CLINICAL SUPERVISION AS IN-SERVICE TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

HİZMETİÇİ EĞİTİMDE BİREYSEL YÖNLENDİRME

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ÖZET


ABSTRACT

In this article, the application of clinical supervision process as in-service teacher training at YADIM (Foreign Languages Centre) of Çukurova University, at tertiary level has been carried out in 1991-1992 academic year. The application has been discussed and some conclusions have been drawn out. Clinical supervision which is an on-going process of in-service teacher training and development can create self-awareness in teachers either novice or in-service. It can help teachers improve their instructional skills, and as an outcome of such improvement, students may gain more in the classroom.
The Definition of Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is defined by various experts as follows:

Moris Cogan (1973:9) defines it as:

the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance. It takes its principal data from the events of the classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the students' learning by improving the teacher's classroom behavior.

Flanders (1976:47-48) sees clinical supervision as:

a special case of teaching in which at least two persons are concerned with the improvement of teaching and at least one of the individuals is a teacher whose performance is to be studied... [I]t seeks to stimulate some change in teaching to show that a change did, in fact, take place, and to compare the old and new patterns of instruction in ways that will give a teacher useful insights into the instructional process.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1979:305) state that clinical supervision:

refers to face-to-face encounters with teachers about teaching, usually in classrooms, with the double-barreled intent of professional development and improvement of instruction.

Acheson and Gall (1980:8) define clinical supervision as:

an alternative model of supervision that is interactive rather than directive, democratic rather than authoritarian, teacher-centered rather than supervisor-centered.
Since clinical supervision aims at professional development of teachers, it can help teachers improve their instructional performance. Through clinical supervision, a supervisor can give better guidance to teachers easily, because it is interactive, democratic and teacher-centered.

Here "clinical" is meant to suggest "a face-to-face relationship between teacher and supervisor and a focus on the teacher's actual behavior in the classroom" (Acheson and Gall, 1980:8).

Pfiffner and Fels (1964:7) explain the meaning of "clinical" as follows:

In modern usage, and with the advent of a greater number of disciplines becoming involved in the study of organizational effectiveness, these terms (clinical, therapeutic, therapy, and counseling) have come to be less associated with illness in the overall picture. They have rather become associated with efforts to help individuals and groups to actualize and use their own creative potential. It is toward the end of realization of potential that these terms find their way into a theory of supervision. Their use is necessary to our primary assumption that supervision is a developmental activity.

The Need for Clinical Supervision

In Turkey, teachers of English have their education in various departments of universities, such as English Language Teaching (ELT), Linguistics, and Language and Literature Departments. Those who have who have an ELT background are more fortunate than the others who did not have courses in methodology of teaching English. Although this is the case, the graduates of these departments can find positions as teachers of English at state schools, private schools, and universities.

English has become a dominant language in the field of science in Turkey. As a consequence, some universities have opened preparatory schools, leading to English as a medium of instruction. The staff who work in these schools are graduates of various
departments as mentioned above, and some of them are novice teachers because there are not enough experienced teachers to meet the demand for staff at such schools. In fact, it is inevitable to have to ask for new staff in such institutions, as senior members of staff retire.

No matter how experienced or inexperienced teachers may be, they come across varying problems in teaching English, as new methods and techniques become available, and as new materials are required. Since teachers do not work on their own, but work for an institution, they are bound to follow regulations, curriculum, syllabi, and to use materials available in the school. As this is the case, teachers often have problems in adapting themselves to new situations; thus they need improvement in orientation and guidance. On the other hand, teacher trainers claim that teachers need development by means of in-service training, written sources, seminars, symposiums, supervision and so on (Freeman, 1989; Fanselow, 1988; Larsen-Freeman, 1983; Taymaz, 1982). Freeman (1989:40) handles teacher training in two aspects, as training and development. He defines development as "a strategy of influence and indirect intervention that works on complex, integrated aspects of teaching; these aspects are idiosyncratic and individual." According to Freeman (1989), the purpose of development is for the teacher to generate change through increasing or shifting awareness. Clinical supervision, which is a way of contributing to teachers' development, can create this awareness through its on-going process.

Acheson and Gall (1980:17) explain the need for clinical supervision in the following statements:

Teachers are like learners. The content they need to learn is the profession of teaching. At various points in their professional development they need the skillful assistance of a clinical supervisor if they are to make progress.

Actually, it is a great opportunity for teacher, novice or in-service, to be able to have somebody to discuss their problems with, and to get some ideas for potential solutions to their problems.
The operations of any teaching and/or learning system involve a number of different tasks and roles which have to be shared between the different components which make up the system (Gremmo and Abe, 1985:23). Dubin and Olshtain (1986:31) point out the necessity of role change in teachers as long as new methods and approaches are in use. In addition to these, Duff (1988:20) states that "just as language teaching was dominated for many of its most formative years by a behaviorist view of learning, so many approaches to the preparation of teachers have been unduly dominated by procedures, techniques, and 'activities' that tend to have a manipulative effect of learning."

