

**ACTION RESEARCH**

**EDUC 794c  
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## **DO MY SUPERVISORY SKILLS PROMOTE TEACHER REFLECTION?**

### **THE CONTEXT**

I believe that the main goal of supervision to help to provide the framework for teachers to analyze their performance and to reflect on ways to enhance their knowledge and skills and to eventually develop competence and exercise some autonomy in improving their performance. Supervision should also build on the teachers' strengths and provide guidance and support to assist them in improving in deficient areas. It should capitalize on the teachers' experience and build their confidence. This should be rewarding and enriching as both supervisor and supervisee share insights of problems from their different perspectives. The purpose of this action research was twofold. First, it was to examine my effectiveness in meeting this goal. Second, it was to give me a better understanding of my role as a supervisor and to improve my supervisory practice. The research question was: How effective am I as a supervisor in assisting my supervisees to develop their reflective skills?

The focus of my research was six student teachers that are doing their practicum for licensure in various disciplines of science that I was supervising. These disciplines were Earth Science, General Science, Physics and Biology. During the practicum four of the supervisees taught grades 10-12. One supervisee taught grades 8, 11 and 12. The sixth supervisee taught grades 9-11. Two of the supervisees had four years of previous teaching experience, one had lectured at a community college for four years, the other had taught senior high school. The other supervisees had no prior teaching experience except for two of them being substitute teachers a few times. One of the supervisees was changing careers after being in the engineering field for over 10 years. This action research study was done while I was a supervisor for a university in a suburban college town with a mixed cultural, economic and racial population in

Massachusetts, USA. The terms supervisees and preservice teachers will be used synonymously to refer to student teachers in this report. The term supervising practitioner refers to cooperating teachers that mentored the supervisees during the practicum. To protect the anonymity of the participants, the supervisees will be referred to as S1, S2, S3, S4, S5, and S6 in reporting the results and findings.

## **STATEMENT AND ORIGIN OF RESEARCH FOCUS**

I chose to study the effectiveness of my supervisory skills for my action research because I needed to know if I was really helping the supervisees to develop reflective skills which are fundamental for effective teaching. The foundation for these skills should be set during the practicum because if a teacher has poor reflective skills that do not improve, they are destined to be mediocre ineffective teachers. I was especially interested in investigating this because as supervisor with many years experience in a small island nation with a different educational system I needed to know if the supervision style that I used over the years with preservice and inservice teachers was effective with the supervisees in Massachusetts.

Reflective skills are lifelong “survival” skills that help teachers improve their efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness. To promote reflective skills in teachers I needed to first reflect on my supervisory practice and then improve my efficacy, efficiency and effectiveness. This must begin with me analyzing events and processes in my supervision that impact the way preservice teachers develop proficiency in teaching and then by adapting my practice to be better able to meet their needs. This action research project was born out of that need.

Action researchers test ideas by putting them into practice, they adapt them or develop new ones and use them to modify or change their practice. (Feldman, 2002). The two main

purposes of action research are: to improve teaching to improve student learning and to have an “improved understanding of the educational situations in which teachers teach so that they become a part of the knowledge base of teaching and learning” (Feldman & Minstrell, 2000).

The Photo Voice Project and the Research Notebook Focus Group (RNFG) contributed to this research by helping me to add substance to the skeletal framework at the beginning of this research. The Photo Voice Project was a starting point for me to seriously reflect on my supervisory skills and ask myself two initial questions; Why are you a supervisor? How do you know whether what you are doing is effective? ” One day in passing over the Connecticut River, it struck me that with my supervisory skills I am building bridges that allow the preservice teachers to develop reflective skills while linking contextual understanding and technical knowledge. Through my supervision I am trying to bridge the gap between effective science instruction and the ineffective science instruction. By my definition, effective instruction motivates students by making science meaningful and relevant to them, so that they want to learn science.

After further exploration, I realized that the questions that I needed to answer by conducting this Action Research were featured in the article *Teacher Supervision and Evaluation: Theory Into Practice* (Nolan & Hoover, 2004, p. 143).

1. What am I doing?
2. Why am I doing it this way?
3. What impact is it having on my supervisees?
4. How might I do things differently?
5. If I did things differently, what impact might it have on my supervisees?

The Research Notebook Focus Group assisted me in exploring these basic questions, in narrowing my research question, formulating the secondary questions and in fine tuning the data

collection methods and the data analysis that were used for this study. I had started out with the question, how effective are my supervisory skills and plans to use seven different data sources including three types of archival data, audio tape transcriptions, lesson observations and Research Notebook entries. After the volumes of collected data and thinking about the amount of time needed to transcribe tapes verbatim and for data analysis, four data sources were selected. Much was gleaned from weekly group collaboration, the differing perspectives, the guidance and dialogue with the group members and the ownership that we had in each others research. The RNFG was definitely beneficial to me in conducting this research.

While doing this action research as I planned, acted, observed and reflected, revised the plan and went through the “spiral of action research cycle” (Altrichter, et al, 2002 p. 130.) Out of the initial basic questions eventually came my research question: How effective am I as a supervisor in assisting my supervisees to develop their reflective skills? This question was investigated through the following secondary questions:

1. How effective am I in assisting supervisees to be reflective and to diagnose and solve instructional problems that they may be experiencing?
2. How effective are the methods that I use in assisting the supervisees to enhance teaching and student performance?
3. How useful are the guidance, support and resources given to supervisees in assisting them to develop reflective skills?
4. How do the supervisees feel speaking to me about educational issues? What makes them feel this way?
5. What are supervisees’ perceptions of my supervisory skills?

