

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Research Question and the Professional Context of the Inquiry

The biggest step one can take toward finding an answer is to begin with a well-formulated question (Wolcott, 1988:30).

Overview

The question that governs this investigation, that drives the research approach, and that seeks some betterment in current professional practice, is inextricably bound up with the speech event of the supervisory conference. It may be formulated thus: *how can we account for the fragility of feedback as it takes place between supervisors and teachers in the context of teacher supervision?* The specific context with which this study is concerned is pre-service and in-service teacher education in the field of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) in Australia, with an emphasis on adult learner programs.

The aim of Chapter 1 is to define the territory in which the study takes place: it introduces the research topic and the professional context of the inquiry. The early part of the chapter places supervision within the general frame of teacher education; and justifies the focus of inquiry on the feedback function of the supervisory conference. It then outlines the intended application of the study within the domain of TESOL teacher education. The latter part of Chapter 1 profiles the professional context in which the study is embedded, detailing the historical circumstances underpinning the development of TESOL teacher education practices in Australia. The chapter ends with a narrowing of the field of focus to the perceived fragility of the supervisory conference; and includes here a statement of the main terms of reference pertaining to the study.

1.1 The context of the research question

1.1.1 Why supervision?

The importance of supervision hinges on the importance of the practicum in the education of pre-service teachers. The practicum has both curricular and experiential significance, being the intended point at which, for the student of teaching, theory is supposed to translate into practice: when talk about teaching is intended to transfer to the enterprise itself (Housego & Boldt, 1985); when students begin to turn into teachers (Partington, 1982); when knowing 'what' becomes knowing 'how to' (Borko, Lalik & Tomchin, 1987).

Practice teaching, too, has an interpersonal dimension, involving a nexus between those able to give help and those who need or want to be helped. Its power lies in its potential: that which may be learned when a skilled helper interacts constructively and effectively with a teacher. Research evidence points to trainees' positive perceptions of the value of field experience (Tisher & Wideen, 1990). Indeed few would dispute that practice teaching is 'the single most powerful intervention in a teacher's professional preparation' (Clark & Marker, 1975, cited by Turney, Cairns, Eltis, Hatton, Thew, Towler & Wright, 1990:2). Nor would many dispute that what is learned in practice teaching is in large part a function of the supervisory relationship (Zahorik, 1988).

Supervision derives its importance from the centrality of the practicum. Turney et al. (1990:2) expressed the link succinctly:

If, as the research indicates, practice teaching is the single most powerful intervention in a teacher's professional preparation, then supervision is the single most powerful process in such intervention.

Field experience, then, is pivotal; and crucial to its success is supervision. Within in-service teacher education, supervised practice is certainly less pivotal, but where it exists, as in many instances of Adult TESOL, it is also highly valued (Burton, 1987; Freeman, 1982).

1.1.2 Why the supervisory conference?

In that the conference provides a context for a review of the teaching shared by the two participants - carried out by the teacher, observed by the supervisor - there is consensus in the literature that it is an essential part of supervision (Holland, 1988). Smyth calls conferencing the 'centrepiece' of supervision (1984a:7); and Garman refers to it as 'the central source of mutual participation' (1986a:28). Clark states that the conference causes 'a focussing on the nexus between intention and action' (1990:45). Of course, other areas of teacher education are important but few are so intense (being one to one); so confronting (being face-to-face); and so personal (dealing with the teacher's self). Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski (1980:174) contend that the problems of the conference are in effect 'a composite' of all the problems of supervision, rendering the event a logical 'window' for a researcher investigating the problem of fragility in supervision.

In a literal sense, of course, the conference is not co-extensive with supervision, being only one phase of a larger cycle. Yet in another, perhaps symbolic sense, it may be seen to stand for supervision: it is 'at one and the same time a constituent and a development of everything that goes on before and after it' (Cogan, 1973:196). This latter view - perhaps most strongly stated by Goldhammer et al. (1980); and least subscribed to by Garman (1990) who feels that the undue focus has neglected other elements - is the one that is adopted here. The reasons for this are greater than, but not uninfluenced by, the convenience afforded by the temporal and generic parameters of the speech event itself.

Central here is Goffman's sense of encounter or face engagement - a 'venture in joint orientation' (1972a:64). Being separate in time and space - 'an eye-to-eye ecological huddle' (Goffman, 1961:18), the conference has a 'boundedness' that is endorsed by those included (participants) and those excluded (outsiders). In this study, the focus of concern will be on the conference; the data will be drawn from this experience; and the intended outcomes of the research will apply to this aspect of supervision. Accordingly, it will be a criterion in the selection of literature for the critical review (Chs 2 & 3).

1.1.3 Why feedback?

As supervision derives its importance from the value of practice teaching, and the conference is the locus of that intended help-giving and receiving, then feedback is the communication event within which the intended help is scheduled to happen. Eltis and Turney term feedback 'pivotal' within supervision (1984:19). Goldhammer et al. argue that the central purpose of the conference is to provide 'constructive feedback' in order to bring about improved instruction (1980:143). In addition, there is a wealth of empirical evidence from the field of management (Ilgen, Fisher & Taylor, 1979; Larson, 1984; Nadler, 1979) to point to the value of supervisors' performance feedback. Yet, as Salek asserts, 'help is not always helpful' (1975:34), largely because of the interpersonal factor: there are no guarantees of immediate uptake nor of positive long-term impact (Tracy, Van Dusen & Robinson, 1987).

Language plays a defining part (O'Neal & Edwards, 1983). Casting the roles of the participants broadly into helper and helpee (Wajnryb, 1992e) it will be seen that the help that is given and received is delivered in, through, and by means of language. Whichever role the supervisor is cast in - managerial, advisory, instructive, evaluative, giver of feedback (Turney et al. 1990) - it is realised linguistically. Accordingly, this investigation views supervisory work as centred in supervisory talk¹. However, while language serves the function of information as well as goods and service exchange, its purpose is not exclusively transactional (Brown & Yule, 1983a:1)². Language also affords 'the exchange of meanings in interpersonal contexts' (Halliday, 1978:2). And it is firmly within this interactional dimension of language function that this study is placed. It is projected as likely that subjecting the interpersonal dimension of the language of feedback to the scrutiny of a metaphoric microscope will be enlightening.

Communication, then, is the means by which supervision is realised, and the supervisory conference, according to the premise of this study, is essentially fragile. It is logical, therefore, to search for the etiology of fragility within the communication of feedback. Given the defining role that language plays in the event, especially in the interpersonal connection binding the participants, it is the intention of this study to 'problematise' feedback: to seek within the

¹ c.f. Gronn's definition (1981) of administrative work as centred in talk: 'school administration as verbal accomplishment'; and Labov and Fanshel's (1977) definition of therapeutic work as centred in therapeutic talk.

² 'Transactional' is listed in the thesis' glossary where explanations of central linguistic terminology may be found.

parameters of the speech event the nature and origin of its own problems. This is consonant with research findings as Tisher's review asserts: 'problems in respect to practice supervision are generally related to failures in communication (1987:167). One seeks to reject as inadequate Pfeiffer and Dunlap's contention that in the supervisory connection, 'something indefinable happens' (1982:5). In doing so, one is guided by an essential paradox: communication, the linchpin of the conference, is also, one suspects, the locus of its fragility.

1.1.4 Intended application: supervisor training

Teacher supervisors in the field of TESOL, as in most educational contexts, are rarely trained or in any way substantially, strategically or systematically prepared for the job (Duff, 1988; Hewitson, 1979; Kremer-Hayon, 1991; Price, 1980; Wajnryb, 1989). Traditionally, few supervisors have received any significant preparation, awareness or skills-training for their duties and tasks. In the TESOL field, they tend to be promoted into the role where their behaviour, unaffected by opportunities for guided reflection, can become subject to the processes of conventionalisation, naturalisation, and ritualisation (Maingay, 1988). The route to promotion takes various forms: experience as a teacher or higher qualifications; sometimes *de facto* trainer duties are simply added to a position description. The prevailing wisdom is that experienced teachers do not need any specialised training in order to teach others to teach (Terrell, Tregaskis & Boydell, 1986), an attitude cited by Brodbelt as 'we are all professionals and... any professional can supervise' (1980:86).

One of the underlying assumptions of the prevailing wisdom is that the skills needed to teach in the area in which you were trained to teach overlap with or duplicate the skills needed to train or educate teachers to teach (Morris, 1980). However, even a superficial comparison of the two areas of teaching will reveal that, other than generally belonging within the broad field of education, there is no such convenient one-to-one correspondence (Bagnall, 1990; Davis, 1982; Grundy, cited by Thew, 1980). Indeed, research into the complexity posed by the challenge of supervision confirms the need for training (Roberts, 1991a; Rust, 1988). In particular, the skills broadly attached to clinical supervision are certainly not within the existing trained skills of the practising teacher. In Adult TESOL, for example, in the view of the writer, the feedback exchange is generally treated in a loose, unrigorous, and *ad hoc* fashion which, one suspects, places a heavy demand on the interpersonal skills of both participants. It also probably accommodates, if not causes, strong 'echoing behaviour', with models of feedback as experienced by supervisors being repeated in their own styles of supervision: just

as teachers tend to teach the way they were taught (Nolan & Huber, 1989), so supervisors tend to echo their own supervision (Bowers, 1987; Rust, 1988; Wajnryb, 1993c). Garman's Pittsburgh study (1984) reinforced the notion of supervisors acting out 'folk models' of supervisory behaviour (Garman, 1986c:155)¹.

There have been some attempts within TESOL to remedy this. Within the RSA/UCLES Certificate in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (CTEFLA), an incoming tutor is 'trained up', apprentice-style, by a more experienced tutor. While such 'sitting-with-Nellie' style of induction (Stones & Morris, 1972) is presumably better than nothing, and while it is augmented by external moderators and the cross-fertilisation of a world-wide network of trainers, the model is limited in that it seeks uncritically to perpetuate current practice (Davis, 1990; Davis & Worley, 1979), and so would seem to be more technocratic-craft oriented than reflective (Wallace, 1991a). It suffers in the same way that the practicum's apprenticeship-of-observation suffers - in being 'an ally of continuity rather than change' (Lortie, 1975:67). Staff appraisal seminars, such as those conducted by the Curriculum Support Unit for its own teachers within the Adult Migrant English Service, are limited by industrial and ideological constraints which impose a very narrow and essentially non-critical definition of appraisal: 'sharing expertise' (Burton, 1987:157). Specific trainer training courses, such as the former International House (Sydney) TESOL trainers' course (Mike, 1990) are not given deserved accreditation perhaps because there are no existing benchmarks; and because, in the eyes of the ignorant, the skills of trainer training are too obvious to require training. Supervision training, such as the master teacher program at Macquarie University's School of Education, designed for mainstream teachers, is unheard of in TESOL teacher education in Australia. In the USA, resources for trainer training are comparably few and fragmented (Freeman, 1987b).

Change, however, appears on the horizon². Training for supervisors, sometimes as part of Masters programs is beginning to appear: e.g. Sydney University began a teacher education module in its 1991 M.Ed. program. Even tertiary post-graduate supervision is being spot-lighted (Aubert, 1993). As research findings are generally supportive of the value of supervisor training

¹ The influence of folk models on behaviour is not of course limited to educational settings. Maynard (1994), for example, describes strategies doctors deploy for the task of breaking bad news, for which their formal professional education fails to prepare them.

² Indications of this may be found in: Asche, 1980; Auchmuty, 1980; Boyan and Copeland, 1974; Bodoczky & Malderez, 1994; Buckley, 1981; Clark, 1990; Edmonds, 1980; Eltis and Turney, 1984; Henry 1981; Hewson, 1992; McNergney and Francis, 1986; Meggitt, 1980; Morris, 1980; Preston, 1986; Reed, 1990; Reed, 1991; Sellars, 1981; Swinburne, 1983; Turney et al. 1990.

(Le Clercq, 1993; Neumann, 1992; Rust, 1988; Wallace & Woolger, 1991), the trend might be expected to continue, despite certain difficulties, such as its 'nettle-grasping' nature (Sellars, 1981). To support and supplement such training, a number of supervisor training manual-style materials already exist (Acheson & Gall, 1987; Bebb, Low & Waterman, 1969; Garland, 1982; Turney et al. 1990). It seems increasingly logical to demand that 'supervisors too must learn their craft' (Clark, 1990:48). Just as counsellors receive 'strategic' training' (Goldhammer et al. 1980:146), and other professionals can be taught strategies from related fields (Ivey, 1974), so too can supervisors have their efficacy enhanced through strategic intervention (McNergney & Francis, 1986). Training and development are also pre-emptive interventions to support the so-called helping professionals (Mandaglio, 1984; Maslach, 1986). What stands out as essential, however, is that the curriculum of programs which seek to prepare and up-skill supervisors should have some basis in research (Calderhead, 1984). In short, if we are going to be training people in supervisory skills, the more we know about actual supervisory behaviour the better.

Research into supervisor training is as yet embryonic and there are some pressing questions. For example, how does experience impact on the thinking of supervisors? (Rust, 1988). There is some evidence to suggest that supervisors 'wrestle' with their role (Rust, 1988:62), and proceed through developmental stages comparable to what is claimed for teachers (Fuller, 1969; Katz, 1972). Thorlacius' (1980) pre-test/post-test experiment suggests that conferencing skills are able to be developed substantially through training. There is also evidence to suggest that supervisors would benefit from a greater professional identity, such that would afford them a language to talk about their work (Rust, 1988)¹. Smyth alleges that while supervision is essentially interactive, current practices are rooted in an isolated privatism (1987). An additional element in Adult TESOL is the higher than average age of students in training. While the literature on adult learning is rich (Knowles, 1984; Rogers, 1971), a body of knowledge concerning the supervision of adult student teachers is lacking (Carroll, 1988). Empirical evidence is needed, too, to gauge the value of involving students in supervisory training (Hewson, 92), and the value of dialogue in providing scaffolded instruction (Palincsar, 1986) within the teaching function of supervision. Lastly, a key item on the agenda of supervision research must be the issue of supervisor flexibility and the value of strategic training (Glickman, 1983).

¹ e.g. the newly created SPAN - Supervisors of Practicum: Australasian Network, based in Queensland University of Technology.

The final outcome in applied terms that, it is hoped, will flow from the present research is that it will eventually offer findings and knowledge that will assist in the systematic and strategic training of TESOL supervisors, most particularly in the feedback context. It is possible, too, that provided appropriate domain-specific adjustments are in place, the application to supervisory practice may extend more broadly¹. This investigation into the language of feedback seeks to provide some empirical basis into which future supervisory training may be grounded. In this sense, the effort to 'problematise' feedback, mentioned above, might be considered Freirian: by engaging supervisors in critical reflection of their own (usually subliminal) language practices, the training outcome of the project seeks to enable supervisors 'to become transforming agents of their social reality' (Freire, 1974:ix).

1.2 The professional context

1.2.1 TESOL and the mainstream

The connection between TESOL teacher preparation/development and mainstream teacher education has traditionally been a separatist one. This is both caused by and reflected in the curriculum of TESOL-oriented courses. Traditionally, the theoretical underpinnings of TESOL education have been in areas of linguistics rather than in education, as shown in Richards and Hino's data-based study of second language teacher preparation (1983). This has meant that TESOL professionals' level of knowledge in matters linguistic is largely not matched by their level of knowledge in matters educational (Davis, 1990). Such separatism has not served TESOL well: instead of cross-fertilisation, the trend has marginalised TESOL and led to internal fragmentation (Freeman, 1989; Nunan, 1989b).

Separatist trends have made the relationship between TESOL and the mainstream a contentious one. There are those who argue that TESOL is essentially a linguistic rather than an educational concern and that insights from the mainstream are limited and often inappropriate (Davis, 1990; Ferguson, 1990). There are others (Nunan, 1989b; Whitney, 1988) who regret the insularity of TESOL and argue that the societal needs of the 1990s demand 'sophisticated, self-directed teachers whose professional development is grounded in the notion of "reflective" teaching' for which the 'necessary theoretical and empirical underpinnings' are more likely to be found beyond TESOL, in mainstream teacher education (Nunan, 1989b:144)

¹ The issue of generalisability is pursued further in the concluding chapter.

1.2.2 Trends within TESOL: parallel paths, different currents

In Australia, as in many other countries, TESOL education is perhaps best described as having 'a complex pattern of provision' (Rossner, 1988:102). The field of Adult TESOL is composed of two broad strands: the teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL), largely and traditionally controlled by the public sector (e.g. the Adult Migrant English Program); and the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), largely but not exclusively held by the private sector e.g. English Language Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) (McNamara, 1985). Increasingly, in recent years the domains have overlapped so that today we have the heretofore anomalous situation of universities offering private language courses for fee-paying overseas students; and private English colleges winning Government contracts for the teaching of English to migrants. Just as the public/private division is far from clear-cut, so too is the division between the terms ESL and EFL, with overseas students in Australia falling rather into a hybrid case (Gordon, 1988; Mike, 1990).

While traditional domains are certainly beginning to overlap and diversify, some current practices have largely been determined by historical conditions and events. Because these have especially stamped their imprint on practicum, supervision and feedback conventions in TESOL, they are of relevance to this study. Traditionally, entry of teachers into adult migrant teaching has required no pre-service TESOL-specific qualification (stipulated 'desirable' rather than 'essential': see Appendix 1), part of a tradition of accepting teachers on the basis of generalist teacher qualifications. In recent years, market forces - specifically, employment competition - have given a premium to TESOL credentials; and with this has emerged a proliferation of new courses which not only offer TESOL-specific preparation, but also encourage and enable existing de facto ESL teachers to retrain within TESOL. New courses now offer both practising and intending teachers a firm introduction to the theory and methodology of TESOL as well as a rich grounding in the domain-specific areas of multi-cultural and cross-cultural studies. However, these programs have not uniformly or systematically provided one key aspect of the teacher preparation process: practice teaching. In this regard, Cervi writes that 'there has been an apparent assumption that practical skills ... would either flow spontaneously ... or would be learnt "on the job"' (1991:12).

On the other hand, the young EFL industry - hardly existent before the eighties - has been steered by a different current, made up of a different set of events and conditions. Within a decade, the EFL domain has grown from a handful of schools to a fully-fledged industry, with

Australia currently being a major destination for overseas (mostly Asian) students of English, events that have not been without their attendant problems (Moore, 1991). A massive shortage of TESOL-specific trained teachers in the late eighties led to a demand for short, intensive courses which in a brief span of time could supply newly-created colleges with certificated teachers to cater for the influx of overseas students. Trainees attracted to such courses fell into four groups: certificated teachers in other fields (e.g. primary, secondary English, Modern Languages); untrained but practising primary, secondary and adult ESOL teachers; de facto ESOL teachers (i.e. teachers with high numbers of pupils of a non-English speaking background); as well as people with no background in teaching (Gleeson & Wajnryb, 1984). The events described here obviated the attraction of courses such as the RSA/UCLES CTEFLA (Certificate in the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language to Adults): traditionally and internationally, an entry to overseas English language teaching, CTEFLA had no stringent entry requirement, and promised to turn one into a teacher or re-qualify one in the field, in the space of four weeks. Historical events and economic pressures, therefore, turned the 120-hour CTEFLA into a design-and-practice model for many such Australian-made courses. Indeed, until recently, it has largely dominated teacher training for EFL - a state of affairs that is not altogether uncontentious (Wajnryb, 1990a). In contrast to the parallel developments in ESL, CTEFLA courses and their Australia clones emphasised the training side (practical, hands-on, TESOL-specific skills) as opposed to the educational side (e.g. theory of adult learning, cross-cultural elements). This dichotomy of pressures is often reflected in TESOL literature (Gaies & Bowers, 1990; Richards, 1990a); mainstream literature (Beyer & Zeichner, 1982; Calderhead, 1984), where it has been a long-standing concern (Dewey, 1904); and literature specific to supervision (Goldhammer et al. 1980).