There is no typically good teacher or clear-cut prescription for being a good teacher as set forth by research and methodology (Freeman, 1982, 1989; Mackey, 1976; Fanselow, 1987; Malamah-Thomas, 1987; Allwright, 1988). However, teacher training courses related to the development of teachers in their profession are necessary so as to contribute to the field of teaching (Harmer, 1988; Gower, 1988). Gower (1988:21) points out that:

Teacher-training activity gives a school a certain prestige, particularly among teachers. For those who work on the courses, the experience can provide valuable "teacher development," and indeed "career development" opportunities--an attractive alternative to the conventional classroom routine. Servicing the profession in this way is not only a good thing in itself, it can revitalise a school and provide an organization with a source of trained teachers.

Reznich (1985:14) states that "the purpose of all teacher training and supervision is to prepare independent, effective teachers." He also makes the distinction between training and development as that "training issues are aspects of teaching that can be mastered through prescribed courses of action, while development issues are aspects of teaching which mature through the constant attention, critique, and involvement of the teacher in his/her teaching."

Reznich (1985:33) claims that "there are two factors that influence the learning process: attitudes, which is the affective---emotional--position of the individual towards oneself, one's activity, others, and their activity, and awareness, which is the outcome of
attention, the recognition of essentials." Freeman (1989:40) discusses how this awareness takes place:

The teacher and the collaborator engage in a process, the purpose of which is to generate some form of change in the teacher. Change does not necessarily mean doing something differently; it can mean a change in awareness. Some changes occur over time, with the collaborator serving only to initiate the process. Through development, the collaborator works to trigger the teacher's awareness of what the latter is doing. By asking questions, by making observations in a detached way, by sharing personal teaching experience, the collaborator endeavors to start the teacher on a process of reflection, critique, and refinement of the teacher's classroom practice.

The Aims of Clinical Supervision

According to Acheson and Gall (1980:12), the major aim of clinical supervision is "the improvement of teacher's classroom instruction." They also define the goals of clinical supervision as follows:

1. To provide teachers with objective feedback on the current state of their instruction.
2. To diagnose and solve instructional problems.
3. To help teachers develop skills in using instructional strategies.
4. To evaluate teachers for promotion, tenure, or other decisions.
5. To help teachers develop a positive attitude about continuous professional development.

At YADIM, Foreign Languages Center, preparatory school of, Çukurova University, clinical supervision has been used for the purpose of all, mentioned above, except number 4, which aims at evaluation of teachers for the purpose of promotion, tenure or other decisions.
The Stages of Clinical Supervision

According to Acheson and Gall (1980), Goldhammer (1980) et al. the structure of clinical supervision is composed of four steps:

1. **Pre-observation Conference:** In this first step, the supervisor and the teacher come together:
   a) identify the teacher's concern about instruction,
   b) translate the teacher's concerns into observable behaviors,
   c) identify procedures for improving the teacher's instruction,
   d) assist the teacher in setting self-improvement goals,
   e) arrange a time for classroom observation,
   f) select an observation instrument and behaviors to be recorded,
   g) clarify the instructional context in which data will be recorded.

2. **Observation:** the supervisor visits the teacher's class and collects the data related exclusively to the problem area. Observation can be done in many ways: tape-recording, video-recording, and hand recording; ethnographic type and checklist, selective verbatim, and analytic method.

3. **Data Analysis and Strategies:** the supervisor analyzes the data s/he has collected and proposes some strategies to solve the problem.

4. **Post-observation Conference:** the supervisor and the teacher come together and go through the analyzed data and strategies to be used to overcome the diagnosed problem. The idea of a post-observation conference is:
   a) to provide the teacher with feedback using objective observational data,
   b) to elicit the teacher's inferences, opinions, and feelings,
b) to encourage the teacher to consider alternative lesson objectives, methods and reasons,

d) to provide the teacher with opportunities for practice and comparison.

The Role of the Supervisor:

Reznich (1985:37) states that "by role it is referred to a definition of purpose of supervision activity." According to him, a supervisor has definable roles in:

- **Communication**
  
  a process of self-expression and delivery of meaning through symbols

- **Training**
  
  structural teacher development activities, usually within a group/leader context

- **Administration**
  
  supervision program support activities

- **Observation**
  
  a process of classroom visitation and related activities by the supervisor and the teacher aimed at teacher development

- **Evaluation**
  
  a process of assessment and judgement of performance

Figure 1. The roles of supervisor. (Extract from Reznich's Teaching teachers, 1985:37).