The main goals of conducting this action research were to improve my practice by having a better understanding of my role as a supervisor, to use the data to process and analyze my supervisory practice and to identify areas that needed improvement. By conducting this self-

study I wanted to define and refine my supervisory skills by bringing “to the forefront the importance of self and be critical of my role” (Feldman, Paugh & Mills, 2004) as a supervisor and “construct and codify” categories which will assist me to modify my supervisory practice to improve my effectiveness and to better meet the needs of supervisees.

Why is it important to study the effectiveness of supervisory skills in promoting self reflection in preservice teachers? One of the domains of science education in which action research has been utilized is teacher education and professional development (Feldman & Capobianco, 2000, p. 4). The role of the supervisor in the professional development of preservice teachers and the level of effectiveness of the supervisor in this role is an important area for research.

Good teachers are constantly asking questions about their teaching and their students’ learning and they continually process and analyze their own practice. Reflecting and asking questions about one’s practice is a powerful process with great formative value which can help teachers become more reflective, develop problem solving capabilities and promote an inquiry focus to teaching. It is critical for all teachers to develop reflective skills and important that self reflection skills grow during the practicum experience. Developing strong reflective skills helps teachers better understand their teaching behavior, identify their concerns, aids them in analyzing their practice, helps them to cope and deal with the complexity of teaching and to improve as teachers. Being reflective helps student teachers to define the appropriateness and efficacy of their teaching practice as they analyze, modify and increase their collection of effective teaching strategies. This builds their level of consciousness of their insights, experiences, thought processes and actions that impact their teaching.

According to Tremmel in *Zen and the Art of Reflective Practice in Teacher Education* (1993, p.441), “Encouraging student teachers to reflect does not mean just leading them to change their minds in the sense of changing perspectives; it means rather, trying to help them change the way that their minds work so that they are more prepared for reflection”. In discussing Schon’s concept of “reflecting in action” as “thinking on your feet” (1983, p. 54). Tremmel “ties it to such abilities as “feeling,” “seeing,” or “noticing what you are doing; then learning from what you feel, see, or notice, and finally, intelligently, even intuitively, adjusting your practice.” Schon sees the reflectiveness of the teacher as being “flexible and pliable” , a mind that is aware of what is happening while it is happening and is able to respond directly to transform the situation (Tremmel, 1993, p.437).

“How we reflect, in the final analysis, is based on how we perceive the world, and how we construct knowledge and give meaning to events. This, in turn, is based on our professional knowledge base, prior experiences, and personal and social values.” Ornstein 1995, p. 15).

Additionally, according to Ornstein, there are four criteria needed to reflect, which are: care for our students; our motivation to teach, flexibility and adaptability; acceptance of other’s views, and being socially responsible for our actions and being conscious of what we are doing (p. 15).

The reflection skills the supervisees were varied. For most of them at the beginning of the practicum, their experience was minimal of non existent. Only two of the supervisees had four years teaching experience. The supervisees with experience were better at pinpointing what was went wrong in the lesson and were more skilled in identifying what they needed to concentrate on to improve their practice. The inexperienced preservice teachers were less skilled in these areas. According to Allan C. Ornstein in *Beyond Effective Teaching* (1995) when discussing tools to analyze teachers’ reflective thoughts that were developed by Ross (1989), he stated that

there are increasingly complex levels of reflection that are based on a person's maturity and perceived safety in expressing his or her views.

The three levels are: (a) discussing practice with little detailed analysis and little insight into the reasons behind teacher or student behavior, (b) giving convincing critique of a behavior from one perspective, but failing to consider multiple factors, (c) analyzing teaching and learning from multiple perspectives and recognizing that teachers' actions have a pervasive impact that goes way beyond the lesson. With each ensuing stage there is a greater awareness of the person's role in improving the practice as they become less inclined to pass blame and become more open to change and willing to admit that they do not always have the answer. Research findings point to fewer than 25% of preservice teachers function above level 2 of reflection and when they do it's only for particular topics (Ross, 1989).

It is important for me as a supervisor to assist teachers to develop their teaching skills by developing reflective skills. Many novice teachers have theoretical and practical insights of teaching that may not apply to specific situations with which they may be regularly confronted. Often the emphasis that is put on technical knowledge and skills in teacher preparation programs causes novice teachers not to be prepared to think deeply about how they are teaching and to make the necessary adjustments to make their practice more effective. The teacher's ability to reflect upon and analyze his/her own mistakes and to be proactive in correcting these mistakes is so critical to develop proficiency as a teacher. If they do not develop these self reflective skills, so often they feel like failures, lose confidence in their abilities and may become an attrition statistic within 5 years of entering the teaching profession, even though they may be good teachers (Ornstein, 1995, p. 15). This is why my role as a supervisor in assisting them to develop these essential skills is so important.

As a supervisor of preservice and novice teachers, my main goal is to assist teachers to teach well and be effective in their teaching. I strive to do this by using a variety of methods which are greatly dependent on various situations, and on the amount of experience and level of competence of the supervisee. I look carefully at their planning, observe their lessons, give immediate and objective feedback, assist them with diagnosing and solving instructional problems that they may be experiencing and help them to enhance their teaching skills and their students' performance.

Before embarking on this action research I had not formally differentiated between categories, concepts or characteristics that had emerged in my supervision and had never systematically collected data about my supervisory practice. I know how important it is for research to drive reform and I was eager to find out what this action research would reveal about my supervision skills and how I could increase the effectiveness of my supervision.

