ENHANCING MENTORSHIP IN THE PRACTICUM: IMPROVING CONTEXTUAL SUPERVISION

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ABSTRACT. This report describes a project that enacted recent changes to the implementation of the Contextual Supervision (CS) model with two cohorts of classroom cooperating teachers (CCTS) and their teacher-interns in an extended-practicum program in Western Canada. When compared to the results of previous research on CS, the findings from the current study reveal a distinct improvement in the appropriate matching of cooperating teachers' mentorship styles with their teacher-interns' skill-specific developmental levels in teaching. Reasons for this improvement are presented, and implications for practicum organizers are drawn.

POUR FAVORISER LE MENTORAT DURANT LES STAGES PRATIQUES : L'AMÉLIORATION DES SUPERVISIONS CONTEXTUELLES

RÉSUMÉ. Cet article décrit la mise en place de récents changements dans l'implantation du modèle de supervision contextuelle (SC) auprès de deux groupes de maîtres associés et de leurs stagiaires lors d'un stage de longue durée dans l'ouest canadien. Lorsque les résultats de cette présente étude sont comparés aux recherche antérieures portant sur la supervision contextuelle, les conclusions révèlent une amélioration appréciable dans l'appariement du style de mentorat des maîtres associés et du degré de développement des habiletés pédagogiques du stagiaire. Les raisons de cette amélioration sont présentées ainsi que leurs implications dans la planification des stages pratiques.

A key component of pre-service teacher preparation is the extended-practicum, in which student-teachers engage in an "internship" experience within a school setting. The university teacher-educator and the classroom cooperating teacher (CCT) at the school site jointly fulfill the supervisory role in this practicum by assisting the pre-service teacher-intern in developing his/her professional knowledge and skills (Dalzell, 1997). A recurring problem that periodically arises during this supervisory process, however, is one of interpersonal conflict between the classroom cooperating teacher and the teacher-intern (Ralph, 2000). Although such difficulties are often rationalized as a "personality clash," an "irreconcilable difference," a "stubborn and intransigent position," or "plain ignorance" (Fullan & Miles, 1992;

Ralph, 1993a), a primary cause of such disagreements is a mismatch of the supervisor's leadership style with the protégé's developmental level (Ralph, 1993b, 2000).

This report describes an approach to supervision, the Contextual Supervision model, that can lead to a distinct improvement in the appropriate matching of cooperating teachers' mentorship styles with their teacher-interns' skill-specific developmental levels in teaching. The purpose is to present research evidence identifying how the gap or mismatch between mentors and protégés may be reduced, and by extension, to achieve two other goals: to improve mentorship of interns and thereby to see them develop professionally.

Some teacher educators have shown an aversion to using the term "supervision" (Glickman, 1992; Paris & Gespass, 2001) because of its possible negative connotation, and because the practice may have been misused or abused. Recently more fashionable terms have developed, such as "mentoring," "coaching," or facilitation." However I choose to sidestep this terminology controversy. At the core of all these terms is the same "apprenticeship process" rooted in the tenets of cognitive developmental psychology. This apprenticeship or internship model is based on the following three key assumptions undergirding the process of how beginning teachers construct their personal knowledge about the teaching/learning process (see, for example, Lave & Wenger, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978):

1. Novice teachers learn to teach by integrating the new experiences that they encounter in their practicum program with knowledge previously acquired in their campus coursework and prior life events.

2. This professional-development process occurs within a socio-cultural setting mediated by the more capable person(s) in the mentorship role, who assist(s) the supervisee's instructional development. The mentor does this by providing appropriate scaffolding (i.e., supervisory guidance and support) within the novice's existing task-specific zone of proximal development (i.e., the gap between the individual's actual and potential capacity to perform a particular instructional skill).

3. The ultimate goal of this supervisory process is for supervisors to move from a relatively structured and explicitly directive approach (when initially assisting neophytes in the profession) to one that would eventually become less directive. This adjustment of the supervisor's behaviour is made as supervisees develop their professional competencies, and as they gradually become less dependent on their mentor(s) and more self-evaluative of their own instructional performance.

I am therefore not uncomfortable with the term supervision for three reasons:

(a) it has widespread usage

(b) decrying it is demeaning to any individuals who have effectively and successfully participated in the supervisory process as it benefited all stakeholders

(c) instructional supervision (or mentoring, or coaching) is a leadership process in which any educational professional, by virtue of his/her previous expertise and experiences, assists a less experienced or knowledgeable colleague in acquiring new professional knowledge/skills or to improve existing ones (Ralph, 2000, p.312).

The Contextual Supervision (CS) mentorship model has been developed, applied, and refined during the past several years in the extended practicum setting. CS has been found to achieve three aims: it assists supervisory personnel (i.e., both the college supervisors and the classroom cooperating teachers) in identifying and resolving the mismatching problem mentioned above; it thereby improves their mentorship effectiveness; and in turn it coaches preservice teachers more successfully to develop their professional skills and attributes (Ralph, 1998; 2000; Watt, 1998).