One result of the separate currents is mutual suspicion between the two strands of TESOL (see, for example, Collins, 1990; Davis, 1990; Laurence, 1990; McNamara, 1985): many ESL proponents view with disdain the short, theory-lacking, prescriptive, practice-bound training program of the EFL industry; while many of their EFL counterparts consider generalist teaching qualifications, and even mainstream-influenced ESL qualifications, as irrelevant or inadequate, primarily because their alleged attention to theory and neglect of practice (Cervi, 1991).

These attitudes are foregrounded by an increasing contact and inter-meshing of ESL and EFL through recent developments. Many ELICOS students are now moving beyond intensive language programs through long-term study goals in Australian educational institutions. To accommodate this trend, EFL centres are increasingly establishing links, both formal and

informal, with public-sector educational establishments so as to increase articulation across their courses to promote long-term learner pathways. In times of economic stagnancy, teaching staff of both ESL and EFL institutions are increasingly interested in shoring up their marketability across TESOL by acquiring qualifications in each other's courses, although the promise of horizontal mobility is not always delivered (McNight, 1992). Parallel traditions and conventions - especially in practice teaching - have led to different expectations; these often manifest themselves, sometimes through collision, in the post-observation feedback encounter, as discussed in Cervi's case study report (1991).

1.2.3 Supervision within the TESOL practicum

A comparison of mainstream and Adult TESOL practices reveals some interesting parallels and divergences. While in broad terms, many of the frameworks and conceptualisations of teaching practice overlap, some of the conventions are quite different. This allows Adult TESOL (on the CTEFLA model) to avoid some of the perennial and inherent complexities and conflicts of the mainstream. An important one is the 'triangulation syndrome': the complex interpersonal relations that can develop among the college supervisor, the co-operating teacher and the trainee (Sinclair & Nicoll, 1981), confirming James' view (1951) that two is the preferred natural group. In Adult TESOL, this is largely avoided as the training venue is often the site of practice teaching: there may be no co-operating teacher, or if there is one, their role is likely to be more marginal.

However, while this allows TESOL to avoid some of the pitfalls of the mainstream practicum, it also generates its own context-specific problems. One such is the intensive and often personal nature of supervision, involving close interaction and feedback, on a one-to-one basis (or in the case of CTEFLA, on a small group basis). Another relates to issues of evaluation: the fact that the twin roles of counsellor/evaluator are carried by the same person (the supervisor), gives rise to a greater potential for conflict and confusion. In this regard, the mainstream triad, despite its difficulties, offers the advantage, in some contexts, of allowing the co-operating teacher to be largely divested of the assessing role (Zimpher, deVoss & Nott, 1980).

1.2.4 TESOL and the notion of critical feedback

As outlined earlier, TESOL in Australia has largely developed through a path separate from mainstream education. Within teacher education for TESOL, two parallel paths have evolved, one - ESL, largely public sector - aligning itself more closely with mainstream practices; and the other - EFL, largely private sector - following the design and practice of the CTEFLA model, and driven largely by market forces. In Australia today, despite greater interface between the two areas, entry to the largely private-sector EFL industry is still mainly via the short-course CTEFLA model training program; while entry to ESL is through post-graduate diploma status: typically, the ESL method, part of a generalist Diploma of Education; or an adult-oriented Diploma course including a TESOL strand; or TESOL-dedicated Diploma courses - all of which involve more time, more theory, and proportionally less supervised practice teaching.

As a result of historical circumstance, then, short-course TESOL training, like British TEFL (Davis, 1990), has a close association with private enterprise. Perhaps this accounts for the greater emphasis on notions of training, competence, performance and accountability. The needs of employers in private-sector ELT have promoted norm-referenced criteria in both training and employment practices (Roberts, 1993). Typically, teachers hired in private language schools have to submit to a pre-employment demonstration lesson which is shamelessly gate-keeping in function. Subsequently, their employment is characterised by a range of quality assurance measures: they undergo a supervised probationary period of employment; and then are observed and supervised at regular intervals through their employment. In contrast, in public-sector employment, pre-service practicum supervision is noticeably less prescriptive and less vigilant; it is often peer-conducted and oriented towards development rather than appraisal. Employment is on the basis of interview, qualifications and experience, and the demonstration lesson is largely unknown; once employed, teachers enjoy an 'assumption of competence' (Okeafor & Poole, 1992), wherein observation and supervision are largely absent; and some institutions (e.g. the Adult Migrant English Service) develop an ideological opposition to the hierarchical aura that supervision traditionally invokes.

Supervision practices derive from historical influences in education (Karier, 1982), and in the case of pre-service education, evolve specifically in response to the ideology and orientation of the practicum. It may be that the private-sector associations of short-course TESOL account for the focus on evaluation, and hence criticism, both in the courses themselves and in TESOL

supervision literature; just as the public-sector associations of mainstream education may account for the neglect of criticism in mainstream supervision literature. Because of its market-driven nature, supervision in short-course TESOL has tended to be normative, prescriptive and directive (Davis, 1990). It may be for this reason that within it, the notion of criticism is more urgent and palpable than in mainstream circles. A deficit view prevails: there seems to be a set number of teaching competencies that people are presumed to lack at the start of a course and are required to have by the end of the course. The task of the supervisor is to assess whether by the course's end the minimum skills are satisfactorily in place. Apologists for the emphasis on training argue that such courses have never intended to be anything other than pre-service (RSA/UCLES, 1991). Opponents would no doubt label the approach reductionist, and attack the premise that people develop skills in much the same way as they develop muscle (Smyth, 1989c). Developmentalists might argue that the sort of training offered is comparable to the 'first aid' nature of what Cohn and Gellman (1988) advocate: direct criticism and suggestion (although interestingly, the 'ego counselling' element is largely absent). It also conforms to Fuller's (1969) notion of what beginning teachers need, want and are able to take in. On the other hand, it is notable that mainstream teacher preparation courses, while significantly longer, are often also attacked for their 'craft' approach to education (Housego & Boldt, 1985; Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

1.2.5 Contextual shaping influences on TESOL supervision

While the focus of this study is on feedback within supervision, it would be erroneous to view these processes as isolated events unrelated to other currents and considerations. Indeed, the practicum in Adult TESOL is subject to a range of shaping influences, constraints and pressures similar to those in mainstream education. Of such influences on teachers' practice (summarised in Exhibit 1), Henderson (1990:173) writes:

(Practitioners') immediate day-to-day teaching-learning situation is... shaped by local, state and federal policy mandates that validate and limit professional autonomy and by a host of historically situated personal, social, economic and political contexts.

A critical view of the context of supervision (St Maurice, 1987), sees it as a 'regime' (Foucault, 1980, cited by St Maurice, 1987:242), that is, a context that informs power relations. According to critical theorists (Beyer, 1984; Giroux, 1985; Retallick, 1986; Smyth, 1991c; St Maurice, 1987), these power asymmetries then determine policy and impinge on practice: as

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- *curriculum issues* - the need for the practicum to be a planned, well-sequenced and systematic set of experiences; the function of the practicum as a crucial link between theory/input and meaningful practice.
 - *professional/industrial issues* - the demand from external agencies for quality training and an output of competent classroom practitioners.
 - *organisational issues* - the need for a common reference point of understanding about course aims, objectives, purposes, curriculum, methodology, expected outcomes.
 - *evaluation issues* - the tension between learning and 'scoring'; the questions of objective/subjective factors in evaluation; the need for explicit criteria.
 - *logistical issues* - the provision of adequate time and appropriate settings for feedback sessions; contextual factors that can help or hinder a smooth-running practicum; tensions between the needs of trainees and the needs of language learners.
 - *interpersonal issues* - perceptions of trainees and supervisors of their roles and needs; perception of conflict/confusion in roles; the face-to-face nature of the feedback communication within the broader setting of the practicum and program.
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Exhibit 1: Contextual shaping influences on TESOL supervision

teachers are to learners, so supervisors are to teachers - 'clerks of the empire' (Giroux, 1985:27). Within this frame of reference, supervision is surveillance, and surveillance is 'malveillance' (Foucault, 1980:158). While this critical perspective is certainly not central to the present study, many of the contextual issues and influences emerge as 'dilemmas of practice', discussed in Ch. 2.

1.3 The field of focus: the notion of fragility in the supervisory dialogue

That feedback is fragile is well evidenced in the abundance of literature highlighting the problematic nature of the conference, especially the vulnerable, interpersonal connection of the participants. Its fragility is also evidenced in the ease with which the connection between supervisor and teacher may be ruptured. This rupturing can be precipitated by factors external to the conference, like institutional or program constraints; and by factors internal to the conference, constraints related to elements such as ego management; stress and anxiety; conflicting perceptions and expectations; and misfired communication. The membrane that encircles and enjoins the participants (Goffman, 1961) is but that; and it is at best tenuous.

Yet the rupturing itself is notoriously difficult to investigate, because the effects tend to be internalised and suppressed; and what emerges as visible is too often the odd, cosmetic and face-saving side of strategies harnessed to smooth down surfaces and calm tempers. There seems to be a mutual interest in the collaborative avoidance of conflict. Yet, it may well be that in the very energy given over to the maintenance of harmony and the avoidance of discord that an explanation lies - a notion that will be revisited in Ch. 3.

The research question, then, is bound up with the notion of fragility in the supervisory conference, which henceforth will be termed the supervisory dialogue (SD) so as to highlight its dyadic and communicative nature. Fragility may be thought of as breakability or vulnerability, a frailty or tenuous delicacy. Such brittleness is deemed to derive from a sense of unstated and unresolved conflict, a preciousness born perhaps of unspoken tensions, an antagonistic, centrifugal straining of competing elements, a tug-of-war.

However, two other elements need to be considered here, as part of these terms of reference. Interestingly, one has to do with *creating* a set of distinctions; the other, with *removing* distinctions. In the first place there is the distinction that must be made between 'objective reality', on the one hand and the perception of reality, on the other. The fragility with which this study deals is more to do with the perception of fragility than an actual fragility. While conflicts do at times erupt, and processes do break down, these events are rather the exception than the rule. More often than not, the SD survives the distance; people go through the motions dictated by role and purpose; and the job gets done. However, that the event is achieved without breakdown is not testimony to its robustness. Indeed, it succeeds often despite an omniscient risk of rupture, an abiding sense of frailty, a threat of events and participants ever on the point of capsizing, a premonition of 'tectonic rumbling' (Crichton, J., 1993, pers. comm., 31 July).

This sense of underlying precariousness is closely bound up with Goffman's seminal notion of 'dysphoria' or a state of unease or tension that can exist for a participant in a focussed encounter, when the participant 'can find himself [sic] strongly repelled by the official focus of attention' (1961:42). The contention of this thesis is that the face-to-face encounter of the SD, by very definition, places the spotlight of official attention on the teacher-supervisee. As such, the pre-conditions of 'dysphoria' or participant unease are present in the very infrastructure of the encounter: they set the stage, shape the event, constrain the process and create the tenor. The conditions are pre-fabricated into the roles into which individuals step.

Greater or less dexterity on the part of individuals may make the difference between potential threat of collapse and actual collapse; but will not affect the abiding state of dysphoria, or perception of fragility. Text and context thus connive to create an act that is intrinsically fragile. The central purpose of this inquiry is to understand precisely how such fragility is operationalised in the text. Thus, one enters the inquiry with the problem 'foreshadowed' (Malinowski, 1922, cited by Wolcott, 1988:23), guided by a 'what's-going-on-here?' question (Wolcott, 1988:17), seeking to know better the phenomenon under scrutiny, as well as to fathom its etiology.

The second point has to do with removing distinctions. When reference is made to the fragility of the SD, no distinction is made here between the SD and the language of the SD; it as though the event and the language used to achieve that event, were one and the same. Much as Yeats asks 'how can we know the dancer from the dance?' (1969:245), this study contends that supervision cannot be separated from the expression of supervision, that is, from its own voice. The premise, then, upon which the study rests, is that supervision *is* talk - it is defined by talk, realised through talk, impossible without talk and indistinguishable from talk. Thus the perception of fragility, introduced above, is indeed a perception of the language, being the terms through which the event is forged¹.

Overview

Chapter 1 has endeavoured to set the stage for the inquiry. The next two chapters, embracing the critical review, seek to place the study in its academic and research context. This will involve a survey of scholarship pertaining to supervision; and will entail both substantive (Ch. 2) and methodological (Ch. 3) elements.

¹ The identification of a phenomenon's 'soul' as existing 'in its talk', as is here being claimed of supervision, was first said of a town (Kellogg, 1974); later of a school (Herbert & Tankersley, 1993).

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Substantive Survey

All roads lead to the conference (Goldhammer, Anderson & Krajewski, 1980:41).

Overview

Chapter 2 comprises a critical review of the substantive literature. It is organised into two sections. Firstly, a set of 'dilemmas of practice' is outlined: these are the identified tensions and anomalies that characterise the practice of supervision. Secondly, there follows a set of recurrent motifs or dominant themes that emerge from a reading of the literature. From the substantive survey, there springs the notion of critical feedback as central to the concerns of the study.

In approaching the substantive concerns in supervision, the issue of relevance begs the two questions that inevitably, if not always explicitly, underpin any literature review: 'where to begin' and 'what to include'? (Pajak, 1990a:4). The starting point is roughly 1980, about a decade after clinical supervision established itself among published literature on supervision in the USA. Previous reviews (Dussault, 1970; Eposito, Smith & Burbach, 1975; Michaelis, 1960; Reavis, 1978; Sturges, Krajewski, Lovell, McNeill & Ness, 1977) had synthesised the available literature and exposed the interpersonal supervisory relationship to be a complex and fraught one (Dussault, 1970:54-57), perhaps justifying the title of Blumberg's 1980 work: Supervision of teachers. A private cold war. One decade later, communication and conferencing skills figure prominently in Pajak's review of the literature which identified twelve major dimensions of supervisory practice (1990b).

Criteria for the inclusion/exclusion of material stems from the premise of survey genre that the literature search be guided by the research question (Cooper, 1989). As established above, this study seeks to explore the communicative processes within the post-observation feedback conference so as to investigate and throw light upon the sources of its alleged fragility. Accordingly, this survey concerns itself with writing that has focussed directly or

indirectly on the supervisory conference and on the communication process therein. Data collection channels for the literature search are outlined in App. 2.

2.1 Dilemmas of Practice

It is inevitable that a practice that has any kind of resilience and vitality will generate anomalies. These anomalies are the peculiar inconsistencies and dilemmas within the concepts and they form the basis of progress and continual renewal of professional action (Garman, 1986a:26).

Earlier, attention was given to the historical circumstances that have governed the development of TESOL in Australia. As well, shaping influences from the context of TESOL have had their influence on the practicum and supervision as well as on in-service conventions. Attention is now turned to examining what the literature reveals about the tensions and anomalies - or dilemmas of practice - that, Garman would argue, furnish the operation of the supervisory conference with its peculiar 'resilience' and 'vitality'. Calling on a musical analogy to make a similar point, Gore suggests that 'moments of dissonance' can provide enhancement and strength (1991:268). To promote clarity, these various elements are treated separately, although the complexity of human experience, of course, suggests that they are inextricably intermeshed.

2.1.1 Collegiality vs hierarchy

Supervision scholars have written of the need for 'collegiality' as an essential ingredient of help within the relationship of the supervisor and the teacher (Garman 1986; Grimmer & Crehan, 1987; Grimmer & Crehan, 1989; Smyth, 1986). Many have concerned themselves centrally with the issue of power relations (Gore, 1991; Retallick, 1990b). This collegiality, or 'mutuality' (Sullivan, 1980:8), is a certain frame of mind brought by each of the participants to the supervisory encounter. It has to do with the way one sees the world, the view one holds of learning and education, and the perceptions they each have about the nature of help. It has to do with the tenor of the relationship. One can detect here something of the philosophical notion of 'respect for persons' underlying the writings of the educator R.S. Peters (1966; 1967). Certainly, it is incompatible with a hierarchical structure (Ng, 1987), which rests on stratification of various layers of authority-imbued role status. While collegiality requires a mutuality of recognition and regard, hierarchy demands respect upwards, not sideways.

Goldhammer et al. state that 'hierarchical distance' has traditionally separated teachers and supervisors, spawning conflicts 'tantamount to class struggle' (1980:157).

The notion of symmetrical communication within a hierarchical context is explored in detail by Retallick (1990b). The place of most supervisors in the upper echelons of status on the institutional hierarchy, as well as the connotations of 'superior vision' (Fanselow, 1990:184; Stones, 1984:vii), together with evidence of the fragility of collegiality in educational institutions (Lanier & Little, 1986) account for the tension between collegiality and hierarchy. Furthermore, if collegiality means a preparedness to having one's own practice examined (Goldhammer et al. 1980; Mansfield, 1986; Smyth, 1984a) - then, clearly, most practising TESOL supervisors cannot be called 'collegial'.

Some argue that true collaboration is only possible in symmetrical observation set-ups, such as peer observation (Poumellec, Parrish & Garcon, 1992). For example, Retallick contends that 'where hierarchies exist', the prospects for symmetry in communication are 'doubtful' (1993, pers. comm., 20 May). Yet other writers (Grimmet & Crehan, 1990) seek to demonstrate through research that collegiality, of and by itself, is insufficient to bring about the 'reflective transformation of experience' (Schon, 1988, cited by Grimmet & Crehan, 1990:215). Blumberg (1976) refers to the credibility and communication chasm that divides those who do and those who do not get their hands dirty¹. Cogan touched on the inherent complexity of the supervisory relationship when he advocated the 'productive heterogeneity' that derives from unequal and dissimilar competencies of supervisor and teacher (1973:68). This, too, is captured in Gore's musical metaphor of the triad: constituted of different parts and deriving its strength from 'the difference of its components' (1991:268).

2.1.2 Supervisory role conflict: helper vs critic

Turney et al. (1990) outline six macro supervisory roles, within which are subsumed other micro-roles and skills. The roles do not necessarily operate separately or equally: they may have different emphases at different times and frequently overlap. At times, conflict can be discerned: for example the inherent tension between the supervisor as helper/counsellor and

¹ Symbolically, Blumberg (1976) invokes the experience of Van Gogh, described in Stone's biography (1954): as an evangelist in the coal-mining district of Belgium, Van Gogh discovered that he was unable to communicate effectively with the miners until an accident which caused him to go into the mines, whence he returned with face and hands dirtied.

the supervisor as judge (Cowie, 1981; Fitzclarence, 1983; Nias, 1976). Some would argue that evaluation, being embedded in history and semantics, is incompatible with a helping function (Ryan, 1971; Sullivan, 1980). Research documents the dominance of the evaluator role in supervisor-teacher interactions (Calderhead, 1988; Kennedy, 1993), even despite attempts to reconcile their role behaviours (Nias, 1976); and reveals that the conflict may be a result more of organisational constraints within the practicum, than of personality factors (Blumberg 1980). Negative perceptions about the value-laden side of the supervisor's role have shown a resultant cluster of negative behaviour symptoms among trainees - closed, defensive and mistrusting (Blumberg, 1980). Sinclair and Nicoll reveal that trainee teachers, while able to separate their hostility to the evaluative role of the supervisor from their positive personal comments about the supervisor as 'supportive and helpful' (1981:9), are subject to considerable anxiety because of the conflict.

Martin, Isherwood and Rapagna (1978) contend that a supervisor's helping and evaluating roles are confounded through a coincidence of modality. While the two are conceptually distinct and interdependent institutional mechanisms, their instrumental modality - observing and conferring - is the same. The outcome is portentous (1978:86):

The coupling of these two roles gives the supervisor two types of leverage: influence through expertise and influence through the power to reward and punish. This coupling creates dissonance for the teacher, and reward-punishment considerations often supersede or impair expertise considerations because of the former's potential for impact on the future of the teacher.