## **METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION**

Four science lessons were observed for each of the six supervisees which were followed by post observation conferences with the supervisor and the supervisee. The observations were done during the Spring Practicum for Preservice Teachers from February to May. The lesson observations were conducted 2 - 4 weeks apart. The lessons were the first four of five formal observations that were required by the Department of Education of the State. During the observations, the preservice teachers' proficiency in State Standards and Sub-Standards in Science were assessed to ascertain if they met the requirements for licensure in science. Data were collected from multi sources for triangulation. The four data sources were field notes for the observed lessons, Research Notebook entries, the Supervisor's Assessment Form and

audiotapes of post observation conferences that were selectively transcribed. Data were coded using initial categories for the first cycle of analysis shown in Table 1. After more extensive analysis, the data were further refined to the categories listed in Table 2. These refined categories were the criteria used for selecting data for further exploration. Narrative commentary analysis was then used for the data.

Table 1 INITIAL CODING CATEGORIES

TABLE 2 FINAL CODING CATEGORIES

CODE	DESCRIPTION
PCS	Problems and concerns of supervisees
ELQ	Effectiveness of lead questions/prompts
TRQ	Types of responses to lead questions
LOR	Level of responsibility taken by supervisees for lesson outcomes and/or student difficulty
AIP	Ability to identify problems being experienced
ASP	Ability to solve problems identified
LOF	Level of flexibility in modifying strategies as problems arise
IFL	Incorporation of prior feedback into lesson

CODE	DESCRIPTION
ANI	Areas Needing Improvement
LOR	Level of responsibility taken supervisees for lesson outcomes and/or student difficulty
AIP	Ability to identify problems being experienced
ASP	Ability to solve problems identified
IFL	Incorporation of prior feedback into lesson

**FINDINGS**

As a supervisor I put priority on building strong relationships with supervisees – relationship before process. I believe that good relationships facilitate the supervision process. First and foremost I work toward building rapport with my supervisees because I want them to know that I genuinely care about them, that they are valued and that my main interest is to help them to be successful teachers. I try to give the supervisees the guidance, support and resources

they need to grow professionally and develop proficiency in teaching. I am also very liberal with praise because affirmation and validation are very important. This is who I am as a supervisor. I looked at the results with these questions in mind: Is there evidence to support what I think I am doing as a supervisor? Are my perceptions of what I think I do as a supervisor consistent with the preservice teachers and cooperating teachers perceptions of my supervisory skills?

Responses on the Supervisory Assessment Form emerged as the most important data because they gave the perceptions and input of both the supervisees and the cooperating teachers about whether my supervisory practice was effective. Of special benefit were their suggestions for improvement. The Research Notebook excerpts were very insightful on how the supervisees were thinking in various situations and how they were processing their teaching practice. The transcriptions of the audio tape gave feedback on the effectiveness of lead questions that I used for prompts at post observation conferences and the supervisees' responses to those questions.

For ease of reference the findings will be reported as they relate to the secondary questions listed at the beginning of this report. Although answers for these questions could be derived from all of the data sources that were used for this study, data from the audio tape transcriptions, field notes and Research Notebook excerpts are more directly referenced to questions 1 - 3. The responses of the Supervisors' Assessment Form are more specific to questions 4 -5. This does not mean that the data are only limited to answering the questions under which they are cited.

**HOW EFFECTIVE AM I IN ASSISTING SUPERVISEES TO BE REFLECTIVE AND TO DIAGNOSE AND SOLVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROBLEMS THAT THEY MAY BE EXPERIENCING?**

One of the methods that I use is lead questions that prompt preservice teachers to reflect on their lessons and their teaching skills. These questions and others that are similar usually guided the discussion at post observation conferences. Samples of the questions are listed below followed by excerpts from transcribed tapes showing types of responses that supervisees gave as the supervisor uses the lead questions to probe their thinking. Figure 1 on page 15 shows a graphical representation of the some of the methods that are used to promote reflection in supervisees.

How do you feel about the lesson?

Do you think the objectives were achieved?

How do you know?

What could you have done differently?

What do you think your strengths were in the lesson?

What do you think you need to work on?

What do you think you need help with?

What are some additional and/or alternate strategies that you could have used?

Why did you react the way you did in that situation?

#### **EXCERPTS FROM TRANSCRIPTION OF POST OBSERVATION CONFERENCE**

##### **SUPERVISEE - S1**

Supervisor      How do you feel about the lesson?

S1                      Today at least I felt better that yesterday's lesson. At least even though I said today is a new day, it has a probability of it being good or it being bad. I haven't seen...nothing bad have happened so today I feel it was a good lesson. I want to say that maybe I reached half the class. Half the class understood... I feel that the kids were more engaged...at least two-three girls were more engaged.

Supervisor      What could you do to know with more certainty whether the students understood the concepts you taught ?

**SUPERVISEE - S2**

- Supervisor      What could you have done differently in the lesson?
- S2**                I probably could have gotten involved in the inquiry activity earlier. I think... it felt like I stayed too long and spent too much time on reviewing the homework when some students already knew what to do so they were bored.
- Supervisor      What strategies could you use the next time so that you could give the students the reinforcement that they need while keeping the others who understand engaged.
- S2                 That's the problem. I really couldn't think of any. What are some things you think I should do?
- Supervisor      Maybe encouraging the students who understood the homework to do peer tutoring may be a strategy that you could use. Let's explore that for awhile. Think of the strengths of your students. How could you capitalize on their strengths while helping the other students?

These excerpts were recorded at the beginning of the practicum and were characteristic of the type of dialogue that the supervisor had with all supervisees. Early in the practicum most of them were able to identify what went wrong to some degree but many times could not think of anything to rectify the problems. By the end of the practicum all six supervisees had developed their reflective skills and were able to diagnose and solve problems. They also had developed a level of flexibility that allowed them to modify the lessons as they taught.