DESCRIPTION OF CS

I have defined Contextual Supervision (CS) as a developmental leadership model that is used by supervisors (i.e., experienced practitioners in either permanent or temporary mentoring roles) to promote the professional development (i.e., the acquisition or the improvement of job-related skills, tasks, and/or knowledge) of supervisees (i.e., protégés in this relationship whose goal is to learn and/or improve these professional skills or tasks Ralph, 1993b, 1996a, 1998, 2000, and 2001). The CS model, based on the original Situational Leadership approach (Hersey, 1985; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977), has been developed and refined during the past twelve years in the field of the supervision of instructional development. It has been used both with beginning pre-K to 12 teachers and their supervisors, and with novice instructors at the college and university level. (See Ralph, 1993b, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, 1996-1997, 1998; Watt, 1998).

The CS process is *Contextual* because the mentoring relationship is affected by a complex web of factors unique to each mentorship setting, as represented by the outer border in Figure 1. These factors may be psychological, social, organizational, cultural, or a combination thereof. Many of these influences may not be ones that can be changed by the mentor nor the protégé; however, the only factor over which the supervisory participants *do* have direct control is their own behaviours in the relationship. For the supervisors, this factor is their mentorship or supervisory style, which consists of two key dimensions: their "task" response (i.e., a concern for the

technical performance aspect of learning or perfecting a particular skill); and the "support" response (i.e., a concern for the "human" or psycho/social/ emotional component in the protégé's learning). These two leadership dimensions have long been identified, described, and studied in the extensive research literature of management and organizational behaviour (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977; McShane, 2001; Robbins & Langton, 2002).

For the protégés, the key element over which they have most control in the supervisory context is their own skill-specific developmental level in performing the particular task being practised or learned. This developmental level consists of two dimensions: their level of "competence" (i.e., their actual ability to perform or apply the particular skill being practised) and their level of "confidence" (i.e., the degree of self-assurance, composure, and feeling of security and/or safety they possess in performing that task). Thus, each learner has the ultimate responsibility to practice the skill until it is internalized as part of his/her professional repertoire. However, the cliché "practice makes perfect" needs to be modified to reflect the more authentic process emphasized in Contextual Supervision: "practice incorporating appropriate supervisory feedback makes perfect."

The CS model is portrayed in Figure 1.
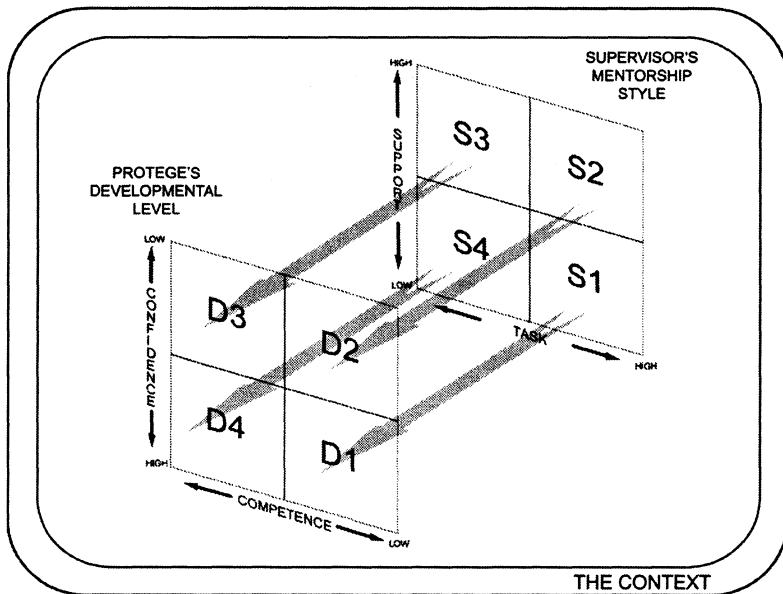
FIGURE 1. Contextual Supervision. (The mentor matches his/her supervisory style to coincide with the skill-specific developmental level of his/her protégé.)

The heart of the CS model is represented by the arrows linking the S-grid and the D-grid that portray the appropriate matching by the mentor or supervisor of one of his/her four basic supervisory styles with the similarly numbered developmental-level quadrant exhibited by the protégé he/she is mentoring.

CS and Other Models

I have compared and contrasted CS with seven other contemporary supervisory models, and I have demonstrated that CS incorporates many of the strengths of these approaches and bypasses their limitations (Ralph, 1993b, 1998, 1999b). Interested readers are invited to consult these references for details of their analysis.

APPLICATION OF CS

The research on CS has been conducted with pre-service teachers and their mentors (i.e., their college-based supervisors and classroom cooperating teachers) during the extended-practicum period of their teacher-education program. Throughout the practicum period, the college supervisor conducts regular workshops with a cohort of pairs of teacher-interns and their cooperating teachers, and also coordinates five clinical-supervision sessions with each pair. These workshops and supervision sessions are held in order to facilitate the mentor's supervision of the protégé's mastery of a recognized set of essential instructional skills drawn from the body of teaching-effectiveness research (see, for example, University of Saskatchewan, 2002-2003).

