

SYNERGISTIC SUPERVISION STRATEGIES OF
MID-LEVEL PROFESSIONALS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

by

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DEDICATION

To my Mom, Melinda Ingwersen, who taught me perhaps the most valuable lesson of all: perseverance. To my Dad, Ludolf Ingwersen, who taught me about courage and integrity; and who introduced me to Beethoven, whose music was played during much of this work. And to my grandparents, for their belief in the power of education.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation contributes to the body of knowledge about the utilization of synergistic supervision in practice and about the adult learning experiences reported by participants within the context of supervision.

The research questions guiding this study are: (1) What are the synergistic practices of mid-level Student Affairs supervisors at a four-year public university?, and (2) What adult learning experiences do study participants report within the context of supervision?

Using Winston and Creamer's (1997) Synergistic Supervision model as framework, data were brought to life through the narratives of the supervisors and supervisees participating in the study as they reflected on best practices for working together. Their adult learning experiences emerged through analysis of two sets of qualitative interviews and one workshop about synergistic supervision.

I: INTRODUCTION TO SYNERGISTIC SUPERVISION

It is tough to see someone not be motivated because they were not in the right place. It is one of the biggest challenges I have seen. It could be that they have not found the right place in life or work. I've had employees realize that they were not in the right place at work and then their performance tapered off. But for me that goes back to having honest conversations- life is too short for you to be somewhere where you don't enjoy what you're doing. They are here 40 plus hours a week, so let's find something that's a good fit. Let's talk about it at least. That's always been my approach. It is tough to see someone go through that. – Participating Supervisor

The goal of this dissertation, *Synergistic Supervision Strategies of Mid-Level Professionals in Student Affairs*, was to provide insight to the field about how supervision practices can influence the success of professional staff members. This introductory chapter illuminates the concept of synergy within professional supervisory relationships, introduces the purpose and the participants of this study, identifies the research questions, and provides an overview of the dissertation.

Synergistic Supervision

Synergy is defined as “the interaction or cooperation of two or more organizations, substances, or other agents to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects” (Synergy, n.d.). Proposed by Student Affairs scholars Roger Winston and Don Creamer in 1997, the synergistic model for supervision “has a dual focus on accomplishment of the organization’s goals and on support of staff in accomplishment of their personal and professional development goals” (p. 43). Winston and Creamer identified nine strategies that should be actively employed by supervisors in

the field. After reviewing their suggested strategies and accompanying literature, I was inspired to create an accessible table summarizing their model for supervision (see Table 1). The table lists the nine strategies and contains a description for each.

Bolman and Deal (2013) recognize that it is advantageous for organizations to invest in people in order to procure a loyal, motivated, and skilled workforce. Employing synergy in supervision affectively adds a humanistic component to a process that is traditionally hierarchical and structural. The synergistic approach to supervision is an example of a connection being made between what Sergiovanni (2000) terms the “lifeworld” (human needs) and the “systemsworld” (organizational needs). The synergistic supervisor advocates for and encourages people while working within systems that are typically not people-oriented. Through synergy, a bridge can be built between the needs of the organization and the employee. This bridge establishes a common vision that increases morale and productivity while capitalizing on the individual talents that we each possess as humans.

Table 1

Strategies for Synergistic Supervision

<p>Goal Based: There is a clear understanding about expectations of each other. Goals and expectations and goals are periodically reviewed and evaluated for accomplishment. There is a bi-annual session during which supervisor and staff member meet to establish goals, evaluate goals, adjust goals for the future. There are bi-monthly meetings specifically for the purpose of monitoring progress and making adjustments. As circumstances change, so can goals. Supervisors identify areas of need in the unit that are appropriate for the staff member to address. Supervisors identify perceived areas of personal and professional development needed by the staff member.</p>
<p>Growth Orientation: Relates to both career development and professional development. Supervisors help clarify a person's occupational self-concept. Seeks to make dealing with staff shortcomings a positive learning experience rather than a punitive one. Dedicated to enhancement of knowledge, skill development/mastery, motivation, needs, career development, and advancement of staff.</p>
<p>Dual Focus: Staff likely to show loyalty to institution, unit, and supervisor when they perceive the supervisor is sincerely interested in them as individuals and is able and willing to assist them in accomplishing personal and professional objectives. Organization's goals and staff member's personal and professional development goals are simultaneously met. Goals not imposed on staff, who have</p>

significant influence in defining goals and selecting strategies to reach them. Staff perceive fairness and equity. Staff perceive their own goals as satisfied by the accomplishment of organizational goals.
Two-Way Communication: Staff members are willing and feel free to give supervisors direct and honest feedback. Supervisor frequently reflects on if they are setting up situations in which staff members feel comfortable to give feedback or if they unintentionally make it uncomfortable for staff to give feedback. Staff willing to allow supervisor to learn about them personally as well as details of daily work life without being defensive. Dependent on a high level of trust.
Proactive: Focuses on identifying potential problems early and the dyad jointly develops strategies to prevent and intervene to lessen the effects of problem situations. Asking for assistance not a sign of weakness, problems not transferred to supervisor for solution, supervisor does not encroach on staff autonomy to solve problems. Solution and learning-focused information sharing. Staff inform supervisor of issues in order to understand various ways to address. Staff members get feedback on how various constituencies may react. Supervisor informs of how issues on the institutional horizon may affect isolated decisions. Staff members inform supervisors of mistakes or incidents that may need to be addressed at higher levels. Strategic.
Systematic and On-Going Process: Supervisory sessions not a response to crisis and more than just information-sharing. Rather, a routine part of professional life. Sessions should have a predictable format and include a discussion and evaluation of activities since the last session. Reports about actual or predicted trouble spots. Discussion of planned activities. Attention is paid to both the job-related and personal concerns of the dyad.
Holistic: It is impossible to separate people and their attitudes and beliefs from their professional positions. Who one is determines to a large extent the kind of job one is able to do. Holism helps staff become more effective in their jobs and personal lives. There is consideration of the whole person.
Joint Effort: Supervision is not something done to staff, but rather a cooperative activity in which each party has an important contribution to make. The combination of energy makes the approach synergistic. Conflicts are solved through joint problem solving. Each party has an important contribution and each party willing to invest time and energy into the process. Without this commitment, synergistic supervision cannot happen. In synergy, cooperative efforts exceed individual efforts
Focus on Competence: Synergistic supervisors concentrate on identifying current skill levels and devise methods for refinement Plus they identify ways staff members can acquire new skills. Staff members need skills such as interpersonal communication, goal setting, public relations, leadership, conflict resolution, time management, career planning, knowledge of student development theory, legal implications, ethical standards, enthusiasm, adaptability.

As demonstrated in Figure 1, the pendulum (Newton's Cradle) illustrates the concept of how synergy within supervision of adult professionals can influence the lifeworld and systemsworld to activate organizational change. McAllister, Madsen, and Holmes (2014) describe the motion thusly:

The first ball is lifted up and let go; it hits the second ball and comes to an

immediate stop, while the ball at the other end of the series rises into the air.

When the system is ideal, the last ball rises to the same height as the first and no energy is lost, but when there is a lack of flexibility, internal resistance within the material of the balls, or friction between the balls, energy wastage occurs and the system is inefficient and ultimately ineffective. (p. 131)

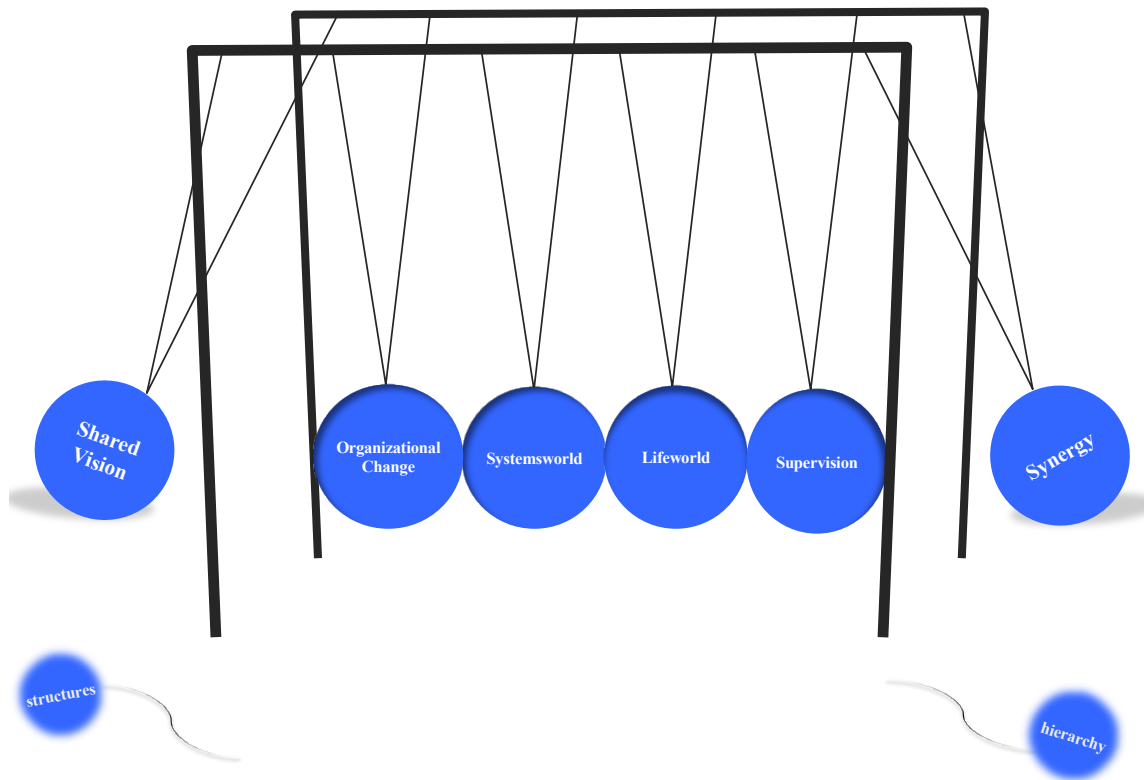


Figure 1. Influence of Synergistic Supervision

Once set in motion, each sphere depends on another for movement. Similarly, synergistic supervision is based on the continuous association of various spheres of influence in order to produce organizational change and shared vision while removing systemic structures. In an ideal organization, when synergy between supervisor and supervisee is released, the energy created flows through the lifeworld, organizational change, and the systemsworld, losing no momentum along the way. The energy culminates in a shared

vision resulting in the loss of structures and hierarchy that can typically impede shared vision and common goals. But when there is no flexibility, organizational resistance and energy wastage renders the system ineffective. A shared vision is the result of an organization's investment in both the systemsworld and lifeworld.

Indicators of Synergistic Supervision

Supervision of new professional staff members in Student Affairs has not been studied with great frequency (Carpenter et al., 2001) nor consistently explained to new supervisors (Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003). In addition, the nature of supervisory relationships is not often studied (Armenio & Creamer, 2001). Thus, I concluded it was necessary to further-analyze Winston and Creamer's (1997) model in order to facilitate ease of use for current supervisors of entry-level staff members. Emergent in the participants' interview data combined with the literature from Winston and Creamer's (1997) model were indicators for each of the nine synergistic strategies. These became important in order to understand, at the most basic level, the core condition that must exist within each strategy in order for it to be utilized with the most success. For example, the *Holism* synergistic strategy is about a supervisor understanding that what happens outside of the job can affect the job itself (Winston & Creamer, 1997). For this strategy's indicator, *empathy* is the core condition that must be present for this strategy to be fully realized. As an enhancement to the 1997 model, the indicators make Winston and Creamer's model for supervision readily usable, relatable, and recognizable for current professionals in the field. Figure 2 illustrates how the nine indicators merge with their nine synergistic strategies to create guidance in supervision.

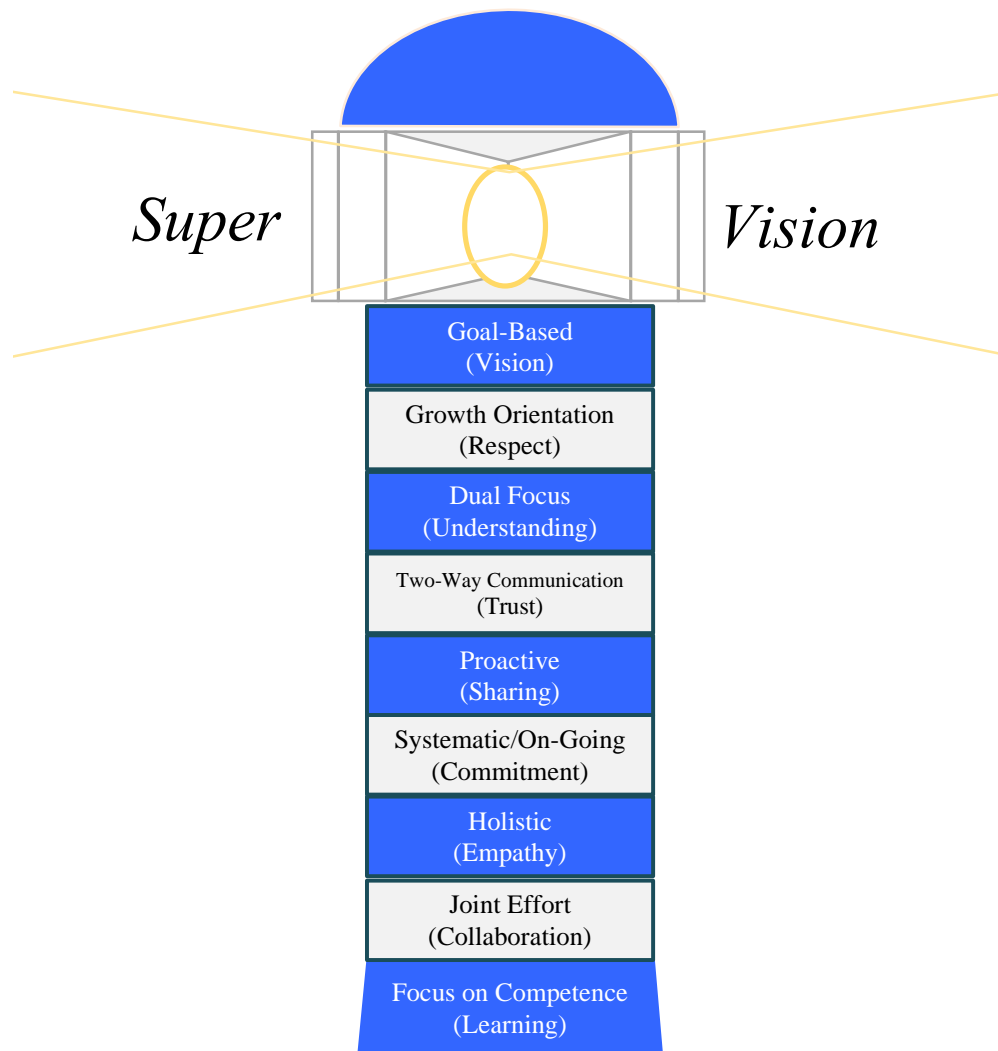


Figure 2. The Supervisory Lighthouse

Lighthouses were commonly utilized by sailors while navigating coastlines at night, providing them with vision of the seas. As with supervision of staff in organizations, the illumination of a lighthouse offers a sailor confidence, safety, and guidance. The placement of the strategies and their indicators in the lighthouse is not meant to be hierarchical. Rather, the indicators were placed in order of what emerged in the data and how it was presented in the chapters ahead. The supervisory lighthouse

serves as a metaphor to illustrate how the indicators combined with the synergistic strategies can create successful supervision. In addition, the indicators helped provide a name for each dyad of participants. The four teams of participants are named after the “core” of the synergistic strategy each supervisor used with the most prevalence (e.g., Team Vision, Team Respect, Team Understanding, and Team Trust).

Synergistic Hats

Another metaphor used throughout this study to describe the participants relates to the idea of a supervisor wearing multiple hats. Supervisors play different roles according to the demands of the job. A common saying within the Student Affairs field is “we wear many different hats!” (depending upon the task being accomplished). For example, a Residence Hall Director could give a student career advice, plan an educational event, check a facility for cleanliness, and adjudicate a student conduct hearing all in the same day. Fochtman (2006) assigned various hats to the managing, supervising, advising, and mentoring roles of Student Affairs professionals. “There will be times when we are called to serve all four roles at once and others when we can wear our hats separately and with distinct style. Having many hats in our closet to pull out when we need them is an asset to us as professionals” (Fochtman, 2006, p. 52).

Inspired by De Bono’s (1990) model of the *six thinking hats for thinking and problem solving*, I was able to identify nine different hats to represent the nine synergistic strategies and their nine indicators that emerged from an analysis of the literature (these include the Sun Visor, the Homburg, the Beret, the Newsboy, the Bowler, the Peaked Cap, the Wide-Brimmed Floppy Hat, the Baseball Cap, and the Fascinator). De Bono’s (1990) model explains how people can separate thinking into different yet clear functions

and roles, to focus or redirect thoughts, the conversation, or the meeting. Thus, in this dissertation, changing between supervisory strategies is symbolized by the metaphorical act of putting on a different hat. Through the utilization of different synergistic strategies, the nine synergistic hats demonstrate solutions to supervisory problems. Figure 3 exhibits how the nine hats correspond to the nine synergistic strategies and their indicators.

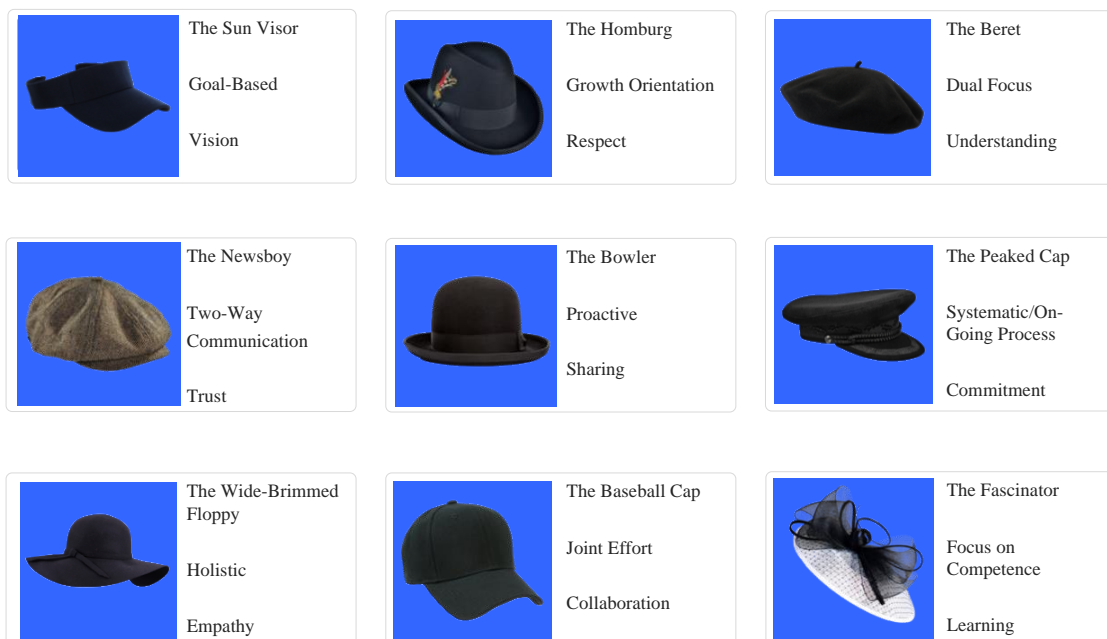


Figure 3. The Nine Hats of Synergistic Supervision

The *synergistic hats* allow a supervisor of professional staff members in the Student Affairs field to better understand the necessity of utilizing all synergistic strategies in their practices and to recognize situations that require the use a specific strategy in order to produce the best results. As will be seen in the forthcoming chapters, the characteristics of the synergistic hats have similarities to the components of each synergistic strategy and its indicator. In addition, each of the four supervisors who

participated in this study was assigned a hat based on the synergistic strategy the supervisor of each dyad employed most often.

Introduction of Participants

The case of the working relationships of eight Student Affairs professionals (four dyads) was deeply explored to provide insight into the challenges and rewards of synergistic supervision practices. Each dyad was composed of one entry-level staff member who was supervised by one mid-level staff member at one university. To protect participant's identities, I will not include the names of the departments where they worked. Refer to Table 2 for a description of departments that are commonly found within divisions of Student Affairs in higher education.

Table 2

Similar Departments Within Student Affairs Divisions

Department	Description
Campus Activities	Plans a wide variety of campus-wide and co-curricular educational and social events designed to enhance campus life.
Career Services	Prepares students for professional life after college through decision-making, career exploration, and job searching.
Disabilities Services	Assists and advocates for students who need accommodations to ensure equal educational opportunity.
Diversity and Inclusion	Advances the educational and social priorities of students with various identities.
Leadership Development	Offers opportunities for students to learn capabilities often not taught in the classroom.
Recreational Sports	Provides wellness opportunities such as a recreation center, intramural sports, and outdoor recreation.
Residence Life	Delivers safe, affordable, social, and educational environments for students living on-campus.
Student Organizations	Advises and provides leadership for clubs such as professional societies, fraternity and sorority life, sports clubs, and culturally-based organizations.

All of the mid-level supervisors reported to a senior-level administrator or one level below and they had a range of less than one year to eight years of experience

supervising entry-level professionals. All of the entry-level supervisees worked directly in various capacities with undergraduate students attending the university and they had a range of less than one year to two years of experience working in the field. All eight participants had earned master's degrees and were full-time employees.

Supervisory Teams

The synergistic model for staff supervision is an effective way to coach staff members to success as Student Affairs professionals (Tull, 2006 and Saunders, et al. 2000). Thus, it can be concluded that supervisors should fully employ each of the nine strategies in their day-to-day practices. However, as the data revealed, each of the four supervisors in this study utilized the strategies at varying levels. Their level of involvement varied by the strategy, and the data disclose that each supervisor relied on some strategies more heavily and frequently than others. Thus, each dyad was given a name according to the indicator of the strategy that the supervisor within the dyad used with the most prevalence. Table 3 serves as a reference to the names of each team, describes the eight participants, and elucidates their years of experience. The names that each dyad will be referred to as from this point in the study forward are Team Vision, Team Respect, Team Understanding, and Team Trust.

Table 3*Participant Reference*

<i>Team Name /Indicator</i> (Most prevalent strategy used)	Mid-Level Supervisor	Supervisor: years in field/supervising entry-level staff	Entry-Level Supervisee	Supervisee: years in field
<i>Vision</i> (Goal-Based)	early 30s, female	6/<1	mid 20s male	<2
<i>Respect</i> (Growth Orientation)	mid 30s, male	9/8	mid 30s female	2
<i>Understanding</i> (Dual Focus)	mid 30s, female	10/6	mid 20s female	<2
<i>Trust</i> (Two-Way Communication)	late 30s, female	6/<1	mid 20s, female	<1

As previously discussed, each of the four supervisors who participated in this study has been assigned a hat based on the synergistic strategy the supervisor of each dyad employed most often. The hat rack (see Figure 4) illustrates the primary hats the supervisors metaphorically wore. The supervisor for Team Vision most often wore the Sun Visor. This hat allows for clarity and *Vision*, the indicator for the *Goal-Based* synergistic strategy, while protecting the eyes from sunlight. Because it does not cover the entire head, it is also a hat that permits openness. I selected this hat for this supervisor because her values, beliefs, and assumptions about supervision were all characterized by openness and honesty. Team Respect's supervisor most often wore the Homburg, a formal hat that symbolizes being your best and commands *Respect*, the indicator for the *Growth Orientation* synergistic strategy. Throughout his participation in this study, this supervisor emphasized the importance of always being your best as a professional and in life. Team Understanding's supervisor most often wore the Beret, a hat with universal appeal. It is often associated with attire worn by artists as well as

within aspects of fashion. A *Dual Focus*, the indicator for the synergistic strategy of *Understanding*, is what drives this supervisor. She was very committed to understanding the needs of the staff member in order to focus on their professional goals and simultaneously the goals of the University. Lastly, the supervisor for Team Trust most often wore the Newsboy, a hat that symbolizes communication, a balance of information, and *Trust*, the indicator for the *Two-Way Communication* synergistic strategy. I assigned the Newsboy to this supervisor because her values, beliefs, and assumptions about supervision were all very much characterized by the idea of balance in work.

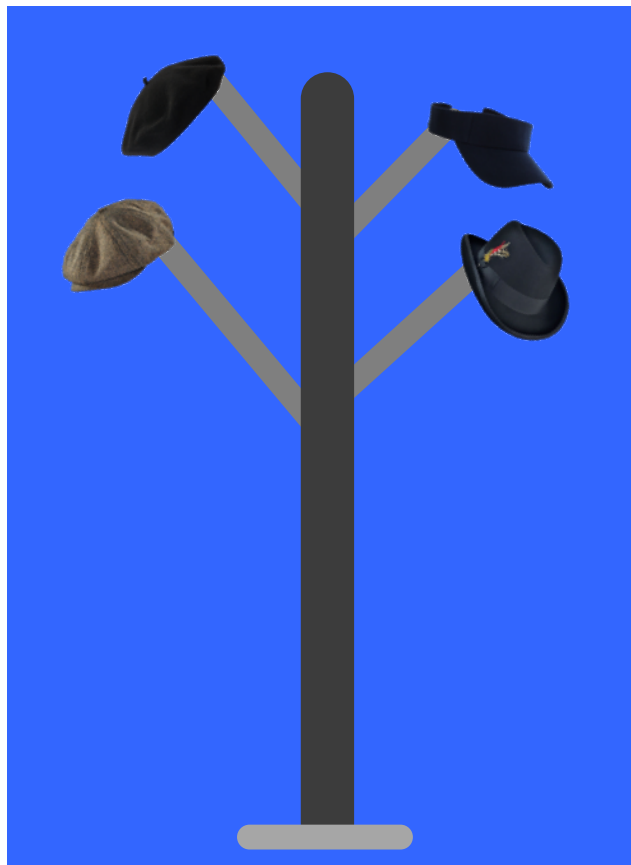


Figure 4. The Four Hats Worn Most Often

Purpose of the Study

To ascertain the current state of mid-level supervision practices, this qualitative study sought to understand the strategies that were being utilized by mid-level supervisors at a four-year university in Texas. “Supervision in Student Affairs has the potential to facilitate individual growth, improve service, and change the nature of the entire field. However, in order to effect these changes, supervision within Student Affairs must be re-conceptualized” (Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003, p. 89). The identification of successful supervision practices, both current and new, accompanied learning experiences for participants (mid-level supervisors and their supervisees) by design. This study helps supervisors of entry-level professional staff be more effective in their roles as they consider and reconsider their strategies for working with new professionals.

Because the supervision competency is currently not at the forefront of concern in student services work in neither research nor practice, it becomes clear that a culture change is needed. In a national study on professionals entering the field, researchers found “the quality of supervision of new professionals in Student Affairs varies from exceptionally good to downright awful” (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008, p. 332-333). The researchers state that it is unclear how to improve the supervisory practices of mid-level managers. To inform the policies and practices of Student Affairs divisions in higher education, the present research aids in understanding how mid-level professionals in the field are supervising and developing their entry-level professional staff members. This study contributes to the research on supervision within the Student Affairs field and benefits administrators in higher education seeking to improve supervision practices for

entry-level professionals and who want to understand the adult learning experiences associated with supervision.

In addition to contributing to the body of research on supervision of entry-level professionals in the field, this study has potential to benefit mid-level Student Affairs supervisors who, by nature of their positions, have the capacity to positively influence outcomes for two groups of stakeholders. The first group of stakeholders affected by inadequate supervision and development are new professionals. Those professionals who are newest to the student services field are on the front line in terms of direct contact with students. Combined with inexperience, they are overwhelmed with increasing work demands including the mental health of students, pressures of learning outcomes as a means of assessment, and parental over-involvement. Unhappy employees can cause an entire system to collapse (Carpenter & Carpenter, 2009). Thus, entry-level practitioners need guidance from strong, active, and developmental mid-level staff members.

However, high attrition and burn out has been attributed to a lack of support on the part of supervisors (Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Attrition among entry-level staff members is high in the Student Affairs field. Renn and Hodges (2007) estimate that "between 50% and 60% of new professionals leave the field before their fifth year" (p. 370). Tull, Hirt, and Saunders (2009) are more conservative, estimating a range from 20% to 40% of professionals leave within the first six years (p. x). Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) observe that poor supervisory experiences are a reason for the attrition of junior student services practitioners and Tull (2009) states that some new professionals leave the field because of a perceived lack of prospects for advancement. Questioning how employees

learn to perform their jobs, Olson (2015) reflects that limited finances in higher education causes a reduction in the amount of time available for employee training.

The second group of stakeholders affected by inadequate supervision and development of entry-level professionals are traditional undergraduates. Today's college student is quite different from the student of yesterday. Contemporary full-time college students spend 27 hours per week engaged in academic pursuits versus 40 hours per week in past decades, and 45% of students today demonstrate "no statistically significant gains" in critical thinking and writing skills after two years in college (Arum & Roksa, 2011). Student Affairs practitioners play a critical role in the success of undergraduates and are tasked by their institutions to support, deliver services, and retain college students to graduation by providing for their holistic development. Arminio and Creamer (2001) note that there is a connection between the quality of supervision for professionals in the field and the quality of educational resources for undergraduates.

Winston and Creamer (1997) asserted that the quality of education is connected to the quality of institutional staffing practices: supervision, staff development, and performance appraisals. Of these, they see supervision as the lynchpin. This link between the quality of supervision and the quality of educational services generally is assumed in student affairs, but the actual nature of the relationship remains largely unstudied. (p. 35)

At the micro-level, improved strategies for supervision can impact relationships, experiences, and job effectiveness. At the macro-level, improved strategies for supervision can maximize student benefits. More effective supervision of entry-level staff working directly with traditional college students can lead to higher rates of success.

Research Questions

The research questions formulated for this study examined the synergistic supervision strategies (Winston & Creamer, 1997) employed within dyads of mid-level supervisors and their entry-level supervisees at one university as well as the learning experiences reported in their professional lives. (For a preview of specific terms used in this proposal, refer to Appendix A.) Two research questions guide this study:

1. What are the synergistic practices of mid-level Student Affairs supervisors at a four-year public university?
2. What adult learning experiences do study participants report within the context of supervision and in their professional lives?

Dissertation Overview

The title of this study, *Synergistic Supervision Strategies of Mid-Level Professionals in Student Affairs*, refers to a model of supervision that was explored among mid-level supervisor-participants from the field. The study documented their active supervision experiences, the reactions of their supervisees, and the learning experiences reported within the context of supervision and within the professional lives of each participant. Data were used to observe how supervision and learning experiences were reflected within the strategies and indicators for synergistic supervision.

To that end, the team narratives of the forthcoming chapters (Team Vision, Team Respect, Team Understanding, and Team Trust) were presented in the same order that the strategy and indicator appeared on the Strategies and Indicators of Synergistic Supervision table (see Table 1) and within the Supervisory Lighthouse (Figure 2). To determine the synergistic practices of mid-level Student Affairs supervisors at a four-year

public university, the narratives focused on the strategies utilized by the participants, the relationships they had with their adult professional supervisees, and the stories told by those supervisees that lend credibility to their supervisor's performance as to the outcomes of synergistic supervision.

Each chapter is organized by first presenting a pie chart (determined by the "statistic of sub-codes" function in the MAXQDA software) that details the prevalence of use for each of the nine strategies. The role of the "core indicator" (for which the dyad is named) of the supervisor's *most*-utilized strategy was explained, supported by a description of the similarities between the synergistic hats and the components of each strategy. Expounding upon strategies used *less* often, examples from the narratives demonstrated how each supervisor metaphorically put on a different hat when necessary within their professional practice. Lastly, because literature from the Student Affairs field reveals a need for education beyond graduate programs, the ways of knowing encountered by study participants were included in this research. The participant's narratives illustrated their adult learning experiences within the context of supervision. While there are many theoretical perspectives on adult learning, only the strongest examples of learning that came across in the data were brought to light within each team's narrative.

