the principal knows what they are doing" (6:317).

There is no criticism more frequently expressed of administrative officers than that they do not know or understand intimately the work of their subordinates. In consequence of this attitude, teachers are often skeptical of the value of suggestions made to them by a principal who is attempting to supervise. The fact that they think he is remote and aloof from conditions as they know them and that being uninformed he can not competently either appraise or improve their practices makes them inhospitable even to suggestions that are good or to those that they could by cooperation make good (4:244).

Every teacher furnishes a peculiar supervisory problem that can be solved only by repeated and skillful observational visits. When teachers are assured that the supervisor knows what they are doing, they will at least be more open minded to the suggestions he makes for improvement and growth (6:317).

7. "To build up the supervisor's capital by the accumulation of a rich store of knowledge" (6:318). Kimball Wiles reiterates the importance of this purpose when he states, "The supervisor must not assume that observation is only for the growth of the teacher. He may profit far more than the teacher from the experience" (19:309).

The longer a supervisor observes classes, the greater his accumulation of knowledge. He can not well direct other teachers to visit in order to see good teaching unless he first knows where good teaching is (6:318).
III. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPERVISORY RAPPORT

Classroom observations should not be made until rapport has been established between the teacher and the principal. Adams and Dicky state, "A disregard for human relations is a certain way of defeating his [the principal's] purpose of improving instruction." Until a friendly relationship has been established, the supervisor can do little to improve the teacher and his teaching (1:109).

The following example from Basic Principles of Supervision, by Adams and Dickey, illustrates how scheduled visits to the classroom may be employed to build rapport:

A supervisor in the Cincinnati schools successfully employed announced visits as a means of building rapport. Instead of slipping into the room as if to catch the teacher off guard or to spy on him, a schedule of announced visits was put into operation. Teachers then knew when to expect the supervisor and no longer felt that his visit was for the purpose of snooping (1:109).

A visit to the teacher's classroom will likely accomplish little except to arouse suspicion until the teacher learns to know and trust the supervisor and feel comfortable with him (1:109).

Wholesome attitudes toward observational visits are most likely to result from special efforts by the supervisor to include the teacher in the planning and operation of the program of classroom observation (3:127).

An example of cooperative planning, also related by
Adams and Dickey, comes from the experience of a California city school principal.

For a period of approximately six months the supervisor had been working with teachers in groups, discussing means of improving instruction, and formulating with them the purposes of classroom visits in particular and supervision in general. After he felt that a wholesome relationship had been developed, he sent a sheet to all of the teachers with the request that they indicate whether or not they wished to have him visit them in the near future. He also asked them to state the hour of the day they found most convenient. Then, on the designated day and hour, the supervisor stepped into the room and quietly took a seat in the rear. He manifested an interested and understanding attitude. At the end of the class period he expressed his appreciation of the opportunity for the visit. Later, he made arrangements to hold a conference for the purpose of discussing his observations (1:10).

Adams and Dickey suggest the following questions which may be considered by a principal and his teachers in cooperative planning:

Shall the visits be scheduled and announced? How far in advance of the visit should the teacher be notified? Should the teacher always be notified? How much time should the supervisor devote to on-call visits? How can this be controlled so that all teachers will receive service? How should the problem of the supervisor's taking notes be handled? Should reports of observations be made by the supervisor? If so, to whom and for what purpose (1:109)?

Several studies indicate that supervision, when well done, is welcomed and appreciated by teachers as a part of the program for improving instruction (7:33).

IV. TYPES OF VISITS

The various types of classroom visits may be classified
as on-call, scheduled or announced, and unannounced visits. It has been noted that the pattern of the visit is determined largely by its purpose.

The on-call visit. The visitation-on-call method is defined as "An observation made by supervisory leaders upon invitation of the teacher" (11:40). The on-call visit was developed out of reaction against the rigid schedules and stereotyped plans for visiting teachers that prevailed earlier in the present century. The thesis was that it would provide a supervisory program that was more flexible and better adjusted to the individual's needs (2:395). The advantage of this pattern is that visits can be made when instructional procedures where special help is desired are being carried on. It features the concept of the supervisor as an expert consultant (11:40).

The disadvantages of this type of visit are fairly obvious. The visits are limited to those who feel the need of help. On the other hand, there is danger that some teachers will call frequently and monopolize the principal's time (1:114). Harman maintains that another disadvantage of the on-call visit is that the teacher may prepare an elaborate exhibition designed to cover weaknesses, not at all representing his daily work (11:41).

