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Zepeda, Sally J. (2007) *Instructional Supervision: Applying Tools and Concepts*. Second edition. Larchmont, NY: [Eye on Education](#).

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Not so long ago one of my mentors said, "In instructional supervision, there is always the risk of becoming the wolf inside the lamb." Supervision as a process may have many angles of observation (e.g., formal and informal), analysis (e.g., mix method data collection), or interpretation (e.g., action research, constructivism, or the Johari Window approach). Principals, academic staff and supervisors have to stand on a solid base in order to be aware of the different internal and external factors mixed into the always imperfect teaching process.

Sally Zepeda's *Instructional Supervision* is an excellent guide for new and veteran supervisors. She shows how to reach goals that institutions and professionals have in common by clarifying the nature of supervision, its function, its methodology, and some instrumental tools in a comprehensive and practical way. As Zepeda states, "Supervision is a reflective and iterative process that needs to construct a culture on a foundation of collaboration, collegiality and trust to promote the processes that support and actively engage adults in reflexion and inquiry" (p. 20).

In order to reach this goal, Zepeda organizes chapters with a pragmatic structure. Each chapter has both concept and theory framework, and suggested activities that move from theory into practice, like a group processing a reflection. A summary and extensive reference section are also included for each chapter. Zepeda presents fifteen chapters; the first three are related to philosophical, pedagogical, political, and sociological aspects of instructional supervision. A second group of chapters focuses on classroom observation and includes tools (some can be downloaded online) to help supervisors gather data and analyze and design the intervention program for teachers. In this new edition, Zepeda has improved three main aspects of the book by providing additional tools: a) classroom observation tools, b) self-assessment activities for students based in Early Learning and

Child Care (ELCC) standards, and c) professional development and clinical supervision that is linked with teacher evaluations and professional growth.

One of the authors stronger emphases is, without a doubt, classroom observation tools. Here, Zepeda provides a wide variety of materials on how to gather relevant information and offers strategies for analyzing them. The decision-makers have to identify and analyze information that may reveal not only strengths or weaknesses but also areas for development individually, by peers, or as a group. It is relevant to mention here that the author's sensibility and experience offer a short course in the complex process of educative supervision. The classroom observation section includes thirteen tools structured around three areas: the background, giving general information about the technique; the application of the tool in practice, and some general tips. Most of these tools are easy to use and can inspire improvisation or creation of custom-made techniques.

Each data-collection techniques includes a very concise analysis of its advantages and disadvantages. These tools comprise a comprehensive list of techniques designed to measure wait time, cause-and-effect, the effectiveness of instructional methods, selective versus verbatim data, no-focus data, calling and interaction patterns, transition patterns, cooperative group learning, technology implementation, and classroom traffic. With this information supervisors can select the best procedure to design a supervision program keeping in mind the level of participation of the staff and the teachers themselves. Zepeda reiterates that trust and confidence are the "glue" necessary to build professional relationships between instructors and supervisors. We have to constantly remember that supervision is not only a bureaucratic process, but also a human relationship. Well executed, it will help others to grow and be witness to our own professional process.

The last group of chapters gives general ideas for supervisors on how to design short- and long-term supervision programs. Zepeda knows how powerful involvement and active participation of the supervised teachers is. Among the topics she covers: motivation and supervisory leadership, peer coaching, action research, portfolio supervision, and an alternative strategy for mentoring and induction. Zepeda introduces several ideas from her book *Professional Development* (2008), which outlines "what works where" and explains in detail that professional development is an endless journey of continuous learning. One interesting chapter deals with marginal teachers, where a clear and objective diagnosis is needed to elicit their participation in a process of growth, both personal and as a member of the teaching team. According to Zepeda, "above all, remain cautiously optimistic while working with marginal teachers" (p. 312).

The culmination of Zepeda's approach is succinctly presented in the last chapter: "Pulling it All Together" in which she presents job embedded learning. She states that "supervision should seek to guide growth and learning where reflection, collegiality, transfer of newly learned skills, and refinement of practices foster common lexicons for better understanding" (p. 354).

This is a book that I highly recommend not only as an informational read but also as a tool to increase understanding and a resource for applying ideas. The intricate social, economic, and political aspects behind *Instructional Supervision* encourages education professionals to be aware of their professional responsibility to grow by helping others to do so. Good reading, and enjoyable!

References

Zepeda, S. (2008). *Professional development: What works*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

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