Because there were four teams of participants, data are presented within four main chapters. **Chapter II**, *Team Vision*, tells the story of a supervisor/supervisee dyad who had been working together for less than one semester. The supervisor was naturally talented in the area of supervision and deeply aware of her obligations to set the team's goals for the coming years and the supervisee was pleasantly surprised with the

performance of his supervisor. **Chapter III**, *Team Respect*, is about a pair of professionals who had been working together for over two years. The charismatic supervisor diligently worked to challenge the supervisee to always create an end-product to be proud of while the supervisee was eager to learn all she could. **Chapter IV**, *Team Understanding*, is about a dyad who had been working together for less than one semester. The supervisor was exceptional about finding ways to build a bridge between the needs of the University and the needs of the supervisee, who was very happy in her entry-level position. Lastly, **Chapter V**, *Team Trust*, tells the story of a supervisor/supervisee dyad who had created a strong working relationship by learning to trust one another.

To be mindful of my audience (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), I have chosen an inverted dissertation format. Wiggins and McTighe, 2005 propose that “backwards is best” (p. 14) in order to effectively give audiences the information they are seeking as quickly as possible. In line with the concept of the inverted dissertation (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), the Appendix section includes the important traditional pieces of dissertations such as the literature review, methods, and qualitative interview questions. The appendix section of this dissertation is composed of the following: Appendix A, *Language from the Field*, offers a brief list of typically used supervision and Student Affairs terminology. Appendix B, *Literature Review*, presents literature relevant to supervision in the Student Affairs field, approaches within other fields, and connections to adult learning theory and organizational change. Appendix C, *Methods*, offers the reasoning behind selecting case study methodology, details how the site and participants were selected, illuminates data collection sources and analysis techniques, and discusses

trustworthiness. Appendix D and E present samples of the first round of in-person on-site interview questions. Appendix F is an outline of the procedure used to facilitate a synergistic supervision workshop that was attended by all eight participants. Appendix G, the Observation Protocol Form, is the template used by a graduate assistant to collect observations of the participants and activities at the workshop. Appendix H and I, the Post Workshop Questionnaires for Supervisees and Supervisors were also used as a tool to assess learning upon completion of the workshop. Appendix J and K are samples of the Skype (second round) interview questions for supervisors and supervisees.

II: TEAM VISION

We see a lot of people that get caught up in the fact that their way is the only way or the best way. The reality is even if it is the best way, that is not the only way it has to be done. There is a bigger picture and my personal view of the world there are times it's not going to be worth sacrificing relationships or creating all the extra stress and tension to do something in a particular way. At the end of the day as long as we're still moving forward with helping students persist and graduate and be successful while they are here, then we are doing our jobs. – Supervisor for Team Vision

Team Vision's supervisor is in her early 30s and has worked in the field for six years. This was her first year supervising an entry-level professional. As she expressed above, the supervisor for Team Vision is open to accomplishing tasks in different ways and according to different styles. As the story of Team Vision unfolds in this chapter, it will be established that this supervisor has the Goal-Based *vision* to keep her team moving forward in a sensible way while also embracing the art of *collaboration* through Joint Effort to identify and reach work goals. The last section of this chapter will demonstrate how *workplace learning* played a role in the supervisor's professional life as she prepared for an entry-level staff member to join her team.

The Goal-Based Strategy

Team Vision is named for the indicator of the *Goal-Based* strategy of synergistic supervision. Out of the nine strategies for synergistic supervision, the supervisor in this dyad utilized Goal Based synergistic supervision strategies most often. The pie chart below (see Figure 5) illustrates the number of times the nine strategies for synergistic supervision were mentioned in Team Vision's interview data.

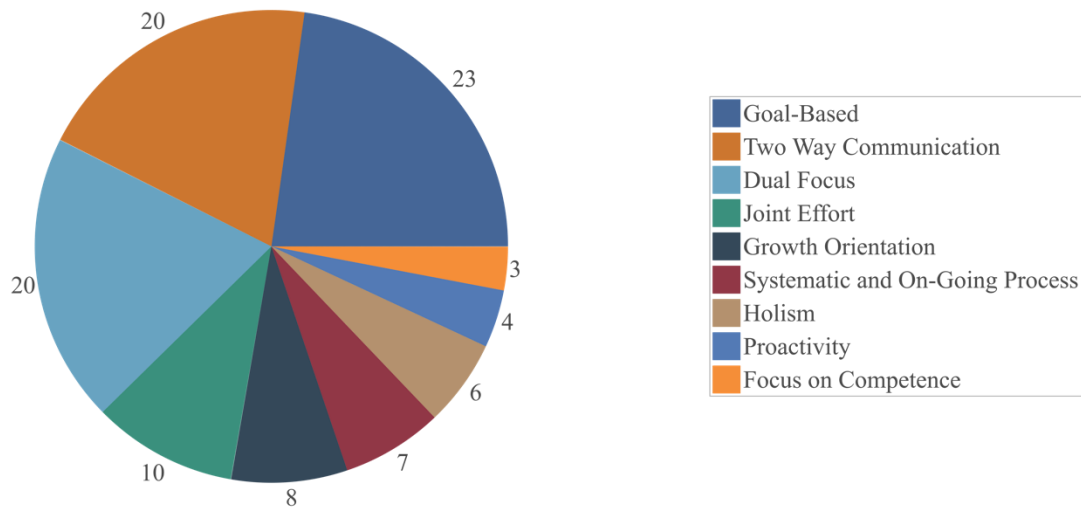


Figure 5: Strategies for Team Vision

Winston and Creamer (1997) explained that in the Goal-Based strategy, the dyad has a clear understanding about the expectations of each other. The supervisor in the dyad identifies goals for the unit and develops plans for how to reach them. In addition, the supervisor identifies areas of need in the unit for the staff member to focus on as well as perceived areas of development needed by the staff member. And lastly, the expectations of each other and the goals of the unit are periodically reviewed for accomplishment.

The synergistic hat that most relates to the Goal-Based strategy is the Sun Visor (see Figure 6). This type of hat is an informal, open piece of headgear that allows for vision while protecting the eyes from sunlight. The Sun Visor is a very simple hat, composed of only the brim and a strap that surrounds the head. The Sun Visor suggests openness because it does not cover the entire head and it is a valuable piece of headgear because it allows one to see when in bright light. The Sun Visor seemed a good fit for the supervisor of Team Vision because she is an adventurous, outgoing, and very positive yet tactful person. Her values, beliefs, and assumptions about supervision are all

characterized by openness and honesty. The data reveal that Team Vision's supervisor metaphorically wore the Sun Visor 23 times in the dyad's interview responses. For the core indicator of the Goal-Based strategy, *vision*, emerged as the best fit for the components of this strategy as well as participant data. For a clear understanding about expectations, a supervisee's development, and goals for the unit, *vision* is key.

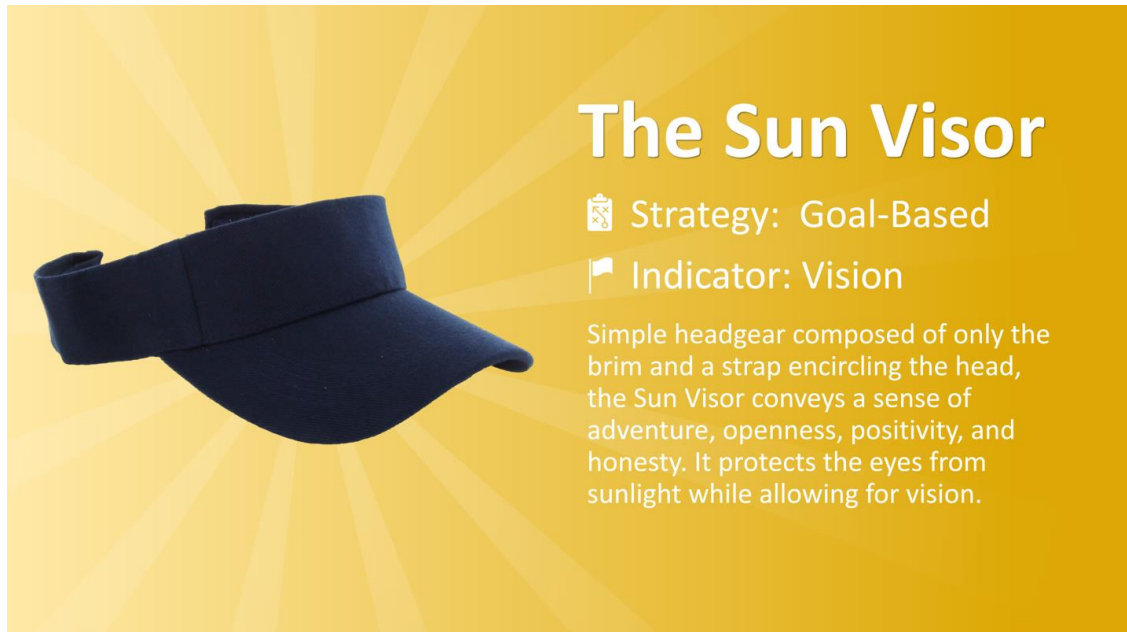


Figure 6. The Sun Visor

The data show that this supervisor was clearly Goal-Based in her strategies for supervision. Upon finding out that she was to have a full-time, entry-level staff member joining her area, her first goal was very much focused on creating a strong team. Bolman and Deal (2013) note that team-oriented leaders value shared goals, as well as cohesiveness and collaboration. For example, the supervisor commented during her second interview:

Supervision is having more people on your team. It might be a headache when you're in the moment and somebody is challenging your views on things, but if it's

working well, it's going to lead you to a better product and at the end of the day, you're going to be more effective in your role.

In examining the interview data, it also became apparent that Team Vision's supervisor was Goal-Based prior to the beginning of her relationship with the entry-level staff member. She approached her colleagues to get their recommendations related to supervision of entry-level staff members and how to build the team that was so important to her. This information gave her the ability to identify areas of need for her new team and plan for how those needs would be met in the near future. Similarly, David (2010) found that many participants in her study turned to other professionals to learn supervisory skills when needed.

The supervisor for Team Vision emphasized that passion on the part of members of the team is a huge part of what it takes to make organizations work. Similarly, organizational culture must lend itself to teamwork (Levi, 2011) if an organization is to find success. As a leader in an organization, Team Vision's supervisor recognizes her responsibility to cultivate teamwork through passion. Her Goal-Based *vision* in this area is an example of what Bolman and Deal (2013) describe as the right person for the right structure (p. 283). The supervisor shared some thoughts about passion for the work during her first interview:

Having passion for what you do is so important because again it comes back to the culture of your organization. Do people want to work in this organization or not? This higher education field in general is a field filled with passion. Nobody gets into this field because they get paid a lot of money, or because they love working nights and weekends. That's not why we do it. So, you have to be

passionate in this field or you're not going to last. And as a leader you need to make people passionate about what they're doing or you're going to be caught in a cycle where you are continuously turning your team over and having to rehire and retrain.

As a supervisor exhibiting Goal-Based *vision*, the mid-level professional within this dyad was very deliberate in planning for the future of the team prior to the arrival of the entry-level supervisee. Previously, she had been the supervisor for student staff members, but this was her first experience supervising an adult professional. She reflected on if training on how to supervise professional staff members would be effective, had formal training been available to her.

It all depends on the quality of training. There's a lot of really crappy training out there. There's a lot of mandatory trainings we have to sit through that at the end of the day everybody's just checking their phone or checking their watch and counting down the minutes. I think the quality of the training has to be there and the buy-in of the people in the room has to be there. I'm not a person who has generally struggled with buy-in. So, I think if I were in some kind of a new supervisor training it would be happy and obviously I sought out a lot of information at the very least before kind of embarking on this. But it might.

Many adult educators would agree with Team Vision's supervisor. A 1980's movement toward mandatory continuing education began out of consumer advocacy: there was a concern with the competence of professionals (Queeney, English, & ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult C.O., 1994). The purpose of mandatory continuing education was to protect the public from professionals who had not kept their knowledge base relevant which is an

important part of working in fields with ever-changing dynamics, such as education.

In wearing the Sun Visor, Team Vision's Goal-Based leader often focused on having conversations with her supervisee about future goals and expectations. She started having these conversations at the beginning of their relationship, and again when her supervisee had been there for two months.

One of the first things we did when he was hired was to sit down and look at our personality profiles and we did about a half-day retreat of all sorts of different things. One of the things we did as an exercise was to make commitments to ourselves, to each other, and then to our students. I think those would be the only formal expectations than what is on his human resources performance evaluation, which is pretty generic and just follows the job description. So those would be the day-to-day expectations. Longer term expectations are more aspirational expectations than are on the human resources evaluation and job description. One of the biggest expectations we have that hasn't necessarily been written somewhere is about honesty and transparency and keeping in mind that we have each other's best interest at heart even when sometimes we question that. So, if something were to happen in our dynamic or a decision was to be made that one of us didn't necessarily agree with or understand, instead of getting defensive about it we would remember that this person is in my corner so I need to calm down and address it more rationally.

An analysis of the Team Vision interview data demonstrated that the supervisor had a thorough understanding about supervision and her responsibilities as a leader. She was determined to create a positive working relationship with her entry-level supervisee by

planning time for them to get to know each other during a retreat and by being very intentional in establishing clear expectations from the beginning.

I did a 60-day post-hire informal meeting and evaluation with him. I didn't call it that, maybe I did call it an evaluation, but I asked him for feedback on me as well. I came prepared with my notes and my interpretation of how things were going and what I thought he was doing well and what I thought he could improve on and things I noticed about our team and the work and stuff like that. There have also been a couple of just little struggles with organization and keeping multiple project timelines in mind and dropping the ball on some stuff. But those we have addressed and managed as they come up. So, I think the 60-day evaluation with him asking for his feedback was a really important part.

Without *vision*, a supervisor/supervisee dyad would not have the foresight to set reachable work goals nor set clear expectations for both the job and the relationship.

Data suggest that the supervisor was deeply aware of her obligations. She set clear expectations and worked with the team to set team goals for the next three to five years, as Winston and Creamer (1997) suggested. Wearing the Sun Visor, Team Vision's supervisor had the ability to make decisions from the beginning about how she wanted to approach their relationship and what she needed to know prior to becoming a supervisor of a professional staff member.

Team Vision's relationship is characterized by a great amount of mutual respect for one another's knowledge and experience in the field. The supervisee within this dyad is in his mid 20s and this was his second year in a full-time position, although his first year working at this institution. He described his ideal relationship with a supervisor as

being gracious and friendly in his first interview.

I think it's cordial in nature. You know, showing some vulnerability to establish that trust and rapport, which I believe is absolutely necessary. Just being very honest and clear, similar to what I had mentioned earlier about why do we not- this is me talking to the new supervisor, this is why you wouldn't get what you want from me, the expectations, the tools and then we can talk about performance. So, cordial, just very focused on trust and transparency. Definitely rapport-oriented.

The supervisee in the Team Vision dyad held a full-time position previously at a different university where he was responsible for many tasks on his own because his immediate supervisor had a full plate and trusted that he would be successful. He has since grown accustomed to working as part of a team.

I was able to do what I wanted. I was given free roam of my program. For me that time was very nice. I was able to do what I wanted, however it was subjective. I told you it's what I wanted. So, everything was me. Now everything's not me. Everything, I describe it as a team because I think that's what it is.

Just as the Goal-Based supervisor for Team Vision was very deliberate in establishing a good relationship from the beginning, the supervisee was equally as intentional in informing her about his expectations for the position.

I usually talk about why there's a discrepancy or performance failures whether it be from the supervisor or a supervisee and that's usually because people are not getting what they want. I find most discrepancies are about wants. Most of the

time we either don't say what we want or we don't know what we want. So just being clear in those communications. I was very clear with her what I wanted from this position and I asked her what she then wanted from me. I just think if we find out wants first then we're able to alleviate a lot of performance failures later.

Since his experience completing many duties on his own in his previous position, the entry-level professional within Team Vision indicated during his first interview that he has come to enjoy having a supervisor who is readily available.

I love it. I wouldn't change it. That's what I would say. I recently wrote her a thank you card. National Boss's Day was a couple of weeks ago. I was hesitant. I had never been directly supervised. So, my previous one, I didn't have it. I'd never been directly supervised so to speak. I wrote her a card and I let her know I was hesitant. That there were thoughts in my mind that were running, I was posturing myself, I was getting ready for a supervisor that I may not agree with, that I don't like. Then, I told her I was wrong. I told her that all my apprehension and fears and hesitation had been laid to rest; at that time I think it was the five-month mark. So, I think she's great! I like her as a supervisor. I don't think I would change it. Again, she gives me a ton of opportunity!

The supervisee's enthusiasm for his new position and his supervisor demonstrated that Team Vision's supervisor had met her goal of creating a strong team. Wearing the Sun Visor, Goal-Oriented supervisors are open to new challenges and this supervisor was able to help her supervisee adjust to his position successfully. The data show the success of her use of synergistic supervision in that the supervisee was surprised as to how well

everything was working out in his new position.

As she said during her first interview, Team Vision's supervisor did notice her supervisee's apprehension within the first six months of employment.

One of the interesting things for me to see as a supervisor, and as somebody who was pretty much relationship focused when he first came in, I sensed a lot of anxiety maybe around the fact that he was talking to his boss. Being somebody who is relationship focused and always had collegial relationships with my supervisors, I think was not ready for the apprehension. We got through it. It's been fine, but there still will be times when he will say something such as you're the boss and I'm like no we're a team. I might be your supervisor but we're a team. So, if you've got a problem, I want to know about it. That has been interesting! He's come with more of a you're the boss, I'm the employee and I've come from more of a team orientation and seeing those two attitudes work together I think has been interesting.

Carpenter and Carpenter (2009) recommend that early exchanges with a new staff member should be monitored by a supervisor so that adjustment can be made because learning to communicate is part of becoming socialized to a new organization. See the Socialization section of this chapter for more about this topic.

Winston and Creamer (1997) further recommend that the Goal-Based supervisor identify areas of need in the unit that are appropriate for the supervisee to work on. The supervisor for Team Vision has alluded to that with her supervisee, but has asked him to be patient.

I told him to take the first semester and learn what we've been doing so you can

change it from there. He has done exactly that. He hasn't tried to make any changes yet. I think he has trust in me when I say that I will be turning these reins all the way over to you. You just need to see this first semester through. So that's been interesting.

Team Vision's supervisor believes the dyad has a good relationship and is proud of the work she has done in her first semester as a supervisor of an entry-level professional. For example, she was happy to receive the previously mentioned card for National Boss' Day.

There have been a lot of really good moments. He gave me a card for Boss's Day. He took a minute to write me a note on a card and tell me that he thought I was doing a good job. I have it here somewhere. Yeah. "Today is National Boss Appreciation Day but you are so much more than that. To be honest I was unsure and hesitant, but that has long been laid to rest. You treated me with respect and have given me every opportunity for success. You've been my boss but you've also been my leader. Thank you for being you." I know I'm being really purposeful about what we're doing, but to have that positive reinforcement definitely was a feel good fuzzy moment for me.

Goal-Based supervision requires that the supervisor identifies areas of development for her supervisee and that the supervisor be prepared to incorporate the goals that the supervisee identifies for himself. Based on the interview data collected, the supervisee was pleased that he had been able to incorporate his own goals into his work. He felt this led to a positive work environment and he was able to set aside some initial apprehensions. Wearing the Sun Visor, Team Vision's leader had the ability to create a

strategy for developing her team, thus helping this supervisee be successful. Buchanan (2012) concluded that positive work environments created through supportive supervision and professional development opportunities could contribute to lower levels of attrition in the profession. Moreover, the supervisor met with Team Vision's supervisee to discuss his development with plans on revisiting their discussion again at a later date. Similarly, Shupp (2007) found that goals should be discussed more often than just at performance appraisal time; as was the recommendation of Winston and Creamer (1997).

The Joint Effort Strategy

In addition to wearing the Sun Visor as a Goal-Based supervisor, study findings revealed that it was also common for Team Vision's leader to wear the Baseball Cap, the hat that represents the *Joint Effort* synergistic strategy for supervision of adult professional staff members. The indicator I have identified for the Joint Effort strategy is *collaboration* due to how it fit with participant data combined with the elements of this strategy. Athletes and others who enjoy actively participating in sports must collaborate as a team in order to win. The synergistic hat that most relates to the Joint Effort strategy, and its core component of *collaboration*, is the Baseball Cap (see Figure 7). While the Baseball Cap has become somewhat utilitarian over the years, when it comes to mind it is still thought of as being associated with sports and teams. As a metaphor, the Baseball Cap suggests Joint Effort, such as that which is required by a team in order to succeed. With *collaboration* as its indicator, the Joint Effort strategy of synergistic supervision effectively removes the structure and hierarchy that is often unnecessary in workplace relationships because the focus becomes the team rather than the individual.



Figure 7: The Baseball Cap

Winston and Creamer (1997) explained that in the Joint Effort strategy, both parties must be willing to invest time, energy, and responsibility in the supervision process. Thus, when goals are clearly identified, and plans for accomplishing goals are worked out jointly, success or failure falls on both sets of shoulders. In addition, Winston and Creamer (1997) maintain that supervision is not something done to staff, but rather a cooperative activity in which each party has an important contribution to make. As previously noted, the supervisor for Team Vision was very intentional in her Goal-Based approach in having the *vision* to deliberately seek information that would help her as a new supervisor of the entry-level adult professional that was about to join her team. In examining the data, it became clear that when she metaphorically changes hats from the Sun Visor to the Baseball Cap, she devotes time and energy to building the team for which she had steadily been preparing.

I said pretty strongly to multiple people- I mean upwards and across, "I know we

have more manpower on my team right now, but do not expect to see more output from us in this first semester because that's not the most important thing we're going to be doing right now." This is our goal and it might seem intangible and it might seem nebulous or it's not actual work but if we don't set ourselves up right now we're not going to be able to do the things I have planned for us over the next three to five years.

The Joint Effort synergistic strategy for supervision cannot happen without a time commitment from both the supervisor and supervisee. This combination of energy makes the approach synergistic. Based on the data collected from interviews, Team Vision's supervisee is also devoting time and energy to the supervisory process. He refers to his supervisor as a "player's-based coach," which exemplifies the *collaboration* indicator for synergistic supervision.

I've played under player's-based coaches, which is I think more in line with the synergistic model. It's not about numbers, it's not about me telling you what to do, but it is about how can I help you become your best. How can I be a support to you? How can I give you the tools to succeed? I've played under those coaches and I've done well under them. That gives me ability to watch the schemes going on and be able to put a method to the madness. I model my own management or leadership style under players-based coaches.

Wearing the Baseball Cap, Team Vision's supervisor planned to facilitate an off-campus retreat for her two supervisees to do some strategic planning, which is a clear example of the *collaboration* indicator where plans for accomplishing goals are worked out in collaboration with one another. When people are working in synergy, collaborative and

cooperative efforts exceed individual efforts (Winston & Creamer, 1997). As Team Vision's supervisor said:

We're going off campus for a day to do a two-to-three-year strategic planning retreat for our program where we will start to identify some action steps and things we're working together towards as a team to have a clear path of where all three of us want to go together.

The third component of the Joint Effort strategy effectively removes some of the structure and hierarchy that typically comes to mind when one considers the topic of supervision. Supervisors who wear the Baseball Cap understand that supervision is not something done *to* staff, but rather a collaborative activity in which each party has an important contribution to make. One of the contributions made by the supervisor of this dyad was to keep a notebook of reminders not only for the entry-level staff member's formal performance appraisal, but also for points of periodic discussion leading up to the performance appraisal. Some of the items in the notebook were areas of development for the supervisee and others were areas of praise.

I have a notebook in one of my drawers that's just filled with notes about things I want to talk about. So always keeping that in the back of my mind- you are going to have to give feedback which is something I can do but honestly my mind sometimes is so all over the place so that when I sit down and have to go back and think about, it's tough for me. So, I always remember to write things down when something happens.

The supervisor's willingness to make performance feedback a cooperative activity is an example of the Joint Effort Strategy, where supervision is not something that is done to

staff, but rather an activity where both members of the dyad are allowed to make important contributions.

One of the contributions made by the supervisee in Team Vision was to be transparent with his goals by being intentional in contributing to honest conversations.

I want to be an adjunct lecturer at the Health and Human Performance Department. I want to teach the personal training class. The component here is teaching, whatever I have to do to get that I think I will. I haven't been clandestine in any form or fashion about that. In every sense of the word, I want to be an assistant director and for that fact I wouldn't mind acting as an associate director. It's about being truthful with your supervisor, being able to define what you want, getting trust, having that communication, that honesty, I think it goes a long way.

The supervisee in Team Vision told his supervisor about his teaching intentions and she has been supportive. But for now, he wants to concentrate on his new position and on doing what it takes to go above and beyond the basic expectations of his job. This is an example of Winston and Creamer's (1997) assertion that both parties must be willing to invest time in the supervisory relationship. As Team Vision's supervisee said:

I told her that before I take on anything else, I have to be good at what I'm doing. I have to accept responsibility for things that are not under my job description. However, I am confident that if an opportunity arose, she would be on my side.

Through working in synergy with Team Vision's supervisee, the supervisor has been referred to as a "player's-based coach" by her team member. In wearing the Baseball Cap, she informed others in their department that they were going to take some time to

build a solid team. In addition, she was willing to provide and accept feedback more than just once per year.

The Socialization Strategy

An update to the Synergistic Supervision model (Winston & Creamer, 1997) that emerged from Team Vision's interview data is *Socialization*. Socialization, also referred to as "on-boarding," is the process of not only orienting a new employee into the workplace, but also easing their transition. Tull (2006) noted that synergistic supervision is effective because it allows for socialization, thus decreasing the likelihood of job dissatisfaction. However, Socialization is not a strategy of its own. Thus, the model benefits from Socialization being added as a strategy. The hat worn by supervisors when being intentional about socializing entry-level staff members is the Hard Hat (see Figure 8), a symbol of planning due to often being worn by architects and others who either work at or visit construction sites. Consequently, the core indicator for the Socialization strategy is *planning*. Without proper *planning*, supervisors cannot appropriately socialize new staff members. *Planning* fit well with the components of this strategy combined with interview data.

As shown previously in these data, Team Vision's supervisor noticed some apprehension on the part of her supervisee when he was speaking to her. As a first-time supervisor of an entry-level professional, the formality and deference given to Team Vision's supervisor by the supervisee was a new experience for her. His anxiety took her by surprise because the supervisor was accustomed to a more informal communication style with her supervisors and colleagues. Decreasing the anxiety experienced by new professionals when interacting with their supervisor through continuous Socialization is a

meaningful addition to the synergistic supervision model because learning to communicate with less apprehension is a part of the Socialization process.

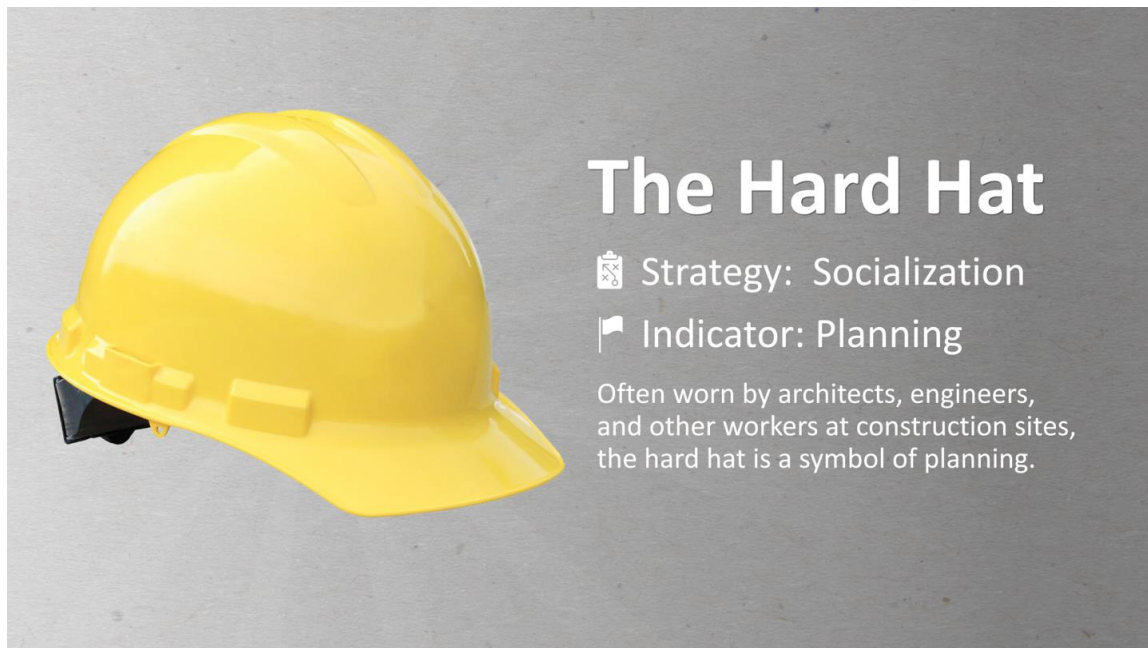


Figure 8: The Hard Hat

Socialization includes learning how to function in a new environment, understanding the dress code, learning the traditions of the profession as well as the organization, learning to avoid pitfalls, discovering a niche, communication, becoming familiar with subcultures, developing an understanding of how to appropriately use information, and even learning where to park (Carpenter & Carpenter, 2009). Much like orientation for new undergraduates entering a university, “It can be argued that new staff entering their first student affairs professional position face a transition similar to that of new students, with the attendant anxiety, mixed emotions, and myriad questions” (Dean, et al., 2011, p. 137).

Adult Learning Experiences: Workplace Learning

In analyzing data regarding the participant’s learning experiences within the

context of supervision, it was revealed that the supervisor for Team Vision experienced workplace learning the most often. Team Vision's supervisor was very intentional in conducting her own research to prepare to become a supervisor of an entry-level staff member. Her intentionality is an example of workplace learning. As a type of informal learning (Froehlich, Beausaert, & Segers, 2017), workplace learning refers to unstructured learning activities that occur while individuals are at work (Marsick, Volpe, & Watkins, 1999). Fenwick (2008) refers to workplace learning as an informal learning process that involves human change as well as the way humans connect through their actions with "rules, tools and texts, cultural, and material environments" (p. 19). Workplace learning is not classroom training, but it is learning from the environment and the people and actions going on within it.

I think the gravity of the change wasn't lost on me. In the role I was in before, I directly supervised 80 student employees. It's one thing to supervise part-time students who can come and go but it's something else to supervise somebody whose livelihood and life is wrapped up in the same work you're doing. So that further solidified my plan to take a semester and do really foundational stuff with our team. I made that decision based on some of the reading I had done on my own about leadership and thinking about what kind of leader I wanted to be. And also, just speaking with other peers in my department and division who had gone through that change of supervising a fulltime staff member for the first time and asking them what'd you screw up, what went well, what would you have done differently. I think a lot of people who had been through that change told me that they went in and there was so much work to do that they just got lost in it and they

never took the time up front and they had to go back later and it was harder to repair, it's harder to repair a bridge than it is to build it right the first time.

The supervisor for Team Vision's conversations with colleagues about their experiences confirms Billett (2014), who found that workers from a variety of occupations learned through engagement in work activities, observing and listening, and "just being in the workplace" (p. 463). In another example of workplace learning during her first interview, Team Vision's supervisor shared that over the years of her professional life, she had observed colleagues do things within the normal, everyday course of work that she wanted to either emulate or avoid doing in the future.

I think in all the different supervisors I've had since I've been here, I've seen it go well and I've seen it go poorly. I think a negative aspect I noticed while watching a former supervisor's relationship style with employees is that they would have really good relationships with staff members, but when those employees had a conflict they would both go to the supervisor rather than working it out together. It actually drove a lot of spikes between relationships laterally in the department. I wanted to be cautious with this.

Team Vision's supervisor reflected on another person she worked for who would feel threatened about whom she communicated with while at work. Fenwick (2008) did comment that power in the workplace is often created through relationships among those in the work environment. However, "power relations in workplace learning have not resulted in much empirical research" (Fenwick, 2008, p. 23). Team Vision's supervisor further reflected:

I also once had a supervisor who was really emotionally invested in organizational structure and was emotionally invested in this idea that they were at a higher level and communication needed to come through them. They would feel undermined if I had a lateral conversation with another assistant director, or God forbid a coordinator. So, I think stakeholder management is a challenge, making sure everybody feels comfortable and everybody feels good. But again, I also think it's important to have mentors and I don't think I have had a whole lot of mentors in my role here who have been above me in an organizational perspective. But I think if the relationship works well and it is, I think there's a lot of benefit to it, I just haven't lived that over the last six years unfortunately. I'm hoping to give him a better experience than I've had.