Scheduled or announced visits. Many supervisors feel
that their visits should be scheduled or announced (1:112).
Proponents of this type of visit assert that scheduled
visits help to relieve the emotional tension which may
accompany the unannounced classroom visit. Another advantage
claimed for the scheduled visit is that it saves the
supervisor's time. By knowing in advance the objective of
a visit, it is possible for the supervisor to prepare
specifically for a certain observation (11:41). In addition,
definite scheduling should prevent the need for making a
second visit to accomplish a purpose, as would be the case
if the lesson plan had been changed by the time he arrived
(1:113).

On occasion, teachers may lack motivation or not be
familiar with the supervisory assistance available. These
teachers respond well to regularly scheduled visits even
though they do not recognize their own problems (11:41).

On the other hand, it seems relatively evident that
there are also some corresponding disadvantages to the
regularly scheduled visit. Adams and Dickey found that
"some supervisors feel that a scheduled visit is not
satisfactory at all" (1:113). They contend that an announced
visit may result in an atypical demonstration which may be
designed to cover certain weaknesses. Another limitation is
that the scheduled visit may force inflexible conditions
upon both supervisor and teacher since it does not provide
for changes as the needs arise (11:41). Also, some question
the conjecture that announced visits relieve emotional
tension by citing instances where certain individuals are
actually more disturbed by the anticipation of a scheduled
visit (1:133).

The unannounced visit. If the purpose of the visit
is not so much to observe the performance of the teacher as
to observe the pupils interacting in a learning situation
under the teacher's guidance, then many of the criticisms of
the announced visit may be regarded as assets of the
unannounced visit. The supervisor will see an unstaged
performance. The unannounced visit does not force the
teacher to observe a rigid schedule of procedures which can
not be modified to meet pupil needs or interests. The
principal is free to arrange his visits in such a way that
no one is excluded from receiving his assistance (6:315).

Genevieve Farley defends the unannounced visit, but
not without reservation:

All visits need not necessarily be on request basis.
Unscheduled visits, short or long, are valuable,
depending upon the purpose. Formal, announced visits
may not prove to be as valuable as a less formal plan.
However, only when a friendly and cooperative rela-
tionship exists between teachers and supervisors will
less formal plans of visitation be valued (10:313).

Those who criticize the unannounced visit point out
that considerable emotional strain is generated by fear of
the unexpected visit. They further protest that the
supervisor may not see a "natural unstaged performance" because he may unintentionally visit the teacher at a time when he is unprepared. The unannounced visit may result in a waste of the supervisor's time if he should call to observe some specific lesson which has been changed for some reason or other (11:41).

The diversity of opinion among authorities regarding the use and value of the various types of visits indicates that no one type of visit is appropriate for all occasions. Each supervisor, then, must determine his purpose for visitation and select the technique he feels will best achieve it.

V. THE FOLLOW-UP CONFERENCE

The conference which follows classroom visitation has been urged as a necessity by many writers on supervision. The importance of this supervisory device is stressed rather forcefully by Briggs and Justman. In their book Improving Instruction Through Supervision, they state:

As a means of fostering growth and furthering the professional competence of teachers, the supervisory conference following observation is potentially of utmost value: an able, experienced, understanding supervisor in whom the teacher has confidence and to whom he turns without hesitation can, over a period of time, contribute more to that teacher's growth than attendance at any number of summer sessions and "alertness" courses (6:349).

Although authorities do not agree on the various
aspects of organization or execution, they generally concur that the ultimate purpose of the post visit conference is to aid the development of a more effective instructional program. Thomas Lawson's statement of purpose in the March, 1957, issue of The School Executive summarizes the thinking of many others in the field:

The objective of the follow-up conference is to help the teacher secure deeper insight and understanding of the problems of education, to satisfy her need to know if she is doing well, and to provide her with an opportunity to develop and carry out plans which will bring about progress (16:49).

Although there is no dispute about the necessity or importance of the post visit conference among supervisors, considerable evidence has been presented in professional literature that teachers are not enthusiastic about such conferences (6:350). The reasons for this, like those cited for the unpopularity of observational visits, are related to improper use and procedure on the part of the supervisor (18:75).

The success of the individual conference following observation is contingent upon (1) the attitude of teachers towards it, (2) careful planning and preparation, (3) use of a tactful approach, (4) respect for the teacher's ideas and opinions, (5) informality, and (6) evaluation of the results.