This set of professional attributes, knowledge, and skills consists of eight broad categories of generic teaching skills—each composed of a specific set of sub-skills (see, for example, Anderson & Burns, 1989; Borich, 2000; Good & Brophy, 2000; Wittrock, 1986). These categories (with an example of a related sub-skill) are:

(a)   personal and professional attributes (e.g., fulfils professional commitments);

(b)   instructional preparation (e.g., creates short- and long-term teaching plans);

(c)   presenting (e.g. provides clear directions);

(d)   classroom management (e.g., handles disruptive student behaviour effectively);

(e)   oral-questioning (e.g., poses clear questions);

(f)   responding (e.g., provides positive reinforcement in an effective manner);

(g) evaluating pupil work (e.g., uses a variety of assessment instruments);

(h) implementing methodologies (e.g., employs a variety of instructional approaches to motivate students' learning).

A teacher-intern's performance of each of the instructional skills can be analyzed through the framework of the developmental-grid component of the CS model. As is the case with *any* individual learning *any* new task, two basic elements emerge: (a) the person's actual level of physical or psycho-motor ability to perform the skill in question, and (b) his/her existing psychological/emotional thoughts and feelings about the performance.

With respect to the instructional category of classroom management, for instance, the supervisor will determine the developmental level of the intern in the skill of "handling disruptive student behaviour effectively." This can be done by observing the extent to which he/she performs that task during the routine of day-to-day school activities (i.e., the "competence" dimension) and by conversing with (and observing) the intern regarding the degree of his/her feelings of apprehension and/or comfort about doing it (i.e., the "confidence" aspect).

During the practicum inservices and the triad clinical sessions in which the majority of the CS research was conducted, the supervisor would describe and demonstrate how CS was to be applied by both the college supervisor and the cooperating teacher, in order to assist the supervisees to learn (or to improve) their professional skills in their teaching practice. The applica-tion of the CS model consists of three phases or steps.

Three steps

1. DETERMINE DEVELOPMENT LEVEL. The first phase in applying CS is for the pair (or the triad, if the college supervisor is present) to determine the existing development level of the protégé to perform the specific task or skill being learned.

As indicated above and as illustrated in the "D grid" of Figure 1, a protégé's skill-specific level of development consists of varying degrees of both his/her *competence* and his/her *confidence* in performing that task. The D1 level reflects an individual's level of low competence and high confidence to do the task (i.e., he/she does not know how to execute the skill, but is confi-dent, willing, and eager to learn). A supervisee at D2 is low on both dimensions; a learner at D3 shows high competence and low confidence in executing the skill; but one at D4 is high on both elements.

A supervisee's level of development may be ascertained in three ways: by his/her answers to direct questions about it from the mentor; from the pairs' (or triads') pre- and post-conferences, informal dialogue, and casual conver-sations about the protégé's teaching progress; and from formal and informal

observations of the novice's teaching by the cooperating teacher and/or college supervisor.

The existing levels of a supervisee's development are skill-specific, they are changeable over time, they may be different for different skills, and they are not to be fixed to permanently label or categorize a protégé's overall performance (Ralph, 1992, 1996a, 2000).

2. SYNCHRONIZE SUPERVISORY STYLE. After determining the protégé's task-specific level of performance, the mentor must appropriately adjust his/her supervisory response to meet the observed developmental needs of the supervisee for the skill in question. This matching process represents the essence of the CS model.

As described above and as depicted in Figure 1, the supervisor's mentorship or supervisory style consists of two leadership dimensions, depicted on the two axes of the "S-grid." One dimension is the *support* element (i.e., the human-relationship aspect, in which the mentor's response may vary along a range from a greater to lesser degree of encouragement, positive reinforcement, and psychological/emotional support for the protégé as he/she attempts to develop the teaching skill in question). The other style component is the *task* dimension (i.e., the technical or mechanical aspect of mastering a skill or competency being practised, in which the mentor's response may vary along a continuum from greater to lesser directive guidance and specific technical advice). This task-dimension involves telling, showing, guiding, and providing directions or procedural strategies regarding the protégé's "technique" in performing the skill.

As illustrated by the multiple-arrow portion of Figure 1, the mentor executes this matching process by synchronizing an S1 style with the protégé's D1 level, the S2 style with a D2 level, and so on. The key principle, here, is that the mentor's *task* response is inversely proportional in magnitude to the extent of the protégé's *competence* level; and simultaneously, the extent of the mentor's *supportive* behaviour is similarly reciprocal in degree to the novice's level of *confidence* in performing the particular skill.