Through learning while at work, Team Vision's supervisor has observed both positive and negative aspects of relationships in the workplace. After watching others and learning what to do and what not to do, the supervisor wants to make the supervisee's experience a positive one. Billett (2014) asserts that observation such as this is a process of learning called "mimesis," which requires "higher order cognitive functions" such as "perception, action, and introspection" (p. 477).

Team Vision Summary

Team Vision emerged as a very passionate team. Both the supervisor and the supervisee were goal-oriented and confident in their own skills to complement each other and work as a team. Open and honest communication was a must in their professional relationship. The power imbalance inherent in supervision was well handled by the supervisor as she placed emphasis on the need to work collaboratively. This team was all

about joint effort and clear goals. Through her use of the Goal-Based and Joint Effort synergistic strategies as well as her ability to learn in the workplace, Team Vision's supervisor has created a powerful partnership with her entry-level supervisee.

III: TEAM RESPECT

My management style has been patterned after all of the people who I could tell wanted the best for me. Because they wanted the best for me, I felt like giving them my very best. That equates to me wanting to work until the job is finished, not necessarily just work until the clock buzzes. So that willingness to give everything you have is what I've gotten from my best managers. I love to watch people grow from one position to another, get from being the caterpillar to the butterfly. – Supervisor for Team Respect

In his middle 30's, the supervisor for Team Respect is a direct, imaginative, charismatic, and honest mid-level professional. As he expressed above, he believes in being the best. He gives staff members the tools and resources they need to succeed so that their work represents the department and themselves exceptionally. This chapter will establish that Team Respect's supervisor has a Growth Orientation in that he concentrates on his supervisee being her best by giving and receiving *respect*, he Focuses on Competence by advocating *learning*, and he is Proactive by demonstrating and encouraging *sharing*. In addition, this chapter will introduce an emergent strategy, Recognition. The final section of this chapter will demonstrate how *experiential learning* influenced the supervisor's preparedness and how *affective learning* helped the supervisee to learn how to perform her job.

The Growth Orientation Strategy

Team Respect is named for the indicator of the *Growth Orientation* strategy of synergistic supervision. Out of the nine strategies for synergistic supervision, the supervisor within this dyad utilized growth orientation-related strategies the most often.

The pie chart below (see Figure 9) illustrates the number of times the nine strategies for synergistic supervision were mentioned in Team Respect's interview data.

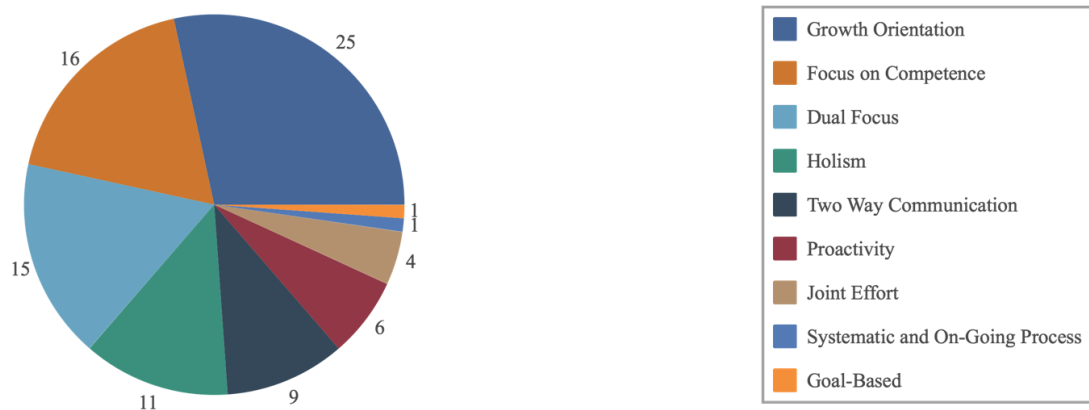


Figure 9: Strategies for Team Respect

Winston and Creamer's (1997) explained that the Growth Orientation strategy relates to both career development and professional development; a supervisor utilizing this strategy helps a person clarify their occupational self-concept. Also, it seeks to work with staff members in a positive way (rather than punitive) when improvement is needed. Lastly, this strategy is dedicated to skill mastery and enhancing motivation while helping staff members to advance.

As the indicator of this strategy, *respect* emerged as the best fit with participant data and the elements of the Growth Orientation strategy. Successful and engaging staff development requires that *respect* be given and received within the supervisory relationship. *Respect* is key to the Growth Orientation synergistic strategy because the supervisor within a dyad must have esteem for their staff member in order to give beneficial assistance and appropriate feedback. In turn, the supervisee within a dyad must respect what their supervisor is attempting to do for them.

The synergistic hat that most relates to the Growth Orientation strategy, and its

core component of *respect*, is the Homburg (see Figure 10). In addition, the Homburg seemed a good fit for the supervisor of Team Respect because he is a driven, imaginative, confident, and charismatic person. His values, beliefs, and assumptions about supervision are characterized by being your best. A formal hat popularized by world leaders, royalty, and a favorite of Winston Churchill, the Homburg is characterized by a deep crown (the vertical portion), a bold center dent, and an upturned brim (Turner, 2011). Together, these three elements make quite an impression; thus, the hat commands respect and symbolizes being your best. The data reveal that Team Respect's supervisor metaphorically wore the Homburg 25 times in the dyad's interview responses.



Figure 10: The Homburg

As a Growth Oriented supervisor, the data show that this supervisor is developmental in nature. To develop new professionals, the supervisor for Team Respect utilizes honesty in his communication style.

I measure my effectiveness by having candid conversations with the people that I

manage. I measure my success based on how far I have been able to get them to grow. So, if I'm getting the people who work for me to grow and they're no longer the person afraid of taking chances, afraid of rejection, afraid of risk, afraid of stepping outside their comfort zone, then there's nothing they can't do. Once your mind expands, it won't go back in the box.

Through honesty, Team Respect's supervisor is keen on developing a supervisee's occupational self-concept by motivating them to develop competencies necessary for success in their career.

Sometimes you're not ambitious enough, meaning you can go the next 10 or 15 years on the same track and be pretty good in an average environment versus pushing the envelope and pushing yourself to be extraordinary even if the environment only calls for average. I constantly reinforce that you want to be excellent enough to put your name on it. If you put your name on it you don't get an opportunity to go back and write subtext. "But I was sick when I wrote it. That was my off day. Don't count this as my best work." You don't get an opportunity to put subtext on a project that bears your name. When your name is on it, someone will say "Oh my God this is good as Coca-Cola. They wrote their name on it! That's as good as Exxon-Mobil!!!"

The supervisor's dedication to growth and being your best enhances a staff member's career development and professional development, which is a critical component of the Growth Orientation strategy. Similarly, Buchanan (2012) found that new professionals who had opportunities for professional development were happier in their positions. Buchanan (2012) recommended that supervisors should invest in the personal and career

development of supervisees in order to retain them in the Student Affairs field.

The supervisee within the Team Respect dyad is in her middle 30s and has worked in various positions throughout her life. This was her second year in this entry-level role. She characterized the relationship with her supervisor as that of brother and sister and she reflected that she has enjoyed their supervisory relationship thus far. The supervisee further reflected that her relationship with her supervisor has made her want to be a stronger professional, which is characteristic of the Growth Orientation synergistic strategy.

The relationship has made me want to be better. It's made me want to think smarter and do things better. I want to learn from mistakes by having teachable moments. I was just doe-eyed and had no idea what was going on during the first big event we had after I began working here. So, my goal for the next big event, which was the one we had this year, was to be better and fix the things that I definitively could fix, start sooner, do more, and just make this a better experience. Which I tried really hard to do and I think I succeeded in a lot of different areas. There were certain things where I was like okay, I messed this up last year. Let's not do this again. Of course, there are things that are unforeseeable, things that you cannot control, such as weather. But just to be better prepared and to be better is how he helps me.

The data show that the supervisee in Team Respect learns from her experiences being supervised and feels these experiences have been positive rather than punitive, which is another component of the Growth Orientation strategy. Team Respect's supervisee reflected on a conversation she recently had with her supervisor:

I made a comment in passing, “I don’t want to be your coordinator forever.” He said “Well, what do you want to do?” I said I want to get into management. He asked if I knew how to get there. When I told him I didn’t, he invited me to come sit down. That’s how it went. He sat me down one day and basically gave me a laundry list of things I need to work on. It wasn’t you’re bad at this, you’re bad at that, work on this, work on that. It was you’re awesome at this and you’re really good at this, and I would work on focusing on doing it. You should get involved in more groups, you should meet people, you should do more things with other professionals, and things of that nature. He said, “If this is where you want to go, I want to help you get there.” Many other bosses wouldn’t do that. A lot of bosses would just be terrified that you’re after their job. He wasn’t like that at all. At the end of the day, it’s just better. You know? I honestly think he’s probably just right now trying to prepare me for what’s coming next. I know that we don’t know what that is yet, but he seems very adamant about helping me get where I need to be. I don’t want to stay here forever. At some point I’m going to plateau and I don’t want to do that. But knowing that he doesn’t want me to do that either makes it better, makes it easier.

Interview data reveal that Team Respect’s supervisor is more than willing to help his entry-level supervisee by insisting that her work represents her best product, by pushing her out of her comfort zone, and by helping her understand what is needed in order for her to professionally advance into higher level positions.

The Focus on Competence Strategy

In addition to wearing the Homburg as a supervisor who focused on the Growth

Orientation of his entry-level professional staff member, study findings reveal that he utilized the *Focus on Competence* strategy of synergistic supervision second most often in the dyad's interview responses. When synergistic supervisors Focus on Competence, they concentrate on identifying their supervisee's current skill levels and devise methods for refinement as well as ways for the supervisee to develop new skills (Winston and Creamer, 1997). The indicator that matched best with the elements of this strategy and the participant data is *learning* because the components behind this strategy are for entry-level staff members to learn work-related skills as well as personal skills, gain knowledge about the profession, and about how to work with other people effectively.

The synergistic hat that represents *learning* and the Focus on Competence strategy is The Fascinator (see Figure 11). Fascinators can be homemade or purchased and are usually designed to be fastened to a clip which attaches to the hair. This is a hat that is purely used for decorative purposes but is also often worn for formal occasions. Beyond decoration, however, fascination with an object or subject contributes to *learning*. In order to truly learn something, a person should be fascinated by it. As the synergistic hat for the Focus on Competence strategy and the learning indicator, The Fascinator is metaphorically worn by professionals in supervisory relationships who are internally and autonomously motivated to learn something new.



Figure 11: The Fascinator

Team Respect's supervisor demonstrated in his first interview that he is a learner due to his flexibility to try new things that perhaps he has not done before. For him, adaptability is an example of being focused on competence.

I'm flexible. If you say yesterday we used to make widgets but today we're making pie, I would say "Hey where's the dough? Where's the pie crust? Let's get it." Versus "Oh man I'm such a good widget maker! Man, I make the best widgets and now they're moving us over here to pies." Because I'm adaptable, you can't come to me with something that's going to rock my world because I think the world is going to move anyway.

Throughout his interview it was evident that the supervisor for Team Respect expected his staff members to be as flexible and as willing to learn new things as he was. He metaphorically wore The Fascinator and challenged his supervisee to learn something new by focusing on her competence. For example:

She would come to me and say, “I’m not really good at photography.” I said, “Okay great, so tomorrow I need you to take the pictures.” She said, “Wait you don’t understand! I just told you I’m not good at photography.” I then responded that if she ever told me she wasn’t good at something, that’s exactly what we’re going to practice.

With *learning* as the indicator for the Focus on Competence strategy, study findings are congruent with Winston and Creamer’s (1997) definition of this strategy, which is for supervisors to dedicate time to helping their staff members learn work-related skills.

In another story of their working relationship, Team Respect’s supervisee gives more examples of how her supervisor wears the metaphorical Fascinator, always wanting her to learn more and develop new skills.

He came to me one day and said, “you have to do the presentation that I always do because I’m going to be out of town.” I went, “Ugh!” Then he asked what I was going to do and how I was going to do it. I said, “I don’t know, you just told me a minute ago. Let me process.” Then, he told me that it didn’t have to be just like his but for me to put it together and then go through it with him. We went through it and it went well! It’s not that I wouldn’t have done it, but it was him saying put it together the way you want to put it together and then let me see it. It wasn’t let me see it so that I can say no, that’s bad. It was more, let me see it so that we’re both on the same page and we’re saying the right stuff. To me, that was okay. It wasn’t just, you know, me here riding a desk and working all the time. You have faith in me to go out and do other things. He literally just shoved me right out of my comfort zone, because I don’t do that on my own.

Team Respect's supervisee appreciated being allowed to put her own spin on the presentation when she had to substitute for her supervisor. Buchanan (2012) recommended that supervisors give their employees their own opportunities to bring their own ideas to fruition.

That was one of those times when I realized I had a good supervisor. He showed that he had faith in me, he trusts me, and isn't worried. He never put pressure on me by calling and checking up on me. He never did any of that. He knew that when he shoved me out of my comfort zone, I would be fine. He had more faith in me than I did. Which was nice. I've never worked for anybody quite like him before, and I've worked a lot. But I've never worked for anybody who, like that presentation thing, literally shoved me out of my comfort zone and then all he wanted was for me to succeed. You don't get that very much. I mean, it wasn't shove her out of her comfort zone and then watch her fail.

Adjei (2014) found that supervisees are encouraged by "a leader who motivates and inspires subordinates, providing meaning and challenge, who subordinates perceive as a person that develops a vision and communicates the vision and goals to become meaningful vehicle to them..." (p. 116). Similarly, the supervisor for Team Respect worked with his supervisee to give her new learning challenges and opportunities. His action in asking her to do something she had never done before while having faith that she would do well was very meaningful to her and is thus another example of the supervisor for Team Respect's Focus on Competence.

The Proactive Strategy

The dyad in Team respect reported that the supervisor also practiced the Proactive

strategy. In fact, analysis of the data showed that Team Respect's supervisor utilized the Proactive strategy more often than any of the other supervisors who participated in this study. Winston and Creamer's (1997) Proactive strategy includes components such as solution and learning-focused information sharing within the dyad, identifying potential work problems early, and the supervisee asking for assistance by informing their supervisor of issues in order to understand various ways to address them.

Fabricated as an alternative to the formal Top Hat, the Bowler Hat (see Figure 12) symbolizes the *Proactive* synergistic strategy. The Bowler metaphorically represents the Proactive strategy because this hat was originally made as a proactive measure to other hats, such as the Top Hat (Turner, 2011) that would often fall off when worn in active situations. The indicator that emerged as the best fit with participant data as well as the components of this strategy is *sharing*. When a supervisor metaphorically wears the Bowler hat, they actively encourage *sharing* to be Proactive in situations that can increase the likelihood of their team member's success.

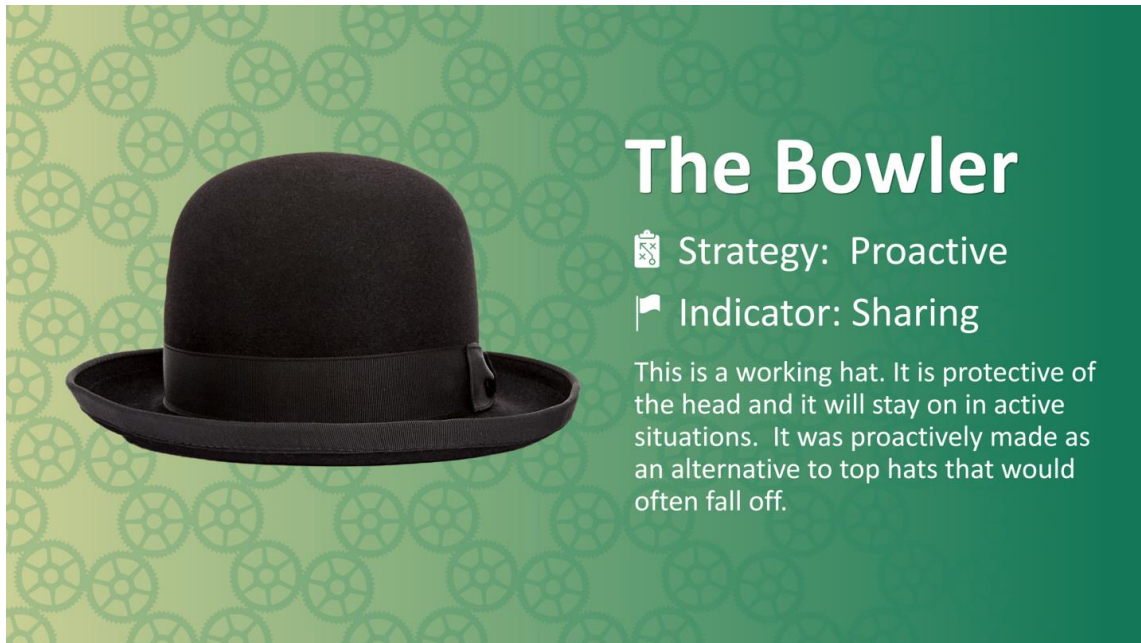


Figure 12: The Bowler Hat

Regarding the Proactive synergistic strategy, Winston and Creamer (1997) elaborated that staff members share with their supervisors about issues coming up in order to understand various ways to address them, as well as to get feedback on how various constituencies may react. Recognizing that asking for help is not a sign of weakness, the supervisor emphasizes development of strategies that will lessen the effect of these problems while allowing the supervisee the autonomy to solve the problem and not allowing the problem to be transferred to the supervisor for solutions. For example, Team Respect's supervisor commented:

We have a list of things we're trying to accomplish. We'll talk several times a day and we really keep each other in the loop on how something is progressing. What we don't want to have happen is wait a week, only to find out there was no movement. So, this constant updating keeps us both in the loop. I learn from her what's going on and how she sees things. When we first started working together,

she saw things in terms of roadblocks. She would tell me about the roadblock and I would ask how she wanted to proceed through it? Often, her solution was to call a bulldozer to move through the roadblock. I'd say that a bulldozer is one solution but then I would ask what else she could do.

With *sharing* as its indicator, the Proactive strategy requires that supervisees inform their supervisors of potential problems early in order for the dyad to determine how to lessen the effects and process how various constituencies may react (Winston & Creamer, 1997). However, the supervisee does not transfer problems to the supervisor for solution and nor does the supervisor take away the supervisee's autonomy to problem solve. This confirms Kingsley's (2008) finding that "second-level professionals need to find a balance between their need to monitor details and providing subordinates autonomy" (p. 147). The supervisor in Team Respect knew that if the supervisee was to become competent, she needs the room and opportunity to work on improving and developing her skills.

The Recognition Strategy

An update to the Synergistic Supervision model (Winston & Creamer, 1997) that emerged from Team Respect's interview data is *Recognition*. Many employees like to be recognized for a job well done. The supervisor for Team Respect mentioned recognition numerous times during his interviews and as previously discussed, the supervisee within this dyad mentioned how much she enjoyed it. The hat worn by supervisors when recognizing supervisees is the Party Hat (see Figure 13). The core indicator that matched best with the intent of this new strategy is *fun*.

When considered together, the three strategies utilized by Team Respect's

supervisor (Growth Orientation/Respect, Focus on Competence/Learning, and Proactive/Sharing), all seem to lead to Recognition in his playbook. The supervisor mentioned Recognition several times throughout his interviews.

One of the things we miss in higher education is people do more for recognition than they do for money. You can't control the money, but you can control the recognition. If you choose to give average recognition when it's your largest commodity then I think we miss the boat. In my role, I really have been conscious of slowing down the staff members. Let's take time to celebrate what we've accomplished as a team, as individuals before we just jump into the next thing, and that's been nice!



Figure 13: The Party Hat

Team Respect's supervisor had many ideas for recognition of employees including sending "thank you" e-mails and cards, having parties that acknowledge when a staff member is about to embark on a personal journey, celebrating milestones, letters of

recognition signed by someone higher in the organization, and even family events. He reflected that it is important to be recognized.

Celebrate people's personal accomplishments because while they are at work for 70% of their day, they still want to accomplish more than an institution is willing to pay for. Celebrate the accomplishments of the university and incorporate how we helped it get there.

In a study on factors that motivate job performance, Hernandez (2010) found that recognition influenced the motivational levels of mid-level Student Affairs professionals. Participants enjoyed recognition from their supervisors in the form of a nomination for an award as well as a simple “thank you” (Hernandez, 2010).

Adult Learning Experiences

In analyzing the data regarding adult learning experiences within the context of supervision, it was revealed that Team Respect reported characteristics of *experiential learning* and *affective learning*.

Experiential Learning

Experiential learning is learning that occurs as a result of our experiences. There are many conceptualizations of experiential learning (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, 2007; Boucouvalas and Lawrence, 2010). For this study's data analysis, a basic concept of experiential learning was utilized: learning that occurs through direct observation and practice. For example, the supervisee from Team Respect reflected during her first individual interview about her first day on the job.

I had worked at a school before, but it wasn't like this. I came here and it was just overwhelming and I never realized how important this department was until I

got here. A lot of the first day was just kind of getting stuff that I needed, like getting a parking pass, getting situated, finding out where my office is, meeting the other people I would be working with. They had a welcome breakfast for me, which was so nice. You know, it was just an introduction. It was a very good, solid introduction. But it was also “Let’s go. We’re doing this, you’re doing this.” It was trial and error. It was just kind of, you know, kind of reading the room. I had to learn the factual side of it and then the human side of it. I had to learn how to speak with parents of students. I had to figure out who I was dealing with and how to talk to them. It was drinking from a fire hose because there was a lot of information.

Stein (2004) argues that experiential learning occurs through the “conscious and unconscious contents of individuals’ minds; individuals’ relationship with others with whom they have a personal link; individuals’ relatedness to others with whom they have a connection but no personal link” (p. 22). The supervisee said she was given large amount of information from the beginning. However, she mostly learned about the types of things she would be doing in her new job through observation, practice, and interacting with others.

The supervisor for Team Respect had some formal management training in a previous profession when working at a restaurant, but he mostly learned the business by building on experiences he already had. Boucouvalas and Lawrence (2010) comment that “one way adults learn is to connect new concepts and theories with something they already know, critically reflecting upon prior experiences in order to make sense of them, thus creating a bridge between the unknown and the known” (p. 39).

I was trained on how to manage when I was working at a restaurant. I shadowed a manager and went to the home office for management training. I was trained there and then from there I just built on that experience. To be honest with you, I built on it from the past. It wasn't so much as management training there, but it was management supervision, where a manager is making certain you don't mess it up but not necessarily saying this is exactly what we're going to do.

The concept of experiential learning stems from Dewey (1938), who proposed that learners connect current experiences to what they already know from past experiences and they are able to see future implications (Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, 2007). Further, Dewey (1938) wrote that there is also an interaction taking place within experiential learning. The learner is interacting with the subject matter. However, for learning to occur, there must also be a communication piece (Boucoulalas & Lawrence, 2010). For example, communication occurred when Team Respect's supervisor shadowed a manager when working at the restaurant:

The general manager took me under his wing and showed me the different things that most people don't see or recognize. It was training through shadowing and following. And then mimicking what that person has done, shared, or produced.

In another example of experiential learning, Team Respect's supervisor reflected on his learning practices through journaling when he worked at the restaurant and then when he worked for himself prior to being in his current position.

When I worked for myself, there was a lot of trial and error. I say that because many times adults don't journal. You journal and chart what you've done this year. Then you can look back at it a year from now and recall how you did it and

ask yourself what should I do this year? In the restaurant business, you do a lot of journaling. You journal because the next person coming after you needs to have a roadmap of what they should expect for the next rodeo, next Valentine's Day, next whatever. So, I began journaling back then before I started working for myself.

Fenwick (2000) writes extensively on the concept of reflection within experiential learning, noting that learners create personal understandings of what they have learned through reflection on their experiences. Journaling is a powerful tool for facilitating reflection on past experiences.

Affective Learning

Learning through reflection on emotions, Affective Learning, can have a formidable impact on adult learning experiences (Dirkx, 2001). "The meanings we attribute to emotional states also inform us about ourselves and the broader social world" (Dirkx, 2001, p. 64). Based on the data collected from interviews, the supervisee from Team Respect was able to find common ground when needing to work effectively with her supervisor after understanding more about herself. For example:

I think an unwritten rule for the way he supervises me definitely is to be blunt if I'm not stepping up to the plate doing what I need to do. Be blunt because literally the best way to get me on the right track is to clearly let me know I'm not doing what I'm supposed to do. It's brash and it's probably not healthy but it's the only way in my mind. You have to be blunt. If I'm not doing something, consistently not doing it, if you call me out I will remember it and I will make sure to not ever feel that way again. He's done that on occasion with me which I

appreciate, probably more than he will know or realize.

In her comments above, the supervisee demonstrates several of the levels of affective learning postulated by Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (1964). These include receiving an instructional message, responding to it, and valuing it. In an effort not to be called out again, the supervisee said she will make sure to correct deficiencies.

As previously discussed, the Supervisor for Team Respect enjoys recognizing staff members for a job well done. Affective learning can also occur through recognition. For example:

I believe when someone has done award winning work, they should know it. So I bought plaques for the student staff and for my coordinator and you could see the glow. You could see the glow on my boss. You could see the glow on the marketing coordinator. And for me, once a you have been recognized, you want to continue doing better work. You want to prove that you're even the person who won the last award.

Team Respect's supervisor's philosophy on recognition lead to his staff glowing with pride when they were appreciated with awards. "Emotions take us to places where words alone cannot, thus elevating us to new levels of knowledge acquisition" (Boucouvalas & Lawrence, 2010, p. 37). The supervisor has seen that as a result of emotion, he can bring his team to a new level of accomplishment because they learned what it feels like to be recognized for award winning work.

Team Respect Summary

The supervisor and the supervisee in Team Respect complemented each other well because the supervisor, who insists on always being your best, was able to provide

challenge and support to the supervisee who was interested in career advancement. The supervisor's orientation toward growth served to assist the entry-level supervisee, who was grateful to be pushed outside of her comfort zone, in becoming more experienced in the Student Affairs field. The supervisor focused on the competence of his supervisee by giving her tasks of increasing responsibility and the supervisee was accepting of his ideas and eager to learn new skills while being encouraged to add her own concepts. The supervisor learned to be a good manager by experientially learning from others and reflecting on action. In addition, the supervisor utilized recognition to bring about affective learning.

IV: TEAM UNDERSTANDING

In my position, my role evolves with the staff members. So that's something that I think is challenging, but also something that I love about my job because I can't always be the same; I have to wear different hats. It depends on what the staff needs. For me it's all about developing relationships with the individuals. I have some who want to be here forever. I may be more of a mentor for them because I'm in a leadership role. I have others who may want to work in employer relations at another type of organization down the line. For them I may be more of a resource. Do you see what I mean? – Supervisor for Team Understanding

A well-prepared mid-level professional in her mid-30's, Team Understanding's supervisor had worked in the field for ten years and was in her sixth year supervising entry-level professional staff members. In her comment above, she describes the need to wear different hats as a supervisor in order to accommodate the needs of a diverse staff. As will become evident in this chapter, the supervisor for Team Understanding focuses on achieving both the goals of the supervisee and the goals of the department and university simultaneously. Her commitment to a systematic approach for supervision is what leads her team to success. *Training* will be introduced as an addition to Winston and Creamer's model for synergistic supervision. The final section of this chapter describes how *situated learning* and *communities of practice* played a role in the supervisor's professional life.

The Dual Focus Strategy

Team Understanding is named for the indicator of the *Dual Focus* strategy of synergistic supervision. Out of the nine strategies for synergistic supervision, the

supervisor in this dyad utilized the Dual Focus strategy most often. The pie chart below (see Figure 14) illustrates the number of times the nine strategies for synergistic supervision were mentioned in Team Understanding's interview data.

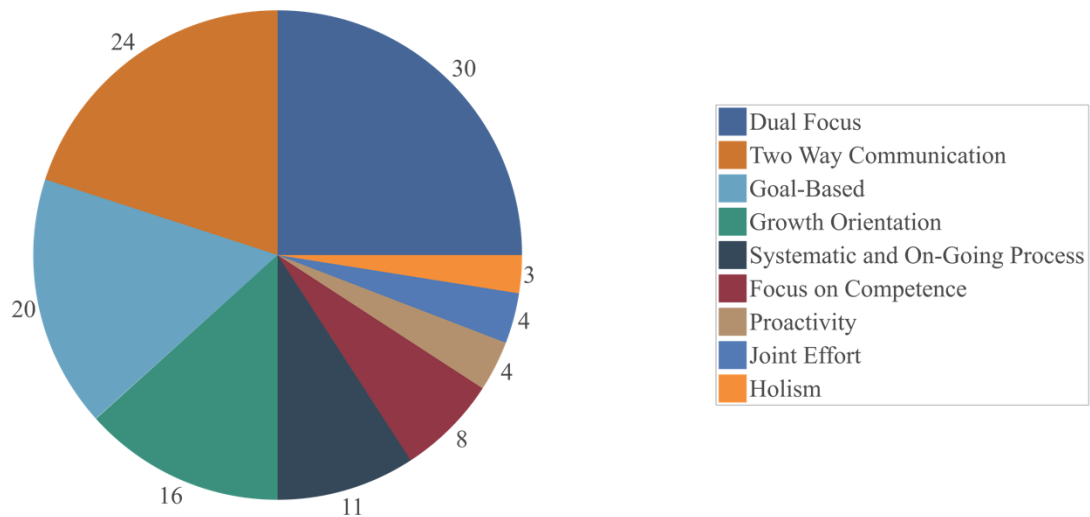


Figure 14: Strategies for Team Understanding

Winston and Creamer's (1997) Dual Focus strategy includes three components. First, the goals of the organization and the goals of the supervisee become connected because the staff member has bought in to the purpose of the organization and perceives their goals as satisfied by the accomplishment of organizational goals. In addition, supervisees have significant influence in defining goals and selecting strategies to reach them. Lastly, supervisees perceive that the supervisor is genuinely interested in them as individuals and will help them accomplish personal and professional objectives.

The synergistic hat that most relates to the Dual Focus strategy is the Beret (see Figure 15), which is a hat with universal appeal that is popular for many different reasons with many populations (Lubitz, 2016). Typically made of felt, the Beret is a round, flat, and a malleable hat. Often associated with political revolutions (Lubitz, 2016), the Beret is metaphorically worn by Dual Focus supervisors because of their ability to merge the

organizational with the personal, thus creating buy-in instead of disgruntlement.

The Beret seemed a good fit for the supervisor of Team Understanding because she is an independent, fair, and encouraging person with a philosophy of supervision that is characterized by strategic thinking and collaboration. Like the Beret, having a supervisor who is understanding, developmental, and collaborative is certainly very appealing to many new professionals in Student Affairs. As the core indicator for this strategy, *understanding* fit best with components of the strategy and participant data. Without *understanding*, the Dual Focus strategy would be very difficult to utilize because the supervisor must be considerate of their staff member's needs, ideas, and passions in order to merge a staff member's goals with those of the university. Similarly, artists who wear the Beret must have an *understanding* of both their own work and the meaning assigned to it by the public.



Figure 15. The Beret

During her first interview, Team Understanding's supervisor explained that since her department gets paid directly through student fees, their goals are completely focused on effective student services. As previously mentioned, one component of the Dual Focus synergistic strategy is that the department's goals and the employee's goals become intertwined. Team Understanding's supervisor metaphorically wears the Beret often because she too believes that goals should connect.

I'm able to now focus more on the, I'm going to say professional development, keeping the staff motivated, encouraged. I consider it important to tie their daily work into not just their professional goals but also personal goals. I feel they should intersect.

Synergistic supervisors operating under the Dual Focus strategy and the *understanding* indicator know the importance of connecting departmental goals and personal goals. They understand how important this is for the supervisee as well.

Just seeing how the personal and professional fall in line is very important. That helps build rapport and it sets expectations. I think that's very important especially in our field. That's the most important thing, just making sure the work we're doing is aligning with what my supervisees want to do and making them the best people they can be.