**HOW EFFECTIVE ARE THE METHODS THAT I USE IN ASSISTING THE SUPERVISEES TO ENHANCE TEACHING AND STUDENT PERFORMANCE?**

**EXTRACTS FROM RESEARCH NOTEBOOK**

*Notes and reflections while making observations of a lessons*

**February**

Observation 1      Supervisee S5

**MN2**                Many of the students were having difficulty with the lab. S5 walked around and gave interaction which was mostly telling the students *with small groups* what to do or where they went wrong instead of guiding students and providing opportunities for them to make the discoveries on their own and to reflect on and evaluate their answers.

TN2  
small

**Comment:** - We need to discuss purposes of lab work. I'd like to know what S5 believes the purposes are then we will go from there. We need to *group* get from what is happening now to making group work more meaningful *goals* for students – letting them make choices, share their ideas, explain their understanding of concepts and provide evidence-based arguments for their choices. I wonder how developed S5's reflection skills are? Will S5 be able to identify the things that need to be improved? How receptive will S5 be to feedback? (*This will direct which method I use in facilitating reflection*).

TN3  
diagnosing  
needs

At the post observation meeting when asked about the response to the student who asked what should be done on the lab, S5 replied, "*He was clowning around. He knew what to do.*" As I explored the incident further, S5 still did not think that the student's question was a legitimate request for help in doing the lab. S5 was not intentionally putting down and ignoring the student, he is having problems diagnosing the needs of the students and realizing his role in meeting those needs.

S6

Was tense – felt that more content specific courses were needed. Was having difficulty "bridging all the information" and applying it to specific teaching situations. Did not feel prepared to deal with a lot of the situations that arise in the Classroom and was also "struggling with planning – long term planning".

**March Observation 2**

S3

Discussed strategies for effective group work, questioning to check understanding, providing opportunities for students to evaluate, justify and challenge answers.

S4

Uncertainly about what to teach because of how the curriculum is presented. S4 was given only the standards and had difficulty knowing exactly what to teach because one standard is for more than one grade level. We discussed solutions.

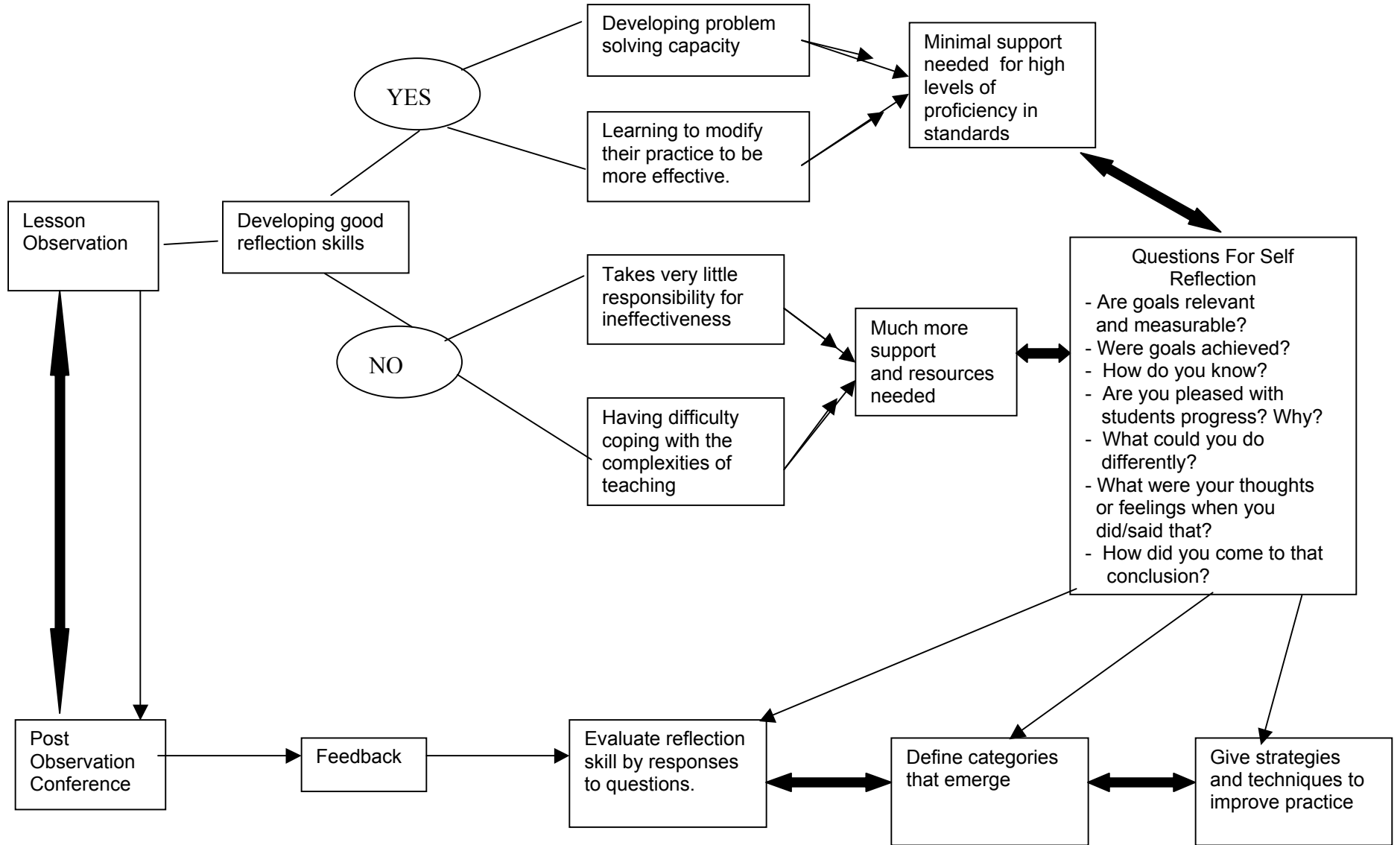
**March Observation 3**

S3

Said "I came into this not knowing whether I would like it or not. I really thought that I would not like it, but now I have come to love it. I realize that I really love it."