Some would argue that the duality of conflicting roles is a priori counter-productive¹. Blumberg argues that there is a tension between the overt relationship, a helping one, and the covert, evaluative one: 'the teacher is aware that the evaluation of his [sic] performance really depends on his adopting, within limits, the supervisor's way of doing things (1980:164). For Sergiovanni and Starratt, the complexity of the role lies, in part, in the 'double-barrelled intent' of formative and summative functions (1979:305). For Dunlap and Goldman, the difficulty of two functions existing 'within the purview of a single actor' (1991:20) is that supervisory encounters are not safe environments for weaknesses to be exposed, risks to be taken, and assistance to be asked for and given. Mickler calls on the psychological perspective: arguing

¹ Indeed, this is a persistent refrain in the literature: Acheson & Gall, 1987; Blumberg, 1970a; Fitzclarence, 1983; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Hoover, O'Shea & Carroll, 1988; Houston, cited by Woodward, 1990; Warger & Aldinger, 1984.

the impossibility of the one person to act as both helper and evaluator - 'the combination of roles negates the effectiveness of both' (1972:515) - a model is proposed which involves two people with clear and separate functions. Price and Sellars (1985) did not find evidence of the conflict in their profile of excellent supervisors, and suggest that it may have been offset by positive interpersonal qualities. Indeed, the intra-personal tensions caused by an inherent paradox of roles has been historically linked to the classroom teacher who is seen to be caught between the duties of helping and grading learners (Erickson, 1986; Waller, 1932).

There has been a great deal of discussion about nomenclature (e.g. 'supervisor' vs 'counsellor' in Handal & Lauvas, 1987:xi), as well as attempts at change - e.g. 'co-operating teacher', 'helper', 'colleague', 'mentor', 'coach', 'co-trainer' - terms which, as Smyth writes (1986:7), are based on the function of the person in the context of supervision, rather than on any notion of 'experience, status or competence'. Such attempts in fact often highlight the problem rather than resolve the issue (Smyth, 1984a). Hazi (1994) likewise views such attempts at 'linguistic maneuvering' (1994:214) as evidence of the evaluation-supervision entanglement

where 'description' replaces 'evaluation', 'discussion' substitutes for 'conference', the 'narrative' supersedes 'rating scales', and 'reflection' stands in for 'comments on strengths and weaknesses'.

In any case, other tensions persist. There is the fact that the teacher's teaching is under scrutiny by the observing supervisor, however well-meaning and empathetic; combined with the fact that in this critiquing process, there is no reciprocity (Richardson-Koehler, 1988); and the fact that, presumably, the supervisor has some skill in analysing teaching behaviours and talking intelligently about processes and outcomes. However, as soon as these components are allowed to enter the discussion, one admits of the notion of a subordinate/superordinate relationship (Garman, 1986a) which, as suggested above, may be less than conducive to the workings of help (Poole, 1994).

2.1.3 Asymmetry in the learning/teaching relationship

If the asymmetry in the relationship of supervisor and teacher trainee derives from the fact of the experience/expertise of the supervisor, it perhaps starts at an even more basic level. Within the relationship of any learner and teacher, there is a relationship of dependency-authority (Abercrombie, 1981): an inference of subservience and submissiveness on the part of the

learner. Goffman suggests that 'subordination' and 'deference' are inherent to the nature of instruction (1979:34). Indeed, 'knowledge plays a central part in the construction of relations of power' (Gore, 1991:263). In the view of critical theorists, 'a face-to-face encounter ... is stacked in favour of the face that claims expert knowledge' (St Maurice, 1987:246). This is very visible in school education contexts where it is propped up by institutionally-sanctioned power (Starratt, 1992). However in adult education, it is perhaps even more invidious for being subtle. In an article on adult learner vulnerability, Wajnryb suggests that wherever 'the teacher... has what it is the learner wants ... we have the potential for power-play and by implication learner vulnerability' (1988a:340). The frailty of the learner's psyche is also explored by Rardin (1977). Goldhammer et al. (1980) contrast the high vulnerability of the teacher with the virtual invulnerability of the supervisor, a condition exacerbated by the fact that the former's errors are visibly on display, whereas the latter's, being perceptual and interpretive, are wholly invisible. Comparably, Handal and Lauvas state that the act of revealing one's teaching to scrutiny is *per se* 'personally very provoking' (1987:64). Gore contends that when we consider the roles of supervisors and teachers, 'investments and consequences are not equal' (1991:263). In a critical feminist approach, Munro (1991:79) suggests that student-teacher relationships are 'impositional by nature'. In Foucault's 'panoptican' terms, the observer internalises the role cast for him or her in the relationship to the observer; and so 'becomes the principle of his [sic] own subjection' (1979:202).

Certainly, the human-relations management movement of the 1930s, (Anderson, 1986) and the legacies of humanist psychology allow us the means of ameliorating the effect of power. There have been numerous studies on student teachers e.g. their needs, desires and perceptions (Love & Swain, 1980; Lowther, 1968); their marginal status (Clifton, 1979); the effect of the stress of supervision (Cicirelli, 1969; Fogarty, 1992; Sinclair & Nicoll 1981; Yee, 1968). There have been many calls for a humanising of the interpersonal relationship e.g. Abrell's (1974) 'supervisory alliance'; Bordin's (1983) 'working alliance' and Thew's (1980) 'working partnership'. It has been said that 'when we consider supervision in the light of student concerns, we are fundamentally looking at an exercise in human relationships' (Turney, Cairns, Eltis, Hatton, Thew, Towler & Wright, 1982:62). It is worth bearing in mind, however, that whatever importance we give to the psychological effects of different supervisory styles (Blumberg & Amidon, 1965; Blumberg & Weber, 1968; Sanders & Merritt, 1974), style is but a thread-bare cover of naked power, itself never far from the surface. Some would argue that a status differential is inevitable (Osborne & Hurlburt, 1971), if only because of the asymmetry of reserve deposits in each party's 'experiential bank' (Grimmet & Crehan,

1987:20); others, that it is able to be altered through the process of critical inquiry (Smyth, 1991c). One concern of the present study is to explore some of its manifestations in discourse.

2.1.4 Language and power

The imbalance in the relationship between supervisor and teacher is also reflected in the language they use. Perhaps as a natural outcome of having more years in the field, more experience and expertise in teaching, supervisors have often developed an economical and technical way of talking about teaching, in other words, their own meta-language (Woodward, 1991). This parallels the specialised lexicons that are associated with other collectives or speech communities (Swales, 1990). By their correspondingly fewer years of experience, trainees and neophytes usually lack this meta-language. When, in the supervisory dialogue, supervisors use meta-language that trainees lack, they may well be hardening their own power base, consciously but more likely subconsciously; and as well, perpetuating the mystique about teaching that keeps trainees in awe and at bay. Handal and Lauvas cite the supervisors' tendency to 'escape' into irrelevancies (1987:65). Language, after all, is power; it is a means of referring to reality, of identifying, categorising and compartmentalising the world and experience, of being in control. 'Those who control language control thought -and thereby themselves and others' (Greenfield, 1982, cited by Sergiovanni, 1984:53). Similarly, Edelman's work on the political language of the helping professions seeks to reveal what the process of socialisation hides, that 'language, thought and action shape each other' (1974:296).

Another danger that emerges from meta-language is that the trainee, too, can seize on it, not necessarily in a knowledge-seeking way but in a defensive attempt to even up the balance of power by playing by the same rules. A professional group uses specialist terminology as an economical means of making their meaning. However, when this happens in an unbalanced power situation, the outcomes can be quite destructive. Sergiovanni claims (1984) that this tendency renders inauthentic the supervisory dialogue and intellectualises the process of supervision to the point where it cannot be personally meaningful for the teacher. Liberation, he claims, depends on an equally shared vernacular use of 'ordinary language' (Sergiovanni, 1984:363).

One outcome of a relationship that is perceived as asymmetrical is the potential for the one perceived as subservient to relate in a way that pays deference to role but is in fact 'inauthentic'. Garman terms this inauthenticity posturing and argues that it derives from a lack

of sincerity or genuineness (Garman, 1986a:28). Supervision theorists argue that while collaboration is a genuine alliance between professionals, posturing demonstrates a superficial politeness but masks an actual refusal to listen and participate genuinely (Pajak & Seyfarth, 1983). There is the ritual of maintaining face, going through the necessary motions, paying lip service where it is deemed necessary (Blumberg & Jonas, 1987). Posturing might be thought of as putting a socially acceptable face on the professionally unacceptable stance of defensive resistance. Sergiovanni (1986:52) claims that authentic dialogue depends on a partnership characterised by the usual interpersonal requirements such as trust, the willingness to share, and equality: teachers and supervisors alike, he claims, need to be 'liberated' from the encumbrance of their traditional roles. Waite argues that until supervision takes adequate account of the ecology of situation, 'it will remain simply a ritual exercise in administrative meddling' (1992b:330).

2.1.5 Conflicting perceptions of the nature of help

Another frequent tension in the supervisory dialogue is the potential for mismatched perceptions about the interaction, especially when the supervisor is seeking a collaborative mode (Reed, 1991). The collaborative mode of interaction is a very recent development in the history of educational supervision and it is one that most supervisors have to be 'educated into'. It is certainly not one which most trainees are expecting.

There are various reasons for supervisors' finding it easier to follow the conventional paths of directive supervision (Wajnryb, 1992d). Bamford suggests that supervisors have been 'occupationally socialised' to be directive and therefore have difficulty with non-directive forms of helping (1981:120). Further, they meet resistance with more pressure, resulting in escalation and crisis.

One of the influences that makes the switch to collaborative feedback difficult for supervisors is the perceived expectations of trainees. Research into trainee expectations of and reactions to supervisory behaviour (Bowers, 1987; Copeland, 1980b; Copeland, 1982; Copeland & Atkinson, 1978; McGarvey & Swallow, 1986; Perlberg & Theodor, 1975) reveals the strength of prevailing traditional attitudes to supervision among those who are supervised. Gairns' survey (1991/2) of TESOL trainees' expectations of feedback confirms this.

Sometimes, a situation of cross-purposes develops. Supervisors given to more facilitative and counselling strategies may find themselves interacting with teachers who expect more directive, interventionist feedback (Glickman, 1983). Frustration is the inevitable outcome when a trainee comes to the conference expecting to receive expertise transmitted as information (Stones, 1987) - tips, pointers, short-cuts and 'gift-wrapped' ideas - while the supervisor is aiming to facilitate the trainee's own reflective growth towards knowledge and understanding.

This is all bound up with the nature of help. In Freirian terms, supervisors have to allow learners to construct their own knowledge, to re-invent the wheel for themselves, and to evolve towards their own autonomy (Boud, 1981). Collaborative-oriented supervisors may well subscribe to Solzhenitsyn's dictum (1990): 'when truth is discovered by someone else it loses some of its attractiveness'. But for many a trainee, facing the pressures of an intensive course, a brief practicum, and the demand to produce and perform, the convenience of rules, routines and rituals - 'pat' solutions to perplexing problems - may seem far more attractive than the circuitous path of discovery learning.

2.1.6 Self-direction and the agency of change

Another dilemma of practice is the notion of help in its relationship with change. A traditional view of help works on the asset/deficit model, with supervisors passing on information - that is, giving or adding something to the knowledge of teachers and thereby increasing their competence and effectiveness. Similarly, Freire used banking as a metaphor for product-oriented education (1970:59). A more recent model of help places the focus on process, not product: on helping teachers arrive at the construction of their own knowledge which will be particular and unique for each individual. Pre-packed parcels of information necessarily fail to take into account the individual's particular preoccupations and circumstances. This type of education can be 'oppressive for it fails to treat people as responsible for their own lives' (Mehan 1979:206-7), and may as a consequence promote a 'learned helplessness' (Abramson, Seligman & Teasdale, 1978). The skill of supervisors is to mobilise teachers towards an ongoing investment in their own development, one that will liberate them from the need for outside help. In this model, teachers become the agency for their own change (Goldhammer

et al. 1980). A similar view is held by R. Smith (1993), who advocates journaling in the practicum as a powerful tool in the construction of personal meaning¹.

Echoes may be found in current thinking about the therapeutic relationship. Weinberg (1990:145) creates an analogy with the egg and chicken metaphor:

Owing to an egg's shape, a beast banging on it from the outside will have great trouble breaking it open. But the slightest tap from inside the shell can shatter it; when the chick is ready it can pop out and get started.... By the same token, a patient, any patient, tapping even lightly, can accomplish more personality change than even the best therapist working alone from the outside.

This view overlaps with the concept of readiness to learn, or readiness to change, a condition within the client, not one imposed from without. The teacher 'can use only help he [sic] is ready to receive' (Bebb, Low & Waterman, 1969:24). Handal and Lauvas make very clear the crucial link between help and autonomy: 'we cannot implement a counselling practice in which we tell people how to behave and then expect them to be independent and self-propelling as soon as they are left on their own' (1987:52).

One difficulty here is the heavy burden on the supervisor. The assumption is that supervisors themselves are self-directed, and able, with each different teacher, to begin as it were from the beginning - to become a learner again. Clearly it is less demanding to hand over off-the-shelf parcels of wisdom rather than to 'customise' the dialogue, to aid the individual construction of meaning, working each time from the perspective and preoccupations, the circumstances and concerns of the individual teacher - the uniqueness of every situation (Roberts, 1990; Waite, 1992b).

Apart from these difficulties, there are institutional and logistical constraints on a self-directed approach, related to the hierarchical nature of the systems within which supervisors operate. In a self-directed approach, dominance and control are anathema; and yet dominance and control are built into the association of supervision with hierarchical authority (Sergiovanni, 1986). Very often, simply at a logistical level, it is the supervisor who sets up the basic design of the supervisory process: from leading the interaction at the pre-observation conference; to the choice of what is to be observed; to setting the agenda; and to the final report-writing,

¹ The keeping of journals or diaries is a recent component of reflective teacher education practice: see Ch. 3; Bailey, 1990; Bailey and Ochsner, 1983; Brinton & Holten, 1989.

where dominance and control are enshrined. These constraints militate against self-direction, and tend to perpetuate the paradigm of supervisor-as-owner and teacher-as-receiver of expertise, in a one-way transmission of information. That there is a link between dependence and hierarchy was shown in Squires' phenomenological study (1978) linking growth in supervisee autonomy with an increase in collegiality in the relationship. The problematic nature of achieving consensus under coercion (Retallick, 1990b), producing 'the paradox of authority' (McGuire, 1977), is explored in Retallick (1990b).

2.1.7 Presage factors: supervision as the intersection of biographies

Compounding the complexity of the supervisory dialogue is the fact that the human beings involved are complex creatures, who bring with them their own 'mental baggage' (Smyth, 1983:3) - 'bundles' (Handal & Lauvas, 1987:10) of experiences, memories, pre-dispositions and expectations. In the case of the trainee teacher, there are powerful presage factors, such as the very perception of the educational process, especially roles and relations (Gore, 1991), formed largely on the basis of experiencing many years in the schooling system (Featherstone, 1988; Lortie, 1975; Weintraub, 1989), although such experiences do not necessarily have to promote conformity, as shown in Shulman's (1987) case study. Another may be previous experience of the supervision process. Yet another may be the reactive patterns to roles sanctioned by power and authority. Together this constitutes what Locke (1982, cited by Tinning, 1984:54) terms 'an invisible apprenticeship in pedagogy'. Far from ignoring such factors, it is a central tenet of andragogy that the previous life and subject-specific experience and expectations of the adult learner be acknowledged and valued (Knowles, 1984). Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann's (1987) case study charted student teachers' field experiences and indicates how presage variables determine emphases, values and dilemmas within the practicum.

Nor is the supervisor a *tabula rasa*. Complex human beings with their own personalities and a pre-history of experience and remembrance, supervisors bring with them their own memories of having been supervised and this may influence their own supervisory conduct. They may be driven by their own notions of how help is best implemented, which may be founded on previous experience of supervising. Supervisory interactions, then, are likely to be 'shaped by biography' (Rust, 1988:57). Certainly, it is naive to believe that they will bring with them anything other than a biased view of teaching, by which they favour certain patterns of behaviour and disfavour others (Hogan, 1983; Juska, 1991). As Sergiovanni says, we might

term this pre-understanding 'domain assumption' (Gouldner, 1970) or 'educational platform' (Walker, 1971) or 'just plain bias' (Sergiovanni, 1984:360). Every decision they make, from the determination of what is to be observed, to its interpretation in the sense-making process, is filtered through the complex baggage of pre-existing biases. Their world view of teaching inevitably leads to certain decisions 'which stack the deck in determining what will happen, how and what it means' (Sergiovanni 1984:360). Viewed thus, supervisory actions are indeed revelations of self, in the style of autobiography (Sergiovanni 1986). This is complicated even further by the complexity of knowledge in relation to self and others: this can be known and displayed; known and hidden; or unknown (Luft & Ingram, 1969), a paradigm that has been variously explored by writers on supervision (Bamber, 1987; McIntyre & Norris, 1980; Richards, 1989; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988).

As teaching, too, is a revelation of self, the process of supervision is rendered more complex by the interplay of multiple biographies. This inherent tension in the supervisory context can exacerbate and hinder the dialogue; or can be resolved through it. Sergiovanni suggests that the challenge for the supervisor is to allow the dialogue to reconstruct teaching independent of the biography that determines it or the biography that interprets it. Freedom comes in the jettisoning of the encumbrance of self. Teaching, Sergiovanni asserts, like other creations, such as works of art, must stand alone and be valued in its own terms (1986).

2.1.8 Theories-in-action vs espoused theories

There is another tension in the supervisor-teacher relationship that is connected in part to the notion of pre-existing baggage, outlined above. This relates to the concept of potentially conflicting 'action theories'. Here the conflict is not so much between supervisor and trainee - although this may happen, when, for example, the two hold very differing views about what constitutes effective teaching - but where the conflict is actually *within* either one of them, though without conscious awareness.

The assumption here is that neither teacher nor supervisor arrives at the classroom as a *tabula rasa*, but instead as a complex human being who is the sum total of previous experiences, both professional and personal; and who views the world through the lens of their bio-data. Both teacher and supervisor arrive on the job, as it were, with more than one agenda: a public one, that appears rational and objective; and a private one, often subconscious. This is what Argyris and Schon (1974) call an espoused theory - the public one - and a theory-in-use that

governs actual practice. Handal and Lauvas' terms are 'the-nature-of-education argument' and 'the-what-I-do-when-no-one-is-watching argument' (1987:21). (Recently, too, Zeichner (1986), in arguing the case for context-sensitive research, highlights the tension between instructional plans and curriculum-in-use). The difficulty here is that there may be no compatibility between the two, a fact compounded when the holders of these two action theories may not be aware themselves of the inherent incompatibility.

Two problems exist here. The first relates to the agenda of the supervisory dialogue. In one sense, the agenda comprises the process and outcomes of a phenomenological analysis of the lesson's events as they unfolded in action. It is the supervisor's brief to recognise and identify any incompatibilities that emerge between stated belief and actual practice. Certainly, it requires a great deal of interpersonal skill to create for the teacher a non-threatening environment conducive to such a discussion. As well as the skills needed to elicit and facilitate this type of discussion, the supervisor needs to be able to recognise and identify facets of incompatibility within the action theories of the teacher. Finally, to make such knowledge shared and effective, the supervisor has to bring the teacher gently and inductively to his or her own discovery of the incompatibility. None of this is easy!

These difficulties are compounded by the fact that supervisors themselves may be encumbered by conflicting action theories. However, it is part of the situational asymmetry that the supervisor is rarely if ever observed teaching, so that all that is apparent perhaps is their espoused theory. In an ideal world, the issue may be resolved by the fact that supervisors may have already journeyed along the path to the professional self-awareness - rather like the personal therapy that therapists themselves undergo as a preliminary and sometimes an accompaniment to their own professional practice.