The supervisor for Team Understanding explained that the entry-level supervisee within this dyad plays a role in making sure the departmental goals connect to effective student services.

One of her professional goals in particular is related to assessing students' needs based on programming, how to make it better, and it ties directly into that piece.

She's also the leader in our assessment committee and it's based on her area of interest so it all ties together. She tracks all of her programming in a document that goes directly to that student fee advisory committee. Then, towards the end of the year we have to present data to the student fee advisory committee and she has a role in the presentation. So, it aligns directly; she is really invested and it's nice to see her make it her own. For me that's a really good example how the main department, the staff member, the university, and student needs connect.

When a new staff member begins working at the institution, Team Understanding's supervisor starts working with the employee where the interview finished. For the Dual Focus strategy of synergistic supervision, supervisees must see that their supervisor genuinely cares about their success by allowing them to make meaningful contributions. Wearing the Beret, Team Understanding's supervisor seeks to get her employee's buy-in from the very beginning by answering questions honestly. The candidate then has a clear understanding of the department's goals and is ready to meet those if they are hired.

I think it comes naturally not just to hire people but to retain them, which is another piece to it. And I take pride in that! Before I even hire them, I have the initial screening interview or the in-person interview and I answer in an honest manner the questions they have. Interviewees ask "What's the challenge you guys have in your organization? Or what are your goals? What is your vision?"

The supervisor for Team Understanding explained that she would pick up where the new staff member's job interview left off. Supervisors who metaphorically wear the Beret

know that supervisees should have significant influence in defining goals and selecting strategies to reach them.

For me the first meeting would build on from back to the interview and our initial contact when we first share expectations, our vision with the department and the university. It's very important. I would continue that conversation. It shouldn't be the first time we're talking about it but now it's an opportunity for them to think about what it looks like for them. At this point they're hired, we're having the first conversation, now okay how can we take this vision and mold it to where it fits with you? And that's an ongoing conversation.

In her use of the Dual Focus strategy, the data reveal that the supervisor for Team Understanding works toward the integration of organizational goals and her entry-level supervisee's goals by thoroughly *understanding* each and neatly merging the two in the form of interest-based professional development that works for both the staff member and the university.

Another component of the Dual Focus strategy is that supervisors let supervisees have influence in defining their goals. This is how they begin to see that their professional goals are similar to those of the department and institution. For the supervisor's part, they must *understand* how important it is to let the process be part of the departmental culture.

I'm happy to say that it's a part of the culture in our office. I ask my staff members "Based on your growth areas, what does my support look like?" It has to come from them. Not me at all. I can have my thoughts based on what I noticed or observed but it really has to come from them. Those are the

conversations I'm having now with the team, which is exciting. I'm happy we're in a space where we can constantly innovate, adjust, and grow. For me that's synergistic leadership, as a leader I also am challenging myself while I'm challenging them to grow. I think it's about growth and ongoing learning.

A supervisor's insight into what their supervisee wants to accomplish is what they will use to create a Dual Focus between the staff member and organization, resulting in the supervisee perceiving their goals as satisfied by the accomplishment of organizational goals. By keeping an employee's personal goals in mind while simultaneously accomplishing institutional goals, a mutual investment is created and the staff member feels valued.

In her mid-20's, Team Understanding's entry-level supervisee was in her second year in a full-time professional position. The relationship between supervisor and supervisee within the Team Understanding dyad is characterized by honesty, trust, and mentoring. The supervisee has appreciated working with her supervisor, whose Dual Focus shines through in their daily interactions.

I want to be the supervisor that she is for me, I want to be the person who can support someone, guide them, and help them develop. I like knowing that I'm helping people. I feel support, this is the best environment that I've ever worked in, so she and then her supervisor, our director, they are both the type of leader or manager that I want to be one day. I'm not trying to be biased here, but I am supported pretty much in everything I do. I know that I can go to either of them, even if it's just a tiny question, at any point in the day, or I can schedule a meeting any time with them. I have really good open communication with them

and with everyone on our staff. We get a lot of interesting appointments with students that there's no way that we could be trained on every single scenario, and so I feel they kind of trained us on how to best serve the students and then we can go and ask whatever questions we have or talk to the group about it and then get back to the student with other resources. I think my goals are definitely ones that aren't just going to be the minimum standards. But they're definitely reachable, especially because I do feel so supported here and that I'm comfortable setting a goal that might be hard to reach because I know that I have people in place that can help me and want me to achieve those goals.

As shown in these data, Team Vision's supervisee is well supported. Because of her supervisor's Dual Focus, the training she has received and that has been on-going has helped her know she is serving students well while also helping her see that her own goals are reachable.

The supervisee in Team Understanding also has enjoyed being recognized for a job well done. This is a way that the supervisor in this dyad takes interest in her supervisee, which is a part of the Dual Focus strategy of synergistic supervision.

I value her coming to my office and talking to me and letting me know that I have done well, whether it's really informal or in one of our monthly meetings. So, I think just either telling me or responding to an email, like "thanks so much" or "this looks awesome," either way but mostly one-on-one.

Team Vision's supervisee has been very pleased with the manner in which she has been supervised. She felt recognized, supported in setting her own goals, and she wanted to one day emulate the type of support she has received for another professional.

The Systematic and On-Going Process Strategy

Winston and Creamer's (1997) Systematic and On-Going Process strategy includes three components related to how regular supervisory meetings should be conducted. First, meetings are not a response to crisis. Rather, they are a routine part of professional life and they have a predictable format. Lastly, supervisory meetings should include a discussion and evaluation of activities since the last session, with reports about actual or predicted trouble spots and a discussion of planned activities.

As the core indicator for the Systematic and On-Going Process strategy, *commitment* fit best with the components of the strategy and participant data. A supervisor utilizing this strategy must have the *commitment* to systematically remain process oriented regarding meetings. As headgear often worn by the military or police, The Peaked Cap (see Figure 16) represents the Systematic and On-Going Process strategy. The Peaked Cap symbolizes process, duty, and safety. In addition, this strategy's core indicator, *commitment*, is an ideology of the armed services and other public safety agencies. Study findings revealed that the leader of Team Understanding wore the Peaked Cap more frequently than any of the other supervisors who participated in this study.

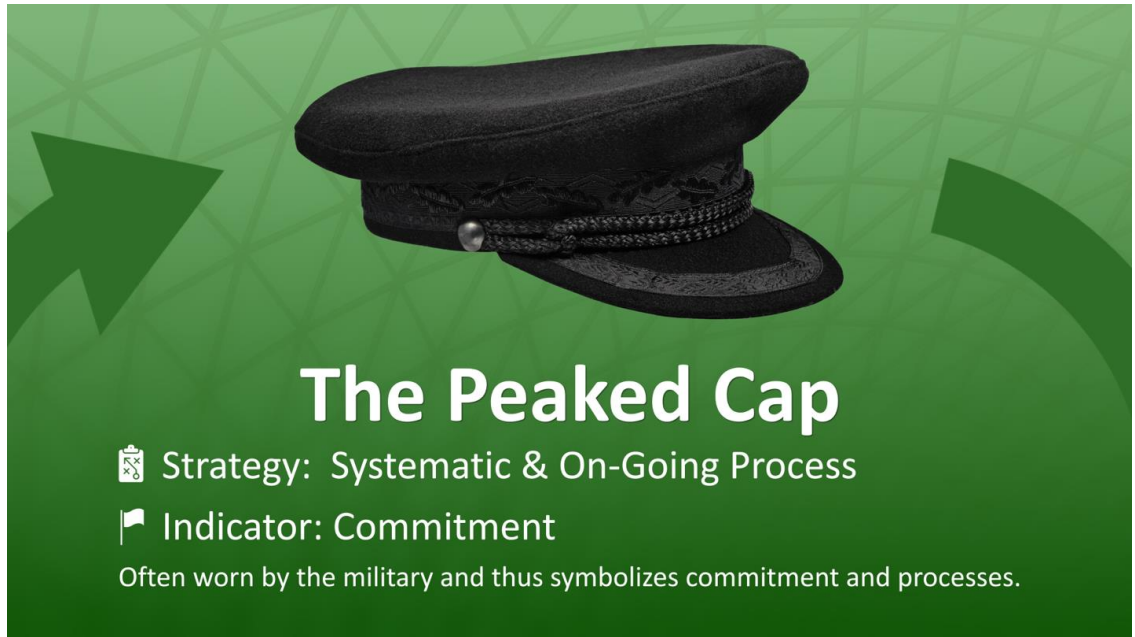


Figure 16: The Peaked Cap

This Systematic and On-Going Process is about establishing routines and confirming that tasks are being completed and that the supervisory relationship is proceeding in a healthy way to ensure the goals of the department are being met. Team Understanding's supervisor further commented on the hats she wears when reflecting on her need to make sure that accomplishments are happening in an effective way.

I do wear that manager hat from time to time when I have to say 'okay we've got some deadlines we need to meet.' This is our timeline; this is where we are. As a team, I'm pulling everyone along.

Team Understanding's supervisor elaborated on how she conducts regular supervision meetings with each of the entry-level staff members she supervises:

We have more of a formal setting and I have monthly meetings with each staff member. They submit a monthly report and there's about four or five different areas. They just pretty much give updates on how job tasks are going, based on

annual goals. Part of that is an exchange of feedback. Then, the format of that is a blend of guided conversation from performance goals, then open to what they want to discuss, share, and talk about. Aside from that, I'm always asking for feedback, too.

These data are characteristic of the Systematic and On-Going process strategy. The supervisor for Team Understanding has a regular format for her one-on-one meetings with her team members. In addition, she remains conscious of this being a time to give and receive feedback.

During her first interview, Team Understanding's supervisee described how her regular meetings with her supervisor usually proceed.

We pull up the report that I sent at the beginning of each month for the previous month. It's a two to three-page document that has the goals and basically things I did each month that relate to them, so programs I put on or different assessments that I completed, and we walk through it. If I have anything I want to explain or talk about more or if she has a question or oh, how did this go, if we haven't gotten a chance to debrief, we just go through it. Then I usually bring in a list of questions or anything else I may have. Sometimes I don't have any and sometimes I have like five. It can be something from 'I'm going take a vacation day next month and wanted to let you know' to 'I had this appointment with this student and I handled it this way... do you have any feedback for me?' We go over that. I always get my questions answered. She'll tell me about new things or new opportunities, whether it's professional development or the need to contact these people for this purpose. I always walk out feeling like I've gained something. For the past couple of

meetings, we've talked through our performance review and how to input everything, because I think things have changed this year. She's walked us through it individually instead of in a group setting because we all learn differently and have different questions, so it's been helpful that she took the time to meet.

Regular and predictable supervision meetings show a *commitment* to getting to know what is happening with each other. This supports Morgan's (2015) finding that mid-level supervisors perceive that synergistic supervision can enhance the *commitment* of staff who report to them. In examining these data, it became clear that the supervisor for this team remains true to Winston and Creamer's components of the Systematic and On-Going Process strategy. She regularly holds supervision meetings that are predictable and productive for both individuals in the dyad. This supports Shupp (2007) who found that supervisory meetings and interactions should be meaningful.

The Training Strategy

An addition to the Synergistic Supervision model (Winston & Creamer, 1997) that emerged from Team Understanding's interview data is *Training*. With so many competencies, perceptions, and expectations, supervisors often (rightly) fall under intense scrutiny. Saunders et al., (2000) comment that there is little supervision training and development for mid-level staff members, but these are the professionals who most need the most training due to the low experience levels of those they manage. Regarding past supervisory experiences, Stock-Ward and Javorek (2003) make the same observation that a supervisor's current practice is often informed by that of someone who once supervised them, good or bad.

In his theory of adult education, Malcolm Knowles proposed that adults are

internally motivated to learn, rather than compelled by an external factor (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). While Winston and Creamer's (1997) model is certainly a useful tool for supervisory training, be it formal or otherwise, neither formal nor informal training is explicitly mentioned. Consequently, training for mid-level professionals who supervise entry-level staff members would be most valuable for those who pursue the knowledge on their own.

The Hat worn by supervisors who are either receiving training on their own or teaching their staff members about supervision is the Doctoral Tam (see Figure 17). This hat is a symbol of the highest level of educational attainment. The core indicator that emerged from these data is *teaching*. As there are many forms of learning, there are also many forms of teaching. Teaching can be as formal as in a traditional lecture-style classroom experience, or perhaps a more facilitated-style workshop, or as simple as role modeling.

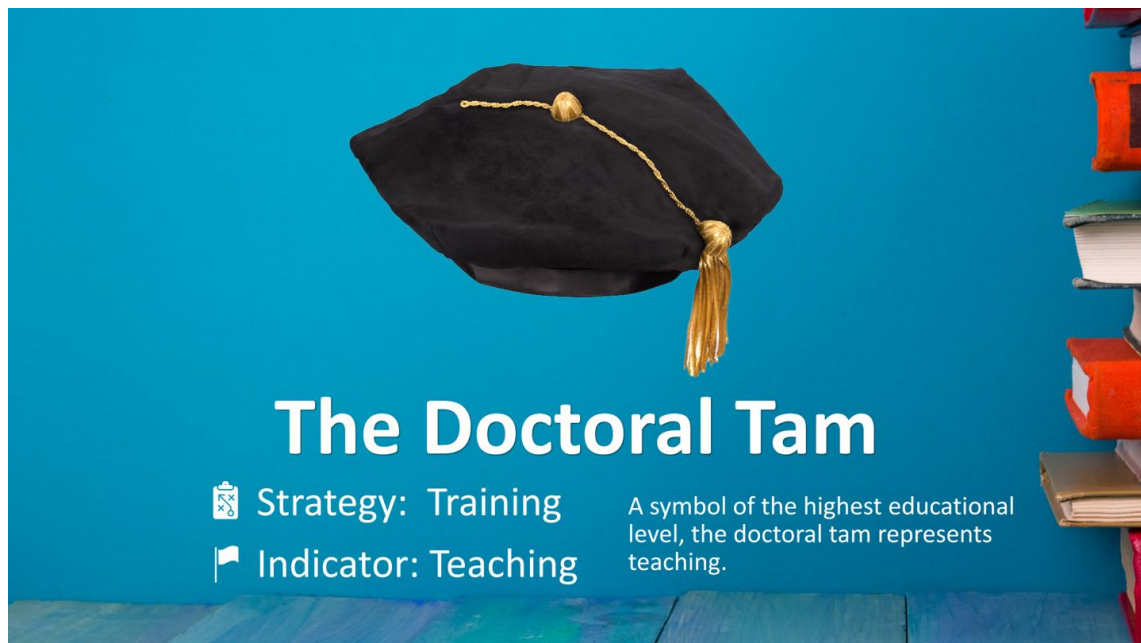


Figure 17: The Doctoral Tam

The problem of not having supervisors who role model good supervisory skills can be extremely difficult to eliminate due to the high number of supervisors who have never been trained. Tull (2009) observes that many supervisors have had few role models who were competent in the area of supervision, nor have they had much training in the art of supervision. Moreover, Perillo (2011) comments that new middle management supervisors who did not have supervisors who were good role models in the supervision area are not able to create effective learning-oriented environments for their staff members.

Team Understanding's supervisor has actually participated in formal training in the form of a series of workshops, and she believes it has been of assistance in her journey as a supervisor.

I had that pre-management training experience, the formal experience, the formal training. On-boarding procedures and processes go onto that, so more of the administrative, the technical performance appraisals, and the human resources processes. That's so important, so I've had formal training and I'm thankful to say. I know that's not always the case, too, that it's really helped inform my work I do here. I feel well-rounded and even the HR policy procedures and things like that.

As long as adult professionals in the workplace are not compelled to participate, it would seem that a plan for supervision training would be a worthwhile addition to Winston and Creamer's (1997) model for supervision. Training mid-level supervisors on the art of effective supervision is uncommon (Janosik & Creamer, 2003; Scheurmann, 2011; Shupp & Arminio, 2012). Thus, unless someone were curious about models for supervision in

Student Affairs and did the research on their own, where would they get the training they need to be effective in what is arguably the most important part of their jobs?

Adult Learning Experiences: Situated Learning

In analyzing the study findings regarding the learning experiences within the context of supervision, it was revealed that the participants in Team Understanding often engaged in *Situated Learning*. Synergistic supervision in the Student Affairs field is a social activity. At least two people are involved at all times. Similarly, adult learning can take on a social form. A type of learning that emphasizes the social aspect of adult education is *situated learning* (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In addition to emphasizing social aspects of learning, situated learning refers to how professionals learn their skills. “In situated learning, the quality of learning is dependent on the quality of the relationships among the members of the group” (MacKeracher, 2004, p. 140).

Situated learning is related to the needs of learners, whose knowledge and skills are learned within the contexts of everyday situations. “Learning is essentially a matter of creating meaning from the real activities of daily living” (Stein, 1998, p. 2).

Supervisors of professional staff can situate meaning making and skill development within their staff member’s actual jobs. Team Understanding’s supervisee reflected on how her supervisor planned her first day on the job:

It was almost a year ago. For my first day she was out of town. But she had created a training schedule broken down pretty much by every hour for the first two weeks. My first day, I toured the office, met everyone again or people that I hadn’t met, and then I spent the whole day talking with someone with whom I would be working closely. It wasn’t a lot of just sitting at my desk reading a

binder, which was good.

Having a schedule and interacting with a fellow team member helped this supervisee become acclimated to her new environment. This confirms Fenwick (2003), who argued that knowledge comes from the process of participating in a situation and people learn when they interact with a community. “The physical and social situations in which learners find themselves and the tools they use in that experience are integral to the entire learning process” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 178).

A concept that is typically paired with situated learning is *communities of practice*. In this situation, groups of individuals socially learn together while performing similar functions (Stein, 1998). Communities of practice capitalize on the social nature of adult learning (Stein & Imel, 2002), providing a mechanism for adults to learn *with* each other through shared understanding instead of *from* one another.

During her first interview, Team Understanding’s supervisor reflected on a formal management training experience she had. She shared that she grew close to the individuals who were in training with her.

The training I was involved in was ongoing, so it didn't stop. If, at the time, I had some very tough performance issues, I was able to work with others who could share templates and examples with me, and I could have someone to pick up the phone and call. It was helpful just having my little go-to team. You know, call someone for this and call another person for that. It was pretty cool because at that time there was myself and maybe one or two other new directors who were also first timers in their positions, so we were able to go through experiences together. That was really, really helpful. I really value that even from here on

out, that's something I would try to model and take with me, just making sure my own team has their little network you know.

As a result of her formal management training, a community of practice arose for Team Understanding's supervisor. This investment in one another is a part of the situated learning process. The supervisee in Team Understanding also said that working with others has been helpful:

I feel it's something that really comes through in our office. Because we each have so much going on individually, knowing someone else can help out is so much easier than the alternative. We just had some of our biggest events of the semester and I just feel like in some situations it could have been a day that was terrible and stressful and everything was on me. But knowing that we could collaborate is a common theme in my office.

In a 2004 study, Machles (2004) found that participants learned their jobs through interacting with each other. The activities associated with performing a job serve as situations wherein knowledge is gained and learning occurs.

In situated learning, being a sounding board for colleagues builds trust and shows a willingness from everyone to commit to communication and growth. The supervisor for Team Understanding often reaches out to staff members for advice. She learns how to help interns who work in her department by asking the professional staff for feedback.

I focus on our graduate internship program. For me it is very important to get feedback from the team based on their experiences and what they have picked up on about the interns. It's been very important for me to, I'm going to say use our community approach, to inform the intern of examples of needed development.

In situated learning, the learning process is related to the settings in which perceptions were made (Hansman, 2001). For example, during supervision meetings with the interns, Team Understanding's supervisor can help them learn together in a community of practice through understanding who each other is, how they function as individuals, and how they can function as a team.

Adults remember what they have learned in relation to one another in Situated Learning because they actively engage in a group negotiation of meaning rather than learning from one individual who transfers knowledge (Stein & Imel, 2002). During her second interview, upon reflecting on the participant workshop that I conducted on her campus, Team Understanding's supervisor noted that she felt validated by the workshop:

It made me feel really good but it also made me more aware in terms of, there's areas I have room for growth. I want to make sure that if I do trainings like this and have these opportunities, that I share the information with staff. I think that's very important I really enjoyed being in the small setting, too and to hear from others about things that they're doing. We had common themes, but different perspectives too. Some of it was clear for us and others were like no, I don't see it that way. We put all the strategies in a certain order of importance my partner and I were very similar and he's someone on campus I highly respect who always has good energy. He loves what he does. So, for me, that was validating to see that in someone else. And just to hear it around the room. That was really cool.

The workshop created a community of practice in which the participants can engage in the future to touch base with each other about synergistic supervision. Additionally, the

supervisor for Team Understanding intends to share what she learned with other staff members.

Team Understanding Summary

Together, the Team Understanding dyad engaged in a working relationship characterized by *understanding* and *commitment*. The supervisor artfully intertwined the goals of the supervisee with the goals of the university and the supervisee was grateful to the point of wanting to emulate her supervisor's capacity for creating a supportive work environment. As the supervisor creates a sense of structure that also values the personal and professional goals of supervisees while still meeting the needs of the department. This sense of understanding and the confidence that can be found in structure can prove important as new professionals engage in moments of situated learning. While training and planning provide some preparation, often learning can occur in the moment. Being confident in the goals of the organization and provide direction as the experience allows for learning that could not be produced in training scenarios. Providing safe spaces for feedback and development encourages supervisors and supervisees alike to focus on personal as well as institutional improvement.

V: TEAM TRUST

Don't be afraid to be vulnerable because it helps to build trust and if you don't have trust, nothing's going to work. – Supervisor for Team Trust

In her late 30s, the supervisor for Team Trust was in her first year supervising an entry-level professional and had been working full-time in the field for six years. She is a conscientious mid-level professional who deeply cares for the student population she serves and who enjoys learning and seeing those around her succeed. As she succinctly stated above, vulnerability is a key to building trust in relationships. As Team Trust's story develops in this chapter, it will be shown that this supervisor utilizes *trust* to encourage Two-Way Communication with her supervisee. Additionally, her *empathetic* nature powerfully contributes to the successful use of the Holism synergistic strategy. The final section of this chapter demonstrates how both the supervisor and supervisee engaged in *informal/self-directed learning* in their professional lives.

The Two-Way Communication Strategy

Team Trust is named for the indicator of the *Two-Way Communication* strategy of synergistic supervision. Out of the nine strategies for synergistic supervision, the supervisor in this dyad utilized Two-Way Communication strategies the most often. The pie chart below (see Figure 18) illustrates the number of times the nine strategies for synergistic supervision were mentioned in Team Trust's interview data.

Winston and Creamer's (1997) Two-Way Communication strategy includes three components. First, supervisees feel free to give supervisors direct and honest feedback. Second, the supervisor often reflects on if they are setting up situations to make supervisees feel comfortable (or uncomfortable) giving feedback. Lastly, supervisees

allow supervisors to learn about them personally as well as details of daily work life without being defensive. The core indicator that emerged from interview data as well as the components of this strategy was *trust*. Successful use of the Two-Way Communication strategy is dependent on a high level of *trust* within the dyad. Without *trust*, meaningful, reliable, and practical communication between individuals cannot occur. In a study by David (2010), two thirds of participants felt that *trust* was an important part of learning good supervisory skills.

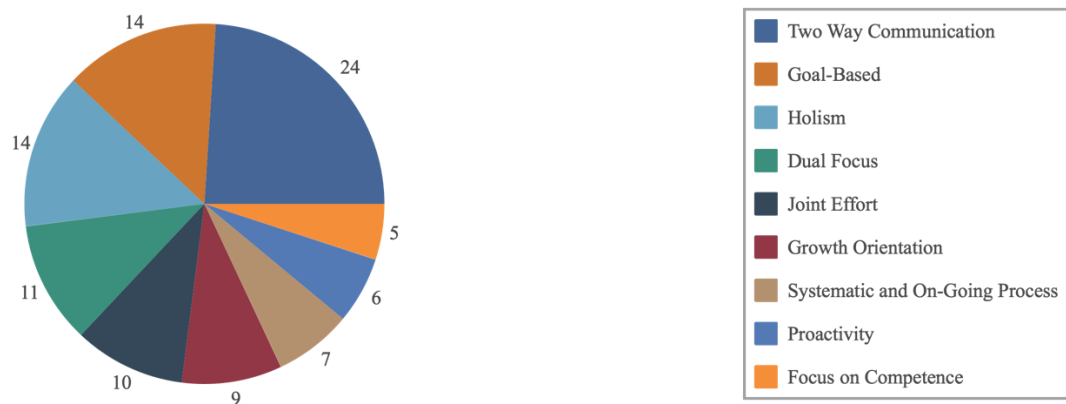


Figure 18: Strategies for Team Trust

The synergistic hat that most relates to the Two-Way Communication strategy, and its core component of *trust*, is the Newsboy (see Figure 19). In addition, the newsboy seemed a good fit for the supervisor of Team Trust because she is a conscientious, adaptable, and precise person. Her values, beliefs, and assumptions about supervision are all very much characterized by the idea of balance in work. The Newsboy is an aptly named hat because the news is about communication, a balance of information from all sides of the story, and trust. This hat was often worn by young people who sold newspapers in the early 20th century (Turner, 2011). The Newsboy is made up of different panels of fabric that are cut into triangles and are gathered at the

top with a button that conceals the meeting point of the panels (Peterson, 2016).

Winston and Creamer (1997) note that Two-Way Communication is a critical strategy of synergistic supervision. Both parties in a supervisory relationship become interpersonally involved as they send and receive information and feedback. This exchange strengthens the dyad. Similarly, the button at the top of a Newsboy hat brings the panels of the headgear together. Based on data collected from individual interviews, Team Trust's supervisor metaphorically wore the Newsboy 24 times in the dyad's interview responses.



Figure 19: The Newsboy

One of the components of the Two-Way Communication strategy is for supervisees to allow their supervisors to learn the details of daily work life. The supervisor for Team Trust has been working to embrace trusting her supervisee in her daily practice.

Well, it's been challenging for me, but it's only been I think four months. I used to do everything except for the little bit that the graduate assistant would do, and then I was over all of the other student employees. Now I've shifted a lot of my responsibilities to the new coordinator. Balancing how much to give her and then also trusting that I don't know exactly what's going on with everything in the office anymore because other people are doing things and, like I said, just trusting that it's getting done and knowing the quality is going to be there has been challenging. It's a little bit of an unknown territory for me, I'm just getting used to it. But it's working out okay.

Wearing the Newsboy, the supervisor has learned that the *trust* she places in her supervisee is paying off and she has bought in to the idea of letting go of some of her former responsibilities so that the supervisee in the Team Trust dyad can run with them.

It's a pretty open relationship. It feels like we trust each other right away. So, it feels like it's very trusting and open and safe to come and express feedback, whether it's positive or something that needs to be improved on. I've gotten to the point where I just have a lot of faith in when I'm telling her she can do this and letting it go so that I can just focus on other things. I feel a whole lot more freedom to focus on the things that I need to focus on because I know she's is going to do that whole piece.

In examining the data, it is clear that Two-Way Communication has influenced this dyad. The supervisor characterizes the dyad's relationship as an open, supportive one in which there is a high level of *trust*. Furthermore, the supervisor is excited about the new ideas the new staff member has brought into the department.

I'm surprised by the different ideas that come from her. She's very competent. I made a very good choice in hiring her and she has many great ideas that I would have never thought of. That's exciting to me for the department to have a different lens and, you know, other new energies coming in. So, it's very exciting to me.

Two-Way Communication enables supervisees to allow supervisors to learn about the details of daily work life. In wearing the Newsboy, Team Trust's supervisor has learned about new ideas that are exciting to her and she has appreciated the new perspectives the supervisee has brought.

As is important in the Systematic and On-Going Process Strategy discussed in Chapter IV, Team Trust's one-on-one supervisory meetings are intentionally structured. They always talk about student concerns, questions they have for each other, and upcoming programs. However, they also set aside time for feedback for one another, which is very indicative of the Two-Way Communication strategy for synergistic supervision.

We talk about praise and then areas of improvement, and that goes both ways. Her for me and me for her. When she gives me feedback on what I can improve on, then I learn from that too and so then I can make a change. In fact, when we had a little midyear retreat, we did this whole structured thing about saying positives and negatives about everybody and it was an awesome experience because you know, it really opened up everybody to how we could be better at who we are.

Team Trust's supervisor accounts for differences in the preferences of how supervisees

like feedback through Two-Way Communication.

Having one-on-one meetings on a regular basis, you know, just weekly, and at the beginning, really setting what are your expectations of me, what are my expectations of you, and being really clear about that communication. And also, not only what the expectations are, but how do you like feedback. You know, and so getting all of that dialogue going at the beginning and kind of setting the stage for how people want to be interacted with. Some people prefer not to be told in the moment or perhaps they would prefer to receive an e-mail so they can process it first and then we'll talk later. You know, everybody is different. I think that having those conversations and understanding what works for everybody first is really important and then continuing that dialogue by meeting one-on-one.

The supervisee within the Team Trust dyad, who is in her first year as a full-time professional staff member, has appreciated her experience being supervised within a trusting and communicative relationship.

My director is very helpful in the fact that she is on my team. I know she's on my team, she has my back. It is an amazing feeling as a new professional, to know that the person who hired you believes in you and they're not going to throw you under the bus. It is an amazing, amazing feeling.

It was evident that Team Trust's supervisee is comfortable giving feedback to her supervisor due to the openly communicative environment that has been established.

Additionally, the supervisee recognized that giving feedback to her supervisor would not have been a simple task without *trust*. Team Trust's supervisee further commented on

the trusting relationship they have and the environment that has been created for direct and honest feedback.

We have built it where we each are able to give each other positive feedback and constructive criticism and so that's really nice having a built-in space to do that. Every time that I've ever given her constructive criticism, even some of my more harsher ones, she's always very open to wanting to understand or to adjust or appreciative of me bringing it up, so I think that creating that place that you can do that to have open communication and honesty is huge. It would've probably caused me anxiety but I didn't have to struggle through any of those things because we had that honesty and trust already built.

The data reveal that the supervisee, as a result of working in a trusting environment, feels comfortable giving her supervisor direct and honest feedback. This exchange is an indispensable part of their interpersonal Two-Way Communication and thus their professional relationship.

For the Two-Way Communication strategy, Winston and Creamer (1997) note that *trust* enables supervisees to allow supervisors to learn about them personally. In analyzing the data from the supervisee's first interview, it became evident that the Newsboy hat is worn effectively by her supervisor. In addition, the supervisee noted that information is shared from both sides:

In our one-on-ones, I enjoy hearing about what she has to say, about her weekend or the things going on in her life. I actually enjoy that a lot better because I feel I have a better understanding of not just what's on her work plate but also her life plate. And then with me I feel, you know, I said I'm an open person about my life

but it almost gives me a time to reflect, to remember “oh yeah- I do have this going on and I guess this is a burden even though I'm not thinking about it right now it's a thing that's happening.”

In examining the interview data, it became clear that this team demonstrated a high level of interpersonal *trust*. The team sometimes discusses things that are going on in their lives outside of the workplace. This supports Buchanan's (2012) finding that participants enjoyed getting to know their supervisors personally and appreciated their supervisors making the effort as well. These trusting relationships led to higher job satisfaction for the Student Affairs professionals in that study.

Two-Way Communication and *trust* can also help an entry-level professional navigate campus politics. While the story cannot be completely repeated here in order to protect the participant's identities, Two-Way Communication facilitated a solution for a problem that occurred at the participant's university.

I very much have the mentality of we are here for the students and we are all doing the best for our students. (But when I came up with a program) and somebody in another department was like, “Whoa, that's not what we do. Why are you doing that?” So, for me, the biggest challenge has been navigating the politics and who needs to be in the know about what we're doing and what is new.

Team Trust's supervisee trusted her supervisor and did not feel the need to be defensive about the issue that arose from a controversial program. She was grateful to her supervisor for her help in solving the problems that arose. This confirms Buchanan's (2012) finding that new professionals tend to stay in the field longer when they have

assistance understanding and navigating the political environment on university campuses.

The participants on Team Trust felt free to give each other direct and honest feedback and to learn about each other personally. Trusting each other contributed to a successful supervisory relationship that was built on interpersonal Two-Way Communication.