Reznich (1985:39) also defines the roles of a supervisor as: "training teachers with different needs, fostering teacher independence and responsibility, making personal decisions, modeling good teaching, evaluating principles and assumptions, managing time, and balancing friendship and work roles."
At YADIM, during the application of clinical supervision all the stages of clinical supervision have been implemented. Here, an account of the organization of YADIM is presented below:

![Organizational Chart](image)

**Figure 2: Organization of YADIM**

At YADIM, group meetings, and after that, operational board meetings are held every week. Various ideas related to the application of the curriculum are exchanged, and the problems that have been encountered are discussed. The teacher trainer has been brought some problems during these meetings by the group leaders or coordinators. Then the teacher trainer and the group leader or the team teacher have come together and discussed the problem in detail. In this pre-observation conference, the problem is specified in performance terms, an appropriate hour for observation, and how the data will be collected is decided. Observations have been done by ethnographical method and a checklists. From time to time tape recording and video recording have been used. After the observation, the data have been analyzed carefully, and some strategies have been proposed.
to solve the problem. In the post-observation conference, the teacher trainer and the teacher have come together, and gone through the analyzed data, and discussed the alternative solutions to the problem. When the same problem has related to the other staff, a seminar or a workshop has been held by the teacher trainer.

During the 1991-1992 academic year, 30 instructors who work at YADIM, both novice and experienced, have undergone the process of clinical supervision from time to time. Clinical supervision sometimes took place because some instructors needed help to use some technical devices in teaching such as the tape recorder or video effectively, some instructors were completely new in their profession so they needed to adjust themselves to the system, or some of them needed to improve their instructional skill in teaching. A questionnaire has been given to 30 instructors asking their positive and negative opinions about clinical supervision. All of them have returned the questionnaire. Although all of them stated their positive ideas, 60% of them stated that they did not have negative opinions about it, however, 40% of them stated their negative opinions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Number of instructors</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the number of instructors, with various years of experience, who have been undergone the process of clinical supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N:30</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of inst. returned the questionnaire</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of inst. stated positive ideas</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of inst. stated negative ideas</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the percentage of instructors who returned the questionnaire and the percentage of those who stated positive or negative ideas.
Among those who stated their negative ideas 66.66% have pointed out that their students have been positively affected by the observations in the classroom. They claim that their students have been more productive in the lesson during the observation. However, 33.33% of them pointed out that their students have been negatively affected by the observations, and added that the students did not perform as they normally did.

The third question in the questionnaire was if they wanted the clinical supervision as in-service teacher training to be continued at YADIM, and if so, how often it should be. Among them 100% answered "yes," however, some of them thought that it would be useful only if a need should arise. The answers are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency suggested</th>
<th>% of instructors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twice in a term</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month</td>
<td>46.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a fortnight</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week</td>
<td>6.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only when there is a need</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the suggested frequency of the clinical supervision process by instructors.

A classification of instructors' positive statements as quotations depending on their experience is as follows:

Instructors from 1 to 5 years of experience:

- Clinical supervision is very useful and necessary because it helps me see both my positive and negative sides in teaching.
- When I discuss with the supervisor in the post-observation conference, I can get some other alternatives to teach the same item.
- It created a self-awareness. After the discussion, I felt that I was doing the right things. It confirmed my ideas. I also learned some new ideas about student seating arrangement, monitoring the students during the pair and group work, and so on.
- I am a new instructor. I have been teaching only for two years. I gained lots of things by means of clinical supervision. Now, I feel more confident in teaching and also preparing my lessons.
- I got both positive and negative feedback from the supervisor, however, I am happy that I have been observed because I like exchanging ideas about my teaching with an experienced teacher.
- The most important thing is the post-observation conference because it is nice and useful to be able to discuss the outcomes of my observation.
- It helped me teach listening activities better; now, I feel more comfortable in teaching listening.
- It helped me improve my teaching in the classroom.

*Instructors from 5 to 10 years of experience:*

- I find it useful to get rid of some inefficiencies in my teaching. It also helped me go to the classroom with more preparation. I saw that I could do better things.
- It created self-awareness in my teaching. I revised my teaching in detail.
- I believe it is necessary from time to time.

*Instructors from 11 to 15 years of experience:*

- It is useful to discuss after the observation. Also watching my lesson and myself on the video helped me revise my teaching.
- I prepared my lesson more carefully and controlled myself a lot. It provided me with self-criticism. I got very useful feedback from you which I never had in my profession.
- It helped me use the video effectively in my video classes.
A classification of negative ideas as quotations is as follows:

- The observation made me and my students nervous during the first one or two observations, but later on, we got accustomed to seeing somebody else in the classroom.
- The idea of being observed by somebody makes everybody disturbed.
- At the very beginning, I was very anxious, and I thought the supervisor was going to report me to the director. This idea made me very nervous. Now, I see that it has never come out.

**Conclusion**

Clinical supervision which is an on-going process of in-service teacher training and development can create self-awareness in teachers either novice or in-service. It can help teachers improve their instructional skills, and as an outcome of such improvement, students may gain more in the classroom.

**References:**


Appendix 1

Dear Colleagues,

Please state your positive or negative opinions about clinical supervision as an in-service teacher development.

Thank you for your interest.

Turan Paker
Teacher Development Coordinator

1. Please state your positive opinions about clinical supervision.

2. Please state your negative opinions about clinical supervision.

3. Do you think clinical supervision should continue at YADIM. If so, how often?