S6

Feeling more confident, more at ease, relaxed and developing good relationship with the student. Cooperating teacher felt that S6 was formulating clear feedback and the ability to "change things on the fly", developing flexibility and better time management skills.



**FIGURE 1 - GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION OF SUPERVISOR ASSISTING SUPERVISEES TO DEVELOP REFLECTIVE SKILLS**

**HOW USEFUL ARE THE GUIDANCE, SUPPORT AND RESOURCES GIVEN TO SUPERVISEES IN ASSISTING THEM TO DEVELOP REFLECTIVE SKILLS?**

Data was analyzed from field notes for these questions. Listed below are comments made by the supervisor about areas that needed improvement during the lessons in giving supervisees feedback of the observed lessons. The comments were not told to the supervisees until they had an opportunity to reflect on the lessons observed and suggest ways to address the areas identified. Additional support, guidance and resources were given by the supervisor as needed. The comments were also given as written feedback of the Lesson Observation Instrument attached as Appendix 1. These comments are made based on the researchers' interpretation of Standards and Sub-Standards. Because of the way that some of them were written, some level of subjectivity may have effected the interpretation, This was by no means deliberate.

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**DATA COLLECTED FROM FIELD NOTES OF OBSERVED LESSONS**

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**SUPERVISEE - S1**

**OBSERVATION 1**

**Time Management**

Work on time management. Implement some of the suggestions discussed as reinforcement and extension activities to fill in the time left at the end of the lesson.

**Questioning**

Use questioning more to check students understanding especially with concepts students are having difficulties with.

**OBSERVATION 2**

**Lesson Planning**

Remember that objectives must be measurable.

**Time Management**

Good time management.

**OBSERVATION 3**

**Lesson Planning**

Great improvement with objectives. Relevant measurable outcomes contributed to a successful lesson.

**Questioning**

Good use of a variety of questions and commendations for your conscientious efforts in having all students respond to questions. Continue to make improvements with probing, wait time and affirming students' responses.

**OBSERVATION 4**

Effective use of questioning that teased out difficult concepts and stimulated thinking. Very good effort in getting all students to respond.

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**SUPERVISEE - S2**

**OBSERVATION 2**

**Wrapping up lesson**

Spend more time recapping key points.

**OBSERVATION 3**

**Wrapping up lesson**

Excellent strategy using group white board presentations to reinforce key concepts and wrap up the lesson.

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**SUPERVISEE - S3**

**OBSERVATION 1**

**Main ideas/Content**

Allow students to explain the process in their own words and to give examples to check for understanding.

**OBSERVATION 2**

**Small Group Activities**

Good effort with cooperative groups. Remember to discuss expectations and provide clear outcomes before starting group work. Give more guidance to students who are off task.

**Underscores Key Points**

Remember to do more highlighting, underscoring and recapping of key concepts.

**OBSERVATION 3**

**Small Group Activities**

Commendations for your creativity in designing the group activities which greatly clarified students' understanding of the content. The high expectations and clear instructions about tasks and outcomes at the beginning set the stage meaningful group collaboration and high levels of productivity.

**Main ideas/Content**

Good job in asking students' to explain what they learned in their own words to check their understanding.

**OBSERVATION 4**

**Underscores Key Points**

An excellent activity to revisit key points and wrap up lesson. (S3 had students write two things they learned in the lesson and one question that they still had on "summing up" index cards. These were then discussed.)

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**SUPERVISEE S4**

**OBSERVATION 2**

**Main Ideas/Content**

Try some of the suggestions discussed to facilitate this. Remember to do more highlighting, underscoring and recapping of key concepts.

**Questioning**

*Continue to encourage students to make inferences and do more of letting them justify their answers. Do more probing so that they can give input and explain their understanding of concepts.*

**OBSERVATION 3**

**Questioning**

Very good progress continue to be made with questioning skills.

**OBSERVATION 4**

**Main Ideas/Content**

Great underscoring, "This is very important. It is important to know how to do this. This will help you in life".

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**SUPERVISEE - S5**

**OBSERVATION 1**

**Questioning**

Only a few questions were asked basically at the end of the lesson. Please use questions and probing to guide learning and to stimulate thinking before, during and after the lab. Questioning is a great strategy to build on students' strengths, to draw from their past experiences, to check their understanding, to assist them with applying what they have learned to every day life.

**OBSERVATION 2**

**Questioning**

Implement the questioning strategies that were discussed; ask open-ended questions, encourage students to justify their answers and to discuss and challenge each other's answers.

**OBSERVATION 4**

**Questioning**

Excellent use of questioning for probing, checking for understanding, expanding students' knowledge and allowing students to explain and justify their answers.

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**SUPERVISEE - S6**

**OBSERVATION 1**

**Lesson Planning**

Remember that a well planned lesson is the foundation of effective instruction. When planning, keep in mind that objectives need to be measurable and also incorporate the other components of the lesson that we discussed.

**Questioning**

You are making progress with questioning skills, allow sufficient wait time and use strategies discussed to encourage responses from more students.