The Holism Strategy

In addition to wearing the Newsboy as a supervisor who most-often utilized the Two-Way Communication synergistic strategy, study findings reveal that Team Trust's leader often operated under Winston and Creamer's (1997) *Holism* strategy. When synergistic supervisors practice Holism, they are helping staff members become more effective in their jobs and personal lives. They know it impossible to separate people and their attitudes and beliefs from their professional positions and they also know that who one is determines to a large extent the kind of job one is able to do (Winston & Creamer, 1997).

The hat that represents the Holism strategy is the Wide-Brimmed Floppy hat (see Figure 20). This hat is designed to cover more than just the head; thus, it provides a holistic amount of shade for the person wearing it. Additionally, the brim is floppy and consequently provides a slight covering of the eyes. This slight covering metaphorically represents that a synergistic supervisor grasps a good balance between the personal and the professional.

The core indicator of *empathy* emerged as the best fit with the elements of the Holism strategy as well as interview data. A supervisor must be *empathic* in order to

properly support the whole person they are supervising in both their job and personal life. Supervisors must understand that who a person is and what occurs with them outside of the workplace both determine the type of job they are able to do. *Empathetic*, holistic supervisors provide a type of support that makes an employee feel valued.



Figure 20: The Wide-Brimmed Floppy Hat

The Holism strategy is about supporting the whole person, not just the professional who comes to the office every day, but also the person who has a life outside of work. The data from her first interview shows that the supervisee within Team Trust is open to this idea of sharing experiences or problems outside of the workplace with her supervisor if needed.

I think there's something to be said about creating that space where if you know you're being supported, then you can make adjustments without feeling the guilt or letting things eat you up. Doing a check-in on like, so how are you doing, how are you managing this load, even just saying is there anything that, you know, is

happening outside of the office that you need to talk about or want to talk about. Not asking people about their mental health but giving people the space and support to let them know that if they are struggling with things, that that is okay, you are human, and how as an office can we help, do we need to take something a little off of your plate.

During her second interview, Team Trust's supervisee reiterated the concept of holism in the supervision area.

We're pretty open people about what's going on and like going ahead and adding that into our agenda so we can purposely be saying like how are you and how is outside of work affecting you. We both have this space to be able to add that in without feeling like we're making up excuses or you know, oh that shouldn't be affecting my work. We want to make an intentional effort to add that into what we do. Because of my personality I really enjoy the holistic area, so being able to bring all of you to work but then also making sure that people are feeling valued and their voices are heard and they're not just here to be a workhorse but really like add value in all ways.

The supervisor for Team Trust said that both she and her supervisee enjoyed learning about Winston and Creamer's (1997) supervision strategy of Holism during the participant workshop. During her second interview she mentioned that they have since added a "whole person" update to periodic staff meeting agendas.

Adult Learning Experiences: Informal Learning

Much of the adult learning data collected from Team Trust's interviews is considered *informal learning*. Informal learning "refers to the experiences of everyday

living from which we learn something” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 24). It is most often self-directed (Watkins & Marsick, 2009) which occurs through everyday experiences (Illeris, 2004), and can often assist learning in the workplace (Ginsberg & Wlodkowski, 2010). Schugurensky (2000) best explains informal learning:

Informal learning, then, takes place outside the curricula provided by formal and non-formal educational institutions and programs. In the concept of 'informal learning' it is important to note that we are deliberately using the word 'learning' and not 'education', because in the processes of informal learning there are not educational institutions, institutionally authorized instructors or prescribed curricula. It is also pertinent to note that we are saying 'outside the curricula of educational institutions' and not 'outside educational institutions', because informal learning can also take place inside formal and non-formal educational institutions. In that case, however, the learnings occur independently (and sometimes against) the intended goals of the explicit curriculum. (p. 2)

Schugurensky (2000) suggests that there are three forms of informal learning. First, *self-directed learning* is intentional and conscious. For example, prior to the entry-level supervisee in Team Trust beginning her position, Team Trust’s supervisor made the decision to attend a leadership skills workshop because she experienced some challenges in a previous role.

I really don't have any formal supervision training, but I did go to a leadership training to see if I was lacking any skills because I did make some mistakes in a position where I was second in command earlier in my life. I made some mistakes with not getting buy-in from employees and not promoting group effort. So, I

think I learned some lessons from that work experience.

David (2010), who studied how supervisors in Student Affairs begin to learn supervisory skills, found that “Comparison within and across interviews revealed the nature of learning to be informal and included self-directed learning and experiential learning” (p. 126). Participants in David’s (2010) study both attended workshops and reflected on past experiences with supervisors to learn managerial skills.

The second type of informal learning for Schugurensky (2000) is *incidental learning*. For example, in her first interview, Team Trust’s supervisee said that she first found her career passion through the everyday experiences of volunteering in another area.

I really became involved in the alumni association after I graduated. The more that I was working with students through a mentor program with the alumni association, the more that I realized I wanted to do this type of work. I then eventually took leadership positions with the association. For one of those positions, I was co-chairing with someone who had their Ph.D. in higher education. That was kind of the first time I realized that Student Affairs was a career.

The supervisee *incidentally* learned that she had a passion for working with traditional college students. There was no teacher nor formal curriculum with regulations. In another example of *incidental* learning, Team Trust’s supervisee had a realization as a graduate assistant while she was earning her master’s degree in Student Affairs.

I had to learn how to stick up for myself when I was a graduate student. I was coming from the mindset of other people are more experienced than me. But

through that experience, I learned that while no, I haven't been in this field for so long, that I do have valuable contributions to make. If I didn't know how to stick up for myself, I don't think I would feel as valued at work. But sometimes if you don't recognize your ability to stick up for yourself in the first place, then that can kind of interfere with your own sense of value.

Through critical reflection and self-awareness, the supervisee *incidentally* realized she had the ability to be assertive as a by-product of not feeling valued due to having less experience in the field.

The third type of informal learning for Schugurensky (2000) is *tacit learning*. This is a type of learning that is neither intentional nor conscious (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007). For example, Team Trust's supervisor has had both good and bad supervisors throughout her career:

I've had really good supervisors who were concerned about my professional development and supported me in my efforts and where I wanted to grow. I've also had supervisors who were horrible. They were micro-managers, territorial as far as how they ran the area, and didn't want to collaborate with other departments. I just saw how limiting that was and how the micro-management really squashed people's morale. So that is how I learned what to do and what not to do.

While Team Trust's supervisor neither intentionally nor consciously sought out examples of good supervision and bad supervision, she *tacitly* learned how to properly supervise through informal experiences. Over time, this supervisor realized what she had learned about supervision.

Through their everyday informal learning experiences, the participants in Team Trust attended a supervision workshop that brought about reflection outside of the explicit curricula (self-directed learning), found a career (incidental learning), and began to understand past occurrences that resulted in teaching supervision skills (tacit learning).

Team Trust Summary

Through the use of open, honest communication the supervisor and the supervisee valued the professional and personal supports and challenges each faced. Being able to relate to each other holistically opened up a sense of mutual understanding, safety and trust that then emboldened both to take risks and feel confident in their work. Knowing that hiccups or errors would be approached with empathy and a developmental focus in mind allowed the supervisee to operate without the anxiety a lack of trust might have contributed. As both the supervisee and supervisor exhibited vulnerability and a willingness to allow the other to see into their lives outside of just work promoted a connection of trust that not only benefited each other professionally, but the work of the department as well. These are key factors when considering the successfully implementation of synergistic supervision practices. The learning experiences that affected the professional lives of both members of the dyad were informal and self-directed in nature.

VI: THE PATH AHEAD: A SUPERVISION BEST PRACTICES MODEL

This dissertation contributed to the body of knowledge about the utilization of synergistic supervision in practice and about the adult learning experiences reported by participants within the context of supervision. The study benefits administrators in the field of Student Affairs in Higher Education seeking to improve supervision practices for entry-level professionals and who want to understand the ways of knowing associated with supervision.

Using Winston and Creamer's (1997) Synergistic Supervision model as an existing framework, data were brought to life through the narratives of the supervisors and supervisees participating in the study as they reflected on best practices for working together. Their adult learning experiences emerged through analysis of two sets of qualitative interviews and one workshop about synergistic supervision. The eight participants consisted of four teams of mid-level supervisors and their four entry-level supervisees who all worked at one university in various departments: Team Vision, Team Respect, Team Understanding, and Team Trust. This concluding chapter will discuss highlights from the study, consider recommendations for practice, and address contributions to the literature. The chapter will end with ideas for future research and concluding thoughts.

Study Highlights

At its core, synergistic supervision is about *both* supervisor *and* supervisee; thus, the present study focuses on the actions of the supervisor participants and the effect those actions had on their employees. Eight individuals participated in this case study about the use of synergistic supervision practices within a Student Affairs division at one

university. The group was made up of four mid-level supervisors and their four entry-level supervisees (see Table 4). The four dyads all worked in different departments at the institution. In addition to supervision experiences, the present study found many adult learning experiences emergent in the data.

Table 4

Summary of Teams

Dyad	Predominant Synergistic Strategy	Assigned Indicator/ Team Name	Metaphorical Hat	Example of Learning
1	Goal-Based	Vision	The Sun Visor	Workplace
2	Growth Orientation	Respect	The Homburg	Experiential and Affective
3	Dual Focus	Understanding	The Beret	Situated
4	Two-Way Communication	Trust	The Newsboy	Informal

Based on each supervisor's predominant synergistic strategy, I assigned each team a name based on a *synergistic indicator*, which is the core quality which must be present in each strategy for it to be fully realized. In addition, I assigned each supervisor a *synergistic hat*, which is a hat the supervisor metaphorically wears when practicing their predominant synergistic strategy.

None of the eight participants in this study had heard of the synergistic model for supervision before, yet it has been confirmed as a key to success (Saunders, et al., 2000; Tull, 2006; Shupp & Arminio, 2012). However, all four of the mid-level participant supervisors in this study were very successfully practicing pieces of the model in their daily work. Analysis of interviews revealed that the four mid-level participant supervisors separately utilized one to two of the nine strategies for synergistic supervision

more often than other strategies. There were four teams with four distinct styles and his section will present the highlights of the findings for each team.

Team Vision Highlights

The synergistic strategy used most often by the supervisor for Team Vision was the Goal-Based strategy and its core indicator of *vision*. Study findings revealed that the supervisor for Team Vision was Goal-Based and that the supervisee was Goal-Based as well. The supervisor's Goal-Based orientation complimented the supervisee's desire to set goals for the future directions of his career. In looking to this dyad, other Student Affairs professionals should take note of the supervisor's ability to plan for the future and the supervisee's ability to be flexible as an entry-level staff member. A major characteristic of Team Vision together as a dyad was their mutual desire to plan for the future and to create a strong team. Key to this characteristic was the exemplary leadership of the supervisor who knew from the beginning that she would have to make adjustments to plan for an entry-level staff member coming on-board. Team Vision emerged as a powerful partnership that worked very well together.

Workplace learning played a strong role in the supervisor's efforts to be prepared for her new position as a supervisor of an entry-level staff member. In addition, the workplace learning orientation of Team Vision's supervisor contributed to the addition of Socialization and its core indicator of *planning* to Winston and Creamer's (1997) model for supervision. As a professional development opportunity, professionals outside of this study can participate in unstructured learning activities centered around how to set expectations for the present and future and then how to be intentional about keeping them up to date and at the center of working relationships.

Team Respect Highlights

The synergistic strategy used most often by Team Respect's supervisor was the Growth Orientation strategy and its core indicator of *respect*. One of the amazing things about this supervisor was his drive to always produce the best work. In having forthright conversations with the staff member's professional development in mind, the supervisor for Team Respect was able to effectively capture the essence of the Growth Orientation strategy by helping his supervisee see the great things they were capable of accomplishing as a team. A learning-centered individual, the supervisee was appreciative of feedback and support that her supervisor periodically offered and she reflected that working together was a learning experience because he would often push her out of her comfort zone. In Team Respect can be found an ideal supervisory relationship for the Growth Orientation strategy. Reflecting on action was crucial for this team. Supervisors of professional staff members can use this to model their own practice.

Experiential learning is a critical component of the Growth Orientation strategy. Team Respect's supervisor experientially learned to supervise staff members in a previous position through job shadowing, journaling, and utilizing past events to make sense out of new experiences. For the supervisee in the Team Respect dyad, the experience of filling in for her supervisor's presentation was powerful for her as she learned through reflection that she could give good presentations, even though it was not something she originally wanted to do. Affective learning also complements the Growth Orientation strategy. When Team Respect's supervisor presented awards, noting that the recipients were glowing and predicting that they would want to continue doing their best as a result of that experience. Team Respect's supervisor was extremely recognition-

oriented and thus the new strategy of Recognition and its core indicator of *fun* arose from the data as an additional strategy for Winston and Creamer's (1997) model for supervision of professional staff members. The dyad was yet another powerful partnership that was centered on learning and mutual respect.

Team Understanding Highlights

The synergistic strategy used most often by Team Understanding's supervisor was the Dual Focus strategy combined with the core indicator of *understanding*. In a positive and productive work environment, a supervisor's willingness and determination to make sure both the supervisee's goals and the department's goals are simultaneously met is paramount to success and to retaining the interest of the staff member in their position. Carpenter and Simpson (2007) observe that synergistic supervision permits supervisees and supervisors to plan together for professional development that will achieve both the supervisee's goals as well as the institution's goals. By communicating the institution's objectives and then exploring what the goals of the staff member were, Team Understanding's supervisor effectively connected the two, creating a synergistic Dual Focus while the supervisee benefited from a highly supportive environment. Within the context of supervision, this dyad demonstrated situated learning frequently. Student Affairs staff members outside of this study would benefit by situating their learning of this strategy within activities that establish ways to practice communicating the departmental goals while infusing the goals of an employee in order to effectively utilize the Dual Focus strategy. A community of practice could then organically arise among supervisors who have learned this skill.

In her own philosophy of supervision, Team Understanding's supervisor noted

that she strives to strategically align goals of the unit and institution with professional development opportunities for her supervisee. This is the biggest take-away from this team. The supervisor for Team Understanding took pride in retaining her employees and the supervisee within this dyad felt supported in her aspirations to achieve her professional goals. In addition, this supervisor had the benefit of some formal supervision training on her resume. Thus, a new strategy of Training at its core indicator of *teaching* arose from Team Understanding as an addition to Winston and Creamer's (1997) model for supervision of professional staff members. This dyad had an extraordinary working relationship characterized by honesty, synergy, and a thorough *understanding* of what was needed from each other in order to be successful.

Team Trust Highlights

The synergistic strategy used most often by Team Trust's supervisor was the Two-Way Communication strategy along with the core indicator of *trust*. A key point that other professionals can learn from Team Trust is their genuine interest in one another, both inside and outside of the work environment. This interest cemented their honest communication and their trusting relationship. Supervisory partnerships such as that of Team Trust are great examples for others to follow when working towards a greater goal such as serving students. A characteristic that makes this team great is their kindness towards one another and enthusiasm for the population of students they serve.

This dyad had the freedom to give each other feedback and in purposefully taking an interest in what each other wanted to accomplish. The willingness on the part of the supervisor to let the supervisee run with new ideas and programs was very encouraging for the supervisee. The members of Team Trust practiced informal learning often. A

professional development opportunity for staff members outside of this study would be to delve into informal activities that promote skills such as learning to trust and learning to have genuine conversations about working relationships. These are skills that can only be developed when learning to trust those you have to depend on to accomplish a task.

A study about the reasons why entry-level professionals leave their positions lends credence to the importance of *trust* and Two-Way Communication. In this study, Buchanan (2012) interviewed a participant who ultimately left a position for a variety of reasons, but the participant never spoke with her supervisor about her job dissatisfaction because she did not feel she could trust him. Supervisors in Student Affairs would be well informed by using this team as a model for how to maintain healthy and positive relationships in the workplace. This approach matters because only through *trust* can professionals create the type of environment that is needed to serve students well.

Recommendations for Practice

This section is divided into recommendations for a variety of stakeholders in this study. They include the national associations in the field of Student Affairs in Higher Education, Adult Education, mid-level supervisors of entry-level staff members, and entry-level staff members themselves.

Recommendations for Student Affairs National Associations

My first recommendation for the Student Affairs field is to do more research and publication on supervision of entry-level professional staff members. This should be made a priority by the national associations such as the American College Personnel Association - College Student Educators International and NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. Perhaps supervision literature remains sparse

because of the assumption among mid-level Student Affairs supervisors that the sole purpose of supervision is information sharing and to see to the completion of work tasks. Yet the philosophy of Student Affairs is a holistic one of development and learning (Ignelzi, 2011). However, several dissertations in the last ten years have investigated the supervision of professional staff in the Student Affairs field. They have focused on synergistic supervision and persistence in the profession (Randall, 2007), synergistic supervision and staff retention (Shupp, 2007), supervisee's perceptions of mid-level manager's skills (Kingsley, 2008), learning how to supervise (David, 2010), a social exchange perspective (Lane, 2010), the relationship between synergistic supervision and leadership attributes (Hall-Jones, 2011), factors that contribute to staff attrition (Buchanan, 2012), experiences of supervisors in Catholic higher education (Wenzel, 2013), satisfaction and leadership styles (Adjei, 2014), and synergistic supervision and job performance (Morgan 2015). These dissertations as well as the current study show that there is so much more to supervision that should be explored in the Student Affairs field. Recognition and support from the Student Affairs national associations is needed.

Secondly, I recommend that the Student Affairs field begin to offer a comprehensive body of opportunities for professionals who supervise other professionals. As seen in the literature, we are well prepared to develop students and supervise student staff members, but not as well versed on the supervision of professionals who have earned bachelors and master's degrees. I have expanded Winston and Creamer's (1997) model for supervision and created a model based on the results of this study (see Figure 22). I recommend that administrators in the Student Affairs field introduce this model to new supervisors of entry-level professional staff members to increase the use of

synergistic supervision. The expanded model adds to the body of knowledge and complements the goals of contemporary supervision practices in Student Affairs.

Recommendations for Adult Education

Incorporating adult learning into the Student Affairs field is paramount to improving the ways that Student Affairs professionals have adjusted and adapted to supervising entry-level staff members. As a profession, we must promote solid approaches to reaching the goals of both the employees and the university.

Understanding these possibilities can take us out of traditional ways we have engaged in professional development and job training to promote more authentic, creative, and mutually beneficial progression in the field. In realizing that traditional college students are not the only stakeholders we teach, mid-level supervisors can improve ways to engage team members in their development. Furthermore, adult learning can assist teams by informing potential areas of struggle related to learning that a team might face. Lastly, adult learning aids in our awareness that learning can occur not only in formal training, but also in the everyday moments we encounter.

The findings of this study reveal five primary types of learning (workplace, experiential, affective, situated, and informal) were illustrated by the narratives provided by the study participants. It was interesting to me how the adult learning experiences of the participants emerged so organically in these data. Through the participant's narratives, it became clear that adult learning not only informs, but also enhances and drives the experiences of professional staff working in the Student Affairs field. Adult Education programs at universities where there are also Student Affairs programs should consider adding an adult learning theory in Student Affairs course to their curriculums.

The coursework for these programs prepares young professionals well for working with traditional college students. However, at some point in their careers, should they be retained in the profession, they will need at least a knowledge-base of adult learning principles because they will one day supervise professional staff members.

Recommendations for Mid-Level Supervisors

The last comprehensive study on staffing practices within 263 Student Affairs divisions was conducted in 2001 by Winston, Torres, Carpenter, McIntire, and Petersen. This study revealed that 62% held staff orientations that only covered personnel policies and benefits, 43% did not provide any formal training for supervisors, and 38% offered occasional training. While it is reasonable to assume that the past 16 years has brought changes, current literature has revealed that these changes are more than likely not substantial.

The data in this study revealed that the use of synergistic supervision can create a shared vision with supervisees. Thus, the question becomes if all twelve (nine original plus the three that were added as a result of study findings) of the synergistic supervision strategies were more widely known and more widely practiced, what could be the outcome for the Student Affairs profession and those being supervised within it? In considering leadership responsibilities within supervisory relationships, the synergistic supervision model has yet to be fully realized within the profession and its potential has not yet been fully explored. This model has the potential to merge human needs with organizational needs. Synergistic supervision focuses on meeting each of these needs both at the micro level (between supervisor and supervisee) and at the macro level (between the organization and its mission). My specific recommendation for mid-level

supervisors is to utilize the indicators that arose from the data in this study. These include creating a shared *vision* by working with supervisees to together set short-term, mid-range, and long-range goals for the team. Create an atmosphere of *respect* in order to push the envelope and encourage each member of the team to grow and be their best. *Understand* the needs of the department and the supervisee in order to merge the two to create a dual focus. Concentrate on communication in order to build a relationship centered on *trust*. Encourage *sharing* in order to be intentionally proactive. Remain *committed* to regular and predictable supervisory meetings that move beyond information sharing. Through *empathy*, realize that who one is cannot be separated from the job one is able to do and that what happens outside of work influences what happens at work. Combine the energy of the team to create an atmosphere of *collaboration* to work out the ways in which goals will be accomplished. By focusing on the competence of each team member, emphasize *learning* to identify ways to increase the skill levels of supervisees. Rely on thorough *planning* to socialize entry-level professionals when they first arrive to your campus for their new positions. Always *teach* yourself and others by remaining open to new possibilities. Lastly, have *fun* through frequent recognition in a variety of ways that suit the needs of the team.

Recommendations for Entry-Level Supervisees

Entry-level supervisees are half of the supervision equation. The theoretical framework for this dissertation utilized Newton's Cradle as a metaphor to illustrate the concept of synergy in supervision. Similar to synergistic supervision, the spheres within Newton's Cradle depend on one another for movement. When synergy between supervisor and supervisee is released, the energy created flows through the lifeworld,

systemsworld (Sergiovanni, 2000), and organizational change, losing no momentum along the way. Entry-level supervisees should remember that they too are part of the supervision process. The mutual energy between supervisor and supervisee culminates in a shared vision resulting in the loss of structures and hierarchy that can typically impede shared vision and common goals. I recommend that entry-level supervisees familiarize themselves with the existing literature and that they have fruitful conversations with their supervisors who do not typically practice synergistic supervision strategies. These conversations may be difficult ones to have. However, entry-level supervisees who are not getting what they need are less likely to be retained in the field. Entry-level supervisees must work hard to contribute to the synergistic supervision process for their own good, the good of their supervisors, and the good of the students they serve. The onus of synergistic supervision is not completely on the supervisor.

Contribution to the Literature

It has been 20 years since Winston and Creamer proposed the synergistic model for supervision of professional staff members in the Student Affairs field. However, none of the professionals who participated in this study were familiar with the Synergistic Supervision model. Yet the supervisors were practicing the strategies to varying degrees. This study provided three creative enhancements (synergistic *indicators*, synergistic *hats*, and adult learning experiences) as well as three additions (*socialization*, *recognition*, and *training*) to an aging model for supervision of professional staff in the field of Student Affairs. The creative enhancements, additions, and adult learning components have been worked into a supervision best practices model presented later in this chapter (see Figure 22). Current professionals in the field will deem the new model as a valuable update that

increases the likelihood of employing the model for synergistic supervision in its entirety in their day-to-day supervisory practices.

Indicators of Synergistic Supervision

As a contribution to the literature, I concluded it was necessary to further analyze Winston and Creamer's (1997) model in order to facilitate ease of use for current supervisors of entry-level staff members. Reviewing the data from both the model and the participants' interviews, *indicators* for each of Winston and Creamer's synergistic strategies emerged. The indicators are useful in order to understand, at the most basic level, the core condition that must exist within each strategy in order for it to be utilized with the most success. This has not been done before. As an enhancement to the 1997 model, the indicators make Winston and Creamer's model for supervision readily usable, relatable, recognizable, and able to be fully realized for the Student Affairs professionals of today.

Synergistic Hats

As another enhancement to Winston and Creamer's 1997 model for synergistic supervision, the concept of *synergistic hats* arose from participant data. Utilizing this concept, I was able to identify nine different hats to represent the nine synergistic strategies and their indicators that emerged from the data analysis. These included the Sun Visor, the Homburg, the Beret, the Newsboy, the Bowler, the Peaked Cap, the Wide-Brimmed Floppy Hat, the Baseball Cap, and the Fascinator. Thus, in this dissertation, changing between supervisory strategies was symbolized by the metaphorical act of putting on a different hat. Through the utilization of different synergistic strategies, the nine synergistic hats illustrate solutions to supervisory problems. The synergistic hats

allow a supervisor of professional staff members in the Student Affairs field to better understand the necessity of utilizing all synergistic strategies in their practices and to recognize situations that require the use a specific strategy in order to produce the best results and increase productivity.

A common saying within the field of Student Affairs is “we wear many different hats” depending upon the task being accomplished. Supervisors play different roles according to the demands of the job. While the participants in this study wore specific hats more frequently than others, the hat concept symbolizes the need for supervisors to intentionally concentrate on the big picture of their positions by wearing each hat equally throughout their practice as they supervise entry-level professionals. In bringing intentionality and flexibility to the regular practice of each synergistic strategy, supervisors can capitalize on the energy and harmony of supervisory relationships. This results in the necessary loss of structures and hierarchy that plagues many professional interactions. The hats restore a balance of power within a dyad, resulting in greater productivity. As an enhancement to the 1997 synergistic supervision model, *synergistic hats* provide a framework to be used by current professionals.

Adult Learning

This study investigated the learning experiences reported by participants within the context of supervision. The field of adult education and learning informs many different disciplines. For Student Affairs in Higher Education, adult learning is indispensable for the professional staff members working in the field. Janosik and Creamer (2003) note that within the Student Affairs profession, emphasis on how one develops the skills necessary to provide student services is lacking. When an entry-level

staff member transitions into a mid-level role, an assumption is often made that because they have effectively supervised paraprofessional staff, then they have the knowledge and are ready to supervise adult professionals. Adult educators know that without the proper education, training, and experience, mid-level supervisors of adults in Student Affairs (or any field) will only be moderately successful in their roles. In supporting examples from the literature, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) comment that new professionals in organizations need to develop a lifelong learning orientation, and they should reflect often on their own practice. In addition, Renn and Hodges (2007) advocate for a movement towards synergistic supervision of new professionals, noting that it integrates adult learning and development theory into supervision practices.

After analyzing the interviews and looking for references to adult learning experiences, I coded these data to determine the types of adult learning experiences present in the participants' narratives. The five primary types of learning they reported were workplace learning (Team Vision), experiential and affective learning (Team Respect), situated learning (Team Understanding), and informal learning, including self-directed, incidental, and tacit learning (Team Trust).

Additional Synergistic Supervision Strategies

In reflecting on their own supervisory styles and successful practices, the supervisors mentioned three strategies that were not specifically included in Winston and Creamer's 1997 model for supervision (see Figure 21). As an expansion of the original model that included nine strategies, the three new strategies increased the number to twelve. The new strategies were related to the socialization of entry-level professionals, the need for recognition of professional staff members, and the capacity for training on

the art of supervision.



Figure 21: Additional Strategies

The first new strategy was Socialization. This refers to the situations entry-level professionals encounter and the transition tasks they experience when beginning a new position. These situations include everything from the simple such learning where to park to the complex such as becoming familiar with the organizational culture. The core indicator that arose from the data was *planning*. The Hard Hat became evident as the synergistic hat for the Socialization strategy because engineers plan, design, and construct. The second new strategy was Recognition. This refers to congratulating and thanking a staff member for their accomplishments at work. The core indicator that arose from the data was *fun* and the Party Hat emerged as the most appropriate hat for the Recognition strategy. The third new strategy was Training, which refers to not only training new professionals about their jobs, but also training mid-level professionals about how to properly and successfully supervise. The core indicator that arose from the data was *teaching*. The Doctoral Tam became evident as the synergistic hat for the Training strategy because it is representative of the highest form of teaching.

The Synergistic Supervision and Learning Model

As a final contribution to the literature, I have merged the creative enhancements, additional strategies that emerged from the data, and adult learning components with the original nine strategies for synergistic supervision to create a model for supervision best

practices, the Synergistic Supervision and Learning Model (see Figure 22). Through merging the elements of this study that arose from the data, this model provides a contemporary understanding of Winston and Creamer's (1997) strategies for supervision. The Synergistic Supervision and Learning Model will benefit younger Student Affairs professionals who are learning to supervise.

This model emerged from my understanding of the different types of adult learning experiences of the participants that were reflected within the context of supervision. I utilized the principles of adult learning to connect the dyads experiences with the synergistic hats and core indicators of each strategy. This model helps illustrate how the various forms of learning are represented in relation to synergistic supervision. In practice, this model will inform professionals working in the Student Affairs field how particular aspects of learning can inform the successful use of synergistic supervision strategies. For example, if a staff member recognizes a breakdown in communication, they can look to experiential learning to consider or design ways to promote *trust* in communication.

The twelve strategies, indicators, and hats have been placed inside a segmented wheel to convey movement while still demonstrating that a supervisor cannot wear all hats at once, but they can metaphorically switch between hats in order to take different types of actions and solve different types of problems. The suggestion of movement within the wheel is important because synergistic supervision is not a static practice. Synergistic hats are worn, removed, and then replaced with a different hat according to problems and needs that present themselves. In addition, just as supervisors select the

hats they need from the wheel, supervisory teams can select use the wheel to select the type of learning that will be most effective in joining the needs of life and work.

As suggested by the theoretical framework for this study in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1), the lifeworld (human needs) and the systemsworld (organizational needs) not only connect, but they depend on each other for movement. In the Synergistic Supervision and Learning Model, the lifeworld and systemsworld are part of the same plane, establishing that the two concepts work together in a more humanistic way to produce a *shared vision* between the two worlds. Within the segmented wheel are the forms of adult learning presented in varying degrees by the participants in this study. The spheres of learning are not placed into the wheel in any particular order and they appear jumbled as an exhibition of the need for all of them to be utilized by professionals in Student Affairs. Current administrators and other professionals will find this model useful as an update to Winston and Creamer's 1997 synergistic supervision model.



Figure 22: Synergistic Supervision and Learning Model

Future Research

A motivating factor for this research was the lack of literature on supervision in Student Affairs. Practitioners spend a large amount of time supervising, yet the literature on the topic is scarce because teaching practitioners to supervise and then engaging in meaningful strategies for supervision is not currently the focus of administrators in the field of Student Affairs in Higher Education. I have four recommendations for

continuing this research in order to bring more information to light for administrators. First, a study utilizing participatory action research methods would be interesting. As I began analyzing the data for the present study, I kept thinking how much better it would have been had the participants had an opportunity to design the study and write interview questions. Gathering a community of student affairs professionals made up of both mid-level supervisors and entry-level supervisees would provide a way to utilize their experiences to create a rich study. Second, a case study involving supervisors of entry-level staff members as participants to determine the level of their awareness of adult learning and adult education practices would also be interesting to determine how to utilize specific mechanisms of adult education to teach entry-level staff their positions. Third, a study on supervision of entry level staff members according to gender could facilitate a conversation on how mid-level staff members prepare to supervise genders (or non-binary genders) opposite their own. Lastly, now that a year has gone by, a longitudinal study using the theoretical framework for learning organizations would be interesting to follow up with the participants from the present study to learn about their current relationships with their supervisees as compared to the relationships presented in this study.

Study Challenges

The purpose of this section is to identify and explain the challenges that took place while conducting this research. The first and foremost challenge was the nature of the study itself as it relates to job security. While it was not the case with all participants, I sensed hesitancy among one participant during their initial interview to answer interview questions openly. There was undoubtedly caution because they knew the study would one

day be published and perhaps they feared disclosing certain experiences out of the desire to protect their job. However, during the second set of interviews, I did not sense any hesitancy. More than likely, there was a lack of hesitancy because the second set of interviews was our third interaction, including a half-day workshop one month earlier. I suspect the workshop allowed them to see me more authentically than in the initial interview session and they came to realize I was not looking to expose problem relationships. Nevertheless, this was a necessary challenge because synergistic supervision is about the relationship between a dyad working together on a daily basis. Including the dyads together in this qualitative study is what makes it unique.