For example, a protégé's *low* level of competence in a skill calls for the mentor's *high* degree of task orientation (i.e., the supervisee does not know the "what to do" or the "how to do it" and therefore needs the mentor to specify clearly these elements). Further, the protégé's *high* level of confidence requires a *low* supportive response from the supervisor (i.e., the learner already has adequate self-assurance and does not therefore require a great amount of mentor encouragement and praise to bolster the learner's already existing high level of confidence).

3. CONTINUALLY MONITOR AND ADJUST STYLE. The mentorship pair (or triad) would continually monitor the protégé's skill development, and the mentor

would accordingly synchronize his/her supervisory style with the supervisee's skill-specific development level. Typically, as a protégé advances from D1 to D2 to D3 to D4 in performing a skill, the mentor would reciprocate by responding correspondingly with an S1, S2, S3 and S4 style.

At this juncture, the question of mentors' supervisory abilities should be addressed. What are the developmental levels of competence and confidence of supervisors in terms of their specific abilities and skills to coach, mentor, lead, guide, facilitate and otherwise assist protégés to develop? Although not within the scope of the recent research on CS, this key element is critical in the conceptualization and effective implementation of the model.

Although I have not conducted extensive research on this aspect of CS, my mentorship work with several hundred internship pairs over the past sixteen years has informed my own supervisory practice in the following ways (Ralph, 1998):

> 1. Classroom cooperating teachers (like their interns) are at a specific developmental level in terms of their own competence and confidence in applying the CS model during supervision.

> 2. They, too, reflect a change in developmental levels as they gain experience in implementing the model in their supervisory routines with their interns, as do their interns with respect to the teaching skills.

> 3. I, as the college supervisor, must alter my own supervisory style (in terms of my "task" and "supportive" responses) with the classroom cooperating teachers. This is necessary in order to match inversely the extent of their respective levels of supervisory competence and confidence – in the same way they are supposed to function with their interns.

> 4. In several cases where mismatches between supervisor style and intern development have been identified in the pair's relationship, I have been able to assist the cooperating teacher adjust his/her style to match appropriately the intern's existing skill-specific developmental level.

> 5. This adjustment helped alleviate the interpersonal problem, and the pair resumed a more cordial working relationship.

RESEARCH FINDINGS ON THE CONTEXTUAL SUPERVISION MODEL

In this section, I compare the findings from the earlier research on CS with those from a current study. The *general* purpose of *all* of these studies was to examine the effectiveness of the CS approach in helping supervisors do their job. The *specific* purpose of *all* the studies was to help supervisors reduce any mismatch (between supervisory style and intern development) that arose during the practicum.

The difference between the earlier studies and the current one was the addition of 3 elements to the latter that I postulated would reduce the

mismatch gap that seemed to regularly appear in each of the earlier studies. I describe the three changes in *The Current Study*, following.

The 1991-1999 findings

From 1991 to 1999 research was conducted on the effectiveness of the CS model, and the findings have been extensively reported in the literature. For instance, in a series of early studies, as the designer of the CS approach, I reported how I used CS, personally, to inform my own mentorship and supervisory practice. I did this first as a faculty advisor with several cohorts of pairs in the extended-practicum program at my university (Ralph, 1991, 1992, 1992-1993, 1993a, 1993b, 1994; Ralph & Yang, 1993) and then as a peer-consultant and workshop leader in instructional development for new post-secondary instructors (Ralph, 1995, 1996b, 1996-1997, 1998; Ralph & Konchak, 1996).

Later, results from several studies that investigated the use of CS by whole cohorts of instructional supervisors (who were trained to apply CS in their mentorship of teacher-interns) were also reported. In these latter studies, as the faculty supervisor, I did not merely apply CS privately in my own supervision, as was the case in the first series of studies. Instead I presented the model to six different cohorts of classroom cooperating teachers over a six-year period, who in turn learned it and applied it in their own supervisory practices with their interns during the six extended- practicum sessions (Ralph, 1996a, 1998, 1999a, 2000, 2002). Some of these studies examined the supervision of teacher-interns' practice of classroom management skills, while other studies investigated the CS model used in the interns' application of oral-questioning in teaching.

A synthesis of the key findings of *all* of the above studies of the CS model reveals that:

(a)   a protégé progresses through different developmental levels for each instructional skill;

(b)   a mentor who adjusts her/his leadership style to match these developmental levels (i.e., S1 with D1, S2 with D2, and so on) appears to enhance the protégé's professional growth in these skills;

(c)   interpersonal problems typically arise when mismatching occurs between mentor style and protégé development level;

(d)   these conflicts tend to subside if this misalignment is corrected when the supervisor synchronizes his/her leadership style with the corresponding development level of the supervisee;

(e)   classroom cooperating teachers, on the whole, seem to prefer using a high supportive/low directive style (i.e., S3 or S4), and in some such

cases may actually limit the professional development of supervisees who may be at a D1 or D2 level in their performance of a specific skill.