It is exceedingly important that every supervisor provide for the individual conference in a way that will make teachers turn to it as a source of in-service assistance
with their instructional problems. If this is to be accomplished, rapport must first be established between the teacher and supervisor. The teacher must develop wholesome attitudes toward the supervisor and the supervisory conference. Adams and Dickey regard the teacher's attitude as, "The greatest asset or liability to success of the follow-up conference" (1:126). The Supervisor must create a climate that fosters the development of this attitude. Most authorities agree that the supervisor should take the initiative in this area by first displaying a friendly attitude. Again Adams and Dickey maintain:

The display of a friendly attitude and the demonstration of a genuine and sincere desire to help will do much to assist the supervisor in building wholesome and favorable teacher attitudes . . . toward his working with them individually (1:126).

The supervisor must not assume an air of authority, but should regard the conference as an opportunity to serve his colleagues by sharing with them what he has learned from his training and experience (6:350).

If the conference is to accomplish its purpose of contributing to the improvement of instruction, it must be carefully planned. Briggs and Justman state, "The more important the means of supervision, the more it merits adequate planning" (6:361). They point out that it is worse than futile to hold a supervisory conference without adequate preparation, since "it may not only be ineffective but positively harmful in its immediate effects and may
Adams and Dickey suggest that the supervisor prepare for the conference by reviewing his purposes and that he recall the lesson he observed in detail, paying particular attention to those phases that dealt with student participation (1:130).

Following is a list of questions and suggestions a supervisor may find profitable to use when planning what he will discuss with a teacher in a supervisory conference following one or more observed lessons:

1. What was the teacher's plan for the unit study? To what extent was it well ordered and comprehensive? How was it related to the preceding or future work? to what is being undertaken by other teachers?

2. What was the teacher's purpose in each division of the unit of study? Why did it seem to be selected?

3. To what extent was it worthy, definite, and specific with relation to the knowledge and probable needs of the class?

4. How could it have been improved?

5. What possible contributions could the unit of study make to the objectives of general education? to the special functions of the school?

6. What purpose did the pupils have? Why did they have it?

7. Did any of the pupils, either individually or as a group, propose a purpose? What means could have been used not only to get them to do so, but to evaluate their proposals and to develop good plans for achieving them?
8. To what extent did the pupils comprehend the purpose that the teacher had? Approve it as worthwhile and adopt it as their own?

9. What means were used by the teacher and by the pupils to achieve each purpose?

10. To what extent did the pupils appreciate the means in terms of the purpose of the unit?

11. How could better means have been discovered and used by both the teacher and the pupils?

12. What obstacles were there to achievement? Which of them could have been removed, overcome, or diminished? How?

13. Consider the specific techniques of instruction used, the educational materials and aids, and the learning activities of pupils.

14. How were the results evaluated and how could they have been?

15. Wherein and to what extent were the pupils made better by this learning experience?

16. Consider the observed lesson in terms of the teacher's effort, improvement, and plans for future growth.

17. Which points should be selected for discussion with the teacher at the conference? Keep in mind all pertinent characteristics of the teacher, those that are temporary as well as those that are relatively permanent.

18. How can they most tactfully be educed or presented?

19. What long term plan for helping the teacher grow is indicated, or what modification of a previously made tentative program seems wise?

20. What has the supervisor himself learned from the observation and preparation for the conference (6:366)?

The supervisor has a constant challenge to proceed
with tact. Kirsch asserts, "The post visitation conference takes knowledge, technique, sympathy, and tact on the part of the supervisor" (14:37).

A procedure that is effective with one teacher under certain conditions may fail with another. If the supervisor finds the teacher apprehensive, the effectiveness of the conference is threatened. Only if he can put the teacher at ease can he expect receptivity to proposals for the cooperative solution of difficulties or the cooperative development of plans for growth (6:363).

The supervisor's regard for the ideas and opinions of the teacher is of vital importance to the success of the post visit conference. Indeed, Adams and Dickey intimate that "the success of future conferences and of the whole supervisory program may be jeopardized by failure to respect the opinion of every teacher" (1:133).