**OBSERVATION 2**

**Lesson Planning**

Good, conscientious planning that laid the foundation for a successful lesson.

**Questioning**

Great! Continuous improvements are being made with your questioning skills. It was great how you used questioning to guide a student to hypothesize about the question he posed and to allow him to test his theories. Continue to do this whenever possible.

**OBSERVATION 3**

**Lesson Planning**

Well planned lesson with relevant measurable outcomes.

**Questioning**

Very good effort in using higher level questions and continuous affirmation for students' questions and answers. Continue to work on getting responses from more of the students.

The data revealed that all supervisees were experiencing some problems with different aspects of the lesson. The supervisees all implemented the suggestions that were discussed by the next observed lesson or by the second lesson after the need for improvement was identified. Additional resources that targeted specific skills and strategies that were sent to some supervisees were also incorporated into their lessons to improve their practice. By the supervisees' implementation of the strategies discussed at the post observation conferences, it could be assumed that they thought that the feedback, guidance, support and instructional resources were useful. Table 3 shows the areas where supervisees initially needed improvement as reflected in data from the field notes.

AREAS NEEDING IMPROVEMENT	SUPERVISEES					
	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
Small Group Activities			X			
Questioning	X			X	X	X
Lesson Planning	X					X
Main Ideas/Content			X	X		
Time Management	X					
Wrapping Up Lesson		X				
Underscoring Key Points			X			

**HOW DO THE SUPERVISEES FEEL SPEAKING TO ME ABOUT EDUCATIONAL ISSUES? WHAT MAKES THEM FEEL THIS WAY?**

**WHAT ARE SUPERVISEES' PERCEPTIONS OF MY SUPERVISORY SKILLS?**

Focus was given to the responses from the Supervisor's Assessment Form to answer these questions. Forms were received from all six supervisees and only from three of the supervising practitioners. The data for the Supervisor's Assessment Form recorded on Tables 4 and 5 below shows that all six supervisees rated the supervisor as either 3 or 4 for the 24 items on the form. The three supervising practitioners that sent in their forms all rated me at 4 in all 24 items items. The Assessment Form which is attached as Appendix 2 will be amended for further use by rewording some of the items, using a continuum of 1-10 for the rating scale and having some items for open ended answers.

**Table 4 Supervisees' Responses on Supervisor's Assessment**

ITEM	SSA	STUDENT TEACHERS' RESPONSES					
		A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6
<b>Section A: Professional Characteristics</b>							
1. I am genuinely concerned with the growth and the development of students.	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
2. I am genuinely concerned with the growth and development of the student teacher.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
3. I am trustworthy.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
4. I am fair.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5. I am flexible.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
6. I am ethical.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
7. Rapport with me is good.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
<b>Section B: Skills</b>							
8. I have effective communication skills.	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
9. I display needs assessment skills.	3	4	3	4	4	4	?
10. I display planning skills.	4	4	3	4	4	4	3
11. I display group facilitation skills.	3	4	3	4	4	4	4
12. I display problem-solving skills.	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
13. I display observation skills.	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
14. I display conflict resolution skills.	3	4	3	4	4	4	4
<b>Section C: Individual Assistance</b>							
15. I effectively observe the student teacher and provide helpful feedback.	3	4	4	4+	4	4*	4
16. I provide prompt feedback.	3	4	3	4	4	4	4
17. The format for written reports of observed lessons is effective.	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
18. I provide useful instructional resources when needed.	3	4	3	4	4	3	4
19. I provide sufficient opportunities for the student teacher to express her/himself.	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
20. I foster teacher reflection, which helps the student teacher to diagnose and solve problems.	3	4	4	4	4	3	3
21. I share innovative instructional strategies.	3	4	3	4	4	4	3
22. I effectively assist the student teacher with instructional problems he/she is experiencing.	3	4	3	4	4	4	4
23. I effectively assist the student teacher to develop skills as a teacher.	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
24. You feel comfortable asking me for assistance if needed.	3	4	4	4	4	4	4

**Key**

SSA - Supervisor's Self Assessment

A1, A2, A3, etc - Labels given to supervisee's assessment forms

1 - Strongly disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Agree

+ \* Symbols used by respondents for emphasis

4 - Strongly agree

**Table 5 Supervising Practitioners' Responses on Supervisor's Assessment**

ITEM	SUPERVISING PRACTITIONERS' RESPONSES		
	P1	P2	P3
<b>Section A: Professional Characteristics</b>			
1. I am genuinely concerned with the growth and the development of students.	4	4	4
2. I am genuinely concerned with the growth and development of the student teacher.	4	4	4
3. I am trustworthy.	4	4	4
4. I am fair.	4	4	4
5. I am flexible.	4	4	4
6. I am ethical.	4	4	4
7. Rapport with me is good.	4	4	4
<b>Section B: Skills</b>			
8. I have effective communication skills.	4	4	4
9. I display needs assessment skills.	N/A	4	4
10. I display planning skills.	4	4	4
11. I display group facilitation skills.	N/A	4	4
12. I display problem-solving skills.	4	4	4
13. I display observation skills.	4	4	4
14. I display conflict resolution skills.	4	N/A	4
<b>Section C: Individual Assistance</b>			
15. I effectively observe the student teacher and provide helpful feedback.	4	4	4
16. I provide prompt feedback.	4	4	4
17. The format for written reports of observed lessons is effective.	4	4	4
18. I provide useful instructional resources when needed.	N/A	4	4
19. I provide sufficient opportunities for the student teacher to express her/himself.	4	4	4
20. I foster teacher reflection, which helps the student teacher to diagnose and solve problems.	4	4	4
21. I share innovative instructional strategies.	4	4	4
22. I effectively assist the student teacher with instructional problems he/she is experiencing.	4	4	4
23. I effectively assist the student teacher to develop skills as a teacher.	4	4	4
24. You feel comfortable asking me for assistance if needed.	4	4	4