These findings suggest that when mentors/supervisors are familiar with CS and its principles they are more consistent in matching their mentorship/ leadership style appropriately with the development levels of the supervisees. The studies not only confirmed that supervisors seem to prefer using supervisory styles with higher support and lower task responses when working with other adults, but also that supervisees, as a whole, tend to rate themselves lower in skill development than their mentors rank them. One further problem was identified by means of previous CS research. This problem was that even when cohorts have been exposed to CS preparation and training in supervisory workshops, an ambiguity about, or a misinterpretation of, some of the CS principles and /or its implementation persisted among a certain percentage of cooperating teachers. Yet it has also been shown that the CS concepts and principles, once understood and accepted by personnel in supervisory roles, are relatively easy to apply (Ralph, 1998, 1999a, Watt, 1998).

All of the research on CS cited above has shown that the overall strengths of the model are that:

(a) it has been shown to help supervisory personnel clarify their conceptualization of the whole supervision/mentoring process;

(b) it replaces a "one-size-fits-all" approach by providing for mentors to vary their leadership styles according to the professional needs of their protégés;

(c) it is intuitively appealing and relatively easy to learn, and it offers mentors a tool to help analyze and alleviate supervisory conflicts (which have typically been misrepresented or distorted by such clichés as: "We have a personality clash," "She is simply ignorant" or, "He is plain stubborn"); and

(d) it has revealed that such relationship problems are often the result of mentors mismatching their supervisory styles with protégés' task-specific developmental levels.

One limitation has been repeatedly identified in the CS research that was conducted from 1995 to 1999 (i.e., the studies of several cohorts of classroom cooperating teachers and their interns in extended-practicum programs). This limitation is that not all of the supervisors trained in the application of CS were consistent in appropriately matching their mentorship styles with the developmental-levels of their interns. This inconsistency was shown to be greater for cohorts of supervisory pairs who were working on enhancing protégés' oral-questioning skills than it was for cohorts who were

attempting to develop interns' classroom management competence (Ralph, 1995, 1998, 1999a, 2000, 2002).

Possible explanations for this difference are that:

(a) because classroom management is typically deemed more important than questioning skills, more attention is paid to developing the former;

(b) questioning skills are difficult to develop and maintain – for *all* teachers, and thus require sustained work by *all* participants; and

(c) interns' and cooperating teachers' prior experiences with questioning skills may cause each sub-group to value and therefore to employ them differently.

I concluded that further research was needed to address this gap question, to explore alternative solutions to the problem, and to determine if the mismatch could be remedied. I therefore conducted another study described below.

The current study

In order to attempt to reduce the persistent mismatching gap that appears to arise among a certain number of internship pairs, I recently instituted three distinct changes in the extended-practicum program with my last two assigned cohorts of practicum pairs of classroom cooperating teachers and their interns. I made these changes to the regular format and procedures of the extended-practicum program that I had originally used with my previously assigned cohorts. First, I added a new half-day "Orientation In-service" for all cooperating teachers (alone) for whom I served as faculty advisor. At this initial meeting (held prior to the beginning of each of the Fall Internships) I described, explained, and demonstrated the CS model in the context of the extended-practicum program. At these two meetings I incorporated the inservice format determined by Showers, Joyce, and Bennett (1987) in their extensive research to be highly effective in teachers' professional-development programs. (Also, all expenses were covered for the two cohorts of teachers to attend these extra in-services: i.e., substitute costs, mileage, and a luncheon.)

The main differences between this pre-internship orientation in-service and the three regular internship inservices were that the former was attended by classroom cooperating teachers prior to the beginning of the practicum (without the interns); it consisted of a half-day rather than full-day session; and it was devoted entirely to the CS model. Thus, the cooperating teachers could spend a focussed period to comprehend the model, its rationale, its application, and its previously studied effects.

The teachers' subsequent feedback to me about the orientation session was unanimously positive. Typical of the written comments provided at the conclusion of the practicum were: "I found the first inservice very informative to help me before the intern started"; "As a first time cooperating teacher, I found it very helpful. The model was a great guideline to follow and reassured me that I was on the right track as far as expectations"; and "It gave me a chance to discuss and compare notes with other supervising teachers. It was excellent support."

A second addition that I introduced to each of the last two programs was the planned and deliberate increase in my references to the CS model, whenever an opportunity arose to do so during the regular internship activities. Thus, during the three regular internship seminars with all pairs, during formal pre- and post-conferences with internship-pairs, and during informal conversations with the participants, I intentionally referred to specific facets of the CS model as the need or opportunity arose, in order to emphasize its value. For example, when one of the cooperating teachers made a comment during a discussion with a pair of interns over coffee in a staff room in the seventh week of one of the practica about an intern's performance, I responded:

> Just as we learned about the CS model last week, your (the intern's) confidence is growing, and we (i.e., the two supervisors) don't have to be as concerned about encouraging you and building your confidence as much as we did earlier . . . you display more of an air of assurance, now . . . .