Seen from Garman's (1986) perspective, wherein dilemmas of practice are evidence of a vital resilience, the tension between espoused theories and theories-in-action is a potentially rich source of learning. Bolin's (1988) case study of reflective journal writing as an instrument of growth incorporates a comparable idea of challenge: 'ambiguity creates dissonance, a disequilibrium, making problematic the taken-for-granted' (1988:52). In Bolin's case study of the teacher Lou, the challenge to resolve discrepancies is the impetus for reflection, inquiry and growth. This conforms with Glickman and Gordon's (1967) notion of an 'optimal mismatch' between the student teacher and the co-operating teacher, allowing for an ideal blend of comfort and challenge.

2.1.9 Mismatch of objectives: survival vs reflection

A further anomaly within pre-service supervision relates to a potential conflict in objectives: it may be that what the trainee or neophyte teacher is aiming to achieve is markedly different from what the supervisor is aiming for.

The style of supervision favoured in recent supervision theory is non-directive (Gebhard & Malika, 1991), a process designed to allow individuals to work towards their own development by helping them to construct knowledge that has personal validity. Non-directive supervision aims towards a reflective style of teaching, where teachers will continue to reflect on their own teaching, and through that reflection, become the agency of their own change and development.

It may be, however, that reflective teaching is only possible after a teacher has moved beyond the neophyte stage - that is, only once the basic skills of teaching are in place and concerns about them assuaged (Fuller, 1969). The pre-occupations and concerns of trainees and neophytes tend to be with a 'lower' order of teaching skills - the survival level. Questions that dominate their thinking are: will I be able to control the class? will I be able to hold their interest? what if I can't manage them? what if I can't answer a question? (Calderhead, 1984; Petrusich, 1967; Pettigrew & Wolf, 1982; Saltzgaver, 1980; Sinclair & Nicoll, 1981; Sullivan, 1979) - hence the focus on technique which at the outset of training 'provides a false sense of knowledgeableness and helps the novice to fend off the anxiety stirred by new tasks' (Garman, 1986a:33). It may be that neophytes are not capable of the luxury of reflection until the basics of survival skills are in place. Nabors and Richard (1987) suggest continual constructive feedback is the key that allows teachers to proceed through the stages of development. Similarly, O'Shea, Hoover and Carroll (1988) specify the need for conferencing behaviour to be appropriate to the teacher's stage of development. Fuller's view is that teacher educators should not work 'against the tide' (1969:223). The view is a contentious one (Floden & Feiman, 1981; Griffin, 1983a; Griffin, 1983b; Mansfield, 1986; Retallick, 1990b; Zeichner & Teitelbaum, 1982). Indeed, two distinct camps are evident in the literature: the developmental, personalised, utilitarian, technocratic approach associated with Fuller (1969) and an opposing, 'pro-inquiry' view associated with Zeichner (1981; 1981/2). Each approach has particular implications for the curriculum, as well as for supervision: Mansfield (1986), for example, warns of a 'patchwork pedagogy' in conference feedback. There is a danger, too, that

the parties of the conference, driven by their own priorities, may be operating at cross-purposes.

Temporal constraints compound the mismatch. A major constraint in pre-service TESOL teacher training is the factor of intensity (Pearce, 1991), exacerbated by the brevity of the practicum. As a result, by purpose or default, the practicum tends to have a gate-keeping function (Erickson, 1976; Warger & Aldinger, 1984). The characteristics of intensity and brevity run counter to much that we know about learning, such as the time needed to process new information, to appraise the new in the light of the old, to digest, assimilate and take 'ownership' of the learning, to develop one's own theory-of-action (Ur, 1992); as well as to establish trust in relationships (Cross & Murphy, 1990; Gitlin, Ogawa & Rose, 1982; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Kilbourn, 1984; Le Clercq, 1993; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Robinson, 1984; Thew, 1980).

Other dangers lurk in the brevity of the practicum, such as the tendency for trainees to pick up the routines and rituals of teaching behaviour without having imbibed the principles underpinning such behaviour (Fullan, 1985, cited by Davis, 1990; Maingay, 1988). In this sense, such courses are aptly called 'training' rather than 'education': understanding foundation principles and how they link up with practice requires time, principally for the benefits of calm, reflective thought in regard to one's own practice. Compounding the tension here are external 'accountability' demands, both professional and industrial, compelling field practice to be seen to be preparing classroom-wise teachers who can cope in the here and now (Wilkin, 1992).

Another effect is the speed with which trainees are expected to perform - that is, to produce concrete evidence of the assimilation of new ideas, a type of pressure-cooker training which can have deleterious effects (Heaton & Sigall, 1991), one of which, according to Davis (1990), is the push for prescriptive solutions. The pressure to produce prematurely is discussed in Wajnryb (1991a) in which an argument is put forward in favour of an anxiety-free, 'silent period' to allow trainees the freedom to learn without the pressure to produce. There is some reason to believe that the Rogerian concept of 'freedom to learn' (1969) - whereby a trainee may take advantage of the expertise of the supervisor by being able to listen effectively - is built on the early foundation of positive self-esteem in the trainee and a caring and non-threatening relationship between teacher and supervisor (Cohn & Gellman, 1988; Cowie, 1981; Moshe & Purpel, 1972). Yet, the sites where practice teaching occurs are often set up

for teaching, not learning to teach, creating institutional, social and political constraints that inevitably impinge on participants' experience (Gore, 1991). Given the parameters within which Adult TESOL preparation courses function, primarily the speed with which trainees are expected to perform and the brevity of the practicum, it appears extremely difficult to set up supervisory conditions that are conducive to learning.

2.1.10 Conflicting perceptions of supervision efficacy: indispensable resource or meaningless ritual?

That the practicum is variously valued is well known (Davis, 1982), with contentious arguments offered by its advocates (e.g. Tom, 1976; Turney et al. 1990; Young, 1979) and its detractors (e.g. Tabachnick, Popkewitz & Zeichner, 1979/80; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981). For student teachers, it 'glitters with practicality, reality and utility' (Tinning, 1984:53); yet many hold serious misgivings about the mythic nature of its promise (Tinning, 1984; Zeichner, 1980).

So, too, is supervision divided, with the literature riddled by conflicting viewpoints. Indeed, surveying the literature leaves the researcher staggering under the weight of the contradictory perceptions of efficacy studies (Duck & Cunningham, 1985; Heichberger & Young, 1985; Hull & Baker, 1984; Gordon, 1973). On the one hand, there is the strongly held belief that supervision is important (Sellars, Osborne, McNally, Martinez, McSwan & Bamford, 1988; Turney et al. 1990), indeed indispensable, a view which persists despite its being largely unsupported by empirical evidence. On the other hand, there is the abiding impression that supervision has little perceived value (Blumberg, 1980; Wiles, 1967), being viewed as a ritualistic convention (Garman, 1990; Zeichner, 1992); meaningless, administration-imposed meddling (Kilbourn, 1991; Kottkamp, 1982; Waite, 1992b); stress-causing, but largely unfair and unhelpful (Juska, 1991); ineffective as an agent of behavioural change (Tinning, 1983); ambiguous, paternalistic and damaging (Stones, 1987); lacking in instructional support (Lemma, 1993); and episodic and deprived of value or meaning (Alfonso, Firth & Neville, 1984). Blumberg and Jonas refer to the 'litany of studies that suggests that teachers tend to view the structure and process of supervision as something considerably less than efficacious' (1987:59). Waite calls teachers' reactions 'legion' (1992b:322). The chasm in perception is graphically portrayed in Blumberg's study which tapped contrary perceptions through respondents' fantasy world (1980). Starratt (1984) explores the 'underside' of supervision and

recommends (1992) its abolition on the grounds of invalid assumptions and ineffective outcomes.

That supervisors lack credibility as help-providers is reinforced by evidence which suggests that, despite unsupportive institutional constraints which impose great isolation on teachers' work (Alfonso, 1977; Alfonso & Goldsberry, 1982; Clandinin, 1989; Lortie, 1975; McFaul & Cooper, 1984; Sellars et al. 1988; Smyth, 1987), when teachers perceive the need, they turn for help to other teachers (Alfonso & Goldsberry, 1982; DeAngelis, 1979; Lortie, 1975; Sergiovanni, 1985; Starratt, 1992), not to a figure they associate with evaluation (Hazi, 1994). Such collegiality is potentially their greatest source of self-efficacy (Grimmet & Crehan, 1990; Horan, 1987; Little, 1987). Perhaps this is because teachers intuit that their colleagues, unlike their supervisors, are more likely to value their own 'epistemology of practice' (Schon, 1983, cited by Gore & Zeichner, 1991:120). Some, however, argue differently, citing the constraints on collegiality as obstacles to professional growth: 'cellular' schools; competitive and unsharing work; and 'splendid isolation' (Alfonso, 1977:597). Significantly, it seems that supervisor efficacy, in the mind of the teacher, is closely linked to the 'observable act' of conference behaviour (Goldhammer et al. 1980:143), suggesting again that this particular window on process merits special scrutiny.

2.2 Substantive motifs

This section is devoted to the discussion of six substantive motifs that pervade the literature. They comprise studies of supervisory models, perceptions, communication, observing and conferring, affect and supervisor thinking.

2.2.1 Studies of supervisory models

The literature is replete with various typologies outlining models of supervision. These come with different nomenclature, being variously termed 'models' (Housego & Boldt, 1985); 'theories' (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988); 'orientations' (Zeichner, 1986); 'belief systems' (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982); 'practices' (Glickman, 1981); 'styles' (Gebhard & Malicka, 1991); 'patterns' (Okefor & Poole, 1992); 'profiles' (Jonsson & Ahlstrom, 1988); 'approaches' (Freeman, 1982); and 'types' (Zahorik, 1988). Many are variations on recurrent themes (Clark, 1990); some are 'mutations' (Niemeyer & Moon, 1988:3). Despite the differentiation, 'a

common thread' - seeking improvement in instruction - unites otherwise widely disparate platforms (Niemeyer & Moon, 1988:3). As with Hewson's (1992) survey of the literature in supervision in counselling, there appears to be a plethora of models described, yet no adequate definition of 'model', nor a core set of terms of reference. Some studies seem to be highly descriptive, offering accounts of what supervisors actually do (Zahorik, 1988; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982); other writing tends to be more hortatory or prescriptive, outlining a suggested model or arguing the case for a set of behaviours and attitudes (Gebhard & Malicka, 1991).

The relevance of supervisor models to this study lies in the presumption that the supervisor's orientation - whether it be deliberate and conscious, as with an educational platform, or unconscious and 'intuitive', as with theory-in-use - is a major determining factor in how the supervisor approaches, views and conducts the encounter; the nature of the interpersonal connection that is established; and a steering factor in the whole supervisory process. This presumption underpins much of the literature in supervision (Acheson & Gall, 1987; Glickman, 1981; Goldhammer et al. 1980): if you assume a certain orientation to supervision, it follows that you will conduct your conference in a particular way. In support of this, a study by Holloway, Freund, Gardner, Nelson and Walker (1989), of the supervisory behaviour of a number of major theorists (in counselling), reported positive links between theoretical orientation and supervisory style.

There is, however, considerable empirical evidence to suggest a discrepancy between curriculum and curriculum-in-use, leading the researcher to distinguish between educational intention and actual educational experience (Zeichner, 1985; Zeichner & Liston, 1985; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982). This discrepancy undercuts the logic that links platform with performance; and interferes with the assumed relevance of supervisory models to the study of the conference. A forceful case is argued by Zeichner, Liston, Mahlios and Gomez (1988), following their investigation of the discourse of supervisory encounters in two supposedly very different teacher education programs - one, traditional craft-oriented; the other, inquiry-oriented. They found that the different theoretical positions 'did not appear to filter down to the level of supervisory encounters' (1988:358). They conclude with a statement of the futility of attempting change in the form and content of programs without broader, structural changes in conceptions of teacher education.

This view is well accepted. A study by Griffin (1983, cited by Tisher & Wideen, 1990:175) reached comparable conclusions. Consonant, too, is a study by Jonsson and Ahlstrom (1988, cited by Tisher, 1990:199) which developed supervisory profiles - based on belief systems, supervisory conferences and interviews - and found that student teachers were in fact learning a traditional role, with an emphasis on the status quo of curriculum, rather than an integrated professional role with a critical orientation towards education for change.

The following survey seeks to overview model-oriented supervision studies in the last decade and a half. Wallace (1991a) outlines three major models by which professionals-in-training acquire expertise: the conservative craft model, in which an apprenticeship with the master allows the neophyte to acquire competence through modelling, imitation and instruction; the applied science model which is a one-way application of a body of knowledge to professional practice; and the reflective model, in which received knowledge and experiential knowledge combine to inform practice which is distilled through reflection to become professional competence. Goldsberry's (1988) tri-partite classification, though not historical, is not discordant with Wallace's (1991a): there is the nominal model, which is oriented towards the maintenance of the status quo and the appearance of accountability; the prescriptive model, intended to maximise expertise, promote uniformity and maintain standards; and the reflective model, intended to promote reasoned experimentation.

Zeichner and Tabachnick's (1982) study of supervisors' 'belief systems' generated three overlapping categories: technical-instrumental supervision, oriented to the practice and technique of teaching; personal growth-centred supervision, oriented to the development of the individual according to that person's frame of reference; and critical supervision which encourages the 'discovery of linkages' (1982:46) between classroom events and external factors and forces. Zeichner's (1986) typology of student teaching programs considers four major orientations - behaviouristic, traditional-craft, personalistic and inquiry-oriented - along with the conception of the teacher's role (skilled performer; effective person; professional decision-maker); the directionality (received or reflexive) and explicitness of the curriculum; and the stance ('certain' or 'problematic') towards the institutional form and context.

Horwood's (1981) study revealed three categories: the master-apprentice model, in which supervisors often called on their own success as a basis for their rationale; the 'brewmaster model', in which the supervisor is less explicitly articulate about rationale, preferring simple 'rules of thumb'; and the idiosyncratic model, where the teacher's task is to develop his or her

own unique style. The latter approach resembled Olson's (1982) 'friend in the audience' model, often adopted by supervisors in contrast to the more critical and analytic model ('drama critic') expected of them by the overseeing faculty.

Housego and Grimmet's (1983) categorisation is based on how the supervisor resolves the twin needs of threat reduction and time exploitation: those favouring threat reduction (person-oriented) are facilitative supervisors; and those favouring time exploitation (task-oriented) are performance-based; with each category being further sub-divided according to how goals are met. Both of these are contrasted with the 'conventional' approach where the practicum provides an osmotic learning experience.

At the base of the orientations outlined by Pfeiffer and Dunlap (1982), there are three distinct value emphases - humanistic (valuing of the personnel); technological (valuing of the program and its product); and managerial (valuing power and position). They argue that the value base of each orientation will affect the style of leadership and the nature of the supervisory relationship.

Zahorik's (1988) study aimed to describe what it is that supervisors do in their observing-conferring role. While all the subjects employed a wide range of supervision types, each supervisor had a dominant, preferred type of supervision - where 'type' is a composite of 'style' of interaction (active: prescribing or interpreting; or reactive) and 'goal' set for the student teacher (behaviour prescription; idea interpretation; person support).

Sergiovanni and Starratt's (1988) comprehensive coverage of supervision theory probes industry and management, as well as education; and produces four models reflecting historical movements: scientific management, with an emphasis on authority, control, inspection and accountability; human relations supervision, which, in reaction to the cold efficiency of scientific management promoted a valuing of human relations; neo-scientific supervision, again reactive in nature, but aiming to blend the accountability of the scientific approach with less impersonal processes; and the human resources supervision, with its emphasis on supporting the development of fully-functioning individuals.

Within the studies of how supervisors supervise, one sub-group seems to concentrate on 'style' (further discussed in 'perception studies', below). Blumberg's (1980) study centred on teachers' perceptions of direct and indirect styles, and various combinations thereof. Glickman (1981;

1983) places directness of style on a behavioural continuum and combines it with the variables of teacher type and teacher level (a combination of abstract thinking and professional commitment) to produce a paradigm of developmental supervision, whose goals resemble those of Sergiovanni and Starratt's (1988) human relations supervision. Freeman's (1982) three approaches to supervision are differentiated on the basis of degree of directiveness, which is linked to a hierarchy of teacher needs based on developmental stage. This is consonant with Reed's (1991) model, which, drawing from management research on situational leadership, offers four styles - directing, coaching, supporting and delegating - broadly linked to the supervisee's developmental stage. Gebhard and Malicka (1991) also explore the continuum of prescriptive to non-directive supervision, illustrating each model through examples of how supervisors initiate and respond in supervisory conferences.

2.2.2 Studies of perception

An impressive amount of concern in the literature has centred on perceptions of supervisors¹. Indeed, Kottkamp citing Blumberg's studies, states: 'perception... is all' (1982:3). Holland refers to 'the seemingly endless' studies on perception which have 'belaboured' pessimistic portraits of supervision (1989:63). That this is a substantive motif is itself testament to the importance of the interpersonal connections that make up supervision. There seems to be an abiding quest in the literature for a supervisory type or style or orientation that is benevolently perceived and positively linked to effective learning outcomes. This somewhat romantic pursuit persists, despite the perhaps uncomfortable awareness that a 'one-size-fits-all mind set' (Waite, 1992b:322) is unwise; and despite existing empirical evidence concerning supervisor flexibility (Glickman, 1981; Glickman, 1983; McNergney & Francis, 1986; Zahorik, 1988). Perlberg and Theodor's (1975) study, for example, revealed that far from adapting their style to suit the supervisee, supervisors expected teachers to adapt to them.

At the same time, the research results on supervisory style are at best equivocal. Blumberg and Weber's study of the morale of experienced teachers found a preference for indirect behaviours (1968). A later study (Blumberg & Jonas, 1987) of teachers' acceptance and

¹ Many of these studies, especially the earlier ones, belong to the empirical-analytical tradition and involve measurement: Blumberg, 1970b; Blumberg, 1980; Blumberg & Cusick, 1969; Blumberg & Jonas, 1987; Blumberg & Weber, 1968; Danaher, Elliott & Marland, 1982; Fogarty & Yarrow, 1984; Heichberger & Young, 1985; Kagan & Albertson, 1987; Lowther, 1968; Nolan, 1989; Pullen & Sistrunk, 1990; Reed, 1990; Sanders & Merritt, 1974.

granting of access to supervisors found that collaborative and affirmative relationships were highly valued. Similarly, Blumberg and Amidon (1969) and Blumberg (1980) contend that an indirect style is more effective because it maximises the teacher's freedom to participate in the conference. Shinn (1976) and Eltis (1985) also report preference for indirection. In Grimmer and Crehan's (1983) study, positively valued 'constructive openness' was linked with specific, tentative and informing statements, rather than general, absolute and directing ones.

Other studies have produced different results. Young and Heichberger (1975) found a preference for helper behaviour (directive) over collegial behaviour (non-directive). Copeland and Atkinson (1978), Copeland (1980b), Lowther (1968) and Nettle (1988) found strong evidence among neophytes for preference for directive supervision. Goldhammer et al. contend that indirectness often contributes to a complex network of negative reactions: distrust; feeling manipulated; sensing that information is being withheld; suspecting that language is being 'censored' (1980:170). This is reinforced by what we know from linguistics - that 'indirectness allows us to control others without appearing to' (Tannen, 1986:79). Critical theorists, like St Maurice (1987), see therapeutic techniques applied to supervision as an oppressive form of human engineering. Pajak warns that 'approaching problems in supervision too indirectly, or so obliquely that they are left unspoken, is dysfunctional'; and suggests an approach that combines directiveness in regard to technique, with sensitivity in regard to personal style (1986:123), a 'tactful confrontation' (Jackel, 1982, cited by Pajak, 1986:124). Kennedy (1993) argues that supervisory methods drawn from therapeutic counselling are not appropriate at the early stage of training. Lucas and True see the issue as a 'dilemma' in supervision: learners naturally want to know how well they are perceived as doing by those they regard as experts' (1991:79); while supervisors may wish to withhold judgement so as to encourage the reflective habit of self-evaluation. This is dramatically captured in J. Smith's (1993) appeal for honesty and non-Rogerian directness in trainer-trainee relations.