**Key**

P1, P2, P3 - Labels given to practitioners' assessment forms

1 - Strongly disagree

2 - Disagree

3 - Agree

4 - Strongly agree

N/A Not Applicable

**Table 6 Verbal Comments on Supervisor’s Assessment Forms**

STUDENT TEACHERS	COMMENTS REQUESTED ON FORM		Additional comments student teachers made about items
	How could I improve as a supervisor?	Additional Comments	
A1	“I could not imagine a better supervisor!”	“Karen provides a highly professional supervisory experience while being a very genuine and supportive person. I will always remember your insightful advice. Thanks”	No additional comments made.
A2	“Provide a little more structure and support regarding portfolio development and satisfying teacher standards. Suggestions for content specific resources and teaching methods would also be helpful.”	“It has been a pleasure to work with you this trimester. Your presence and positive reinforcement has been very helpful for building confidence in my teaching abilities.”	No additional comments made
A3	No comments made	No comments made	No additional comments made.
A4	“I enjoyed meeting with Karen and discussing issues regarding my teaching. I found her observations and recommendations to be insightful and helpful and I felt comfortable speaking with her. Karen was also able to provide timely assistance and feedback on my portfolio work. Overall, Karen made the situation stress free and enjoyable.”	“My only concern is that I felt a bit overwhelmed with teaching and keeping track of paperwork issues for the course. I felt like there was too much to attempt to keep track of.”	No additional comments made.
A5	“I honestly can’t think of anything”	“You’re easy to get a hold of & get along with. I’d love to talk to you sometime about teaching in the islands for a while.”	Item 1: “We worked more with my skills, but this is reflected here (arrow pointing to item 2).  Item 17: “The only reason I gave a 3 & not 4 is because sometimes it ( <i>observation feedback instrument</i> ) was difficult to read since the columns aren’t lined up, but that’s it.”

**Table 6 Verbal Comments on Supervisor’s Assessment Forms** *continued*

STUDENT TEACHERS	COMMENTS REQUESTED ON FORM		Additional comments student teachers made about items
	How could I improve as a supervisor?	Additional comments	
A6	<p>“I am not sure what you can improve Karen, you do a great job as a supervisor. Even when we were not going to meet you made an effort in calling me to see how I was doing. You communicated with me as person not only your supervisee. Keep up the good work”</p>	<p><i>“Karen, you made this experience for me one that I will always remember. You offered and gave me help whenever I needed it and you had patience with me. You listened every time I needed someone to listen to me, even when you had such a busy schedule. I wish you the best in your studies and to your family. Please keep in touch with me. I feel I have not only acquired ideas of how to be a better teacher but I also feel I have found a mentor in you. Thank you.”</i></p>	No additional comments made.
SUPER-VISING PRACTITIONER	COMMENTS REQUESTED ON FORM		Additional comments student teachers made about items
	How could I improve as a supervisor?	Additional comments	
P2	No comments made.	<p>“Karen has done a great job with Keith and myself. She has given excellent feedback to help Keith improve his teaching.</p>	No comments made.
P3	No comments made.	<p>“Your professionalism and genuine interest in the student teacher made the supervising practitioner experience a positive one.”</p>	No comments made.

P1’s assessment form did not have verbal comments.

The findings suggest that prompts and strategies of the supervisor that were used during the post observation meetings and the feedback that was given assisted the supervisees to develop reflective skills. The responses on the assessment form indicate that three of the supervisees strongly agreed that my supervisory skills were effective while the others agreed.

1. Four supervisees strongly agreed that I was effective in assisting them to diagnose and solve instructional problems. The other two supervisees rated it as 3.
2. The methods that I use are meeting the needs of some of the supervisees more effectively than the needs of others.
3. All supervisees strongly agreed that they felt comfortable communicating with me.
4. Most persons strongly agreed that the resources, guidance and support I gave were useful and felt that my supervision skills were good.

Results indicated that my supervisory skills had varying levels of effectiveness and that improvement is needed in some areas.

Although the findings indicate that the supervisees' reflective skills have improved and suggest that the lead questions that I use as prompts for the teachers to analyze their lessons and the support, guidance and the resources that I gave and the methods that I used may have been helpful in building supervisees' reflective skills, the results cannot conclusively prove this.

There are many factors that contribute to preservice teachers' development of reflective skills and it is difficult to isolate these factors or credit them to any one experience or any one individual. Just by the teacher being immersed in the classroom environment develops reflective skills. So a word of caution is not to read into the results of the data from the excerpts of the Research Notebook, the field notes, the transcriptions of the audio tapes and the assessment form more than they say. It is felt that the responses from the Supervisors' Assessment Form offered more viable evidence of supervisees' and cooperating teachers perceptions of whether my

supervision skills were effective because the form generated quantitative data which in some instances validate the findings from the other data sources.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

The results have helped me to identify areas that need improvement in my supervisory practice. I will focus more on the areas on the assessment form where I was rated as 3 by more than one supervisee. I need to modify my supervisory practice by improving in the following areas to better meet the needs of all supervisees.

1. Concern with growth and development of students.
2. Displaying planning skills.
3. Format for written reports.
4. Provision of useful instructional resources.
5. Fostering teacher reflection.
6. Sharing innovative instructional strategies

This action research project has implications for my supervision practice for the University of Massachusetts as well of my professional responsibility in my country of origin, the Bahamas. Improving my supervision practice will assist me to be more effective, more current and innovative in my techniques as I work with preservice teachers at the University of Massachusetts and at The College of The Bahamas and also supervise inservice teachers with varying levels of experience.