A third component new to the study of the two recent internship programs, was my addition of a second half-day inservice (again for the cooperating teachers only) after the conclusion of the practicum. In this second half-day, I convened a "Debriefing Session" with them to discuss their recently completed supervisory experiences with, and reactions to, the CS model. During this meeting (again, for which all teachers' expenses were paid), I presented the findings synthesized from the data I had just collected during the practicum. During this post-internship meeting I also requested the teachers' reactions to these findings and the implications thereof, and I also solicited their written feedback in two areas:

(a) How the CS model may have helped them in the supervisory process, and

(b) What suggestions they would make for future cooperating teachers who apply the CS model in their supervisory duties.

I introduced these three changes described above in direct response to the negative finding described earlier that repeatedly emerged in all of the CS studies from 1995 to 1999: namely, the constant presence of 25% to 30% of

cooperating teachers in each cohort who appeared to mismatch their mentorship style with the task-specific developmental level of their interns.

Although various reasons have been advanced for this mismatching phenomenon (e.g., participant disinterest in the model, misunderstanding of it, inability to apply it, devaluation of it, satisfaction with past and present practice, or the college supervisor/researcher's ineffectiveness at describing/ promoting it, Ralph, 1993b, 1996a, 1998, 2000, 2002) my quest was to reduce this limitation. Then, as a result, I wished to improve the overall effectiveness of the mentorship process for future cooperating teachers and their interns. Thus, I sought to record and analyze the results of these three program changes with my two most recent cohorts. I now present these findings in the following sub-section, and I also compare them to the results of the earlier studies.

THE CURRENT FINDINGS. The difference between this most recent study of the implementation of CS and the earlier ones was the addition of the three changes described above. In all other respects, the program format, the procedures, and the related components were similar to those of the earlier CS studies reported previously (Ralph, 1993b, 1996a, 1998, 2000, 2002). The data collection process in both the present and the earlier previous studies was also identical, except in this most recent study of the two last cohorts, I also solicited cooperating teachers' written responses for the two items described in the above sub-section (i.e., the perceived strengths of the CS model, and the teachers' suggestions for future practica).

DATA COLLECTION. In specific terms, all of these studies examined the extent that the two partners in each of the supervisory pairs were in agreement as to (a) where they perceived themselves, and (b) where they placed their partners in terms of grid locations in the two CS quadrants. (Each intern and CCT located his/her own position and his/her partner's position within the respective development and style grids on blank copies of the CS model. They marked the positions at two different times: first during the 5th week, and later, during the 11th week of the 16-week internship period. I then collated and calculated the number of matchings and mis-matchings that existed for all pairs in all of the cohorts for the Week 11 rankings, after the interns had practised the skill for six weeks, under the Contextual Supervision of their cooperating teachers.)

DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL. With respect to a comparison of the degree of the supervisors' matching of their mentor style with protégé development between the previous programs and the "new" one, I summarize the results in Table 1.

TABLE 1. Degree of Match Between Participants' Self- and Partner-Plotted Quadrant Locations on the CS Grids, Final Session (Week 11, N= 40 pairs)

INTERNS' DEVELOPMENTAL-LEVEL GRID		
Consistent match between partners' plottings	87	(87)
Interns plotted selves higher than did cooperating teachers	5	(10)
Interns plotted selves lower than did cooperating teachers	8	(3)
COOPERATING TEACHERS' SUPERVISORY-STYLE GRID		
Consistent match between partners' plottings	83	(71)
Cooperating teachers plotted selves higher than did interns	17	(11)
Cooperating teachers plotted selves lower than did interns	0	(18)

NOTE: The values represent percentages of the pairs whose plottings of their own performance and that of their partners matched similar quadrants (e.g., S1 with D1, S2 with D2, and so forth). The skill being supervised was classroom management. For comparative purposes the values in parentheses indicate the cumulative findings from similar studies conducted from 1993 to 1999 (*N* = 99).

An examination of these findings shows that for the partners' agreement for the supervisors' style there was more consistent matching for the latter groups. For the partners' agreement about the interns' developmental level, however, the findings between the earlier and recent studies were more similar.

If one assumes that the closer the match between leader style and learner development, the more effective the mentoring process, then it also seems reasonable to presume that the three changes implemented with the most current cohorts accounted for the improvement of successful matching for supervisory style. As indicated in Table 1, the "new" 83% agreement compared to previous 71% for the mentors' supervisory style demonstrates this substantial increase in the degree of appropriate matching by the participants. The similar 87% values for the developmental level show that the participants in both the early and recent cohorts apparently had less difficulty in determining the interns' levels of growth than they did on agreeing on the cooperating teachers' supervisory styles.