One explanation for the discrepancy in research findings on perceptions of styles is that teachers at different stages of development have different supervisory needs (Copeland & Atkinson, 1978), a state of affairs also found in other neophyte professionals, such as counselling (Hewson, 1992). Copeland's later study (1982) explored (and confirmed) the hypothesis that the preference for direction was a function of inexperience, a finding that would suggest that supervisors would need to be capable of considerable flexibility in order to provide optimum supervision. Significantly, a recent trend (Lucas, 1991b) advocates flexibility and responsiveness to the teacher-as-individual.

Other studies indicate that situational variables, such as teacher personality type, interact with supervisory style (Fiedler, 1967; Rokeach, 1960; Vroom & Yetton, 1973). Martin, Isherwood and Rapagna (1978) argue that many studies of teacher perception are limited by being conceived in terms of teacher satisfaction rather than in terms of an operational criterion based on supervisory goals, such as instructional improvement. Copeland (1982) counters this claim by contending that if the teacher prefers the approach taken, the relationship is more likely to continue and be productive.

Copeland (1980b) argues that empirical findings supporting directive supervision go against the grain of a recent trend of theorising in supervision that promotes an ideologically attractive, non-directive approach (Oliva, 1984; Salek, 1975). Such an approach aligns comfortably with renewed awareness of the complexity of classrooms; the importance of invisible processes; the recognition of the uniqueness of person-oriented practices; the value of self-directed practice (Lucas & True, 1991); and the appreciation that there is no one single best way to teach (Pajak, 1990b; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Tom, 1984, cited by Cohn & Gellman, 1988). The preference for directive supervision also goes against the current of prevailing wisdoms in the literature on helping relationships (Benjamin, 1969; Brammer, 1985; Carkhuff, 1969; Egan, 1986; Rogers, 1958), which itself draws heavily on humanistic psychology. Further, it conflicts with the writing of critical scholars (Smyth, 1991a; Smyth, 1991b; Smyth, 1991c; Retallick, 1986; Retallick, 1990a) who argue that dominant, directive supervision perpetuates disempowering hegemonies in institutions.

The reasons that might account for the wish for direction take one beyond the concerns of this study. However, what is of interest is the focus on language that, it is perceived, distinguishes directive from non-directive. Presumably, behaviour typified by declarative and expository statements suggest an 'authoritarian posture' while that typified by interrogatory and reflective statements suggest an 'egalitarian posture' (Copeland & Atkinson, 1978:124-5). The difficulty with this assertion, however, lies in the absence of any simple equation of form and function: it is possible to be highly authoritarian using the interrogative form, just as it is possible to be reflective using declarative forms. A link between the notion of directiveness and the present study may be found in Tracy and Eisenberg's study (1990/91) which correlated 'low clarity' messages with lack of direction.

2.2.3 Studies of conference communication

A substantive motif in the literature is the theme of communication. For Sergiovanni and Starratt, 'supervision is, first and foremost, communication' (cited by Jones, 80:433), a view shared by many (Heichberger & Young, 1985; McIntyre & Norris, 1980). Pajak's (1989) review of the literature in which twelve key dimensions of supervision were identified gives a high priority to communication and conferring skills. Likewise, the theme of communication is a recurrent one in the supervisor handbook by Turney et al. (1990). Many studies of supervision have focussed centrally on communication and they are replete with descriptions of problems (Griffin, Barnes, Hughes, O'Neal, Edwards and Defino, 1983; Hennings, 1975; Hoover, O'Shea & Carroll, 1988; Morris & Morris, 1980). Writers have often advocated particular approaches to communication: for example, Dussault (1970) and others (e.g. Hoover, O'Shea & Carroll, 1988) call on Rogerian principles from the conduct of therapy; Blumberg (1980) and Bamford (1981) highlight indirectness as a facilitative factor; Bebb, Low and Waterman (1969) provide guidelines for both verbal and non-verbal communication that seek to optimise the conference as a helpful, learning context. Glickman (1988) sees a 'collision' of ideas between supervisor and teacher as an empowering step in the right direction. Correspondingly, researchers investigating supervisory training place a comparably high degree of importance on training communication skills (McIntyre & Norris, 1980; Sellars, 1981).

Studies of communication tend to have a particular focus. Jones (1980) gives priority to non-verbal communication, citing research evidence (Greene, 1977) to suggest that greater physical distance lessens the chance for effective communication; and warning that greater distance is maintained when threatening, stressful communication is expected. Hennings (1975) explores three elements - 'masking', 'filtering' and 'wandering' - that can become effective barriers to interpersonal communication. Sellars et al. (1988) examine communication in a peer supervisory context. McIntyre and Norris (1980) developed a survey to measure an individual's receptivity to giving and receiving feedback. Pfeiffer and Dunlap (1982) highlight listening skills as central to conference communication. Shrigley and Walker (1981) focus on the use of positive verbal prefixes in the supervisor's language. Gibb (1964) argues that many of the orientations that are conventionally associated with teaching (e.g. information transmission, advice-giving, demonstrating, evaluating) are antithetical to help. Dunkleberger (1987) argues that the conference has to be well planned - especially its setting, tone and clarity of communication - and has to be conceived of holistically, with adequate attention to opening and closure. Cornelius' research (1987) on control and specificity in the conference suggests

that more positive outcomes ensue when the supervisor assumes a facilitative role. Neumann (1992) distinguishes between constructive feedback (which may be 'positive' through reinforcing teaching strengths, or 'negative' through highlighting teaching weaknesses); and destructive feedback, which is feedback badly given. Recognising that interaction is a two-way process, Neumann focuses on the skills of both giving and receiving feedback, an approach that affirms the supervisee's entitlements, responsibilities and options. Tinning's (1983) behavioural critique of supervisory feedback found it largely ineffective through being over-generalised; insensitive to the idiosyncratic nature of classrooms; weak in countering the potency of natural classroom reinforcers; and diluted by often being delayed and infrequent. Warger and Aldinger (1984) corroborate some of this by highlighting the potency of the ecological environment of the classroom, including the real-world status of the co-operating teacher over the often unfulfilled goals of the university supervisor.

The literature has seen an emphasis on imported category systems to enable the analysis of conference interaction. A seminal work here was that of Blumberg (1980) who combined interaction analysis work by Bales (1951) and Flanders (1976) to produce a 15-category system for conference analysis. The emphasis was on supervisor verbal behaviour, reflecting Blumberg's view that supervisors held the primary responsibility for improving communication. In this tradition, other work has followed (Kindsvatter & Wilken, 1981; Toppins, 1983). These tend to reflect the view that 'supervision is a legitimate science but that its effective practice is an art' (Kindsvatter & Wilken, 1981:528).

Central to this study are concerns in the literature about the risk element in the communicative process. Dunkleberger (1987), for example, illustrates how messages received may not be the same as those intended, creating mis-communication. Partington (1982), whose experiment with teaching practice supervision involved 'advice transactions' recorded in diaries, contends that only in an ideal world would the message received match perfectly with the message sent: 'advice given by word of mouth is ephemeral and prone to all the frailty of human communication' (1982:269). Niemeyer and Moon link the interpersonal climate with communication risk: because of context pressures, student teachers 'tend to listen selectively at best'; without a high level of trust, 'most suggestions, if heard, will be discounted' (1986:24).

An important contribution here has been made by the work of Gibb (1969) who has demonstrated how defensiveness in communication interferes with the ability to perceive

communicative messages accurately. Gibb's outline of behaviours characteristic of a defensive climate shows how relevant this work is to communication training for supervisors. Accordingly, many writers on conference communication have focussed on strategies for the avoidance of defensive communication (O'Shea, Hoover & Carroll, 1988). These might be thought to be responding to the lament of Goldhammer et al. (1980) that supervisors are largely unprepared to cope with the psychological defensiveness that their work inevitably entails.

The concept of risk within communication is central to the work of Roberts (1990; 1991a). Following politeness theory (which will be taken up again in Ch. 3), Roberts links 'risk' with face threats within one-to-one encounters, and demonstrates how novice and experienced supervisors variously deliver the face threats associated with supervision. That experienced and novice supervisors behave differently has significant implications. Indeed, Roberts' attention to the way in which the teacher-listener interprets face threat is crucial to supervision: 'if we are sure that a teacher's attitude determines the amount of behaviour change, then the effect of our words on the teacher must be closely examined' (1991a:20). The present study will explore a significant lacuna in the face threats that Roberts has investigated - namely, being critical of the teacher's performance.

One of the central tenets of Roberts' work - one which the present study will borrow from and build on - holds that spoken language is interpretable only in its context and only through examination of 'the extraordinarily complicating factor of listeners' various interpretations of intended messages' (1990:4). Her research (1990) centres on how teachers interpret supervisors' requests which may variously be received as a helpful hint or an unwelcome imposition; and aims to unearth and make explicit the tacit rules by which indirect requests for action are interpreted within the culture of supervision. The study reveals the complexity of human communication; as well as the need for context-sensitive methodological instruments that allow one to access participants' (not outsiders') meanings, an issue which will be explored further in Ch. 3. What is clear at this point is that communication is vital but risky.

2.2.4 Studies linking observing and conferring

The link that binds the observing and the conferring role is reflected in the status of supervisor-collected data in the supervisory dialogue. In Pajak's (1989) study, for example, which aimed to identify key supervisory dimensions, observing and conferring are discussed together. It is

a logical link for observation provides the means by which feedback, or a record of performance, can be given to the teacher (Hogan, 1983). Writers, however, disagree as to the degree to which supervisors should pre-structure their conferences: Hunter (1980) argues for highly structured conferences closely linked to observational data; Cogan (1973) and Sergiovanni and Starratt (1988) warn that planning should be tentative only.

A central concern, largely fuelled by the clinical supervision movement, has been the drive towards objectivity (Wallace, 1981): 'the supervisor's preconceived notions about teaching... should not be imposed on another person' (Turney et al. 1990:164). Garman's study (1984) of supervisory judgement reinforced her notion of the value of 'stable data' (1979). The urge for greater objectivity, from the early sixties onwards, might be seen as a reaction to earlier, global, highly subjective appraisals made of teachers, which seemed to emanate from unarticulated and folk notions about good teaching rooted in status and authority rather than nominated competencies: 'as an experienced hand at the game, I know a good teacher when I see one' (Hogan, 1983:31), a stance of which Stones (1984) has been justly critical. The urge to conceptualise teaching as a set of instructional competencies was fuelled by public disenchantment with education; teachers' complaints about the inadequacy of training; and societal and economic demands for educational accountability (Housego & Grimmer, 1983).

To this end, there have been both simple and elaborate attempts to ensure that the analysis of teaching is objective. A great deal of energy has been spent importing and applying descriptive protocols for the supposed non-judgemental collection of classroom data (e.g. Brown & Hoffman, 1966; Flanders' Interaction Analysis - FIAC, 1964; Schueler, Gold and Mitzel's OSCAR, 1962; Weller's MOSAIC, 1971). The protocols then serve as the basis for discussion in the post-observation conference; and their great value is that they pre-empt the rush to judgement (Smyth, 1986a). They force a delay between the experience and the evaluation of that experience - in which duration, data are collected and pre-judgement is held in abeyance (Saltzberger-Wittenberg, 1983).

Typically, such efforts involve a supposedly value-free descriptive framework through which the supervisor and teacher arrive at a mutual understanding of the lesson (Ellard, 1983; Wajnryb, 1993a). Another motivation for value-free data collection mechanisms has been the management of complexity: given the intricacies of classroom events - their often simultaneous, spontaneous, and unpredictable nature - protocols allow an observer to focus and stay focussed through a lesson (Smyth, 1983). Some teacher educators, while recognising

that teaching is too subtle and complex to be 'reduced to a finite number of discrete, measurable behaviours', nonetheless argue that the specification of competencies is crucial to the neophyte stage (Schapiro & Sheehan, 1986), when there is a need for 'clear, quantifiable and observable' terms of reference (O'Shea, Hoover & Carroll, 1988:18). It was a short step away for the objective classification of teaching behaviour to become a model for a descriptive, value-free means of classifying supervisory behaviour (Barbour, 1971; Blumberg, 1980; Blumberg & Amidon, 1965; Rousseau, 1969; Toppins, 1983).

A recent trend in the literature has somewhat removed the shine from the panacea of objective observing. Three factors may be identified here. Firstly, attention has begun to swing from the visible-is-valuable notion to a dawning awareness of the importance of the unobservable, chiefly teachers' mental processes (Lanier & Little, 1986). Shulman refers to these as 'the tacit mental and emotional states that precede, accompany and follow the observable actions, frequently foreshadowing (or reflecting) changes in the more enduring capacities' (1986:7-8). For example, Calderhead's study of student teachers gave priority to subjects' 'interpretive frameworks', or the means by which they themselves make sense of practicum experiences (1988:34). New questions, driven by the new, increasingly accepted, interpretive research paradigm, 'put mind back in the picture' (Erickson, 1986:127).

Secondly, the alleged purity of the observation instrument began to be sullied. Starratt (1992) remonstrates that invalid assumptions underpin observation; and Mansour (1993:48) warns of the dangers of 'essentialism' - having a narrow conception of desirable characteristics of good teaching. Furthermore, studies isolating the central place of prejudice have highlighted the fact that people's perceptions of processes are invariably bound up with their own undisclosed prejudices (Hogan, 1983; Starratt, 1992; Sto do /sky, 1984). Hogan (1983) differentiates between partisan and non-partisan prejudice; and affirms the value of the latter in the fostering of good practice in teaching. This distinction is comparable to Sergiovanni's 'legitimate' and 'arbitrary' bias (1984:362). In this regard, Goldhammer et al. (1980) list as dangers of observation the myth of objectivity; mood-derived perceptual inaccuracies; physical and psychological distance; and observer effects. In the view of the critical theorist, the purported objectivity is in fact a tool of oppression. St Maurice writes (1987:246):

The superior realism claimed by clinical supervision derives from a regime of power. The clinical gaze is that of an eye of power: facing it, the subject becomes an object, quantified into data, categorised and judged. The eye, with its attendant symbols, language and rituals, empowers the clinician,

establishing the common structure that reduces lived events to behaviours, and places spontaneous actions into patterns.

Here, the objectivity of clinical supervision amounts to a replacement of personal threat by impersonal abstraction, which dehumanises through being atomistic; and which represents an alteration in the guise of power, not its redistribution.

Together with the recognition that all observation is mediated, came a new questioning of the evidence base of observational research. Where once there had been a pre-supposition of correspondence between a form (i.e. behaviour) and its meaning (i.e. interpretation), the thrust of an interpretive perspective was that allegedly 'low-inference observational judgements are in fact highly inferential' (Erickson, 1986:132).

Thirdly, recent studies offer an ecological perspective: they focus on the context-dependence of meaning and the uniqueness of classrooms (Juska, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1984; Stodolsky, 1984; Waite, 1990b; Waite, 1992b). Sergiovanni contrasts the raw, brute data of those who seek an objective reality, with 'sense' data, that is meaningful to the participants (1984:357); and sets up a contrast between 'looking' and 'seeing' (1984:361). Nias accounts for the 'glacial slowness' (1987:1) of educational change by suggesting that innovation has to be personally meaningful to teachers before they are willing to own it. Juska's (1991) impassioned article highlights the limitations of so-called objectivity in understanding a teacher's purposes and practices. Starratt (1992) points to the multiplicity of meanings buried in the word 'competence' and the failure of supervision theorists to unpack the ambiguity.

Waite argues that reductionist 'atomistic thinking' about effective teaching largely misses the point of what goes on in classrooms (1992b:327). Using ethnographic tools and conversation analysis (CA), he posits that participants both contribute and orient to the context of learning. This means that unfolding, dynamic meaning is all bound up with participants' assumptions and knowledge about events, which enables them to read cues in the context. Similarly, Starratt (1992:82) suggests that classrooms are replete with 'highly nuanced' cues which are missed by visiting outsiders. Blind to such cues, newcomers are likely to suffer 'roadblocks to ... perceptual accuracy' (1992b:322), as a result of which they may misunderstand and misinterpret classroom occurrences. Insights from social psychology (Waite, 1992b) allow us to recognise that such perceptual inaccuracy may well be compounded by two major kinds of errors: errors of attribution or the 'actor-observer effect' (Brehm & Kassin, 1990, cited by

Waite, 1992b:322), by which observers are apt to attribute causes to actors' characteristics rather than situational factors; and errors of perceptual disability caused by 'cognitive busyness' through which situational constraint information is disabled by peripheral tasks' (Gilbert, Pelham & Krull, 1988:736).

Altogether, these factors undermine the efficacy of supervisors' observation and evaluation. This means that what an outsider sees may deviate markedly from what an insider sees. What supervisors then have to say to teachers during the SD may be largely devoid of meaning. In highlighting the need for naturalistic research, Tabachnick writes (1989:155):

Each incident of social interaction is *embedded* in a social context that is broader than the boundaries of an observer's vision, reaching back into the history that led up to it, and reaching out to a constellation or network of related and impinging social events and social forces. At the same time, each incident of social interaction is constantly in the *process of changing*, of *becoming* something else (emphasis in original).

2.2.5 Affect studies

Studies of affect within supervision have largely focussed on the emotional experience of the practicum from the perspective of the supervised teacher. Many of those studying the interpersonal aspects of supervision claim that it is the key, albeit a neglected one, to gaining supervisory influence (Blumberg, 1980; Kottkamp, 1982). However, as Lindsey (1969) laments in her study's conclusion, while the affective climate is crucial in supervision, it is notoriously elusive to research.

Affect studies are relevant here for a number of reasons: because they point to personally meaningful events for participants (Coulter, 1974; Grenfell, 1993; Pearson, 1987); because of the influence of affect on behaviour (Barbour, 1971; Sorenson, 1969); and because of the impact on teaching and occupational socialisation, such as the link between decreasing anxiety and heightened custodality (Sinclair & Nicoll, 1981). Of ongoing interest is the anxiety about assessment in the face of near universal pass rates (Griffin et al. 1983; Stones & Webster, 1983; Stones & Webster 1984; Terrell, Tregaskis & Boydell, 1986); and the pervasive negative stereotyping of supervisors (Terrell et al. 1986).

In this section, focus falls on three aspects of affect studies linked to supervision: the supervisor's role complexity as a source of conflict for the student teacher; the conflict caused the student teacher through a clash of goals between the co-operating teacher and the supervisor; and interpersonal constraints within the conference.

In regard to the factor of supervisory role complexity, ample evidence exists that supervision is a major cause of stress in student teaching (Coates & Thoresen, 1976; Fogarty, 1992; Fogarty, Yarrow & Costin, 1993; Morris & Morris, 1980; Price, 1987; Turney et al. 1982), although there is not a great deal of consensus on causal connections. Sinclair & Nicoll (1981) and Blumberg (1980) suggest that it is the very act of being supervised, rather than the individual, interpersonal relationship, that is problematic: for some, the act of supervision *per se* is equated with unwelcome negative criticism, may be perceived as threatening, and may cause a defensive response in the supervisee (Calderhead, 1988; Liddle, 1986). Coulter (1974) contends that practice teaching is bruising to teachers' self-image. However, Sorenson and Halpert's (1968) study found that the stress factor was linked to particular personnel interactions. Nias (1976) contends that as long as the twin roles persist, evaluation will tend to pre-dominate. Evidence from experimental social psychology (Giles & Powersland, 1975) suggest that when a high-status person has control over outcomes that are of significance to a lower-status person, the latter may have a level of affective arousal ranging from mild tension to abject terror.