The participant workshop itself was another challenge. The initial concern was that it was meant to be an intervention, or that it would come across as an intervention. Rather, the participant workshop was created as an opportunity to not only share supervisory strategies but also as a space to collect data about the participants and what they knew. In addition, coordinating schedules for eight people was a task. However, the participants were committed and we were eventually able to find block of time that worked for everyone. To encourage their continued participation after the first set of on-site individual interviews in November, I sent thank you cards to each participant wishing them happy holidays in December. The cards assisted in building rapport and in strengthening my relationships with the participants.

Concluding Thoughts

I held three different jobs after graduating with my bachelor's degree. Each one of these jobs were full of promise when I first started, but as time went on and I learned more, I would realize there was no chance of me being interested enough to make a

career out of any of them, even though they supported me financially. Most days were routine, there was rarely a meaningful challenge, and all of my supervisors were only concerned about the bottom line. I do not think I had ever heard the phrase “professional development” and the actual experience of growth beyond the day-to-day was certainly the least thing on anyone’s mind. Once I began making plans to embark on a new path, I stumbled upon a brochure entitled “Be in College Forever!” Having had a great experience as an undergraduate, I was immediately intrigued. Upon reading more, a career in Student Affairs seemed like the perfect fit. It would allow me to make a difference in people’s lives, make a contribution to our world via education, and work in a university environment.

Within six months, I started a master’s program in Interdisciplinary Studies with an emphasis in Student Affairs. But much to my disappointment, something still did not feel right. I was not fitting in. I started the program in January, a semester after everyone in my classes started. Most of the students in my classes were in the Counseling program (with emphasis in Student Affairs), but my GRE score was not high enough for entrance into the Counseling program, so I was majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies. All of my classmates had graduate assistantships, thus allowing them to put theory into practice. I applied for an assistantship that had come open, but I was not selected as the finalist. This new career was not moving in the direction I had anticipated and thus I did not enroll in classes for the coming fall semester, opting instead to put things on hold in favor of a new adventure that would provide time for contemplation. I accepted a job working for Yellowstone National Park’s concessionaire as a cook in a diner. I finished the semester and moved to Yellowstone for the summer and possibly longer, with no

concrete plan for leaving the park or returning to school. While I was there I got to hike, fish, camp, and explore the vast park all I wanted. It was a fantastic experience. However, something made me send a postcard to the two adjunct professors from my classes the past spring. I explained where I was and what I was doing and that I just thought I would say hello. Perhaps the time I spent living so close to nature was what I needed to refocus.

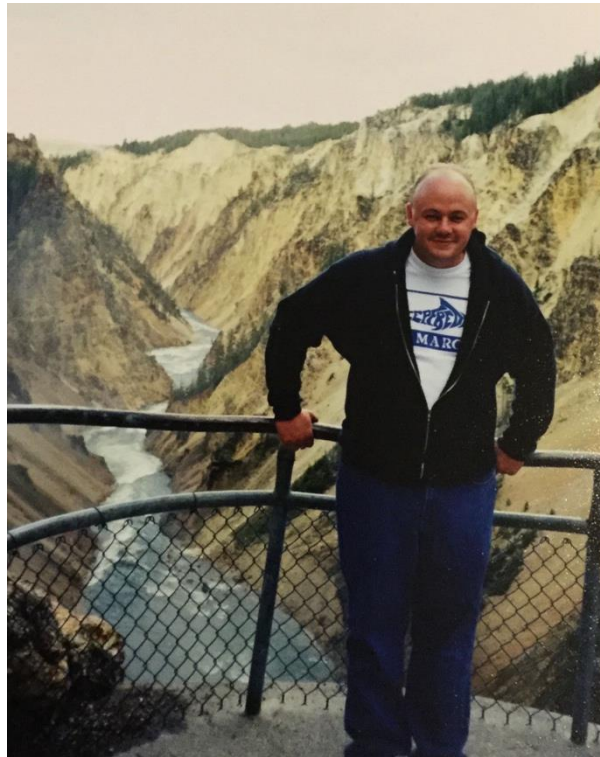


Figure 23. Yellowstone National Park, 1998

Several weeks later, I received a message that one of my adjunct professors (one of the recipients of my postcard), was looking for me. Mobile phones were still a few years away from hitting the mainstream and as it turned out, the professor's assistant had spent considerable time hunting me down via phone calls all around the park. When I called back, I learned that the professor had a graduate assistantship for me in the department where she was the director. I had a phone interview and several days later I

was on the road back to Texas to “be in college forever.” This was the first time anyone in the professional world had ever gone out of their way for me. And I would soon learn that for the first time, my growth and development would be an integral part of my professional life.

About a year after I returned, I came to understand how important counseling skills were in the Student Affairs profession. I knew I had to re-take the GRE in order to change my major from Interdisciplinary Studies and gain entry into the Counseling program. I approached the second adjunct professor to whom I had sent a postcard from Yellowstone and asked him for advice. He referred me to his wife, who was also a professor at the university, and she agreed to help me study for the GRE. I soon took the GRE again and earned a score that was high enough for entry into the Counseling program. The positive experiences I had with caring individuals who took chances on me have been a big reason I have remained in the field and faithfully employed at the institution.

My story exemplifies how a gratifying leadership experience led to dutiful job performance and institutional loyalty from myself as supervisee. I have directly supervised dozens of entry-level staff members throughout my career and I have done my very best to be a good leader to each of them. However, all of my supervisory skills were learned informally; it was left up to me to take control and learn how to supervise, mostly through trial and error. Over the course of the past 18 years, it has been my observation that professionals guided by compassionate supervisors who care about their professional growth as well as their personal goals while simultaneously meeting the expectations of the organization have the most satisfying supervisory experiences.

During this time, I have discovered that it is easy to become entrenched in policy, outcomes, deadlines, and in living from crisis to crisis in Student Affairs. I have learned that it is easy to pay more attention to the system than to the people within it. This research not only helped me to unlearn this practice which does entry-level staff members a disservice, but this study also assists other professionals in similar positions to create positive changes in their own work environments.

From the dissertation study participants I learned that good supervision is indeed a key to making the most out of the experiences of entry-level staff members. I confirmed that adult learning informs many professions, including that of supervision in Student Affairs. Because the synergistic model for supervision is developmental in nature, employee learning is at the forefront of supervision. As Renn and Hodges (2007) recommended, synergistic supervision of new professionals does integrate adult learning theory into supervision practice.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned to be a better supervisor. I am now very well equipped to make big differences in the experiences of entry level staff members in the Student Affairs field. My impact will be felt through those who work most directly with traditional college students who can most influence their retention, graduation, and success. I plan to disseminate study findings by publishing portions of this dissertation, by presenting at professional conferences, and by hosting workshops at my own institution.

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APPENDIX A

LANGUAGE FROM THE FIELD

Authoritarian supervision: a type of supervision in which the supervisor provides continuous attention to supervisees because of a belief that supervisees are not dependable and that they will work as little as possible unless they are continuously monitored (Winston & Creamer, 1997).

Companionable supervision: a type of supervision that is based on a friendship-like relationship. Supervisors avoid confrontation due to concentration on friendship (Winston & Creamer, 1997).

Entry-level Student Affairs practitioner: a full-time employee, is usually master's-prepared, and has five or fewer years of experience (Cilente et al., 2006). Entry-level professionals are those with whom traditional college students have the most contact outside of the classroom.

Laissez faire supervision: a type of supervision in which the supervisor provides direction but allows supervisees the freedom to use their skills to accomplish job responsibilities (Winston & Creamer, 1998).

Lifeworld: human needs (Sergiovanni, 2000).

Mid-level Student Affairs practitioner: someone who reports directly to a senior administrator (or one level below) and who is reible for a function within the division or who supervises professional staff members (Carpenter & Fey, 1996). Mid-level supervisors are responsible for training and developing new professionals (Shupp & Arminio, 2012).

Professional development: Janosik, Carpenter, & Creamer (2006) recommended a move toward a structured, intentional, and curriculum-based professional development plan for Student Affairs professionals.

Student Affairs: A discipline in higher education that aims to assist college students in being successful both inside and outside of the classroom. Carpenter (2003) summarized the responsibilities of a division of Student Affairs. Among others, these include translating student development theory into practice, staying abreast of best practices for quality assurance, responsibly managing financial resources, and professionally developing staff.

Supervisor: “a student services professional who has one or more staff members reporting to him or her and for whose performance the supervisor shares responsibility” (Scheuermann, 2011, p. 5-6).

Synergistic supervision: a form of supervision that moves beyond short term tasks and general information sharing to create a long-term relationship between supervisor and supervisee that is based on growth (Winston & Creamer, 1997).

Systemsworld: organizational needs (Sergiovanni, 2000)

APPENDIX B

LITERATURE REVIEW

This qualitative case study explored the experiences of mid-level Student Affairs professionals and their entry-level supervisees who were in supervisory relationships. The study also described the adult learning experiences reported by the participants in the context of supervision. This section provides an overview of the related literature. It also includes a brief history of the Student Affairs profession, a review of the research about supervision in Student Affairs, as well as a consideration of the supervision function in other fields. The role of adult learning theory and organizational change within the parameters of this proposed study is also considered. Finally, connections relevant to adult learning will be drawn. This chapter will definitively illustrate the gaps in the research on supervision of entry-level professionals and will provide evidence that a vital function in the role of administrators has been largely overlooked.

Student Affairs History

A unique characteristic of higher education in the United States is the provision of an organized curriculum outside of the classroom for college students (Knock, 1985). The systems of higher education in many countries only assume responsibility for the support of solely academic pursuits. However, in 2002, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) first published the role of Student Affairs and services in higher education: A practical manual for developing, implementing and assessing Student Affairs programs and services noting that the Student Affairs field is gradually becoming globally recognized as a necessary component of higher education.

Traditional college students have always arrived to campuses with challenges, and thus student services work (formerly referred to as “college student personnel work”) can be traced to the colonial age in the United States (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Prior to the middle of the 19th century, the development of college students was largely the responsibility of college presidents, faculty, and clergy (Knock, 1985). As traditional colleges became more focused on research and began to expand into land-grant universities and other, more specialized institutions such as technical colleges, higher education as a whole began to change. The main role of faculty became the intellectual growth of students. Enrollments were increasing and presidents of colleges no longer had time to serve *en loco parentis*, or in the place of parents (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Higher education was evolving and administrators began to see the need for education and support outside of the classroom. Newly created positions (such as dean of men and dean of women) were given the task of student’s co-curricular development (Knock, 1985).

In 1937, the Committee on Student Personnel Work of the American Council on Education published its vision for the role of student services in higher education, “The Student Personnel Point of View” (Knock, 1985). It is within this document that one can find the defining mission for those engaged in the profession (Taylor, 2008). This mission presents a tall order, but one that has influenced the success of countless college students. Student Affairs professionals are tasked with moving beyond the intellectual training of the student in order to develop the whole person (American Council on Education, Committee on Student Personnel Work, 1937). After the Second World War, the Student Affairs profession grew quickly (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). This growth

called for expanded information on the various functions of the Student Affairs field. Thus, a second report was issued ten years later with further commentary on how the college student can better society as well as directives for specific operations such as housing, needs of international students, admissions, and campus ministries (American Council on Education Studies, Committee on Student Personnel Work, 1949). Graduate students about to enter the profession refer this guiding document to this day. By the mid 1970s, the Student Affairs profession had grown into its own operational role within universities (Knock, 1985). A contemporary look at how the field has grown and adapted to the demands of various constituencies, including college students, follows in the next sub section.

The Typical Student Affairs Division

The student services function is today an entity that requires a wide variety of management. Student Affairs typically comprises an entire division of a university, akin to Academic Affairs or University Advancement. A division usually includes executive staff such as a vice president, assistant vice presidents, directors of various departments, assistant directors, coordinators, graduate assistants, and, of course, a large administrative support staff. In other models Student Affairs may fall under a variety of university functional areas. Carpenter (2003) summarized the responsibilities of a division of Student Affairs. These include utilizing data to allocate resources, staying abreast of best practices for quality assurance, hiring qualified staff, professionally developing staff based on performance appraisals, participating in associations and scholarly research, steering assessment and evaluation, couching information from a Student Affairs framework as needed by the university community, and advocating for students. In

addition to co-curricular education, the focus of present day divisions of Student Affairs is on learning outcomes, assessment, federal mandates, stakeholder expectations, and accountability for student retention and graduation (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). Through strong student support and effective student development, individual student services practitioners seek to assist institutions in meeting the needs of students. Depending on the institution, today's professionals working in divisions of Student Affairs perform a wide variety of specialized services including physical and mental health, housing, campus activities and co-curricular programming, multicultural services, recreational sports, career services, and student conduct, to name a few.

Supervision in Student Affairs

Supervision has not been written about with any great frequency in the Student Affairs field (Carpenter et al., 2001). Professionals in the field are typically ardent student advocates and thus their main concern is about the success of the college students they serve. Many practitioners view their primary role as providing direct service to students such educational programming, crisis management, or leadership development. This characteristic of student services professionals may be a contributing reason for the lack of research concerning management of entry-level staff members. Saunders, Cooper, Winston, and Chernow, (2000) note that in the view of the Student Affairs profession, supervision is not necessary if staff have a good understanding of their responsibilities, meet expectations, and adhere to deadlines. Shupp and Arminio (2012) observe that in higher education, there is a belief that supervision is intuitive and therefore supervision training is not taken seriously. Other reasons for this lack of research include recognition and the direction of publications. Student Affairs

professionals are usually rewarded for activities directly related to working with students and most journals and researchers in the field devote a majority of research to specific programs and their impact on students (Janosik & Creamer, 2003). However, there have been sporadic research articles as well as secondary articles on the subject.

Scheuermann (2011) defines a *supervisor* as “a student services professional who has one or more staff members reporting to him or her and for whose performance the supervisor shares responsibility” (p. 5-6). In Student Affairs, the supervisor often acts as a guide or coach for those with less experience who are interested in learning about the field and how to succeed in their positions. The task of a supervisor, *supervision*, is defined as “a method of establishing ongoing relationships to meet the goals of individual staff members, as well as goals of their unit, division, and institution” (Tull, 2009, p. 129). Supervision can take on many forms and can mean different things to varying individuals. Additionally, “supervision is a management function intended to promote the achievement of institutional goals and to enhance the personal and professional capabilities and performance of staff” (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 42). The functional components of supervision identified by Winston and Creamer (1997) are communicating the mission and managing the culture of the department, developing individual staff as well as creating a team, managing daily tasks, and problem solving. The functions of supervision in Student Affairs, as identified by Tull (2009), include recruitment, selection, orientation, supervision, development, performance appraisal, and separation of staff. It is clear that supervisors in this field have a wide range of responsibilities, in addition to cultivating an environment that contributes to the success of college students.

Drawing from a variety of informative and data-driven resources, Scheurmann (2011) summarized the competencies of supervisors in Student Affairs who “require a robust toolkit of skills and a sturdy backpack in which to carry them” (p. 14). Among these tools are the capabilities of inclusivity, decisiveness, being a leader as well as coworker and follower, and the interpersonal trait of unpretentiousness. The “toolkit” is ever expanding and must change with the needs of different employees. Stock-Ward and Javorek (2003) recommend several strategies for effective supervision including building rapport, authenticity, and setting a structured supervisory relationship including a regular meeting time. Further competencies of supervisors include an understanding of power and authority, a focus on the big picture and long-term needs of the supervisee as well as the organization, being able to demonstrate outcomes with data, and someone who can function highly within a shrinking budget (Scheurmann, 2011). Another competency includes the ability to understand and empathize with supervisees while maintaining a professional relationship without losing sight of the goals of the organization.

Entry-level staff members typically have high expectations of their supervisors. As a junior-level professional in the field, McGraw (2011) reflects on her high expectations by describing the ideal supervisor as someone who is open to building a relationship through sharing, collaboration, open communication, and joint problem solving. She also expects supervisors to empower employees while allowing for mistakes and to be supportive of a new staff member’s career goals. As a Student Affairs veteran, Perillo (2011) argues that a negotiation between supervisor and supervisee is an imperative component of setting expectations of each other. “Supervision is mutual and requires explicit understanding of each other’s styles, preferences, and goals” (Perillo,

2011, p. 429). Perillo further observes that the more time a supervisor invests in their staff member, the more time they actually save in the big picture. “The more one supervises, the less one supervises” (Perillo, 2011, p. 427). Developing close, trusting relationships with supervisees can be very beneficial to a supervisor who has a full plate of responsibilities. Winston and Hirt (2003) conducted a poll of supervisor’s perceptions of challenges experienced by new professionals. These included navigating institutional culture and politics, learning patience, understanding the big picture, and working through mistakes. In turn, new professionals identified what they desired from their supervisors in a different poll. These included structure, autonomy, frequent feedback, recognition of limitations, support, effective communication, consistency, role modeling, and sponsorship.

With so many competencies, perceptions, and expectations, supervisors often (rightly) fall under intense scrutiny. Perillo (2011) remarks that there are too many supervisors who avoid conflict, thus producing practitioners who were never held accountable. Consequently, they are unaware as to how to do it with their own staff members. Regarding past experiences, Stock-Ward and Javorek (2003) make the same observation that a supervisor’s current practice is often informed by that of someone who once supervised them, good or bad. This problem can be extremely difficult to eliminate due to the high number of supervisors who have never been trained. Tull (2009) observes that many supervisors have had few role models who were competent in the area of supervision, nor have they had much training in the art of supervision. Moreover, Perillo (2011) comments that new middle management supervisors who did not have supervisors who were good role models in the supervision area are not able to create effective

learning-oriented environments for their staff members.

Reviewed in the next section is the concept of “synergistic supervision,” which is a developmental approach to the challenge of supervising entry-level professional staff members. Synergistic supervision has been shown to promote greater job satisfaction and intent to remain in the field (Tull, 2006; Shupp & Arminio, 2012). In addition, synergy in supervision practice can lead to organizational change and a vision shared by supervisor and supervisee.

Synergistic Supervision

Student Affairs scholars Winston and Creamer (1997) write that general approaches to supervision in higher education are categorized as authoritarian (continuous attention to supervisees), laissez faire (allowing staff members freedom), companionable (cultivating friendship-like relationships), or synergistic. The latter, synergistic supervision, moves beyond short-term tasks and general information sharing to create a long-term relationship between supervisor and supervisee that is based on growth. This is accomplished through the hallmarks of synergistic supervision such as a joint effort between supervisor and staff member; a systematic and ongoing focus on goals; and an orientation toward growth and development (Winston & Creamer, 1997). This model applies a humanistic orientation to supervision, thus resulting in the removal of typical hierarchical and systems-oriented structures. An example of this humanistic orientation has been documented in the story of Robert Owen, a businessman of the early 1800s who discovered that investing in employees resulted in a thriving business (Bolman & Deal, 2013). It is here that the impact of the life world on the systems world can be recognized as a positive part of the supervision process. When staff members

thrive, organizations thrive. Through an intentional investment in their staff members, mid-level professionals in Student Affairs can positively impact the organization as a whole. In this model for supervision, entry-level staff members also invest in the supervisory relationship. This dual investment results in cooperation which is a characteristic of *synergy*; two entities creating something that is stronger than only one could have produced on their own.

First proposed by Student Affairs scholars Winston and Creamer (1997), synergistic supervision moves beyond other forms of personnel management in the workplace by intentionally creating a democratic relationship within the supervisor and supervisee dyad. See Table 1 for a presentation of the nine synergistic strategies. This relationship is accomplished through the hallmarks of synergistic supervision such as the presence of a high level of trust between each dyad, an orientation toward personal and professional growth, and an interlocking of individual and organizational goals. In this humanistic and holistic model of supervision, both parties must be willing to invest time and energy into the supervisory process. Without their shared commitment, synergistic supervision is not possible. In synergy, cooperative efforts exceed individual efforts. The combination of energy makes the approach synergistic (Winston & Creamer, 1997). This dual investment results in cooperation, which is a characteristic of synergy: two entities creating something that is stronger than only one could have produced on their own. The synergistic supervisor encourages and advocates for individuals while working within systems that are typically not people-oriented. In changing organizational constructs through synergy, a bridge can be built between the needs of the organization and the employee. In supervision, synergy culminates in a shared vision within the dyad,

resulting in the loss of structures and hierarchy that can typically impede shared vision and common goals.

Reflecting on synergistic supervision, Marsh (2001) remarks that just as in any profession, life events impact the work of Student Affairs practitioners. Astute supervisors engaging in synergistic supervision practices with new professionals are able to assist with personal and professional development while simultaneously encouraging employees to accomplish work goals as defined by departments, divisions, and institutions. “This approach is called synergistic because through the cooperative efforts of staff and supervisor the total effect is greater than the sum of their individual efforts” (Saunders, Cooper, Winston, & Chernow, 2000, para. 12). Synergy creates a bridge between the life world and systems world resulting in a shared vision that can lead to a more motivated staff member. Perillo (2011) asserts human resource scholars know that staff members who grow professionally are more likely to be effective in work and relationships as well as having higher energy levels. Similarly, Bolman and Deal (2013) comment extensively on improving the management of human resources through investment in employee development. The key to synergistic supervision is to create environments where staff members are encouraged to work for both their goals and the institution’s goals simultaneously (see chapter 1 for a complete list of synergistic strategies).

Several studies have been completed about synergistic supervision. Saunders et al., (2000) conducted a quantitative analysis exploring the validity of the synergistic supervision model. The researchers constructed the “Synergistic Supervision Scale” to measure respondent’s perceptions on supervisor performance focusing on both the

advancement of the institution's goals as well as the goals of the professional being supervised. Data, which were collected twice over an eight-month period from new Student Affairs practitioners, demonstrated that synergistic supervision is a valid and significant framework. Shupp and Arminio (2012) conducted a qualitative study using portraiture as methodology. Their study identified themes supporting the need for focused supervision practice within the student services field. The themes included the accessibility of supervisors, meaningful interactions with supervisors, use of formal performance appraisals, and the priority of professional development. Tull (2006) explored the relationship between synergistic supervision and staff turnover in a quantitative study. It was concluded that there was a real relationship between synergistic supervision and job satisfaction/intention to leave. The results demonstrated that lack of synergistic supervision could lead to greater intentions to turnover among new professionals.

Experiences of New Professionals

The specialized functions within divisions of Student Affairs are performed by a varied group of professionals. Most often, it is the entry-level staff members who work directly with students (Scheuermann, 2011). Employees classified as "new" Student Affairs practitioners are typically master's-prepared and have five or fewer years of experience (Cilente, Henning, Skinner Jackson, Kennedy, & Sloan, 2006). The thorough preparation, socialization, and orientation of new professionals entering the field is what will start them down the road to success.

To determine how well master's programs prepare graduates for full-time work, Renn and Hodges (2007) sent a monthly prompt to ten new professionals who had

graduated from one master's cohort. Three themes emerged from this grounded theory study: concern about relationships, concern about fit with the institution and position, and sense of competence. Participants perceived little concern from their supervisors about professional growth and no integration of their professional development needs with the needs of the institution (a lack of synergistic supervision). Furthermore, few of the participants believed they had received enough training in order to accomplish their job duties. The participants also were "frustrated that their supervisors were not acting as mentors, as they had hoped and expected" (p. 376).

In a year-long national study of new professionals, Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) observed a national sample of 90 new professionals by e-mailing an open-ended writing prompt each month. The grounded theory study responses were categorized into four themes: Creating a Professional Identity, Navigating a Cultural Adjustment, Maintaining a Learning Orientation, and Seeking Sage Advice. The data revealed that guidance for entry-level staff members was lacking. "The quality of supervision of new professionals in Student Affairs varies from exceptionally good to downright awful" (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008, pp. 332-333). This data suggests that when new professionals experience poor supervision and little guidance, they are at risk for leaving the field. Saunders et al., (2000) also argue that a lack of guidance and support for student services practitioners may cause job dissatisfaction and turnover. With up to 40% of entry-level staff members leaving the field within six years, it becomes clear that a change is needed.

Although it was outside the scope of their study, the Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) did state that it was unclear how to improve the supervisory practices of mid-level managers, noting that new research was emergent but lamenting that supervision of

professionals is not a competency in graduate programs because most new professionals start off by supervising paraprofessional staff. The researchers make a number of recommendations for supervisors of entry-level staff, including the utilization of coursework from master's programs to frame the identity and work of new professionals. "An additional implication involves helping supervisors of new professionals to facilitate new professionals' transition from learning to know to learning to do" (Renn & Jessup-Anger, 2008, p. 330).

Carpenter and Carpenter (2009) wrote that socialization of new professionals is about helping them function in their new environments. Supervisors must be vigilant in assisting new staff to make a successful transition in order to not only be supportive of first-time professionals, but also to avoid the time-consuming difficulties and expenses associated with recruitment. Shupp and Armenio (2012) agree, stating that supervisors play an important role in orientation and socialization. Carpenter and Carpenter (2009) recommended that socialization should focus on three areas including personal, divisional/unit, and institutional. Their recommendations range from the very basic (showing new staff where to park and making sure they are working a sustainable number of hours per week), to the more complex (performance expectations and professional development), and then to the big picture (helping them understand and navigate organizational culture). Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) commented that most new professionals are socialized in public universities with enrollments of over 10,000 students because most graduate programs are located within those institutions. However, they often begin their careers in other types of institutions. The socialization process, including learning to effectively engage within their new employer's culture, is thus a

critical component of the overall experience of a first-time Student Affairs practitioner.

A component of the socialization process, orientation and training, is unfortunately sometimes either inadequate or overlooked altogether. Orientation and training can provide first-time professionals with the knowledge and tools they need to be competent and ultimately thrive in their positions. “The successful administration of a Student Affairs division is primarily determined by the competence of the staff members who fill the positions” (Winston, Torres, Carpenter, McIntire, & Petersen, 2001, p. 7). In a further argument for thorough orientation and training, Dean, Saunders, Thompson, and Cooper (2011) maintain that a thorough orientation process is critical for new professionals in Student Affairs who are beginning their first positions and is linked to their satisfaction in acclimating to their new environments. More emphatically, Shupp and Arminio (2012) state “the future of Student Affairs depends on the proper education and training of entry-level staff members” (p.157).

In a national study aiming to identify the needs of new professionals commissioned by the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), researchers reported that 1,103 entry-level professionals (five years of experience or fewer) were identified from the ACPA membership database and 27% of those responded to the new professional needs survey (Cilente et al., 2006). The survey was supplemented by focus groups that included 35 of those respondents. The top two needs identified by new Student Affairs practitioners are receiving adequate support and understanding job expectations. One recommendation made by the researchers was enhanced training for supervisors of new professionals. Due to the large number of new professionals traditionally working within the Student Affairs function of residence life, the same data

were examined several years later (Henning, Cilente, Kennedy, & Sloane, 2011). The researchers determined that understanding job expectations and enhancing supervision skills were the top two needs identified by that sub population of entry-level staff members.

In a mixed methods study about orientation for new staff members, researchers examined what supervisors in Student Affairs need to do for new employees in order for them to learn the skills for their jobs and make successful transitions (Dean et al., 2011). The intent was to establish a link between effective orientation for new professionals and their commitment to the organization, overall job satisfaction, and intent to remain in the position. Nearly 43% of respondents reported they had no formal orientation at all. Of those who were formally trained, 69% said their training was at least somewhat helpful. Participants felt that training on policies, procedures, working relationships, and task specific training was effective. Topics identified as being covered poorly included organizational culture, roles, expectations, performance evaluations, and benefits. Other weaknesses included lack of involvement by supervisor, lack of structure, depth and timing, and poor pre-planning. Respondents were not satisfied with the overall quality of how well topics were covered during training (Dean et al., 2011). In conclusion, the socialization, preparation, and orientation process for professional staff members entering the Student Affairs field cannot be overlooked. It is largely the responsibility of mid-level supervisors to ensure these processes are thoroughly engaged in order to set new professionals up for success.

Experiences of Mid-Level Professionals

The mid-level Student Affairs practitioner has the ability to positively (or

negatively) affect an entry-level professional's transition into their first full-time position as well as the ability to ensure the overall success of new staff members as they progress through their first years in the field. A mid-level professional typically reports to a director-level position (or one person removed, depending on the system) and is responsible for the supervision of entry-level staff members (Fey & Carpenter, 1996). There is an inadequate amount of research about supervision of professional staff members in the field of Student Affairs as a whole (Carpenter et al., 2001; Ignelzi, 2011; Perillo, 2011; Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003). Further, Saunders et al., (2000) comment that there is little supervision training for mid-level staff members, yet they need to be effective supervisors due to the low experience levels of those they manage. In addition, Shupp and Armenio (2012) contend that seasoned professionals are not prepared to supervise first-time practitioners entering the field. However, it is the seasoned professionals who do the supervising, regardless of their preparedness. Carpenter et al., (2001) assert that staffing processes (including supervision) are a function of critical importance because Student Affairs professionals spend a large amount of time supervising their staff members. The current viewpoints of many mid-level supervisors are best explained by Ignelzi (2011):

A troubling assumption among many Student Affairs supervisors on when learning ends for supervisees seems to be that learning ends with graduation from a Student Affairs preparation program, as shown by their supervisory views and behavior toward professionals they supervise. There also appears to be a widespread assumption that supervision, when it occurs, should be almost exclusively aimed at the particulars of getting current work tasks successfully

accomplished. These assumptions run counter to the holistic and developmental view of learning that serves the philosophical and operative basis of our profession. (p. 418)

Perhaps the viewpoints of mid-level supervisors would change if Student Affairs divisions were to change their “staffing practices,” which are “a system of policies, procedures, structures, activities, and rewards that govern the way people are hired and managed within higher education” (Winston & Creamer, 1997, p. 3).

National Research on Staffing Practices

Exemplifying the paucity of research on supervision of professional staff in the field, prior to 1997 the only wide-ranging investigations on staffing practices were regional studies published by McIntire and Carpenter in 1981 and 1987 (Winston & Creamer, 1997). Thus, in 1997, Winston and Creamer conducted a more comprehensive study yielding 121 useable questionnaires from Vice Presidents and 816 from professional staff members. A total of 151 institutions from 22 states provided data. The survey covered six different staffing practices including recruitment and selection, orientation, supervision, staff development, and performance appraisal (Winston & Creamer, 1997). An ideal time to provide supervision and professional development for entry-level professionals is during a regularly scheduled supervision meeting. However, “regularly meeting with staff to reflect on their own work, understandings, challenges, and professional or personal goals is considered to be a less important use of a supervisor’s time, particularly when compared with other tasks demanding attention” (Ignelzi, 2011, pp. 416-417). This assertion becomes apparent in the survey data. The researchers found that 54%-64% (depending on type of professional staff member) of

supervisors had monthly (or more) supervisory meetings with their employees. However, 37% of supervisors had six or fewer supervisory meetings with their employees per year and 11% of those never met with their staff members (Winston & Creamer, 1997). These results are mostly congruent with a 2000 of supervisees regarding the number of times they met with their supervisor over a one-year period. The researchers found that 49% of respondents reported that they met monthly or more, 4% reported they met with their supervisor six to eleven times per year, 16% reported three to five yearly meetings, 24% reported they met once or twice per year, and 7% reported they did not meet at all (Saunders et al., 2000). With close to half of supervisors either minimally participating or not participating in supervisory meetings with entry-level professionals, it becomes clear that change is needed.

A final comprehensive study on staffing practices was conducted in 2001. This research yielded 263 useable surveys submitted by senior Student Affairs officers whose institutions were members of NASPA, the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (Winston et al., 2001). Similar to the 1997 study, the Winston, Torres, Carpenter, McIntire, and Petersen survey covered six major staffing practices, including orientation and supervisory approaches. For entry-level positions, 14% of respondents reported that there was no formal orientation, 59% reported that orientation only covered personnel policies and benefits, and 17% reported that the individual departments did have orientation. For mid-level positions, 19% had no formal orientation, 62% reported that orientation only covered personnel policies and benefits, and 7% reported that the individual departments did have orientation (Winston et al., 2001). Regarding staff supervision, 43% of respondents did not provide any formal training for supervisors, 38%

offered occasional training, 14% provided training on a yearly basis, and 6% provided training once a staff member became a supervisor (Winston et al., 2001). Together, the 1997 survey and the 2001 survey reveal a need for change in staffing practices in the Student Affairs field. This need is further exemplified in a 2011 study concerning the number of conference sessions at the ACPA and NASPA national conferences over a period of ten years. Tull (2011) investigated the numbers of sessions offered at the two conferences between 1997 and 2007 by reviewing the program titles and classifications from each conference book. Out of 6,891 total sessions between the two conferences over ten years, 71 of those were related to supervision, 13 covered orientation to the position, and 9 were about performance appraisal (Tull, 2011). In summary, there are low numbers of Student Affairs divisions reporting comprehensive orientation programs for mid-level employees and low numbers of training sessions for mid-level supervisors of professional staff members plus and there are few sessions being offered on these subjects at the major professional associations' national conferences.