However, despite the improvement noted in the most recent internship program, a degree of inconsistency of matching in both areas persists. For instance, as shown in the upper portion of Table 1, 5% of the interns from the recent cohorts still ranked themselves higher on the D-scale than did their cooperating teachers (or, alternatively, their teachers rated them lower in development than the interns ranked themselves). Also, 8% of the interns ranked themselves lower in development than did their cooperating teachers. An explanation for this aspect of mismatching may relate to the differences between expert and novice teachers, whereby the former, because of their accumulated experiences, focus more on a sophisticated and

holistic picture of the teaching/learning process, while the latter tend to be more narrow and idealistic in their perspective (Berliner, 1986; Shulman, 1987; Veenman, 1984). Thus, in the 5% case, the interns may have over-estimated their skill level in classroom management. For the 8% sub-group, the interns may have "outwardly" appeared capable, but "inwardly" may have lacked the confidence that their supervisors thought they had.

SUPERVISORY-STYLE. With respect to agreement on positioning both by the interns and by the cooperating teachers, themselves, of the cooperating teachers' locations on the S-grid, as shown in the lower portion of Table 1, 17% of the pairs mismatched their plottings. In this sub-group, the teachers placed themselves numerically higher on the S-grid than their interns placed them.

The issue at the root of this inconsistency is not so much the question of which partner's plotting is "correct" or "incorrect", as it is to ascertain why each of the partners saw a difference in the supervisory style of the cooperating teachers. For instance, if the cooperating teacher views herself as being S4 (low support) but the intern sees her as being S3 (high support), then there is a possibility of conflict arising in the mentoring process. As shown in Figure 1, the differences between an S3 and an S4 style is the degree of support and encouragement given by the supervisory teacher to the intern (because the degree of task orientation is virtually the same for both S3 and S4 styles). Moreover, if the protégé is at a D3 development level (low confidence) he/she "requires" the high support of the S3 style, not the lower support of the S4 style. Thus, mentors need to monitor closely the degree of confidence possessed by their proteges, and reciprocate with inverse proportions of supportive behaviour.

The key in resolving this style difference is for the pair, together, to re-assess or verify the existing developmental level of the intern in performing the skill in question. If they determine, for instance, that the level is D3 (high competence and low confidence), then according to the CS model the mentor is obliged to respond with an S3 style (in which the high degree of supervisory support appropriately meets the intern's low confidence need).

SHIFTING OF GRID-POSITIONS. Table 2 summarizes the change of participants' respective grid-positions throughout a five-week period of the interns' intensive practice of the skills used in effective classroom management.

The values in Table 2 represent two mean-rankings of the interns' and the cooperating teachers' self-plotted positions on the respective D-level and S-style grids, as well as each sub-groups' mean plottings of their partners' quadrant positions on the grids, with respect to the area of the mentoring of teacher-interns' classroom management skills. These plottings were recorded at both Week 6 and Week 11 of the extended-practicum. For

TABLE 2. Changes of Participants' Respective Grid-Positions in the CS Quadrants
(N = 40 pairs)

	Mean Rankings by:			
	Interns		CCTs	
Week Six				
• Interns' developmental level	3.19	(2.88)	3.44	(3.13)
• Cooperating teachers' supervisory style	3.13	(2.46)	3.07	(2.51)
Week Eleven				
• Interns' developmental level	3.71	(3.68)	3.70	(3.61)
• Cooperating teachers' supervisory style	3.54	(3.03)	3.72	(3.24)

NOTE: The values represent each sub-group's mean rankings of participants' self- and partner-plotted positions within the quadrants of the two CS grids. (The skill being practiced was classroom management.) For comparative purposes the values shown in parentheses indicate the cumulative findings from similar studies reported from 1993 to 1999 (N = 99).

comparative purposes, the values shown in parentheses indicate the cumulative findings from the earlier studies conducted from 1993 to 1999 (N=99).

An analysis of these data yields the following findings:

1. Because *all* values for the most recent study (i.e., the first values in each column) are greater than for those from the previous studies (i.e., the values in parentheses), one may assume that the improvements were due to the implementation of the three changes added to the recent program.

2. *All* participants in both the earlier and recent studies improved in their respective classroom management and supervisory skills over the five-week period of concentrated mentoring, as shown by a comparison between the Week 6 and Week 11 data.

3. With respect to the Week 11 data for the most recent study, the *overall* results indicate a *general* agreement by all participants for their self- and partner-plottings, because all four means were located within the upper portion of Quadrant 3 of the respective D- and S-grids (i.e., 3.71 and 3.70 for interns' developmental level and 3.54 and 3.72 for classroom cooperating teachers' mentorship style).

4. Closer analysis of these four mean values for Week 11, moreover, indicate that the interns as a sub-group saw themselves with a developmental level of confidence (3.71) almost equal to the level that their cooperating teachers perceived them to possess (3.70). For the S-plottings, the interns as a group ranked their classroom cooperating teachers as providing more support (3.54) than their mentors saw themselves as giving (3.72).