In general, the unsympathetic view is of a unwelcome visitor arriving in haste, intruding on a classroom-in-progress with which he or she is situationally and psychologically divorced; with a perspective on teaching that is out of touch and un-synchronised with the constraints of a real classroom in a real school (Calderhead, 1988; Duck & Cunningham, 1985; Oakley, 1988; O'Neal, 1983). Fitzclarence (1983) describes the twin roles of supervisors as incompatibly collaborative and competitive, producing confusion for the student teacher, which is often resolved through a trade-off of compliance for grades (Locke (1979, cited by Tinning, 1984). That student teachers quickly acquire the lore of grade-getting and of impression management (Baumeister, Hutton & Tice, 1989; Goffman, 1959; Henry, 1983; Kennedy, 1993; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982) is shown through Sorenson's (1967) revealing exposure of what students do to 'get by' in the practicum. Similarly, Terrell et al. (1986) reveal 'the grape-vine of second-hand information' about supervisors of which student teachers avail themselves. Goldhammer et al. contend that teachers' tendency to 'second-guess' supervisors

(1980"50), then serving up what they perceive to be expected, derives from the mystique and the threat of evaluation. This is revealed, too, in Calderhead's (1988) case study.

That student teachers need and make claim to a set of survival expediencies is not unexpected, given their marginal and powerless status; and given the impact of cross-cultural 'reality shock' (Veenman, 1984:143), when the idealism of training collides with the reality of school and classroom (Wallace, 1991b; Zeichner, 1993). According to McKelvey and Kyriacou (1985, cited by Lucas, 1991a), their conservatism is linked to their recognition of the conservative expectations of pupils. Tinning (1984) claims that the confusion experienced by student teachers is experienced by supervisors as well, making it difficult for them to sort out their diagnostic from their evaluative functions. Clearly, these currents are impacting - indeed, are in danger of collision - when participants intersect, as they do at the time of the supervisory conference.

A second focus in affect studies has investigated competitive coalitions (Calderhead, 1988; Cope 1969; Yee 1968; Yee, 1969); and the conflict caused the student teacher through incompatibilities between co-operating and supervising teachers' mind sets. Where these occur, the student teacher is the 'meat in the sandwich' (Sinclair & Nicoll, 1981:9), incapable of pleasing both, yet unable to dismiss either. The reasons for the rapid socialisation of student teachers toward utilitarian and conservative values (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1981) is beyond the parameters of this study. What is of concern is the pressure of conformity generated by the threat of evaluation (Sorenson, 1967), the impact of which may be measured by mechanistic, uncritical practices (Beyer, 1984; Henry, 1983); by the avoidance of learning-beneficial, risk-taking behaviours in the neophyte; and by the acquisition of various compliance strategies (Goodman, 1985; Lacey, 1977) to manage an array of discordant demands.

It may, however, be hasty to blame everything on dyad/triad conflict. The nature of conformity is arguably more complex and in practice teaching, it may have more to do with wider institutional constraints. The recent trend towards highlighting the idiosyncratic nature of experience and the unique ecologies of classrooms (Waite, 1992b; Zeichner, 1986) may have been foreshadowed by the focus of Doyle and Ponder (1975) and Doyle (1977) on 'texture' (Doyle, 1977:51), and Copeland's studies (1977; 1979; 1980a) of classroom contexts and skill transfer which demonstrates the power of 'ecological congruence'. It may well be that students quickly discover that what works best is what pupils are used to, so compelling them to gravitate towards an apparently utilitarian perspective (Tabachnick, Popkewitz & Zeichner,

1979/80) and 'excessive realism' (Katz, 1974, cited by Beyer, 1984:37). In the light of the concern with survival (Fuller, 1969), as well as the fact that pupils, in 'providing legitimacy' (Friebus, 1977:286) to persons in search of status, serve as potent socialising agents, the propensity for modelling practice on the co-operating teacher makes logical and pragmatic sense. Given neophytes' uncertain status and their quest for institutional membership, a custodial stance is understandable (Hull & Baker, 1984). In such circumstances, the attractiveness of conforming to the status quo must be overwhelming.

A third aspect of affect studies is the impact of interpersonal constraints on the supervisory process. There is little doubt that the dyadic interpersonal encounter between supervisor and supervisee is potentially a highly charged experience. While TESOL is often spared the potential for triad conflict with a co-operating teacher, the fact that there are two rather than three key protagonists may make the interaction more intimate and more intense.

A host of tensions is at work. Sometimes these erupt as dilemmas of practice; at other times they threaten to reduce the encounter to a polite but meaningless episode (Robinson, 1984). Barbour's (1971) study of participants' levels of thinking ended in a call for more research into the patterns of 'confusion, hostility and avoidance in conferences' (1971:16). Such anomalies may lead the conference in the direction of a power tussle; or a precious and highly-charged dialogue where the supervisor fears resistance from the teacher and the teacher waits in dread for the axe to fall. Blumberg has graphically described the destructive spiral of action-reaction that culminates in 'strain, tension and uneasiness' (1976:290). Bamford depicts the helping process as an interaction of two people, each with a potentially conflicting set of 'needs, values and feelings' (1981:119). There is evidence of student teachers being unwilling to ask for help, to express self-doubt, or to reveal anxiety (Sinclair & Nicoll, 1981; Tinning, 1984). Sometimes the language of the conference can become 'inauthentic', in Sergiovanni's terms, rendering the process mere lip-service to assumed goals. Sometimes, the teacher may be confounded by a supervisor's conflicting messages: the supervisor may maintain a directive form of supervision, belied by a gentle, softly-spoken, seemingly empathetic personal style. Housego and Boldt's 'critical incident' study exposed the primacy and fragility of the interpersonal relationship in supervision (1985). Brodbelt (1980) highlights the need for developing selective criteria for the deployment of supervisors, and cites the necessity of both professional and personal qualities. In regard to the latter, Goldhammer et al. warned that the supervisor needs to be 'well assembled' as a person (1980:174). A recent research paper

(Burgess & Briscoe, 1993) highlighted the strong emotional dimensions of student teachers' early field experiences.

Overall, while a potentially powerful supervisory tool, the supervisory encounter can sometimes bear the seed of its own undoing. What is pervasive through the literature is a sense of the constraints - institutional, personal and interpersonal - that impact on individuals, especially at planned moments of intersection. The motivation behind this study is to investigate the supervisory relationship close-up, and to 'unpack' the language for its fragility.

2.2.6 Studies of supervisor thinking

It is no accident that attention has turned in recent years to the language of supervision. As Zeichner and Tabachnick (1982) note, the change reflects an earlier shift that occurred in the research literature on teaching, as documented by Lanier and Little (1986). From the early 1960s, studies on teaching moved from behavioural concerns with performance, backgrounds, personality characteristics, attitude and academic achievement to a focus on the teaching-learning processes that went on in classrooms. This new process-product orientation (Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Shulman, 1986) heralded the next step, which was a move away from the directly observable to a concern with the invisible mental processes of teacher thinking and decision-making (Carew & Lightfoot, 1979; Calderhead, 1984; Clark & Yinger, 1977; Bolin, 1988), epitomised in terms like 'reflection' and 'reflectivity' (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Holborn, 1988; Gore & Zeichner, 1991; Schon, 1983). Developments in TESOL teacher education parallel the mainstream, with a recent congestion of interest in the mental processes of participants - learners, teachers and supervisors (Bailey, 1992; Brock, Yu & Wong, 1992; Freeman, 1992; Herbert & Tankersley, 1993; Nunan, 1992b; Pennington, 1992).

Paralleling these shifts in teaching, studies on supervision have shifted from the study of 'the manifest activities of supervisors and supervisees' (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1982:36) to attempts to access and interpret participants' perceptions, beliefs and reasoning so as to understand *their* understanding of supervision (Calderhead, 1988; Kremer-Hayon, 1987; Niemeyer & Moon, 1986; Niemeyer & Moon, 1987; Rust, 1988). This trend, following on from studies on teacher thinking, is also informed by them (Niemeyer & Moon, 1986). Since Weller's (1971) call for more research on supervisory process, there have been numerous studies of verbal behaviours of supervisors during conference interaction (Barbour, 1971; Lindsey, 1969). Indeed the work of Lindsey and her associates at Columbia University is noted

as the start of a tradition of research from which later discourse studies might be seen to derive (Zeichner & Liston, 1985).

An early emphasis was on the use of pre-defined observation systems, which were imported and adapted to the study of conference interaction (Barbour, 1971; Blumberg, 1970b; O'Neal and Edwards, 1983; Toppins, 1983). Other studies aiming to develop a conference category system were derived from an analysis of the literature, as in the case of Brown and Hoffman's (1969) 194 identified cases of dimensions of performance in the conferring function. Others were based on data-generated categories (Heidelbach, 1969; Zeichner & Liston, 1985). In the eighties and early nineties, the direction has been away from imported systems to an emphasis on context-embedded meaning (Roberts, 1990; Waite, 1990b), a direction with which the present investigation identifies itself.

A binding commonality of studies with an interest in the 'invisible' dimension of supervision is their attention to discourse. As a window on supervisory meaning, discourse provides a rich and fertile source of enlightenment, as shown in studies by Saunders, Goldenberg, and Hamann (1992); Zeichner and Liston (1985); and Zeichner et al. (1988). Saunders et al. (1992) used techniques borrowed from conversational analysis to access and define a particular kind of discourse, the 'instructional conference', which they argue, because of its nature, is valid both as a means and as a goal of professional development. Zeichner and Liston (1985) and Zeichner et al. (1988) used discourse analysis, based on Bales' 'thought unit' (1951) to assess 'the quality of thinking exhibited in conferences' (Zeichner & Liston, 1985:160). A conceptual framework was developed, made up of four types of discourse: factual (concerned with the 'what' of teaching); prudential (suggestions, advice and evaluations); justificatory (revolving around questions of 'why'); and critical (assessing rationales and embedded values). Not unlike Barbour (1971), these studies found that conferences were dominated by factual discourse, irrespective of program curriculum and goals (Zeichner et al. 1988).

Increasingly, as researchers have become interested in the meanings participants give to their own experiences, research attention has attracted an inter-disciplinary orientation, wherein tools drawn from, notably, linguistics and anthropology are married to a concern for educational processes and outcomes. The suitability of discourse is explored in Ch. 3 where the focus shifts to methodological considerations.

2.3 Substantive survey of the language teacher education literature

Given the data base of the present study, particular attention was given to literature devoted to language teacher education. A recent survey of TESOL teacher education practices in the USA confirmed the importance of quality supervision, but lamented the dearth of information existing about effective practice as well as the current lack of a research agenda (Richards & Crookes, 1988).

The current concerns in language teacher education overlap with those of mainstream education (Richards & Crookes, 1988) - for example, the notions of clinical supervision (Gaies & Bowers, 1990) and reflective practice (Wallace, 1991a) - but there would seem to be a somewhat greater emphasis on feedback, perhaps for reasons outlined earlier¹. The literature also highlights the different currents within TESOL: for example, Burton's reflections on practices within the Adult Migrant English Program in Australia (1987) contrasts with Cervi's case study of feedback within the CTEFLA model (1991).

2.3.1 Observation

Certainly, there is no shortage of observation systems, many of which have been borrowed from research and adapted to suit supervisory or developmental objectives. Some of these are: Bowers, 1987; Fanselow's FOCUS (1977; 1987); Mitchell & Parkinson, 1979; Moskowitz' FLINT, 1971). The systems are surveyed in Wallace (1981; 1991a) and Nunan (1989a). The willingness to experiment with protocols (Deller, 1987; Gebhard & Ueda-Motonaga, 1992; Maingay, 1987; Poumellec, Parrish & Garcon, 1992; Rushton, 1987; Vieira, 1991; Wajnryb, 1993a; Wallace & Woolger, 1991; Woodward, 1989a) underscores the fact that observation has been a primary concern in language teacher education.

The search for the apparently value-free is, of course, itself a value statement. One major objective has been to foster description over judgement (Fanselow, 1977) through the provision of a common reference language. Another is to promote the notion that 'the teaching act is not a mystery that defies precise and rational description' (Fanselow, 1977:17). A

¹ For example, in its first six years of publication, *The Teacher Trainer*, a tri-annual journal devoted to the concerns of language teacher educators, published no fewer than twenty articles on matters directly pertaining to feedback - 'the delicate art of sensitive and constructive debriefing' (Poumellec, Parrish & Garcon, 1992:16).

projected outcome of such increased awareness is the obsolescence of outside supervisors (Fanselow, 1982). In this regard, Gebhard (1989:12) contends that learning to observe teaching liberates the teacher from a reliance on prescription.

Perhaps one might also detect in the concern for observation instruments a maturing of viewpoint: an increasing respect for the complexity of teaching; a new reluctance to prescribe with certainty; and an awareness of the difficulty of establishing reliable criteria for the measurement of performance (Maingay, 1988). In relation to this, Gebhard (1990b; 1991) has isolated a crucial element in traditional supervisory modes: the problematic goal of instructional improvement. Because of the complex relationship between teaching and learning (Starratt, 1992), supervisors might be wise rather to help teachers explore real vs ideal behaviours in specific teaching contexts (Gaies & Bowers, 1990; Swan, 1993), rather than to make definitive statements about what constitutes 'good teaching'.

As with mainstream practices, there seems to have been an assumption that what is quantifiable is objective and value-neutral, and that quality is measurable - a trap of which Van Lier (1988) warns. Nunan cautions that importing a pre-determined set of categories as an observation instrument can mean operating with 'a pair of mental blinkers' (1989a:81). However, in response to Van Lier's ethnographic and text-oriented alternative, he warns too that 'that there is no such thing as theory-free observation', for an observer's 'internal "observation schedule"' may be of greater concern for being less explicit (1989a:89).

In addition, the literature demonstrates a concern for the affective dimension of the supervisee (Denman, 1989; Johnston, 1991). Certainly what emerges as pervasive is an awareness of the problematic nature of 'sitting in' (Wilson, 1991). A key element here is the desire to resolve the role conflict of helper/assessor (Gairns, 1991/2; Haigh, 1987). This is done in many ways, including attempts to mollify the status differential (Rinvolduc, 1988); reduce the value-laden dimension (Acker, 1990; Parker, 1991; Philpott, 1990); and shift the responsibility for evaluation to the teacher (Greis, 1986; Richards, 1989; Wajnryb, 1986), for example, by encouraging the growth of the supervisee's own 'internal supervisor' (Woodward, 1990) and by promoting 'personal engagement' (Dufficy, 1991).

2.3.2 The language of feedback

A key feature is the focus on the actual language of feedback. Witness, for example, Deller's concern with the impact of 'yes but' (1991/2); Woodward's encouragement of option-based language in preference to the language of regret (1989b); Houston's notion of useful language, such as that which extends what the supervisee already knows/does or that which refrains from advice-giving when it has not been asked for (in Woodward, 1990); Philpott's debt to humanist psychology and counselling for purpose-driven listening modes (1990); Burton's concern over the implications of praise-giving (1987). Wileman's (1993/4) survey of supervisee responses; and de Moraes Menti's (1992) concern with nomenclature. Likening the trainee teacher's evolving inner criteria to the 'approximate system' of the language learner, Greis advocates the interactive process of feedback as more helpful than modelling and imitation (1986). The present study, with its focus on the delivery of criticism within feedback, falls neatly within the recent trend, though it differs by being data-driven and discourse-oriented.

2.3.3 Models of supervision

A recent substantive concern has been with models of help-giving - or supervisory style - such as the options offered in Wallace (1991a) who views supervisory style as a continuum ranging from 'classic prescriptive' to 'classic collaborative.' A range of models, broadly consonant with Wallace's, exists in the literature (Fanselow, 1990; Freeman, 1982; Gebhard, 1990a; Gebhard, 1990b; Gebhard & Malicka, 1991; Wajnryb, 1992c).

As in the mainstream, the language teacher education field has demonstrated a wide response to the issue of supervisory style. At one extreme is Fanselow's contention, with its Freirian overtones, that 'when we generate our own alternatives... we construct our own knowledge' (1990:184). Gebhard (1990b), too, gives a convincing outline of the serious shortcomings of a directive approach to supervision, while yet conceding that its 'roots grow deep' (1984:504). Contrasting these views are those who see a place for prescription within the training-development continuum of teacher education (Bowers, 1987; Freeman, 1982). In Freeman's schema, for example, there are three styles - supervisory, alternatives and non-directive - which can be mapped comfortably onto Wallace's continuum. Freeman links his three approaches to a 'hierarchy of needs' related to the training/development needs of teachers. He argues that teachers at the early stage of training often welcome more directive supervision and may be

confused and frustrated by a style of supervision more appropriate to a 'higher' stage of development.

On the whole, the prescriptive mode as a supervisory style has been treated more tolerantly and with less damnation than within mainstream circles (Wallace, 1991a). That this is so is itself indicative of the nature of TESOL teacher education practices. It may be related to the private enterprise links of EFL, as suggested earlier. There may also be a link here to the training vs education debate - sometimes viewed as a focus on technique vs an interest in theory (Widdowson, 1984); or as a striving to find the right balance and relation between theory and practice (McNamara, 1985) - which is another major substantive issue in the literature (Bowers, 1987; Edge 1988; Freeman, 1982; Freeman, 1990; Gebhard, 1993; Richards, 1990a; Ur, 1989).

2.3.4 Training vs education

In TESOL, the training vs education issue may itself be an off-shoot of the contentious nature of short-course teacher preparation. Gower's (1988) is one of many voices to be raised in opposition to the emphasis on 'techniquery' in ELT teacher preparation. He argues that just as the tradition of language teaching was dominated in its formative years by a behaviourist approach to learning, comparable 'manipulative' procedures have taken hold of training (1988:20). On the other hand, and on the other side of the Atlantic, there are those who sense the signs of change. Jarvis' (1977) article - entitled 'Teacher education goals: they're tearing up the street where I was born' - heralded a new era of uncertainty, where the teacher of tomorrow must be educated to be a decision-maker rather than trained to be a performer. Gebhard (1990a) pursues this notion of supervising for decision-making and highlights the importance of developing self-awareness.

2.3.5 The resistance motif

A recurrent motif has been the theme of resistance, especially in the context of feedback (Byrnes, 1985; Cervi, 1991; Fitzpatrick & Kerr, 1993; Hutchinson, 1991; Rinvolutri, 1990; Tomlinson, 1988; Wajnryb, 1991b). Perhaps because of the brevity and intensity of much TESOL pre-service training, a high premium is placed on rapid absorption of material (reception/input) and efficient application (production/output), leading to a notoriously high

stress factor. However, what appears neat and orderly on a course outline does not reflect the true nature of learning, which is less linear and much messier. Despite a recent, increased preparedness to listen to the trainees' perspective (Tendler, Colton & Wilson, 1993), traditional practices are slow to change. Likewise, short, in-service courses attract criticism: paradoxically they often contradict the very principles of learning that they purport to espouse (Tomlinson, 1988).

Within a 'pressure cooker' training modality, the notion of resistance is inescapable. In her overview, Byrnes defines resistance as 'a refusal to adequately consider new ideas, methodologies or approaches presented in the learning situation' (1985:74). This results in 'a sabotaging of the learning experience' (1985:76), the very antithesis of 'pedagogical openness' (Turney, Eltis, Towler & Wright, 1985:69). Of course, in Piaget's sense, any learning is challenging because it requires the learner 'to re-arrange the furniture' of the mind (Abercrombie, 1981:39). Byrnes (1985) considers the complex factors that can cause resistance, a prime one being the collision of the new and unexpected with a contrasting pre-conceived notion. This compels the learner to re-appraise existing knowledge (Bolin, 1988; Handal & Lauvas, 1987; Seyfarth & Nowinski, 1987), a process that can be challenging, discomforting and even distressing. Sprinthall and Sprinthall (1980, cited by Smyth, 1991c:86) remind us that giving up old habits is a painful process, akin to grieving. The possibility of change can pose a threat to an individual's 'key meanings' - the corpus of beliefs, perceptions and values that provide stability and meaningfulness - and trigger a 'crisis of re-integration' (Blackler & Shimmin, 1984, cited by Hutchinson, 1991:19). For Farson (1963), the threat of change is fundamentally disquieting. Acheson and Gall refer to 'dissonance theory' (1987:176) in discussing approaches supervisors might undertake to achieve change in teachers.