The ideas expressed by the teacher probably represent his best thinking; consequently, they merit careful consideration by the supervisor (1:133). Certainly he must acknowledge the strengths of such proposals and be ready to express sincere appreciation for their worth. This does not mean, however, that the supervisor should hesitate to express disagreement. Criticism will be accepted by the teacher if he has developed confidence in the supervisor. Paul Kirsch supports the use of constructive criticism as a technique
of the individual conference. In an article published in the March, 1960, issue of the National Association of Secondary School Principal's Bulletin, he writes:

Perhaps the most difficult thing within the conference is the mastery and use of a technique of criticism in a manner which will invite, by its very nature, the good relations needed between supervisor and teacher. The criticism must be encouraging, constructive, and forward looking. It must be positive in nature . . . . (14:39).

Obviously, the wise supervisor will carefully consider all of the information at his disposal about each individual teacher. In addition to this, Lawson and Stoops imply that planning a tactful approach to the conference will be facilitated if the supervisor attempts to "put himself in the teacher's place." They suggest that he ask himself:

"How would I feel if I were the teacher?" Approach her as a peer; show interest in her as an individual, not as a room number. Put her at ease by creating an air of informality, inject a how-can-I-help-you attitude (16:51).

They conclude with these recommendations designed to facilitate the development of a tactful approach to the post visit supervisory conference: "Request her opinions and suggestions. Criticize methods rather than intentions--wise use of criticism leaves the door open for further discussion. And close the conference on a friendly note, with praise or commendation" (16:52).

Specific details concerning the execution of the post visit conference have been excluded from this study.
However, one trend has been advocated to some degree by all authorities, the growing trend toward informality in conducting the conference. Adams and Dickey remind us that "informal conferences are not coincidental, unplanned, and haphazard in their nature. Rather, they are well planned, well organized, well timed, and meaningful efforts to improve the teacher-learning situation" (1:132).

The location of the conference should contribute to informality. Authorities differ as to what constitutes a location conducive to informality; nevertheless, it is generally regarded as one that is private, quiet, and free from unnecessary interruptions. It should be a place where both the teacher and the supervisor are at ease to talk freely and listen with undivided attention (6:369). It is generally recommended that the location be one familiar to the teacher. As Adams and Dickey rather humorously remarked, "He [the teacher] is not likely to 'let his hair down' in the formal atmosphere of an office or room to which he is unaccustomed" (1:132). They similarly suggest that the physical arrangement of the selected location contribute to informality. "The arrangement of the furniture, the tone of voice, the sham of insincerity all materially affect the mien of the teacher" (1:133). Likewise, they maintain, free use of ashtrays and coffee cups will do much to put a teacher at ease.
All of these factors lend informality to the conference. In turn, this informality aids in removing conditions that might keep the supervisor from obtaining information relevant to the solution of teachers' problems and the improvement of the instructional program.

When the conference is adjourned, the supervisor should make an early opportunity to evaluate it. A thorough analysis of his own strengths and weaknesses during the conference will help him to identify the causes of each. Armed with this information, he will be better able to plan and conduct more successful conferences in the future.

Briggs and Justman, noted authorities in the field of supervision, submit the following questions for the supervisor to consider in his reflection upon the follow-up conference:

What modifications of the original plan were made and why? What were the best points in the conference? How was the teacher probably helped? What evidence is there of this probability? What mistakes were made and how could they have been avoided? How could the conference have been made better? What should be attempted in the next conference and what specific kinds of tactful means should be used (6:73)?

In the March, 1957, issue of The School Executive, Thomas Lawson and Emery Stoops use five words to sum the use of the observational visit as a means of improving instruction: "In short--visit, confer, commend, suggest, and comment" (16:52). This, in essence, is the role of the principal in supervision through observational visits to the classroom.
Observational visits to the classroom have occupied a significant position in school supervision for some time, and evidence indicates that they will continue to do so. The developmental stages of school supervision in general and supervisory attitude in specific are represented by stages through which the observational visit has passed. Although they have been used continuously, observational visits as a means of supervision have not been highly regarded by the majority of teachers. Unwise or improper use of this supervisory technique have been blamed for this unpopularity. The purposes for which observational visits may be made are varied, but authorities generally agree that the ultimate purpose for all visits, regardless of type, is to improve the instructional program. The establishment of a cooperative relationship between the teacher and the supervisor is vital to the success of both the observational visit and the post visit conference. Even though there is no general agreement among authorities regarding the relative worth of the individual types of visits, there is some unity of opinion that perhaps no one single type is ideal for all situations and purposes. While specific considerations of the observational visit are in dispute,
the necessity of the post visit conference is not questioned. It is unanimously recognized as an essential part of the supervisory program.