## **CONCLUSION**

The findings from this action research will assist me to address the deficiencies in my supervision that were revealed in this study and in so doing improve my supervision practice which should improve the practice of the preservice teachers that I supervise. This research may also be helpful in assisting other supervisors of pre-service teachers to examine their supervisory

skills. It may also be of interest to cooperating teachers, mentoring teachers, preservice and inservice teachers to see some of the methods that are used in supervision of teachers.

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**APPENDIX 1**      Running Head: Supervisees Reflection  
**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**STEP STUDENT TEACHER PRACTICUM**  
**SPRING 2005**  
**LESSON OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT**

Student Teacher/Intern \_\_\_\_\_  
School Placement and Assignment \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervising Practitioner \_\_\_\_\_ Program Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Grade/s \_\_\_\_\_ Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_

**LESSON PLANNING**

**Objectives** \_\_\_ relevant & measurable \_\_\_ matches learning and assessment  
**Content** \_\_\_ relevant to objectives \_\_\_ clearly outlined \_\_\_ well sequenced  
**Learning/Teaching Activities** \_\_\_ outlines organization of students \_\_\_ includes culminating activity  
& conclusion \_\_\_ incorporates media and technology \_\_\_ includes assessment

**DELIVERY OF INSTRUCTION**

**Introduction** \_\_\_ engages students \_\_\_ links previous lessons \_\_\_ shares objectives  
\_\_\_ communicates high standards & expectations  
**Main Ideas/Content** \_\_\_ concepts are meaningful & accurate \_\_\_ terminology is appropriate  
\_\_\_ gives clear directions \_\_\_ builds on prior experience \_\_\_ underscores key points  
\_\_\_ fosters inquiry \_\_\_ uses a variety of strategies \_\_\_ assignments are clear and appropriate  
\_\_\_ employs math \_\_\_ strengthens reading & writing \_\_\_ encourages all students to participate  
\_\_\_ students show interest \_\_\_ students are successful \_\_\_ ends lesson appropriately  
**Questioning** \_\_\_ well structured, clear \_\_\_ stimulates thinking \_\_\_ encourages all students to respond  
\_\_\_ continuous feedback \_\_\_ affirmation \_\_\_ probing \_\_\_ allows sufficient wait time  
\_\_\_ uses high level questioning (application, synthesis, analysis, evaluation)  
**Individual Differences/Abilities** \_\_\_ makes provision for individual differences (eg. IEPs, peer tutoring,  
cooperative learning)

**Classroom Management**

\_\_\_ conducive environment \_\_\_ behavior acceptable \_\_\_ enforces safety \_\_\_ manages time

**Interaction with Students**

\_\_\_ rapport with students \_\_\_ treats all with mutual respect and equity  
\_\_\_ circulates class \_\_\_ gives assistance as needed

**Use of Visual Aids/Technology/Equipment** \_\_\_ **Conveys Enthusiasm for Science** \_\_\_

**COMMENTS** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**APPENDIX 2**  
**SUPERVISOR'S ASSESSMENT**

Running Head: Supervisees Reflection

**Your input will assist me to further develop my supervisory ability.**

**Please tick  the appropriate option.                    \_\_\_ student teacher                    \_\_\_ supervising practitioner**

Please rate my supervision by placing in the space before each item the number (1, 2, 3, or 4) of the response that most nearly indicates your level of agreement with the item:

- 1. Strongly disagree**
- 2. Disagree**

**Section A: Professional Characteristics**

- \_\_\_ 1. I am genuinely concerned with the growth and the development of students.
- \_\_\_ 2. I am genuinely concerned with the growth and development of the student teacher.
- \_\_\_ 3. I am trustworthy.
- \_\_\_ 4. I am fair.
- \_\_\_ 5. I am flexible.
- \_\_\_ 6. I am ethical.
- \_\_\_ 7. Rapport with me is good.

**Section B: Skills**

- \_\_\_ 8. I have effective communication skills.
- \_\_\_ 9. I display needs assessment skills.
- \_\_\_ 10. I display planning skills.
- \_\_\_ 11. I display group facilitation skills.
- \_\_\_ 12. I display problem-solving skills.
- \_\_\_ 13. I display observation skills.
- \_\_\_ 14. I display conflict resolution skills.

**Section C: Individual Assistance**

- \_\_\_ 15. I effectively observe the student teacher and provide helpful feedback.
- \_\_\_ 16. I provide prompt feedback.
- \_\_\_ 17. The format for written reports of observed lessons is effective.
- \_\_\_ 18. I provide useful instructional resources

when needed.

- 3. Agree
- 4. Strongly agree

- \_\_\_ 19. I provide sufficient opportunities for the student teacher to express her/himself.
- \_\_\_ 20. I foster teacher reflection, which helps the student teacher to diagnose and solve problems.
- \_\_\_ 21. I share innovative instructional strategies.
- \_\_\_ 22. I effectively assist the student teacher with instructional problems he/she is experiencing.
- \_\_\_ 23. I effectively assist the student teacher to develop skills as a teacher.
- \_\_\_ 24. You feel comfortable asking me for assistance if needed.

**How could I improve as a supervisor?**

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**Additional Comments**

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*Date:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Adapted from Supervision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach by Carl D. Glickman, Stephen P. Gordon, Jovita M. Ross-Gordon (2004) p. 140.*

*Thank you. Your input is appreciated.*