A range of factors within the training context may be objects of resistance: the subject matter; the way in which the learning is organised or presented; or the person presenting (Grimmett & Housego, 1983). Resistance may be conscious and deliberate; or may be happening within and unbeknown to the learner. It may be manifested directly (as in displays of anger) and indirectly (as in absenteeism). Its complexity is increased (and diagnosis hampered accordingly) because its manifestations are to some degree co-extensive with the manifestations of other attitudes. For example, some learners manage the challenge of the new in an open and verbal way - through questioning, responding, arguing, 'trying it on for size' - and this might be mistaken for resistance. Also, what may to the supervisor appear as defensiveness may in fact originate elsewhere: such as the naive reaction of a neophyte to attribute blame

environmentally rather than introspectively; or the cognitive issue of students' failing to understand criticisms through failure to perceive complexities in the attribution of elements in processes (Calderhead, 1988). Relevant here is O'Neal's research-driven perspective of student teachers as 'naive consumers' (1983:71). As well, learners might withdraw co-operation for reasons unconnected to resistance, and again, their behaviour might be misconstrued.

The resistant teacher - or the 'recusant' one (Walker's term for less ideologically directed behaviour, 1985, cited by Waite, i.p.:22) has been explored through a case study approach by Waite (1992c; i.p.). He graphically illustrates how a supervisee's counter-discourse may realise an adversarial role and subvert a hegemonic relationship, seizing back control for the teacher (c.f. Grenfell, 1993; Munro, 1991).

Prime candidates for the resistance syndrome seem to be trainees who come to a pre-service TESOL courses with some teaching background, a proposition that would seem to be consonant with central notions in change theory (Blackler & Shimmin, 1984). Barker and Hamilton present a set of feedback models specifically evolved for trainee teachers who are re-training - from ESL/secondary/public contexts to EFL/adult/private teaching - and have been perceived as 'resistant to criticism' (1993:32). The model highlights the supervisor's listening role and the trainee's responsibility for self-evaluation.

Cervi's (1991) case study set out to explore, through ethnographic, interpretive and quantitative means, the hypothesis that 'pure' trainees (those with no teaching background) had fewer difficulties with feedback than their experienced counterparts. The impetus for the study (1991:23) was widespread anecdotal evidence (from trainers, supervisors and employers) which suggested that:

Trainees new to teaching often appear more able to adopt a receptive attitude to feedback, without regarding it as an attack on their professional competence or a threat to their self esteem, or to incorporate the advice received into their subsequent teaching practice.

Cervi collected supervisors' and employers' perceptions of three different groups ('raw' trainees; trainees experienced in TESOL; and trainees experienced in non-TESOL fields) and found an ascending order of resistance, which corroborated his ethnographic case study. This

corroborates Pajak's contention that the more fully 'self-invested' (1986:130) the individual is in the teacher role, the greater the need for esteem and affirmation.

2.4 A lacuna: giving critical feedback

2.4.1 Role conflict

A recurrent motif is the central dilemma of supervisory practice: the conflict between the supervisor's role in appraisal/evaluation and in teacher development/instructional improvement (Cairns, 1981; Garman, 1986a; Grimmet, 1981; Hazi, 1994). This itself derives from the broader debate as to whether supervision is a managerial preoccupation with quality control and surveillance (Smyth, 1989c) or a means of helping teachers grow. Goldhammer et al. (1980) lamented the 'watchdog' origins of supervision; Zeichner and Tabachnick underscore the same notion in the term 'snoopervision' (1982:38); Grumet (1979) highlights the inspectional basis of traditional supervision by pointing to the medieval Latin origins of supervisory practice as a procedure of scanning a text for erroneous deviations from the original.

At the local level, the question becomes: is the supervisor the teacher's critic or the teacher's helper? Can a supervisor be both at the same time? Wallace reports that trainee supervisors ('mentors') find the relationship 'too close for them to take on the role of impartial assessor' (1991b:11). A stigma attaching to classroom visitation has led teachers to look with 'a fearful, if not jaundiced, eye' at attempts to scrutinise their classrooms (Smyth, 1984a:20) by outside 'invaders' (Sellars et al. 1988:205). Reports such as that by Juska, written from the teacher's perspective, tend to shore up reasons for teachers' wanting to protect the privacy of their 'fiefdoms' (1991:469). Likewise, for Starratt (1992:85), supervision is a 'bureaucratic invasion' into classroom 'sanctuary'. Isolation, misunderstanding and a fear of the consequences of asking for help flow from ineffective induction procedures for neophytes (Zaharias & Benghiat, 1990). There is also the question of how practitioners value their own knowledge and what credence they give to an outsider's pronouncements (Kanpol, 1988, cited by Waite, i.p.).

There is a sense in which the one function (appraisal) has been set up as value-laden, and the other (developmental), perhaps by contrast and therefore default, as value-free. Because of the presumed value dichotomy, the assumption seems to have been made that when supervision

is help-oriented and dedicated to improvement, it can be value-free. The clinical supervision movement may, in this light, be seen as an attempt to resolve the dilemma: in theory, if not in practice (Garman, 1990), the concern with teacher development supposedly disambiguates the supervisory role. Certainly, in Smyth's (1984a) description of the post-observation conference in the cycle of clinical supervision, there is no place for the delivery of criticism. The purpose here, however, is not to contribute to the inspection vs development debate but rather to see how the notion of criticism, as a sub-component of evaluation, has been handled in the literature.

2.4.2 De-adjudication of supervision

The centrality of the dilemma may be witnessed in the attempts made to remove the adjudication element from supervision (Soh, Lam & Po, 1985). The original notion (Goldhammer et al. 1980) was of a colleague wanting to assist the teacher with the latter's own concerns; there was no nuance of monitoring or evaluating. A major effort has been in recasting observing in objective terms, discussed in some length earlier. Another measure has been the attempt to shift the responsibility of evaluation onto the teacher, allowing the supervisor to become, instead, the facilitator of the teacher's own self-assessment (Andersen, 1972); or attempts to personalise observational criteria (Larking, 1982).

Another measure is to promote the affective dimension. In order to develop, Niemeyer and Moon contend, people need personal affirmation: 'a resilient self is necessary if (it) is to mediate the perceptual incongruencies encountered' (1988:19). Hence one finds many recommendations citing the value of a supportive context where 'feedback can be given and accepted positively' (Turney et al. 1990:165); or the value of a trusting relationship in which 'rapport nurturance' (Goldhammer et al. 1980:53) or ego counselling (Cohn & Gellman, 1988; Moshe & Purpel, 1972; Lovell & Wiles, 1983) may foster honesty and directness. Salek suggests that a non-directive conferring style can resolve the helper/evaluator role paradox (1975). Kendra, one of the subjects of Waite's (1990a) ethnography, spoke of the need to allow teachers to fail; of the futility of criticism to produce anything beyond compliance; and of the incertitudes of supervisory interventions because 'nobody has any absolute answers' (1990a:12). Rinvolveri exhorts supervisors to seek ways to 'reduce (their) status as a black cloud, rotteiler or judge' (1993/4:10).

Further evidence of attempts to resolve the dilemma has been the de-coupling of instruction and supervision (Meyer & Rowan, 1978). In this view, supervision does not have a 'leadership function of overseeing the work of others' (Okeafor & Poole, 1992:372) but instead is governed by a 'logic of confidence'. Thus, an assumption of competence permeates the organisation and deems that teachers be respected as responsible and reflective professionals capable of monitoring and improving themselves. Indeed, Lemma's study suggests that the 'hands-off' and 'get out of the way' norm of collegial interaction is operational from the moment of 'perceived competence' in the practicum (1993:340). Supervision here means lack of respect, a 'professional insult' (Ryan, 1971:556). Practices such as these, along with evidence that teachers generally are confident in the formal and informal cultures of teaching (Waite, i.p.), suggests that the supposed technical-level superiority that supervisors purportedly carry may be less portentous than was once supposed.

2.4.3 Removal of prescription

A concomitant to the attempts at de-adjudication is the effort to separate what goes on in classrooms from notions of what ought to go on. According to Sergiovanni (1982) and Zahorik (1992), a notion of the nature of good teaching ought to be central to a theory of supervision, but in fact, it is largely absent from current models (Garman, 1986a). Mansfield (1986), like Stones (1984), deplores the absence of a theory of pedagogy in supervisory practice. Avoiding the vexatious issue of reaching agreement on the criterion of effectiveness (Hogan, 1983; McNeil, 1982; Moshe & Purpel, 1972; Musella, 1967), current models tend rather to emphasis organisational and strategic elements. Sergiovanni argues that scientific (McNeil, 1982) and artistic (Eisner, 1982) models of supervision can profitably be blended to allow teacher and supervisor collaboratively to interpret meanings. 'The essence of criticism', he states, 'is the art of interpretation' (1982:69).

Sergiovanni's argument, however, excludes any examination of the actual language through which interpretation is realised - the discourse of conferring. Given that the supervisory conference is concerned with both 'what is' and the 'what ought to be', it is difficult to imagine how any discrepancy between the two elements might not be perceived by the participants as criticism. Kilbourn pinpoints this issue when he argues that the practice of supervision is difficult precisely because of the 'tension between ideal and real' (1986:111).

2.4.4 Criticism camouflaged

Sergiovanni is not alone in overlooking criticism, which has largely been skirted - camouflaged, over-simplified and marginalised - in supervision literature. At times, concern has landed on related but more general aspects of the problem, and the generality camouflages the issue. Denham says, of the supervisory conference, that because it deals with 'real feelings', there is 'the possibility of trauma' (1977:36). Stenson points directly to the impact of criticism, arguing that 'even carefully phrased questions may be interpreted as criticism by over-sensitive teachers, or... the facilitator may be unaware of the judgemental overtones of some questions' (1983:43). Robinson warns of the danger of expediency: becoming 'inauthentic' in order to avoid the risk of causing offence (1984:27). Some writers have focussed on attitudes to change (Sanders & Merritt, 1974), including the notion of resistance (Byrnes, 1985; Hutchinson, 1991) and the public and hidden self of teachers (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1988:364). Those who favour developmental supervision argue for the avoidance of criticism in the early stage of teacher development - e.g. Cohn and Gellman's (1988) notion of ego counselling. Glickman's (1981) elaborate schema, combining three supervisory orientations, two teacher variables and four quadrants of teacher type, is impressive but notable too for its avoidance of the issue of criticism.

2.4.5 Criticism simplified

In other cases, the issue of criticism has been over-simplified. In a handbook devoted to the multifarious aspects of supervision (Turney et al. 1990), feedback is identified as a key role within the over-arching, six-role framework (1990). Here the supervisor is advised on a sequential strategy: promote success by reinforcing strengths; provide feedback that is non-judgemental, objective, and specific; recognise difficulties and make suggestions; and help delineate goals. Within this framework, the giving of criticism is framed as 'recognising difficulties'; and the supervisor is advised to be sensitive, caring and non-threatening. Exactly how this happens in discourse is not discussed, although the fact that criticism is delicate and worrying to supervisors is well-established (Eltis & Turney, 1984). Likewise, without consideration of task complexity, Lemma (1993:342) mentions the need to offer support alongside the need to 'challenge thinking'. Reed (1991) conflates the framework of Turney et al. (1990) with the four models of situational leadership proposed by Blanchard, Zigarmi and Zigarmi (1989), but the focus is more on the place of praise than that of criticism. The call

for 'tactful' supervision (Tisher, 1987:167), like Abrell's for 'humanistic' supervision (1974) and Pajak's for person-orientation (1989; 1990b), similarly oversimplifies the complexity of supervisory discourse.

One of the central difficulties of observing-conferring is separating the teacher from the teaching. Sergiovanni argues that in order to be able to reflect on their work, teachers need to be both participant and separate: participant because subjective reality is what counts here; and separate so that they 'avoid the encumbrance of being its direct target' (1984: 361). The questions, then, of how criticism is at the heart of the matter, and of how defensive behaviour is a normal reaction are cited but not embraced beyond a statement of need: 'the teacher needs to be liberated from his or her work to interact with it meaningfully' (Sergiovanni, 1984:361).

2.4.6 Criticism marginalised

In other writing, where the issue of criticism is raised, it seems to have been marginalised. Kagan and Albertson, in discussing their findings on the supervisory conference, comment almost peripherally that 'the student teachers in this study appeared particularly hypersensitive to any discussion of their shortcomings' (1987:58-9). Zimpher, deVoss, and Nott discuss criticism in relation to the co-operating teacher and the university supervisor, showing that the former avoid giving criticism and rather act as a buffer between student teachers and supervisors; while the supervisors, apparently because of their more removed relationship, are allowed 'the personal freedom to be more analytical and constructively critical' (1980:13). Later in the same report, the researchers comment that only after eleven weeks of supervision did the supervisors realise that the student teachers were not noting their criticisms. These findings would suggest that criticism, if only through evidence of its being avoided, is an inherently complex construct deserving further research attention.

Among the numerous studies of supervisee perceptions of supervisory style, none has focussed on the delivery of criticisms as central to the feedback process. The issue appears in O'Neal and Edward's case study (1983) which compared supervisor and teacher journal entries following a number of critical events, and shows that negative feedback is problematic if only for the ambivalence with which it is received. One study which comes very close is Perlberg and Theodor's in which four supervisory styles were identified, across a number of criteria, one of which was the presence/absence of criticism and the manner in which it was delivered.

What emerged here was that the supervisees both expected and wished for criticism but wanted it delivered tenderly - a kind of 'pleasant authoritarianism' (1975:208).

2.4.7 Avoidance as evidence of omission

The notion of omission as evidence of a problem has been explored by Okeafor and Poole (1992) who investigated the side-stepping of supervision as part of an avoidance process. Their study hypothesised that direct instructional supervision (presumably involving criticism) may be perceived as being at odds with 'face work', Goffman's term (1961; 1967) for the energy people invest in attending to the face needs of others. Though their numbers are limited, they isolated four major supervisory patterns ('backstage', 'surly', 'imperial' and 'collaborative'), which were identified through indicators of activity, respect and avoidance. The study uncovered pervasive evidence of avoidance of supervisory interactions involving problematic issues.

In this Okeafor and Poole's study (1992) is not alone. Goldsberry (1988) referred to 'nominal' supervision, the purpose of which is to protect insiders and give the appearance of accountability. This corroborates Hewitson's finding which showed that principals' approach to supervision is largely laissez-faire (1976); and Seyfarth and Nowinski's contention that administrator feedback is valued but under-provided (1987). It also corroborates O'Neal and Edwards findings (1983) in which a content analysis of conferences between student teachers and co-operating teachers found that evaluative remarks were largely absent. In Lemma's study, conferences resemble generalised 'amiable chats' (1993:341) which studiously avoid both the specific and the personal. As well, this side-stepping of the delicate area of judgement seems to be consonant with what Eye calls the 'client quiescence' (1977:17) approach to evaluating supervision itself. Blumberg's study suggested that avoidance was achieved through a distancing strategy of 'non-engagement' (1976:285), which may not be conscious, but paradoxically exacerbates the very tensions to which it is a reaction. Sometimes, such as in the absenting behaviour of the co-operating teacher in Shulman's (1987) case study, avoidance of supervisory responsibility appears to be an extreme instance of non-engagement. Roberts' (1991b) study of supervisors-in-training exposes a similar picture of failed conferences caused in part by supervisors' refusing to 'bite the bullet'; resorting to 'double-talk; anxiety-induced, premature abandoning of data analysis; and exhibiting and expressing anxiety at the prospect of pursuing an objective in the face of teacher resistance. Consonant with the avoidance picture is Diamonti and Diamonti's (1975) organisational analysis of practice teaching, within

which the supervisor is interpreted as a 'boundary-spanner' whose energy thrust is dedicated to avoiding conflict between the two institutions and the people within them. So much energy is dissipated in the avoidance of conflict and the maintenance of the status quo, that it becomes ludicrous to think in terms of instructional improvement, change or progress.

Avoidance was also the subject of Olson's (1982) study in which supervisors avoided a rational analysis of the teaching they observed and instead assumed an uncritical, supportive role. The teachers' reaction to the faculty requirement was to resist the demand to increase the diffuseness of their work. The specific role assumed was that of 'a friend in the audience'. Teaching was deemed a stage performance, and while a 'drama critic' role was in fact required of them, the supervisors opted for a support role. They 'saw themselves as a member of the audience who, when the performance was over, applauded warmly or lukewarmly, but did not write a critical review of its elements' (1982:77). Olson posits both social reasons (the promotion of harmony) and personal reasons for the avoidance of analysis. By approaching the task non-analytically, remaining uncritical and fostering a nature-over-nurture approach, they relinquish responsibility for enhancing growth, as well as playing it safe: 'they did not expose the limits of their own ability to analyse the process and they were able to leave uncriticised their theories of the nature of teaching expertise' (1982:78). Critical feedback is simply side-stepped.

2.4.8 Contextual constraints on criticism

Seven important studies have given some attention to criticism and its constraints in supervision (Christensen, 1988; Griffin et al. 1983; Guthrie & Willower, 1973; O'Neal 1983; Mansfield, 1986; Richardson-Koehler, 1988; Terrell et al. 1986). Guthrie and Willower (1973) hypothesised that the social imperative of the principal-teacher relationship constrained principals' willingness to offer goal-directed, non-ritualistic, constructive criticism to teachers. A content analysis of 350 observation reports overwhelmingly supported the central hypotheses, leading to the title 'the ceremonial handshake'.

The study by Griffin et al. (1983) and Griffin (1983) also suggest that a deeply rooted belief in the importance of positive interpersonal relationships within the supervisory context militates against a focus on goal and instruction-oriented pedagogical concerns. This high priority given to the affective dimension, also reported in Calderhead (1988), leads to an appearance of undifferentiated uniformity of teaching competence among student teachers

(Griffin et al. 1983; Stones, 1984; Zeichner, 1986). O'Neal (1983) study of supervisor conferences for formative evaluation found that co-operating teachers, while able to make judgements, are unwilling to share these in conferences: indeed, they eschew evaluative comment in favour of descriptive and explanatory talk aimed at improving student teachers' classroom competence. In speculating on reasons to account for this, she suggests five possible explanations: stipulations made to the co-operating teachers to encourage self-assessment; the threat posed by data collection instruments; intra-personal role conflict (helper vs judge); limited ability - a 'cookbook' approach to instruction'; and their perception of their role as giving teachers a good experience in the field. However, Feiman-Nemser and Buchmann's (1987) case study concludes that unless supervisors act as teacher educators, the occasion of student teaching as an educative experience will be lost.

Another important finding that emerges from O'Neal's study, gleaned from an analysis of student teachers' journals, is the high value student teachers give to the personal relationship within supervision, especially with the co-operating teacher. Cross and Murphy (1990:44) refer to this as a 'professional-friend bond'; Lemma (1993:329) characterises it as 'intensive and intimate'. According to O'Neal, this may account for their compliant, non-participating, 'seen but not heard' behaviour (1983:66). If supervisors are aware of this - and it is likely that they are - this very awareness may impede their ability to deliver (and certainly their comfort in delivering) negative feedback. Certainly it would explain their attempts to cushion the blow. Noddings has pointed out that a trusting relationship may actually heighten the need for tact and hinder efforts at truth-telling: the fear is that the hurt of the criticism will be doubled by the sense of betrayal - 'this person, with whom a relation of trust has been established, has said these dreadful things' (1986:507). Such constraints emerge as significant especially given the important and controversial socialising role of the co-operating teacher¹.