5. A comparison of the Week 11 values for the two mean rankings given by cooperating teachers (3.70 and 3.72) suggest that, in general, the teachers

saw themselves as consistently matching their leadership style with their protégés' developmental level. However, a discrepancy arose between the interns' two values for Week 11, in which they as a group saw themselves as developmentally higher (3.71) than their classroom cooperating teachers gave them credit for (3.54).

The key implication of all of these findings reported in Tables 1 and 2 is that improvement in the reduction of mismatching occurred in the two recent cohorts' programs, compared to the degree of mismatching identified in the earlier studies. However, further consideration should be given to continue to eliminate/reduce the mismatching problem that still persists.

STYLE/DEVELOPMENT MISMATCH. Ideally, if the CS model functioned perfectly there would be a 100% agreement of matchings in both the upper and lower portions of Table 1 and in the Week 11 data of Table 2. The values in Table 1 for both the recent and the previous studies show, however, that there was a greater consistency of match between partner's plottings of interns' developmental levels than there was for partners' rankings of cooperating teachers' supervisory styles.

An explanation for this finding may lie in the fact that the interns' teaching skills are typically more familiar to both sub-groups than are the relatively "new" mentorship skills within the CS model–which had only been introduced to the two most recent cohorts' of participants a few weeks earlier. In the current study, the Orientation Session conducted with mentors prior to the start of the internship did provide teachers with more exposure to CS than was the case for the cohorts in the previous studies. It thus appears that the more accustomed participants became with the CS model, then the closer the matchings of S and D quadrants became, as demonstrated by the 83% to 71% comparison in Table 1.

Yet, there still exists a 4% discrepancy in the current study's results (i.e., between the 87% D-grid agreement and the 83% S-style matchings), which necessitates that further analysis be conducted to seek reasons for this discrepancy, and to generate strategies to reduce the gap even further. Nevertheless, in overall terms, comparing the findings from the most recent study with those of the earlier CS research suggests that making the three changes to the recent program had a positive effect in reducing the extent of mismatching that had existed previously.

COOPERATING TEACHERS' FEEDBACK. At the Debriefing Seminar held with the CCTs after the conclusion of the extended-practicum, teachers provided oral and written comments regarding their reaction to the CS model and their perceptions of its usefulness in the practicum program, and they suggested improvements for future internship sessions.

They cited specific, positive benefits of the CS model. Typical comments illustrating these strengths were: "It helped me understand how interns view their own needs"; "As a first time supervisor I found it very helpful and a great guideline to follow"; "It was good to see the growth or weakness of myself and the intern throughout the term"; "It gave us a basis for discussion where we both used the same language" and "It helped define my role as a supervising teacher as the intern developed."

The respondents also offered suggestions to enhance the CS mentorship process in future practica. A sample of these comments were: "I suggest that the CS model be presented to all individuals involved in the internship very early and in depth prior even to meeting each other"; "Use it to help both [partners] develop through the process"; "Stress the importance of using CS as a communication tool"; and "Tell them to keep reflecting on what stage you and your intern both are at and to adjust your support accordingly."

Thus, it appears that these CCTs' comments, taken together, confirm the reported results from both the current study and the previous ones, namely, that the CS model is a useful supervisory tool, but that mentors need to be well versed in its application.

I suggest that these research results have demonstrated that the CS approach is a useful conceptual and analytical guide with potential to assist supervisory personnel in their practice. I have argued that CS is a guide (but not a panacea); if applied sensibly, it can be employed to analyze conflict-areas resulting from supervisory error (but not to ignore other possible sources of disagreement); and it can help identify solutions to these problems by suggesting adjustments in supervisory style (but not to absolve partners of their respective professional commitments and responsibilities).

I have also argued that:

> Implementing CS is superior to clinging inflexibility to a single supervisory style or to operating unsystematically or erratically via a trial-and-error approach. Familiarity with the model would assist supervisors who may misinterpret others' lack of skill or confidence as resistance or stubbornness to reframe these normal responses into legitimate problems to address and solve during the supervisory process. (Ralph, 1993b: 294-295)

In sum, I also believe that this "familiarity with the model" (i.e., supervisory being skilled at how (a) to determine the supervisee's task-specific development level, and (b) to adjust their own leadership behavior to the developmental needs of supervisees) will develop among supervisory personnel as they apply CS.

However, in the light of all of these data, three critical questions remain: (a) to what extent was the apparent improvement in matching of style with development due to the incorporation of the three stated changes? To what

extent was it due to the impact of other confounding factors, such as the Hawthorne effect? (b) Are the "new" findings valid and reliable, given the difference in size of the two samples ($N = 40$ and $N = 99$)? (c) Even though an apparent improvement was achieved, how can the lingering pattern of the gap be reduced even further between the views of approximately 15 percent of cohorts who mismatch protégé development and mentor style?

In order to respond to these questions, the recent studies could be replicated with new cohorts of teacher-interns and their cooperating teachers. In these replications, one could seek to determine if the incorporation of the same three changes described in this study would produce similar results with the newest cohorts in reducing the mismatching problem.

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