Supervisory Approaches Within Other Fields

Supervision and professional development strategies in Student Affairs can be influenced by ideas from outside the profession. Perillo (2011) maintains that holding staff members accountable is an act of care and that effective supervision begins with the self. "If you are unfamiliar with the scholarship of supervision, learn it. Given the scarcity of literature about supervision in higher education, I recommend studying supervision scholarship in other academic disciplines" (Perillo, 2011, p. 429). In the teaching profession, Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2007) discuss a variety of developmental approaches to supervision within the context of various models of adult

development. Learning from life experience may be eased for the supervisor of professional staff members within adult development models that emphasize the different roles assumed by the adult in work, with family, in love, and in personal development: "...the role of the supervisor may be critical in helping teachers to experience growth as an outcome of unsettling life experiences..." (Glickman, et al., p. 73). The authors recommend that work life and personal life not be separated, as one affects the other. This is similar to the concept of synergy moving through the systems world, life world, and organizational change, to create a shared vision within the supervisory relationship.

Several types of supervision are debated within the hospitality and food service industry. Leaders who prefer a "directive management" supervision style make decisions about the task itself as well as how and when it is to be accomplished (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 1998). In this hierarchical approach, the manager makes all the decisions. Conversely, "participative leadership" lends itself to a shared decision-making process between managers and employees (Mintzberg et al., 1998). In a quantitative study about supervision within the food service industry, researchers found that when managers working within larger organizational structures implemented a participative management style with their employees, restaurant profits increased (Ogbeide & Harrington, 2011). The participative leadership management style may also lead to "self-managed work teams" due to the increased amount of responsibility given to employees. "Self-managed work teams are small groups of co-workers (perhaps eight to fifteen) who share tasks and responsibilities for a well-defined segment of work" (Jessup, 1990, p. 79). Much like synergistic supervision can create a powerful working relationship between supervisor and protégé in Student Affairs, participative management leads to the financial

improvement of a business by involving employees in goal setting and reducing hierarchical structures.

Technology and internet giant Google has an innovative approach to supervision. Google is among the companies who have found ways to effectively utilize self-managed teams (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Recognizing the high cost of high employee turnover, Google developed an organization known for flexibility for employees. Google's company website expresses that they are an "open culture" where employees have a shared vision and where work is equally as important as play (Google, n.d.). In a qualitative study about Google's continuous innovation, Steiber and Alänge (2013) found that one of the big reasons Google has become known for innovation is the strength of the people they hire. As a case in point, Steiber and Alänge note

In order to support these highly talented individuals, Google had a human resource department (people operations) that developed programs to grow and sustain talent in the organization. Google had created special processes for hiring, socializing, and following up on the satisfaction of its employees. (p. 248)

Because the company makes employees feel valued and respected, Google has claimed the top spot on *Fortune's* annual list of the best companies to work for seven times (Levering, 2016). Google literally merges the life world with the systems world by providing childcare, on-site laundry and oil changes, and by giving employees time to work on personal projects. By focusing on people over systems, Google has defined what it means to be in partnership with staff members.

Adult Learning

The concept of adult education does not have a single, specific definition. Rather,

adult educators often subscribe to various and sometimes multiple philosophies that inform their practices as teachers of the lifelong learner (Elias & Merriam, 2005). Additionally, there are many theoretical perspectives on adult learning. Boutouvalas and Lawrence (2010) reviewed several, including holistic learning (a framework for how learning occurs: not only through the mind, but also through the body, heart, and spirit), social cognition (learning occurs through interaction with the world), affective learning (learning occurs through reflection on emotions), as well as artistic ways of knowing (learning occurs through creative expression or exploration of art). Other modes of learning include experiential (direct observation and reflection), self-directed learning (adults learn on their own or out of necessity), transformational learning (perspective change), as well as the practice of critically exposing social inequities through emancipatory learning. Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) present adult learning as divided into three types: formal, non-formal, and informal. Formal learning is the organized type of learning that occurs in schools. Non-formal learning includes community-based education occurring outside of the formal classroom experience. Informal learning is self-directed, incidental, and occurs over time. LaBelle (1982) noted that formal learning occurs under the influence of the state and government whereas non-formal learning was a response to divergent educational needs.

Synergistic supervision in the Student Affairs field is a social activity. In synergistic supervisory relationships, both parties understand that it is impossible to separate people and their beliefs and attitudes from their professional positions (Winston & Creamer, 1997). The supervisory dyad must learn to base their relationships on trust, respect, cooperation, and openness, often allowing each person to learn about each other

personally. Similarly, adult learning can take on a social form. A type of learning that emphasizes the social aspect of adult education is situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Situated learning is related to the needs of learners, whose knowledge and skills are learned within the contexts of everyday situations. “Learning is essentially a matter of creating meaning from the real activities of daily living” (Stein, 1998, p. 2).

Supervisors of professional staff can situate meaning making and skill development within their staff member’s actual jobs. The activities associated with performing a job serve as situations wherein knowledge is gained and learning occurs.

A common element of situated learning is that learning occurs within communities of practice (or learning communities), a group of individuals who are socially learning together while performing similar functions (Stein, 1998). In relation to adult learning and supervision experiences within Student Affairs organizations, Perillo (2011) affirmed learning as a social activity best experienced by staff members whose supervisors work with them to construct expectations of one another. For example, a supervisor can build a team among themselves and staff members through open conversations centering on getting to know each other on deeper levels, discussing the needs of each individual and how the team can meet those needs, and through making decisions on how trust will be formed. This social act of teambuilding creates a community of practice. Learning communities capitalize on the social nature of adult learning (Stein & Imel, 2002), providing a mechanism for adults to learn with each other through shared understanding instead of from one another. Adults remember what they have learned in relation to one another because they actively engaged in a group negotiation of meaning rather than learning from one individual who transferred

knowledge.

Organizational Learning

Learning that occurs in the workplace, organizational learning, not only relates to an employee's professional growth (such as being taught job competencies, learning new skills, diversity training, management development, and leadership skills) but also to how the organizations themselves change and improve (Merriam et al., 2007). Student Affairs practitioners typically attend a specified amount of continuing education units each year and divisions of Student Affairs often learn through activities such as benchmarking and other forms of assessment. Fenwick (2008) relates organizational learning to informal learning that occurs in the everyday practices of work whereas Senge (2003) connects organizational learning to the need for staff in workplace leadership positions to be willing to change in order for their organizations to succeed and grow. Noting that all employees are in different life stages, Marsh (2001) summarizes adult development theories to suggest how they apply to supervision in the Student Affairs workplace. Management interested in creating positive changes within the supervision practices of Student Affairs in higher education can apply adult development theory to design appropriate developmental activities that enhance the personal and occupational growth of staff members. For example, Marsh argues that performance appraisals should be an ongoing educational process that changes as developmental tasks are accomplished. Utilizing the work of Levinson (1986), Marsh explains that a Student Affairs professional's entry into the field connects to Levinson's stage of "early adult transition." When new professionals are early into their careers they are beginning to explore their options as adults and creating stability in their lives.

Organizational learning can also have a socialization aspect for adults entering a profession. Positioning organizational learning within the andragogical perspective of adult learning (Knowles, 1970; 1980), Boucouvalas and Lawrence (2010) observe that adults bring their own life experiences to the learning process and socialization at work. Thus, the socialization process is an exchange between a new employee (and their life experiences) and the organizational culture (Collins, 2009). Further, McGraw (2011) comments that a positive trait in supervisors is the ability to translate the culture of an institution for staff members. In another connection to andragogy, McGraw notes that her own supervision style was influenced by her past experiences as a supervisee. Carpenter and Carpenter (2009) observe that adults are socialized into their occupations, showing the need for supportive supervisors who can help them effectively transition. Further, early interactions with supervisors in the workplace create “powerful messages” about organizations (Carpenter & Carpenter, 2009, p. 176). Renn and Jessup-Anger (2008) comment that new professionals in organizations need to develop a lifelong learning orientation, and they should reflect often on their own practice. The socialization process in organizational learning is exemplified in the reflection of one new professional in Student Affairs: “My work at Wash U has been dependent on learning to understand university culture and organizational dynamics. I take the role of the life-long learner by asking a lot of questions and relishing opportunities to observe my colleague’s communication styles and decision-making processes” (Kurtzman, 2004, p. 99).

Organizational Development and Change

Organizations are complex and can best be understood through the examination of four different organizational functions, or “frames” (Bolman & Deal, 2013). The structural frame focuses on “roles, goals, policies, technology, and environment,” the human resource frame focuses on the “needs of people, skills, and relationships,” the political frame focuses on “power, conflict, competition, and politics,” and the symbolic frame focuses on “culture, meaning, metaphor, ritual, ceremony, stories, and heroes” (p. 19). Fullan (2008) offers a breadth of insight into organizational change. Organizations that cultivate the most positive changes are those that provide transparency for stakeholders and staff, hire and develop talented people, and train employees in the context of the actual work that is to be done while facilitating reflective practices. Reflection on job training leads to *learning transfer*, or application of what was learned. There are several factors that must be considered to facilitate effective transfer of learning. These include learner characteristics and motivation, the delivery methods of the material, the learning context, and a consideration of how and where the knowledge can be immediately applied (Caffarella & Daffron, 2013).

Dean et al., (2011) note that research on transfer of learning suggests that new employee orientations and brief training periods in classroom settings are often insufficient because there is little time for processing, experiential learning, and linking the new information to what adult learners already know. Fullan (2008) further recommends that organizations can improve through investment in employees, and through focusing on development of the leadership team instead of the individual leaders. The development of a team of leaders leads to group cohesion (well formed, cohesive

groups lead to higher commitment and better performance), and while every leader in the group may have different skills, the variances are not to the detriment of group cohesion (Levi, 2011). Fullan (2008) also advocates for a collaborative process that occurs as a result of positive peer interactions where everyone has a voice. Janosik and Creamer (2003) echo Fullan's humanistic approach in their remarks that an organization's greatest asset is the people within them: the employees within organizations produce results, not the organizations themselves. However, Janosik and Creamer note that the attention the Student Affairs field devotes to organizing and motivating employees is insufficient.

Developing an understanding of institutional culture is a concern of first time professionals in Student Affairs (Dean et al., 2011). While organizations as a whole have cultures, Carpenter and Carpenter (2009) explain that individual departments within organizations have distinct subcultures based on the tasks they perform and the stakeholders they serve. In an essay about her first three years as a professional in Student Affairs, Kurtzman (1994) reflects that she developed an understanding of organizational dynamics and institutional culture by way of learning how decisions were made, how conflict was handled, who was really in charge, how to inform but bypass those who did not have decision-making power, how the organization perceived itself, and learning what the institution truly valued. While these qualities of an organization could possibly be taught as part of new employee orientation depending on the methods and context, they are mostly qualities that can only be experientially learned over time within an institutional subculture.

Student Affairs Connections to Adult Learning

Literature from the field reveals a need for education beyond the Student Affairs graduate program. Shupp and Arminio (2012) explain that new professionals face dissonance between their experiences in graduate school and the realities of their first professional position. In a quantitative paper about the conflict between what new professionals learned in graduate school versus what they experience in the field, Kinser (1993) notes that new professionals were most surprised by campus politics and perceived administrators as valuing power and control more than they valued providing student services. McGraw (2011) reflects that she didn't learn everything she needed to know about supervision from her master's courses while Stock-Ward and Javorek (2003) note that there is "... rarely a discussion of how to facilitate personal or professional development in the context of supervision" during coursework (pp. 89-90). In her reflections on how she felt as a new professional fresh out of graduate school, Kurtzman (1994) considered herself to be a "fraud" and "a child in adult clothing" with no full-time experience and no experience doing the job for which she was hired (p. 5). Mid-level Student Affairs supervisors need to cultivate a lifelong learning orientation for both themselves and their supervisees.

Ignelzi (2011) observed that due to the developmental nature of the synergistic model, there is a clear focus on employee learning. A supervisor should develop an understanding of how their employees make meaning of their experiences in order to determine their learning needs. A supervisor can begin to develop this knowledge through the exploration of how their employees interpret success, failure, job responsibilities, and any number of other functions. Ignelzi concludes that suitable

supervision strategies can then be applied based on the employee's learning needs. Renn and Hodges (2007) advocate for a movement towards synergistic supervision of new professionals, noting that it integrates adult learning and development theory into supervision practices.

Tauber (2013) utilized portraiture to examine the meaning and purpose of storytelling for teaching adults. Focusing on three rabbis, the researcher found that the sharing of personal stories creates opportunities for reflection among adult learners. The author describes the three rabbis as "constructivist educators" (p. 436) due to their enthusiasm in exploring their life experiences and reflecting upon what those mean to them in the various aspects of who they are. In Student Affairs, the use of story by supervisors could be an effective way to teach entry-level professionals. Personal experiences expressed through storytelling would engage, situate, and orient new professionals nicely to their positions. The results of two surveys administered to junior-level staff in Student Affairs (Ignelzi, 2011) indicate that work assignments and information sharing often dominated discussions between supervisee and supervisor whereas professional and personal development was not discussed with any great frequency. Janosik and Creamer (2003) note that within the Student Affairs profession, emphasis on how one develops the skills necessary to provide student services is lacking. Junior-level staff may benefit from the use of adult education techniques such as storytelling from supervisors in order to enhance skill development.

Theories utilized in Student Affairs practice champion an interpretation of human development that extends well beyond the college years. Ignelzi (2011) comments that the leadership within divisions of Student Affairs should be more intentional in extending

this lifelong view of continuous growth to the adult professional staff members who work directly with students. Winston and Creamer (1997) have also recognized this need:

Just as successful Student Affairs practitioners base their work with students on an understanding of developmental theory, successful supervisors need an understanding of adult development theory as they work with their staffs. It is essential that supervisors be aware of the kinds of developmental changes that are going on in the lives of the staff members they supervise, as well as in their own lives. (p. 203)

Adult learning theory informs the processes of professional staff supervision in the Student Affairs field. Mid-level staff members are not taught effective supervision strategies because supervision is not a priority within the field. A result of this low priority is a lack of research and resulting literature. Teaching professional university staff employees to become good supervisors is rarely a priority within the various departments falling under divisions of Student Affairs in higher education. Rather, effective supervision skills are learned experientially and informally by the adult professionals who occupy mid-level positions. Without structured supervision training and application of theory through practice, mid-level professionals are left to focus on short-range tasks, programs, and projects (Ignelzi, 2011).

Winston and Creamer (1997) recommend that supervision within the Student Affairs field be a collaborative and helping process that supports staff while they work to meet institutional goals as well as advance their own professional development. However, the potential of this helping process cannot be fully realized without a culture change. Adult education pioneer Eduard Lindeman wrote “Adult education specifically

aims to train individuals for a more fruitful participation in those smaller collective units which do so much to mold significant experience” (Lindeman, 1926/2013, p. 57). Thus, in not preparing professionals for their roles as supervisors of adults, the Student Affairs field is missing an opportunity to capitalize on the experiences of supervisors in order to help them apply what they already know and make adjustments to the needs of adult learners.

Part of the culture change around supervision that is needed within the Student Affairs field relates to when learning ends for adult professionals. Lindeman (1926/2013) firmly and repeatedly commented that learning is a lifelong endeavor. Moreover, this sentiment is at the heart of any adult education theory. However, many Student Affairs supervisors of adults believe that learning ends with graduation from Student Affairs master’s degree programs (Ignelzi, 2011). Further, there is another assumption among mid-level supervisors that the sole purpose of supervision is to delegate and see to the completion of work tasks. Ignelzi (2011) comments that “these assumptions run counter to the holistic and developmental view of learning that serves the philosophical and operative basis of our profession” (p. 418).

In summary, based on a review of the literature produced by the community of discourse, it is apparent there is a paucity of research on the topic of professional staff supervision in the field. In addition, little information about how mid-level supervisors learn to supervise entry-level staff is available.

APPENDIX C

STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

The purpose of this study was to inform Student Affairs administrators who are seeking to improve supervision practices for entry-level professionals and who want to understand the adult learning experiences that are reported by professionals within the context of supervision and in their professional lives. This chapter includes the problem statement, rationale behind the use of qualitative research, a description of instrumental case study, and an explanation of the methods for participant and site selection. In addition, the chapter includes a description of data sources, methods for data collection and analysis, strategies to insure credibility, and a discussion of ethical issues.

Statement of the Problem

There is a gap in the research about supervision of professional staff in Student Affairs (Carpenter et al., 2001; Ignelzi, 2011; Perillo, 2011; Stock-Ward & Javorek, 2003). To inform the policies and practices of Student Affairs divisions in higher education, this research facilitated an understanding of how mid-level professionals in the field synergistically supervised and developed their entry-level professional staff members. This study contributed to the research on supervision within the Student Affairs field by determining the impact of synergistic supervision strategies. The study also illuminated the adult learning experiences reported by participants and how those experiences tied into their professional lives. Two research questions guide this study:

1. What are the synergistic practices of mid-level Student Affairs supervisors at a four-year public university?

2. What adult learning experiences do study participants report within the context of supervision and in their professional lives?

Qualitative Research

For this study, data were collected, analyzed, and reported utilizing qualitative research methods to understand participant's supervision practices and the adult learning experiences they reported. As a method of inquiry, qualitative research allows the investigator to interpret how participants understand their life experiences. Qualitative methods painted a rich picture of the working relationships, challenges, and accomplishments of existing dyads of supervisors and supervisees. Student Affairs administrators will benefit from this research because it resulted in a deep and humanistic understanding of the participants' professional lives and how supervision in Student Affairs as a profession can either enhance or diminish their job satisfaction and thus, their productivity.

In his definition of qualitative research, Creswell (2013) argued that this form of inquiry reports on the meaning individuals assign to social or human problems. A fundamental feature of qualitative inquiry for Merriam (2009) is that individuals construct reality through engagement with the world and thus it is the task of the qualitative researcher to "understand how people make sense of their lives and their experiences" (p. 23). Similarly, Yin (2011) explains that qualitative research locates institutional and environmental conditions within the context of people's lives. The essence of the research problem for this study, the need to ensure that entry-level staff members are well supported in their positions, is both a social and institutional problem. Using a qualitative approach to inquiry, I documented the supervisory relationships of

four dyads of professional Student Affairs staff members at one university. An understanding of the meanings behind the characteristics of sound supervision strategies and the impact those strategies had on the experiences of professional staff members emerged. Those experiences told a story about workplace relationships, professional effectiveness, how supervision occurred, and adult learning within the context of supervision.

Creswell (2013) further explained that data are collected in a natural setting and analyzed to establish themes both inductively and deductively. Likewise, Yin (2011) describes qualitative inquiry as a means to extract data under real world conditions, eventually leading to a truthful representation of participant's perspectives. In addition, qualitative research often includes elements of the researcher's own journey (Creswell, 2013; Guba, 1990). Thus, my experiences as young college graduate prior to committing to a career, as an individual who took time off from the professional world to reflect, and as a more experienced professional in the field of Student Affairs shaped this study. This investigation qualitatively explained how mid-level supervisors managed supervisees through either existing or emerging concepts related to synergistic supervision practices, thus offering new insights for administrators in the Student Affairs field.

Case Study Methodology and Rationale

This qualitative inquiry utilized case study research methodology to understand and describe participant's employment of synergistic supervision and their learning experiences. Case study methodology allowed me as a researcher to cast a wide net for data collection and it encouraged collaboration with participants (Merriam, 2009). In addition to studying supervision strategies and the adult learning experiences reported by

participants, the context in which those strategies and learning experiences occurred including relationships, work setting, and outside influences were considered in order to develop an appreciation of the participants' worldviews. Case study "...can be a disciplined force in setting public policy and in reflecting on human experience. Vicarious experience is an important basis for refining action options and expectations" (Stake, 2005, p. 455). Consequently, this case study provided insight for Student Affairs administrators interested in discovering the best traditions for supervision and how adult learning theory plays a role within Student Affairs practice.

Bounded System

Numerous qualitative researchers have defined case study research. Creswell (2013) defined case study as "a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases)" (p. 97). By *bounded*, Creswell means that the study can be defined by parameters such as time, place, and focus of the research. Similarly, Merriam (2009) explained that a case is an "intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon or social unit" (p.46). Merriam argued that the most important characteristic of case study research is the researcher's ability to "fence in" (p. 40, quotations in original) what is to be studied. The phenomena within the "fence" is the bounded system, the focus of the study. Likewise, Stake (1995) presented case study as research that has a boundary with working parts and that is "a specific, a complex, functioning thing" (p. 2). Given what Creswell, Merriam, and Stake have said, I defined the bounded system for this case study as an examination of the *situational* synergistic supervision strategies and adult learning

experiences within four dyads of mid-level supervisors and their entry-level supervisees who work within a division of Student Affairs at a four-year university in Texas.

Instrumental Case Study

I utilized *instrumental case study* to explore the synergistic supervision practices and the adult learning experiences of mid-level staff members working in Student Affairs. Here, the case itself was the *instrument* utilized to learn about synergistic supervision and adult learning. As Stake (2005) explained, the case itself is secondary to providing insight into something else. For this research, implementation of case study served as the catalyst to collect data from four dyads of mid-level supervisors and their supervisees. Stake (2005) defined case study based on interest in the case instead of being defined by the methods of inquiry utilized. For example, in an investigation about authentic leadership in popular education, Glowacki-Dudka and Griswold (2016) utilized instrumental case study to describe how Highlander Research and Education Center workshops inspired changes in the practices of adult educator participants. Instrumental case study was employed by the researchers to provide insight into an issue. The case of the participant's working relationships and the situations that evoked implementation of various synergistic strategies provided insight into the challenges and rewards of supervision practices as well as insight into the adult learning experiences reported by participants within the context of supervision at the participating university.

Site Selection

Within the setting of the field of Student Affairs in Higher Education, purposeful (or purposive) sampling was utilized to select the site for this study. "Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand,

and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam, 2009, p. 77). The site used for sampling was purposefully selected due to its ability to provide information-rich cases who provided insight into the use of synergistic supervision strategies and adult learning. “There are several different strategies for purposefully selecting information-rich cases” (Patton, 2002, p. 230). Among the various strategies of purposeful sampling is criterion sampling (Patton, 2002). Cases are selected because they meet a predetermined set of criteria deemed important and necessary for answering the research questions (see Figure 24 for a representation of the criteria for site selection). Criterion- based purposeful sampling can drive the successful identification of participants who can provide an abundance of information (Merriam, 2009). The following two sub-sections describe the pre-determined criteria for the site of this study: the potential institutions and the departments that make up the Student Affairs divisions within those institutions.

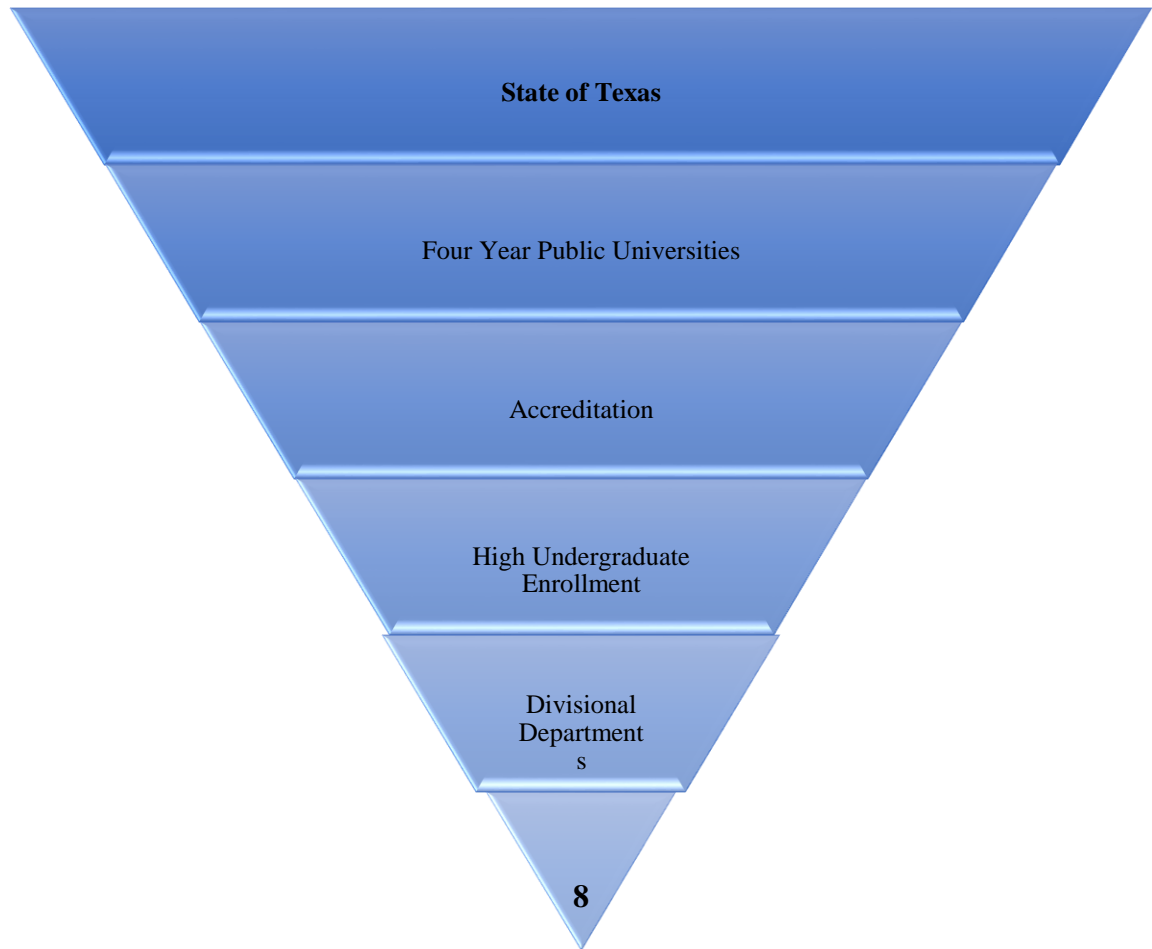


Figure 24. Criterion Sample

University Criteria

The following criteria were established to better describe relevant universities to invite as a potential study participant:

1. A university within the state of Texas.
2. Four-year, public universities. According to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (2011), there were 89 public institutions and of those, 39 were four-year universities.
3. Universities accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

As an accrediting regional body for the southern states, SACS works to ensure quality in higher education (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2016). After a review of the SACS website, all 39 of the public, four-year universities identified by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board were accredited by SACS.

4. Institutions with a high undergraduate enrollment profile. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education describes the differences between universities for research purposes. An institution has a high undergraduate enrollment profile when the percentage of graduate students accounts for no more than 24% of all students enrolled full time (Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2016). To retrieve a list of Texas institutions with at least a 76% undergraduate population, the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education website's "standard listings" tool (institutions listed by a single classification category) was utilized and "enrollment profile" was selected as the category. Then, "high undergraduate" was chosen as the filter. This yielded 609 results, which were then filtered by state. The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education identified 32 universities in Texas with high undergraduate enrollment profiles. Of those, 12 were private institutions. Thus, 20 public four-year institutions with high undergraduate profiles qualified for further review. (The same 20 were previously identified as public, four-year, and SACS accredited.)

Selection of Student Affairs Divisions

While Student Affairs divisions today encompass a wide variety of services for students, not all of those work for students in the same ways (Dungy & Gordon, 2011).

For example, the campus police office, the student health center, and counseling services

office all often fall within a Student Affairs division and each play critical roles in student learning and development. However, the supervision of a doctor from the student health center or a mental health specialist from the counseling services office is inherently different than the supervision of an entry-level staff member who works as a student conduct officer or who manages a residence hall.

Eight departments were selected as necessary components of a Student Affairs division due to the nature of their work with students. The selected departments included Campus Activities, Career Services, Disability Services, Diversity and Inclusion, Leadership Development, Recreational Sports, Residence Life, and Student Organizations. See Table 2 in Chapter 1 for a description of each department. I conducted an on-line review of Student Affairs divisions within each of the 20 universities previously identified as public, four-year universities in Texas that are SACS accredited and have high undergraduate enrollment profiles to confirm the existence of the required divisional departments. If a link for “campus life” or “student services” was not available from the institution’s main page, I employed a search for the keywords “Student Affairs,” using the website’s search engine. Some divisions’ websites had links for each of the required departments within the division and others were not as clear. In the latter instances, I employed another round of keyword searches for each characteristic and I conducted a review of the department’s webpage to determine its membership in the division of Student Affairs. In two cases, it became necessary to review staff member’s titles in order to determine the services provided and in another case it was necessary to review the institution’s organizational chart.

Once identified, if any of the eight departments were found to be privatized, to be located within a division other than Student Affairs, or not found at all, the institution was disqualified from this study. After each division had been checked for all eight departments, nine institutions had divisions of Student Affairs that remained as potential sites for this study. However, one site was removed from the study due to a conflict of interest. Removal of this site will help build credibility for the study (Creswell, 2013). Thus, eight of the 20 institutions previously identified as public, four-year universities in Texas that were SACS accredited and had high undergraduate enrollment profiles remained as potential settings for this study (see Figure 25).

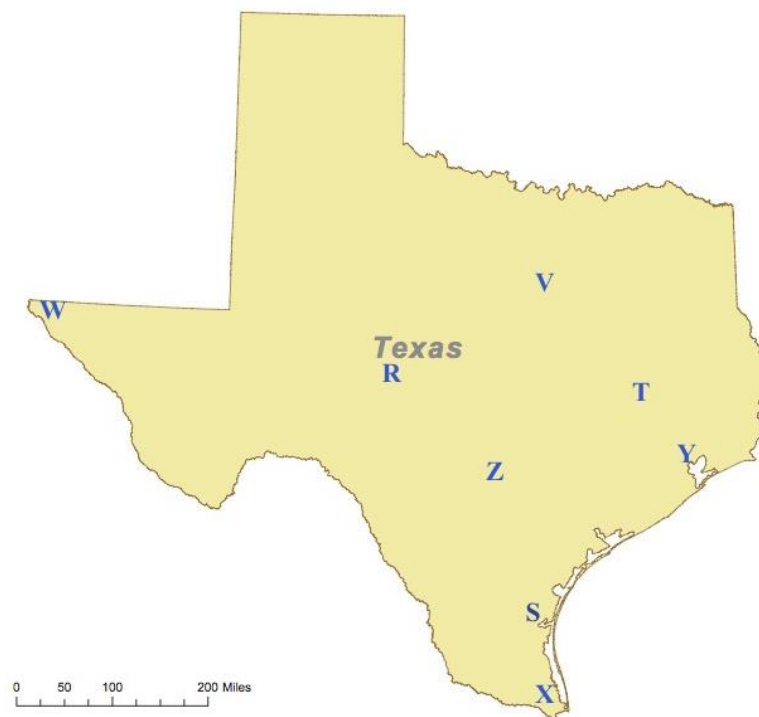


Figure 24. Potential Site Locations

Participant Selection

As with the site selection, criterion-based purposeful sampling helped me to identify and select participants for this study. The information-rich cases are those “from which one can learn a great deal about matters of importance and therefore worthy of in-depth study” (Patton, 2002, p. 242). As a strategy of purposeful sampling, criterion-based sampling was also employed. Criterion-based sampling involves selecting cases that meet conditions of importance related to the study. In order to assure quality and to gain a broad understanding of their supervisory relationships, each participant met pre-defined criteria in order to take part in the study (Patton, 2002). A sample of eight participants in existing supervisory relationships was selected from one of the potential sites to create four dyads; each composed of one entry-level staff member who is supervised by one mid-level staff member (see Table 5 for description of criteria to select participants). The supervisee/supervisor dyads were considered information-rich because they are the individuals within the supervision situation who were studied: they were actually living the case.