Christensen's (1988) study follows O'Neal's, and contrasts supervisors' feedback with O'Neal's co-operating teachers. She found that the supervisors provided more evaluative feedback that prompted greater critical discussion about teaching; the conferences were less one-sided; the topics were less technical; and the orientation was more problem-solving. One reason for the

¹ The influential role of the co-operating teacher in pre-service education, of whose undue influence Dewey warned over eighty years ago (1904), is a recurrent and powerful refrain in the literature: Beyer, 1984; Brimm, 1966; Bunting, 1988; Calderhead, 1988; Featherstone, 1988; Katz, 1974; Migra, 1976; Powell, 1988; Tabachnick, Popkewitz and Zeichner, 1979/80; Warger and Aldinger, 1984.

difference in approach may well be the reduced social role that the supervisor has vis-a-vis the student teacher in comparison with the co-operating teacher. This corroborates the findings by Zimpher et al. (1980) which uncovered a non-critical, buffer role among co-operating teachers, who perceived themselves as students' defence against the university supervisor. This protective function is echoed in Moon, Niemeyer and Simmons' (1988) case study. Similarly, Calderhead's (1988) study uncovered evidence of the impact of assessment on supervisory practices: as long as the university supervisor was perceived as the one scoring, the co-operating teacher was the ally whose practical tips would coach the student through the gate.

Mansfield's case study on 'patchwork pedagogy' (1986) also highlights the difficulty supervisors have in effectively delivering criticism. He identifies two factors to account for this: sensitivity to student teachers' inexperience; and a sharing of communal responsibility for their performance. Citing examples of how supervisors cushion their language, sometimes to the point of opting out, he underscores the severity of the issue: 'while students were extremely sensitive to comments which implied criticism... (supervisors) ran the risk of so muting the criticism offered that all pressure for change was dissipated' (1986:265).

The earlier phase of Mansfield's study (Terrell et al. 1986) also had revealing findings. The over-riding supervisory concerns seemed to be with maintaining good relationships, perhaps because supervisors saw themselves as the practicum's linchpin. Critical analysis, while claimed to be important, was rarely carried out: 'criticism was so muted it lost any impact' (Terrell et al. 1986: 92); and the best that was offered in terms of pedagogy was 'survival tips'. Conferences tended to favour neutral topics, avoid candid feedback, be lavish with unearned praise, and explain away less-than-successful events so as to bolster flagging morale. Forthright discussions about teaching were avoided by triad members because of the threat this posed to personal relationships. Zeichner (1992) reports the same reluctance.

Likewise, some of the supervisors in Grimmer and Housego's (1983) study occasionally resorted to untruths to disarm the effects of their corrective feedback. Calderhead (1988) reports the efforts supervisors make in the direction of tact: 'sandwiching' (1988:43) their critical remarks between more favourable ones; and supporting criticism with rationale. Flaitz reports a refraining from offending as the hidden agenda which results in 'lop-sided' feedback (1993:23). All this tends to confirm what Bebb, Low and Waterman (1969:21) wrote a decade and a half earlier:

Fearful of contributing to... negative learning, a supervisor may avoid situations requiring direct analysis or advice (and)... may depend on hints and casual suggestions.

Goldhammer et al. quoted typical teacher frustrations at 'hedging and pussyfooting' (1980:168): 'this whole discussion seemed tippy-toe. Why aren't you levelling with me?'; and 'you haven't really told me what you thought, have you?' (1980:156). Mansfield would no doubt concur with Guthrie and Willower's conclusion that this type of supervision 'is essentially impotent as a method for improving instruction' (1973:289). Richardson-Koehler's (1988) participant-observational study unearthed complexities in the dyadic and triadic supervisory relationships that collectively militate against the giving of constructive feedback: because student teachers, for a host of complex reasons, tend to model themselves on the co-operating teacher, discussion of central issues ('routines') constituted a potential criticism of the co-operating teacher, and thereby violated a professional taboo. .

The fear of invoking defensiveness means that criticism is either side-stepped or muted. This is apparent in Roberts' (1991b) study of failed supervisory conferences. Grenfell cites as commonplace supervisory diffidence, indeterminacy and indirectness; as well as Brennan and Noffke's (1988) recognition of the need 'to avoid stepping on eggshells' (cited by Grenfell, 1993:18). This is echoed in Argyle and Feitler's (1990) analysis of issues that are not addressed in supervision through fear of confrontation; and in the management literature, Viega (1988:148) refers to the avoidance of 'straight talk'. Relevant, too, is Calderhead's (1988) exploration of factors that account for student teachers' reluctance to accept criticism. Such factors include psychological, cognitive and pragmatic issues of which supervisors ought to be aware if they are to have the 'guts and tenacity' (Roberts, 1991b:44) to pursue an objective through a conference. Kremer-Hayon's study of supervisors' dilemmas uncovered the issue of 'how far can I go without hurting my students?' (1987:155); and related concerns of what to say, how much to say, and how to say it. Jayne and Stokes (1992) report that the fear of denting confidence in effect disables meaningful feedback. What is being highlighted in these studies - a construct to be developed and pursued in the present study - is the tension between two imperatives: social goals and task-oriented goals.

2.4.9 Insights from extra-educational studies

2.4.9.1 Conversation analysis

The delivery and management of negative messages (e.g. bad news, accusations, blaming, criticisms) have been treated by sociolinguists within the CA school as an aspect of one of the major themes in the CA canon - sequential preference and dispreference (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984; Goodwin & Heritage, 1990; Houtkoop, 1987; Jacoby & Gonzales, 1991; Pomerantz, 1978; Pomerantz, 1984a; Pomerantz, 1984b; Schegloff, 1988a; Schegloff, 1988b). From the close examination of actual data that is the hallmark of CA, analysts have built up the notion of sequential preference, and made it visible through detailed transcriptions. The fundamental idea here is that a preference for agreement exists in interaction. Because participants do not always agree, they then have to confront the interactional problem of disagreement, or talk that might engender disagreement in an interlocutor. 'Preferred sequences' are those which come off without incident; 'dispreferred sequences' are those which display some sort of interactional trouble. 'Disaffiliative' actions (Goodwin & Heritage, 1990:297) may be mitigated sequentially through prefacing and delaying. Typically, CA examines the structural and sequential properties of turns to see how impending disagreement can be shaped to be heard as agreement.

There are three major differences between CA and the approach in the present inquiry. In the first place, while the former deals with stretches of talk, the latter limits the focus to the level of the utterance and its immediate discourse environment. A second major difference is the focus in the present study on people expressively engaged in talk - the 'drivers of vehicles' rather than the action of 'traffic'¹). In contrast, CA has its focus on the situational and organisational facets of behavioural traffic and the syntactical relations between turns in talk (Schegloff, 1988b:94). Interestingly, Schegloff characterises a *person* focus as 'ritualistic' and a *traffic* focus as a 'secularisation' - separate and independent from actors and reified in a syntax of action (1988b:94). However, even while CA researchers do not usually formulate their concerns in terms of face management, it is possible to interpret their efforts in these terms (Holtgraves, 1992).

¹ In Schegloff's (1988b) telling adaptation of Goffman's 'traffic' metaphor, he claims that Goffman's 'perduring entanglement with "ritual" and "face" kept him in the psychology' (as distinct from the mechanics) of interaction.

Thirdly, while discourse analysis such as that practised in the present study involves text analysis for the purpose of understanding 'what is really going on' (Labov & Fanshel, 1977:59) in and through the text, CA limits the focus of concern to the text itself, in search of a system within the organisational properties of the text (Garfinkel, 1972; Levinson, 1983). There are therefore important limitations to what CA can offer the present study: while bad news messages have been treated within the concern for sequential preference, the focus is on sequences of utterances in isolation from the parts they play in interaction - texts de-contextualised from the context of situation. The present inquiry, in contrast, is centrally concerned with the text-context nexus, with the assignment of utterance meaning in its context of action.

2.4.9.2 Management

The influence of management theory on supervision can often be seen in the literature (Hoover, O'Shea, & Carroll, 1988; Pajak & Seyfarth, 1983; Reed, 1991; Waites & Wild, 1992). Corroborating findings in organisational communication literature, including cybernetics, contribute to the understanding of the difficulties supervisors have in providing negative feedback about poor performance in work settings (Fairhurst, Green & Snavely, 1984; Larson, 1984; Larson, 1989; Viega, 1988). This reluctance affects both the content and frequency of feedback (Larson, 1989). Longenecker, Sims and Gioia (1987) investigated the politics of employee appraisal and discovered that considerable pressures - 'factors that tug at you and play on your mind' - exist to inflate appraisal results: two such reported 'leniency errors' (1987:190) were the wish to protect and encourage a sub-ordinate and the wish to avoid a confrontation. Similarly, Jablin's (1979) review of superior-subordinate communication highlights the issue of information distortion in the context of discomforting messages.

Despite the importance of feedback as a performance-enhancing tool, research evidence suggests that various processes operate within informal face-to-face interactions between supervisors and sub-ordinates that militate against supervisors' ability to give negative feedback (Morrison & Bies, 1991). These forces operate on both sides of the interaction. On the supervisors' side, there is a natural reluctance to deliver bad news, a phenomenon that has been experimentally investigated (as reviewed in Larson, 1989). On the subordinate's side, there is a set of feedback-seeking strategies that produce, as intended, mitigated negative feedback (Larson, 1989).

2.4.9.3 Experimental social psychology

Research in experimental social psychology has contributed to our understanding of the constraints on interpersonal, face-to-face communication, most particularly in the transmission of bad news. Rosen and Tesser (1970; 1972) and Tesser and Rosen (1975) refer to the reluctance to deliver bad news as 'the MUM effect' - the tendency to keep Mum about Unpleasant Messages. Experiments have demonstrated its impact on communication: sometimes the bad news is withheld (Conlee & Tesser, 1973); sometimes it is misrepresented, so that it appears better than it is (Fisher, 1979; Ilgen & Knowlton, 1980); sometimes it is attached to rationalisations which provide vicarious blame externalisations for the bad-news receiver (Folkes, 1982). Bond and Anderson call the reluctance 'a perennial professional concern' (1987:177), its having been documented in fields as diverse as doctor-patient relationships (Waitzkin, 1984; Aronsson & Satterlund-Larsson, 1987); organisational functioning (Larson, 1984; 1989); and group psychotherapy (Kivlighan, 1985). Bond and Anderson (1987) dispute the explanation (Tesser, Rosen & Waranch, 1973) which attributes the reluctance to the avoidance of 'intrapsychic discomfort', or the desire to avoid feeling bad. Instead, they link the MUM effect to the notion of impression management or the regulation of public self-image (Goffman, 1959; Schlenker, 1980; Ward, Friedlander, Schoen & Klein, 1985): 'lest they seem blithe to others' misfortune, lest they seem callous and cruel, people keep mum' (Bond & Anderson, 1987:177), a view they support with experimental evidence. What seems to be well agreed upon among the various studies of news valence/transmission is that the MUM effect is a robust, pervasive and systematic 'bias in interpersonal communication' (Tesser & Rosen, 1975:228) with great generality of application.

2.4.9.4 Communication research

Linked to this is specific research into communication, such as that into 'account behaviour' (McLauchlin, Cody & O'Hair, 1983) - that is, language behaviour intended to extricate one from a tight spot - wherein the mitigation of messages is documented as strategic management of failure events. In the supervisory encounter, where role expectations require and sanction the transmission of bad news, the supervisor may be unable to keep silent; but may choose other ways to muffle the message. Precisely what linguistic means supervisors deploy in the muffling of their bad-news messages is a central concern of the present study.

The point is made (Tracy, Van Dusen & Robinson, 1987; Tracy & Eisenberg, 1990/1991) that while conventional wisdoms abound about the giving of criticism, as evidenced in communication textbooks (Tracy & Eisenberg 1990/91:61 and references contained therein), these are not systematically based on empirical evidence and suffer from being decontextualised. Most specifically, there is little recognition of the essential 'bind' faced by the giver of criticism - the need to satisfy multiple goals (Tracy et al. 1987:46): attending to both the problem or task and attending to the relational demands of the interaction. The study (Tracy et al. 1987), aiming to describe the characteristics of good and bad criticisms, examined issues such as source credibility, perceptions of accuracy and appropriacy, as well as stylistic variables, but, being based on self-report, did not probe the actual discourse. Other studies sought to dissect 'dilemmas of support' (Goldsmith, 1992:270), analysing the various face threats involved in helping behaviours.

2.4.10 Competing currents

It is being suggested here, that rather as a refrain running through the research on the SD, social pressures - both within the interpersonal connection of the conference and within the surrounding context - serve as a constraining influence on what is said, how it is said and how it is received. Goffman's sociological study of situation as 'bounded micro-space' (cited by Ball, 1973:8) has much to offer here. He argues that focussed encounters, like any other element of social life, exhibit a structure: 'sanctioned orderliness arising from obligations fulfilled and expectations realised' (1966:19).

One significant attribute of encounters is the understanding that 'contradictory feelings will be held in abeyance' (1961:23). Goffman calls on Simmel's work on the management of affect during social interactions, which dictates what one may include and must exclude:

It is tactless, because it militates against *interaction* which monopolises sociability, to display merely personal moods of depression, excitement, despondency - in brief, the light and darkness of one's most intimate life' (Wolff, 1950, cited by Goffman, 1961:55, emphasis presumed in original).

He calls, too, on the 'affective neutrality' - characteristic of the modern face of bureaucracy, professional-client relationships and mainstream middle class life (Edelman, 1974; Kochman, 1984; McClenahan & Lofland, 1976; St Maurice, 1987) - to support the notion that direct face-to-face dealings compel participants to 'hold in check certain psychological states and

attitudes' (1966:23) so as to keep one's public behaviour 'at the non-arousal level' (Kochman, 1984:204). The term 'flooding out' (Goffman, 1961:55) is used for someone who fails to sustain an appropriate expressive role within an interaction¹. Similarly, building on Goffman's concepts, Lyman and Scott, exploring 'coolness in everyday life' refer to the 'displays of stylised affective neutrality in hazardous situations (which are) likely to gain one the plaudits associated with coolness' (1968:95). In terms of politeness theory (discussed further in Chs 3 and 5), unrestrained expressions of emotion impose unduly on other people's considerateness (Kochman, 1984)².

A central feature of the affective neutrality of which Goffman (1973) writes is the notion of deference, drawn from Durkheim (1915), in which a speaker exercises 'verbal care' (Goffman, 1973:198) so as to avoid 'infractions of propriety' (1973:188) - penetrations of that circle of privacy to which individuals are duly entitled. Verbal care is largely concerned with the avoidance of topics which threaten to infringe an individual's intellectual private property, the violation of which, Simmel writes, 'effects a lesion of the ego in its very center [sic]' (1950, cited by Goffman, 1973:198). Most cultures find ways to avoid the problematic expression of emotion while also appearing caring (Lakoff, 1989).

What Goffman shows is the absolute centrality of co-operation in focussed face-to-face encounters. The relevance of this to the supervisory conference is clear. Different writers express the constraints in different ways. A case study of peer supervision by McFaul (1982) revealed a 'gentleman's agreement' honoured by all participants that 'no one would be made uncomfortable in the (supervision) process' (cited by Retallick, 1986:99; McFaul & Cooper, 1984:7). Goldhammer et al. allude to this pressure when they claim that supervisors 'revert to "social conventions" when professional ones are indicated' (1980:163). The controversy over directive vs non-directive supervisory behaviours (Blumberg, 1980) may be interpreted as a task-focus (directive) vs a person-focus (non-directive), a struggle which at base is a question of values (Hoover et al. 1988). Housego and Grimmatt highlight the conflict between task and person orientations by accenting the dichotomy between a task focus (the 'here-and-

¹ A similar sense of shattered decorum is conveyed by the metaphoric thrust of 'break' in 'to break bad news'.

² In the feedback context reported by Flaitz (1993), those giving feedback were able to relieve the usual constraints by preserving anonymity (through the use of pseudonyms) and by avoiding face-to-face encounters (through the use of written reports). Such techniques, however, are not appropriate to most supervisory contexts.

now urgency' to make the most productive use of limited time) and a person focus (the 'mitigation of threat' factor) (1983:318), a conflict well established in management literature (Blake & Mouton, 1985). Grimmett and Housego refer to 'withholding expertise but not support' (1983:5). Roberts refers to the 'struggle to balance... human concerns with organisational imperatives' (1991b:39).

When Cogan stated that 'the clinical supervisor needs to exhibit both person-oriented and task-oriented behaviour in an integrated fashion' (1973:50), it may be, perhaps, that he did not fully appreciate how these orientations are wont to collide, rather than integrate, in moments of threatened discord, such as delivering criticism. Noddings recasts the tension as a conflict of ethics: a Kantian interpretation of the duty of professional fidelity 'makes it our duty to tell the truth no matter what the consequences are'; while a utilitarian interpretation 'demands fidelity to the principle of optimising good outcomes over bad' (1986:507-508). Pajak contends that there are two dimensions of interpersonal interaction in the supervisory encounter - the one related to the critique factor, the other to the supervisee's esteem needs - and that these dimensions themselves interact: 'the supervisee's needs for esteem increase whenever their behaviours, perceptions, assumptions and reactions are exposed to critical examination' (1986:130). It may be that the supervisor's inappropriate reversion to 'social skills,' of which Goldhammer et al. (1980) warn, happens in response to the supervisee's esteem needs. In sum, then, given the difficulties experienced by many who have to give critical feedback, it would seem that the speech community-specific 'rules and obligations' (Labov & Fanshel, 1977:85) that sanction criticism are less powerful than the over-arching obligation to maintain social harmony and the expectation that it will be maintained.

Certainly, the discipline of linguistics offers ample evidence of the functional dichotomies of language to which the competing tensions, described above, seem to pertain. Brown and Yule (1983a) refer to the function of language serving to express content as 'transactional', and that serving to express personal attitude and social relations as 'interactional' (1983a:1; see also Richards, 1990b). This aligns with a well-established tradition in mainstream linguistics (Buhler, 1934; Jakobson, 1960; Lyons, 1977), as traced by Brown and Yule (1983a); and most notably with the Hallidayan paradigm which includes 'ideational' and 'interpersonal', together with a third, 'textual' (1985). In short, people use language for a range of purposes, well beyond the transmission of messages. Because language rarely happens in a social vacuum, and because context impinges on language, people's messages also convey cues as to their

attitude towards the truth content of their utterances and towards their relationship with their listener. 'In interactions... the bare facts are rarely enough' (Holmes, 1982:9).

2.4.11 Concluding the substantive survey

Koehler (1985) has observed that there is a convention within the genre of literature surveys that compels one to include a lament that research prior to one's own has somehow been lacking or inadequate. Why this convention exists and persists is beyond the parameters of this study, although it surely has to do with the compulsion to become familiar with a rich body of knowledge as one carves out a path of discovery on terrain that is relatively virginal. In these, rather than Koehler's more denigrative terms, the present study will abide by the convention.

A substantive survey of the literature has exposed a gap between teachers' perception of the value of constructive criticism¹; and a pervasive, almost tangible, reluctance on the part of many providing feedback to deliver the critical goods. Yet there has been little attempt to explore the connection. A lacuna, then, has been exposed: while there has been some research into attendant and related issues, the notion of criticism - giving and receiving 'bad news' (Goldhammer et al. 1980:154) - in the context of the supervisory conference is, to a large extent, unexplored terrain. Even within TESOL where criticism looms larger as an issue, it has not been thoroughly explored. In particular, what has not received close attention is the actual language of criticism and the attendant pressures that impinge on it. It is here that the present study seeks to make a contribution.

¹ See for example: Cairns and Eltis, 1982; Christensen, 1988; Danaher, Elliott and Marland, 1982; Duck and Cunningham, 1985; Goldhammer et al. 1980; Hytry, 1993; Lowther, 1968; Lucas and True, 1991; MacLean, 1993; Nabors and Richard, 1987; O'Neal, 1983; Price and Sellars, 1985; Seyfarth and Nowinski, 1987; Yarrow and associates, 1984.