Table 5

Description of Participant Criteria

Participant	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3	Criterion 4
Mid-level professional (4)	5 or more years of experience. Reports to senior administrator or one level below.	Supervises entry-level professional staff.	Supervised the staff member for at least one semester.	Full time and master's prepared in related field.
Entry-level professional (4)	3 or fewer years of experience.	Works directly with undergrads.	Directly reported to supervisor for at least one semester.	Full time and bachelor's or master's prepared in related field.

As defined by Carpenter and Fey (1996) a mid-level Student Affairs practitioner is someone who reports directly to a senior administrator (or one level below) and who is responsible for a function within the division or who supervises professional staff members. An entry-level Student Affairs practitioner is a full-time employee, is usually master's-prepared, and has five or fewer years of experience (Cilente et al., 2006). Thus, criterion one adopted these definitions for each participant in the dyad, respectively. Criterion two required mid-level professionals to be actively supervising an entry-level professional (due to the nature of the study) who works directly with undergraduates (due to the retention component of the study). For criterion three, each dyad was required to have been working together for at least one semester. This was necessary in order to give the participant dyads some context of their working relationships prior data collection.

In defining the elements of a Student Affairs division that is committed to student learning, the leadership of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) advised “The division of Student Affairs includes staff who are experts on students, their environments, and teaching and learning processes” (American College Personnel Association [ACPA], 1994, p. 4). In addition to the ACPA recommendations, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education weighs in regarding the educational attainment of staff working in Student Affairs. “Founded in 1979, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) is the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in Student Affairs, student services, and student development programs” (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, 2015, p. main page). CAS recommends that professional personnel hold a graduate or professional degree “in a field relevant to their position or possess an appropriate

confirmation of educational credentials and related work experience” (CAS self-assessment, 2015, p. 18). The participants’ level of educational attainment (a master’s degree in Student Affairs or related field) was a necessary consideration for this study due to the expertise called for by ACPA and CAS. Thus, criterion four required both participants from each dyad to be master’s prepared, full time employees of the university.

Site Selection and Participant Recruitment

In order to recruit eight participants from one of the previously identified eight sites, an expert with over 40 years of experience working in the Student Affairs field was consulted. The expert understood the need to keep the final eight potential sites confidential and I then shared the site locations as well as the participant criteria. The expert pinpointed several sites from among the eight that they felt might lead to the successful recruitment of four dyads of participants who would meet the named criteria. An e-mail letter describing the study and the criteria for participant selection was sent to the chief Student Affairs officer (CSAO) at the institution that was first among the sites recommended by the expert (see Figure 26). Had the CSAO at that institution declined to participate in the study, a copy of the letter would have been sent to the second site recommended by the expert, and so on.

Several days after sending the e-mail, I was contacted by the CSAO from the first site who had a few questions for clarification. The CSAO’s first question was that they wanted me to further explain the participant criteria. The second question was to clarify the amount of time that would be needed from each participant. The CSAO was concerned about the amount of time I was asking of the employees, should I be allowed

to proceed in participant selection. The CSAO indicated they would take this information to their leadership team, which was made up of directors of the individual departments with the division, and then inform me of their decision in a few days.

Date

Dear (),

I am proposing to study the impact of synergistic supervision strategies as they are employed by four full-time mid-level professionals (master's prepared) who supervise four full-time entry-level professionals (bachelor's or master's prepared) working in Student Affairs at one public university with a high undergraduate enrollment in Texas.

- I am looking for 4 dyads—4 supervisors and each of their 4 direct reports.
- Mid-level professionals (job titles such as assistant director, associate director, assistant dean, etc.) have five or more years of full-time experience in the field
- Entry-level professionals (job titles such as coordinator, hall director, advisor, etc.) have three or fewer years of full-time experience in the field.

I will propose to gather data for this qualitative study in the following ways:

- 8 one-hour individual interviews with each participant (at the participants' campus)
- 1 four-hour workshop (at the participants' campus)
- Periodic writing prompts completed over e-mail. I anticipate, 3, maybe 4 writing prompts that would take roughly 15-20 minutes each to complete
- 1 two-hour group interview with all 8 individuals (at the participants' campus)
- I anticipate the study lasting 3.5 to 4 months
- The identities of the participants as well as the site (Student Affairs division/university) will be kept strictly confidential and each individual given thorough instruction on informed consent.
- Participants need to be able to commit to the following:
 - Full participation in the individual interviews, workshop, written reflections, and group interview.
 - Full participation in weekly 1:1 supervisory meetings with their staff member/supervisor

In return for their participation in my study, your staff members would receive training and practical experience participating in synergistic supervisory relationships. With your permission, they could also receive continuing education credits.

Can you help me recruit participants for this study? In addition to me completing my research, I think the study will provide a valuable learning and professional development experience for those who participate. If you have any questions, I would be happy to arrange a time at your convenience when we can speak on the phone.

Best regards, and thank you for considering my request. IRB Exemption # 2017159

Figure 26. Letter to Chief Student Affairs Officer

After consulting with divisional leadership, the CSAO contacted me and agreed to let their institution be the site for this study. Above and beyond that, the CSAO was able to recommend eight employees who met each criterion. The contact information for each participant candidate for this study was then provided to me. I contacted each potential

participant separately to explain the scope of the study, time commitment, and nature of confidentiality. I then explained that although they had been recommended to me as potential participants by leadership in their Student Affairs division, it was completely up to them to volunteer and they should only do so if they felt the research was important and if they had the time. Each of the candidates for participation in this study readily volunteered to participate. The volunteers were then given informed consent forms in order to assure they were completely committed to this study. Finally, I was able to identify one university with eight professionals willing to provide consent and commitment to this study.

Data Collection Sources

Data for this case study were procured from multiple sources. Having numerous sources of data is a hallmark of case study research (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2014). Additionally, identifying and creating various resources for data simultaneously during a single study is a characteristic of qualitative inquiry (see Table 6 for a summary of data collection sources). The researcher personally engaged in data collection by participating in fieldwork. This “means having direct and personal contact with people under study in their own environments... to understand the realities and minutiae of daily life...” (Patton, 2002, p. 48). Fieldwork gives the researcher the opportunity to utilize all of their senses to make individual and personal meaning of the data being collected. The researcher can also help individuals make sense of their own experiences while in the field. This making of meaning is a central element of qualitative inquiry; the researcher’s unique understandings garnered from interacting with the data sources and collecting the data is a constructive experience. “Constructivism taken in this sense points out the

unique experiences of each of us. It suggests that each one's way of making sense of the world is as valid and worth of respect as any other..." (Crotty, 1998, p. 58). For this study, data sources included a round of face-to-face individual interviews, a facilitated workshop with all eight participants, and a round of individual interviews via Skype. A researcher's journal and field notes supplemented these sources.

Table 6

Summary of Data Collection Sources

On Site Interviews	Workshop	Post-Workshop Questionnaires	Skype Interviews	Field notes
8 participants, 1 interview each	1	1 for supervisees, 1 for supervisors	8 participants, 1 interview each	As needed
1 hour	4 hours	10 minutes	1 hour	As needed
November 28-29, 2016	February 10, 2017	February 10, 2017	March 10-13, 2017	Created form
Audio recording Observation Transcripts (FTF)	Field notes GA typist (FTF)	Created form	Audio recording Transcripts (skype)	Created Form

On-Site Interviews

Most qualitative researchers agree that interviewing is the primary means of data collection. Interviews are used to gain information about phenomena that we cannot wholly observe for ourselves (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). For the first major data source, interviews with each of the eight individuals occurred over two days in-person at the participants' campus. Through interviewing, it is expected that the researcher will glean information about the participants' feelings, past experiences, and worldviews

(Merriam, 2009). The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions, which allowed and encouraged each participant to speak freely. Because four of the participants were supervisors and four were supervisees, I came prepared with two separate interview guides (see Appendixes E and F for sample interview questions). Akin to a checklist, an interview guide ensures the lines of inquiry within different interviews are similar and the same general issues are explored (Patton, 2002). In addition, utilizing the interview guide approach rather than a highly structured or standardized line of questioning allows the researcher's active listening and careful observation skills to dictate the overall direction of the interviews (Merriam, 2009). I incorporated questions based on experience and behavior, opinion and values, as well as the participants' feelings, knowledge, and senses (Patton 2002). In addition, hypothetical questions, devil's advocate questions, and ideal position questions were asked (Strauss, Bucher, & Sabshin, 1981).

Interviews allow the researcher to "understand and capture the points of view of other people without pre-determining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories" (Patton, 2002, p. 21). The guided interview format combined with open-ended questions and my thorough observation provided for an organic conversation void of the drawbacks (such as insufficient, boring, or poor data without much context) that can result from a more rigid interview session. Interviews were conducted in a location of the participant's choosing where they felt comfortable. To record observations, I utilized a digital voice recorder, field notes, and a researcher's journal. Voice recordings were later be transcribed into text. I then utilized my field notes, the observations I made during the interviews and logged in a notebook, to

facilitate my reflections in a journal immediately following each individual interview (Merriam, 2009).

The general topic for the individual interviews was the strengths and shortcomings in the existing relationships between each supervisor and supervisee to date. I used these data to formulate a frame of reference that informed the development of a workshop about synergistic supervision strategies that was facilitated with all eight participants together at a later date. (This workshop is described in the following section.) Merriam (2009) notes “the much-preferred way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection” (p. 171). In other words, as the researcher I utilized existing data for frames of reference to inform the development of the next data collection steps. In addition to learning about the participant’s existing supervisory relationships, I was able to document their adult learning experiences. Because little has been written about how professionals working in Student Affairs learn their jobs and because 59% of entry-level respondents and 62% of mid-level respondents reported that their orientation to their positions only covered personnel policies and benefits (Winston et al., 2001), it was important to understand how the individuals participating in this study learned how to do their jobs. Did they receive formal training, or was their learning more informal occurring in the workplace over time?

Other interview topics included how they felt about their ability to succeed in their current role, the nature and structure of their supervisory meetings with one another, the amount of support that they feel they receive, and their opinions of their current work situations. Additionally, their previous supervisory experiences, best and worst practices

for supervision, and the amount of energy they feel their department has invested in their overall growth was investigated.

Lastly, I decided it was critical to understand the challenges that they anticipated while participating in this study in order for their concerns to be addressed. Interview topics such as these were key in order to begin answering this study's research questions regarding the current state of supervision and associated practices in the field of Student Affairs as well as their adult learning experiences reported within the context of supervision and their professional lives. Therefore, individual interview questions were sequenced in three groups: past experiences, present experiences, and future goals.

Workshop

The second major source of data was a four-hour facilitated session about synergistic supervision with strategies for implementation. This workshop was not to be mistaken for an "intervention" because it was expected that the participants, although they did not realize it at the time, were already engaged in the practice of synergistic supervision. The workshop was used as a space to collect data in the field while helping the participants identify synergistic strategies that they were currently using as well as synergistic strategies they may want to implement and experience in the future.

All eight participants (four mid-level supervisors and four entry-level supervisees) were asked to attend the workshop due to the nature of this model for supervision: for true synergy to occur, both parties in each dyad should understand synergistic strategies. The workshop occurred on-site in a classroom in order to reduce travel time for the participants who were already expected to invest a considerable amount of their time in this study. During informed consent, each participant identified dates of availability to

attend the workshop. Observations from the workshop provided rich data about the participants' overall interest in the study, aptitudes about being a supervisor or supervisee, existing knowledge of synergistic strategies, and cues about the nature of existing relationships and general work environment.

Winston and Creamer (1997 & 1998) explain a variety of different characteristics of synergistic supervision. As shown in Chapter 1 (Table 1), I broke those characteristics out into an accessible table composed of the nine strategies identified by Winston and Creamer (1997) and explanations for each. The workshop focused on these nine strategies as well as their indicators also identified in Chapter 1 (Figure 2), and how to use them in actual practice. The general outline for the workshop was an introduction of the day's general and specific objectives, engagement in two learning activities, a lunch break, two more activities, and then time was provided for participants to complete evaluation surveys of the workshop. I used learning activities specifically recommended for adult learners to illuminate the synergistic strategies and their indicators, such as *Structured Silence* and *Newsprint Dialogue* (Brookfield, 2013), were utilized throughout the workshop (see Appendix G for workshop procedure).

To assist in collecting data during the workshop, a master's level Graduate Assistant (GA) volunteer accompanied me to the campus. Prior to the trip, the GA successfully completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) on-line course in order that they gain a background in keeping confidentiality, ethics, and responsible research.

Prior to participant arrival, photographs of the empty room were taken in the event that I needed an artifact to assist my memory. At the beginning of the workshop,

each participant was given a folder containing materials for the day. These materials included instructions for the icebreaker, a list of terminology that would be used throughout the day, four copies each of a separate list of Winston and Creamer's (1997) strategies of synergistic supervision that included explanations of each component and the indicators for each that I had previously identified, a list of examples of synergistic supervision in practice, articles for optional future reading, blank notecards, a post-workshop survey for supervisees (Appendix I), and a post-workshop survey for supervisors (Appendix J). The contents of the folder were then reviewed with the participants, followed by a brief icebreaker, and then a brief conversation on confidentiality and any other rules for engagement the participants wanted to suggest.

For the first activity, structured silence, the supervisor group was asked to write on notecards their philosophy (defined as beliefs, values, and assumptions) related to supervising professional staff members and then to compose their own definition of supervision. The supervisee group was asked to write on notecards their philosophy (defined as beliefs, values, and assumptions) related to being supervised and then to compose their own definition of supervision. All notecards were then read aloud and similarities and differences were recorded on butcher paper at the front of the room prior to a facilitated discussion about supervision in general.

For the second activity, I shared the concept of synergistic supervision with the participants. Each of the components of the nine strategies, as well as their indicators, were then introduced. Supervisors were then asked to rank the level of intentionality with which they utilized each strategy in practice on a copy of the provided list of components and indicators of synergistic supervision. Supervisees were asked to rank

what they perceived to be their supervisor's level of intentionality. Then, supervisors were asked to rank the strategies they felt to be the most difficult to implement and supervisees were asked to rank the strategies they felt their supervisors had the most difficult time implementing.

The third learning activity, newsprint dialogue, utilized the intentionality and difficulty rankings from the previous activity to reflect on prompted questions.

Participants were split into groups of two. For example, supervisor groups discussed why some strategies were more difficult for them to use than others, and supervisee groups discussed why they thought their supervisors used some strategies more intentionally than others. Deliberations were then summarized on butcher paper and posted around the room. Participants then walked around the room, read the comments from other groups, and responded in writing as they wanted. A conversation was then facilitated about the deliberations and responses.

Participants were again split into groups of two and each group was given scenarios adapted from White (2011) to solve utilizing the synergistic strategies for the fourth activity. The scenarios were intentionally written to include andragogical components. Supervisor groups were given scenarios about a staff member not feeling supported and about an employee who had become bored on the job, respectively. The supervisor groups were asked to reflect on their own unique sets of life experiences that might be helpful in solving the problems described in the scenarios and to name the components and indicators of synergistic supervision that might be helpful in their solutions. Supervisee groups were given scenarios about not being included in the decision-making process and about a failing supervisor-supervisee relationship,

respectively. The supervisee groups were asked to reflect on how they could relate to the problems presented in the scenarios and how they might use the components of synergistic supervision to assist the supervisors in the scenarios to become more synergistic. Each pair of participants then presented their solutions to the group and a discussion was held.

After the workshop, the Graduate Assistant and I had a discussion about the day. We discussed our impressions about the participants and how they interacted with one another. In addition, we reflected on how we felt the participants reacted to the activities, components of the workshop that we thought were most successful and least successful, the evaluation surveys, and new questions we had about the material after it had been presented to the participants. Notes were taken on our discussion and typed upon our return home. They became the researcher's journal for that day. This journal, the GA's field notes observation form, the participant's philosophies and definitions of supervision, the intentionality and difficulty rankings, and the evaluation surveys became the primary data that comprised this second method of data collection.

Post-Workshop Questionnaire

At the end of the workshop, a questionnaire was distributed to supervisees (see Appendix H) and a slightly different questionnaire was distributed to supervisors (see Appendix I). The first part of each questionnaire contained agree/disagree statements regarding the participants' experiences of the day such as "The workshop provided knowledge that I can utilize in my daily practice." The second part of the questionnaire contained short answer questions meant to assist me in understanding their learning from the day, such as "Some of my takeaways from today are...".

Skype Interviews

The fourth major source of data were individual interviews with each of the eight participants held via Skype. Rather than doing a second in-person individual interview, I chose Skype because it “saves travel time and money, opens up more possibilities in terms of geographic access to participants, and is less disruptive in terms of scheduling and carrying out the interviews” (Seitz, 2016, p. 230). Similar to the in-person individual interviews held prior to the workshop, the Skype interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions, which allowed and encouraged each participant to speak freely. Separate interview guides were prepared; one for the four supervisors and one for the four supervisees. To record observations, I utilized a digital voice recorder that was placed near the speaker on my computer. To make sure the device would clearly record myself and the participants, I tested it by recording an advertisement being played over the internet through my computer’s speaker. Voice recordings were later be transcribed into text.

As previously noted, Merriam (2009) comments “the much-preferred way to analyze data in a qualitative study is to do it simultaneously with data collection” (p. 171). In other words, the researcher can utilize existing data for frames of reference that can inform the development of future data collection techniques. To that end, data from the workshop was utilized to inform the questions for the Skype interviews. To formulate the questions for this round of interviews, I used two synergistic strategies that the supervisors collectively identified as most “difficult” in their rankings (Two-Way Communication and Dual Focus) during the workshop. I then used one strategy that the supervisors collectively identified as least “difficult” in the rankings (Joint Effort) during

the workshop to inform additional Skype interview questions. Lastly, I identified a fourth synergistic strategy that I wanted to explore (Goal-Based) and created questions related to that strategy.

Thus, the questions were categorized based on four of the strategies and indicators for synergistic supervision detailed in Chapter 1 (Table 1). Six categories were created for this third round of data collection for both the supervisors and the supervisees. The categories were (1) General, (2) Two Way Communication: Trust, (3) Joint Effort: Collaboration, (4) Dual Focus: Understanding, (5) Goal Based: Vision, and (6) Ending. The questions themselves were based on Merriam's (2011) recommendations for qualitative interview questions. While the categories were the same, some of the questions were different based on the type of interviewee.

General questions for both supervisees and supervisors sought to discover the ways in which they had thought about supervision in general since the workshop and to find out their favorite synergistic strategy. The goal of the questions based on strategies was to gauge the participant's understanding of the strategies and to determine how the strategies were in use. The questions at the end of the interview invited participants to comment on how they might use synergistic supervision in current and future practice. See Appendices K and L for sample Skype interview questions.

Field Notes

Field notes, observations logged by the qualitative investigator, were used to facilitate reflection on the part of the researcher immediately following each individual interview (Merriam, 2009). During the workshop, the GA used an *observation protocol form* to type field notes (see Appendix H). This predesigned form is "used to record

information collected during an observation or interview” (Creswell, 2013, p. 168). Designed to parallel the workshop, the observation protocol form provided guiding questions to the GA in order for relevant information to be captured. Observations included recording what was said by the participants, facial expressions and body language, as well as interactions between participants. The observation protocol form was divided into sections. The first section of the form included questions pertaining to the beginning of the workshop such as participants’ introductions, their initial thoughts on supervision, who sat next to whom, and their reactions to the agenda. The next sections of the form provided the GA with instructions on what to record pertaining to the participants’ engagement in the various activities. For example, their level of interest in the material, their familiarity (or lack thereof) with the concepts, the points they made and questions they asked, and what segments of the activities seemed easy or difficult for them. The final sections of the form asked the GA to record field notes on the rapport between members of each dyad, the rapport of the entire group, and their reactions to the facilitator. Prior to the workshop, the GA had an opportunity to practice using the form in a similar setting. This hands-on experience helped the GA learn how to record observations in detail and how to type things as they happen.

Data Analysis

In case study methodology, a pre-determined problem directs data analysis (Yin, 2014). Stake (2005) comments “Perhaps the simplest rule for method in qualitative casework is this: “Place your best intellect into the thick of what is going on.” The brainwork ostensibly is observational, but more critically, it is *reflective*” (p. 449). Due to the rich description that results from case study methodology (Patton, 2002), it was

expected that the individual interviews, workshop observations, and Skype interviews conducted to gather data for this dissertation would produce a large amount of data. However, in case study methodology, it is acknowledged that not all data collected will be utilized (Yin, 2014). This is one of the reasons why utilizing a qualitative research software was so useful for my dissertation. It helped me manage and organize the large amount of data I collected from working with 8 participants. Thus, through thoughtful data analysis, a large number of codes were thematically assembled and the data not suited to this investigation were discarded.

Inductive and Deductive Analysis

Unique to this qualitative study, both inductive analysis and deductive analysis were used to examine the data. Patton (2002) explains that inductive analysis begins with specific observations, those observations are then grouped into generalized patterns, and then categories emerge from the patterns. “The strategy of inductive designs is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study without presupposing in advance what the important dimensions will be” (Patton, 2002, p. 56). This was indeed the situation I encountered. A hypothesis was not specified before data collection began and I remained open to the categories that emerged on their own. This openness allowed me to identify responses for the second research question about the participant’s adult learning experiences within the context of supervision and their professional lives.

Conversely, deductive analysis occurred when data were analyzed according to an existing framework and sometimes “narrowly defined, operationalized variables” (Patton, 2002, p. 56). This study involved the employment of a theory for supervision practice,

which is arguably an existing framework. However, there was no hypothesis, nor a supposition that synergistic supervision is (or is not) an effective tool for developing entry-level Student Affairs practitioners. Rather, a goal of this study was to determine what could be learned from professionals engaging in synergistic supervision practice.

While inductive analysis and deductive analysis seem quite contrary at the onset, Patton recognizes that “conducting holistic-inductive analysis and implementing naturalistic inquiry are always a matter of degree” (Patton, 2002, p. 67). Patton expounds that the inductive approach can be used to reveal patterns and categories towards the beginning of the study while the deductive approach can be used to verify the patterns against an established set of defined rules or framework to explain the observations. Creswell (2013) further explains “Researchers also use deductive thinking in that they build themes that are constantly being checked against the data. The inductive-deductive logic process means that the qualitative researcher uses complex reasoning skills throughout the process of research” (p. 45). In this case, I wanted to find out what synergistic supervision strategies were reported as being used by the participants in the study and I additionally wanted to report on their learning experiences involved in supervision activities.

Data Analysis Sequence

As previously mentioned, data collected from the individual interviews were used to inform the workshop; and data collected from the workshop informed the questions for the Skype interviews. Analyzing data while still being engaged in data collection is a hallmark of case study research (Yin, 2011). This allows emergent themes to be captured while enabling adjustments as necessary.

Data Analysis Steps

I used Yin's (2011) guidelines to make sense of the information collected from the individual interviews, facilitated workshop, Skype interviews, post-workshop questionnaires, and field notes. As illustrated below, Yin's process begins with all data from all sources being compiled and put in order. Second, data is disassembled and coded. The third step to the analysis process is to reassemble the data into emerging patterns and themes. The fourth step involves interpreting the data to create a new narrative. The final step is to draw conclusions and implications.

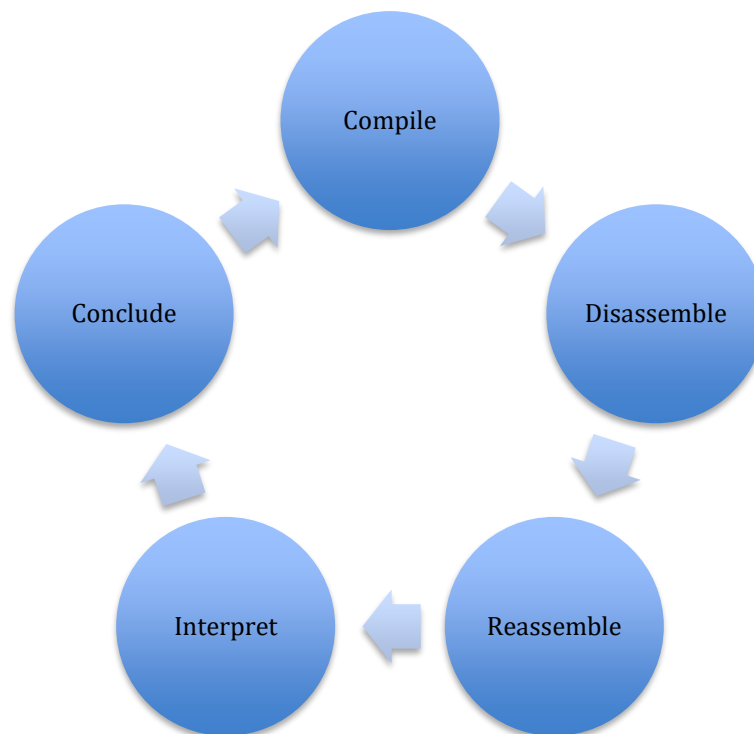


Figure 27. Data Analysis Steps (Yin, 2011)

In addition, Yin (2011) explains that steps to analysis are not linear and they often repeat themselves. Thus, data may need to be recompiled, which is exactly what I experienced. Data should be merged to understand the overall case, not just the individual parts of the case (Yin, 2011).

To make sense of the data, my first step was to read through all the textual data (e.g., interviews, workshop observations, field notes) several times. I focused on gaining an understanding of the dynamics of each dyad, as well as the individuals, keeping the research questions in mind. I paid close attention to if the data were revealing how mid-level staff members were engaging in synergistic supervision practices. I periodically returned to the concept of synergy and its effects when released into a supervisory relationship.

Next, I made sure all data were ready and organized to upload them into the MAXQDA software, such as my field notes from the interviews and the workshop. I also typed each participant's notecard from the first activity of the workshop. After organizing and properly naming the interview transcripts, I decided to edit them by removing the introductory comments and pleasantries from the beginning of each interview because I knew I would not be coding this information. I then uploaded all prepared data into the "Documents" section of MAXQDA. This is the area of the software where data are stored.

To expedite the analysis using MAXQDA, I created codes ahead of the coding process based on the original research questions. Therefore, a code was created for each of the nine synergistic strategies (Goal-Based, Dual Focus, Joint Effort, etc.). In addition, I knew there were some excellent comments made by participants regarding supervision as well as several other topics, so I created a code for "key quotes." I then began coding using these codes that I had already created. As I marked the documents throughout this initial coding process, I began *open coding*. This is a process used by researchers to label categories, themes, and concepts while the researcher remains open to all possibilities and

potentially relevant bits of information (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2011) describes the purpose of open coding as coding to “begin moving methodically to a slightly higher conceptual level” (p. 187). The researcher should recognize how open codes relate to each other in order to perhaps combine them or expound upon them in hopes of creating a “level 2” code, which is more specific and on a deeper level (Yin, 2011). During the open coding process, themes emerged such as “letting go” (supervisors commenting on when to let supervisees take over); “issues for new professionals” (general challenges encountered and sometimes more specific examples of those challenges); “lifeworld/systemsworld” (theoretical framework examples of when home life and work life collide); and “reflective practice” (used when a participant would comment on why they made a decision they made or when they learned from an experience). Lastly, I began to create codes for the different and recurrent types of learning reported by the study participants. As a result, within 29 documents, I had over 700 codes. My largest group of codes related to the synergistic supervision themes, with 282 references. My second largest group of codes related to adult learning, with 199 references. My third largest group of codes to emerge related to 52 codes about organizational change.

To make the amount of codes and data more manageable, it was my preference to break the data into two projects; one for synergistic supervision and one for adult learning. Next, I reconsidered all of the codes in both projects and realized that they were not specific enough. Consequently, I carefully reviewed each code to create sub-codes. Some sub-codes were based on what I already knew existed within the data, and other sub-codes emerged through open coding. For the MAXQDA project on synergistic supervision, I reconfigured all codes to make the data more specific. I utilized the

definitions for each synergistic strategy to break the strategy into components. For example, instead of all the “Goal-Based” codings being coded as such, I created codes for each component of the Goal-Based strategy: (1) the dyad has a clear understanding about the expectations of each other; (2) the supervisor identifies areas of need in the unit for the staff member to focus on as well as perceived areas of development needed by the staff member; (3) the supervisee provides supervisor with their own list of goals; and (4) the expectations and goals are periodically reviewed for accomplishment. As another example, I similarly broke down my code for “Workplace Learning.” Instead of all the data on workplace learning falling under that code, I created four sub-codes to make it more manageable: (1) 360 performance appraisals; (2) On the Job Learning; (3) How particular groups of workers learn; and (4) Problem solving through learning. These adjustments allowed for a coding framework that, while more detailed, made the data much more manageable in the end.

At some point I realized that I did not necessarily remember what each code meant because the codes became so numerous. I thus began using the “Memo” feature in MAXQDA so I could mouse over a code to quickly remember what the code meant. The memo feature allowed for me to define each code. For example, instead of just a code for “Andragogy Tenet 5,” the code name remained the same but the memo portion of it read “Adults are internally motivated to learn.” Accordingly, this memo allowed me to remember that every time a participant commented on their internal motivations, I could create a coding using the “Andragogy Tenet 5” code.

I began the next step once my new codes, sub-codes, and memos were established. This step involved re-coding much of what I had already coded using the

new code options. It was at this time during the process that data was deductively analyzed by looking for themes within the synergistic supervision model proposed by Winston and Creamer (1997) as well as for themes from the various adult learning concepts. In the instances of the adult learning categories that were identified through open coding, “axial coding emerges in which the researcher identifies one open coding category to focus on (called the “core” phenomenon), and then goes back to the data and creates categories around this core phenomenon” (Creswell, 2013, p. 86). This process was repeated until the data had been exhausted. Merriam (2009) refers to this as the ongoing nature of qualitative research. For example, “Learning” was originally an open coding category—the core phenomenon. But when different types of learning began to surface, such as self-directed learning and experiential learning, those different types became axial codes because new categories were created.

Regarding the codes themselves, the MAXQDA software includes a variety of ways to code data, including symbols, colors, and text codes. At the beginning I used the “emoticode” (symbols as codes) feature as well as colors, but I realized this was not necessary, as well as time consuming. Thus, it became my preference to create codes using text.

While the process was tedious due to the amount of detail I had set up in the new sub-codes as well as the open coding that was happening concurrently, it was well worth the effort because the manageability of the data greatly increased. I was soon able to see more comprehensive connections between numerous pieces of data and how they related to the research questions (Yin, 2011). Breaking large pieces of data into smaller nuggets of information allowed me to make more sense of the data in a richer and more

meaningful way. Emergent patterns began to make sense as I applied them to potential new meaning and these patterns related strongly to the research questions.

Trustworthiness

To increase credibility of the study, several strategies were utilized to ensure that the qualitative methods for data collection and analysis were trustworthy. “Good case study research follows disciplined practices of analysis and triangulation to tease out what deserves to be called experiential knowledge from what is opinion and preference” (Stake, 2005, p. 455). The researcher’s qualifications to conduct this study include 19 years working in Student Affairs in positions of increasing responsibility. This includes 14 years supervising professional staff members. However, it can be argued that 19 years in the profession leads to the potential for a number of biases. A qualitative researcher’s interpretations of the participants’ worldviews should be kept in check because biases and the previous experiences and biases of the researcher can unwittingly distort data. It is critical that researchers keep their own opinions, preferences, and biases out of qualitative data. While biases that have emerged from the researcher’s previous experiences cannot be totally excluded, the researcher must be very intentional in letting the data speak for itself, both during fieldwork and during data analysis. Increasing credibility through the exclusion of biases requires researchers to detach themselves from the information being collected while “capturing and being true to the perspective of those studied” (Patton, 2002). The *etic*, or researcher’s perspective, must become immersed in the *emic*, the perspective of the participants, in order to develop an insider’s view of what is happening and write an interpretation of the participants’ worldviews (Patton, 2002). To accurately

capture the emic voice, researchers must understand how their biases shape their interpretations.

For this study, I detached through careful personal reflection on my assumptions and how the concept of supervision is shaped through my own lens. In addition, I asked the judicious interview questions that did not twist data one way or another.

Furthermore, I refrained from introducing my personal experiences while facilitating the workshop. A Graduate Assistant/typist assisted in taking field notes during the workshop to assure that details were not missed by the researcher while facilitating. To prepare to take field notes during the workshop, the graduate assistant/typist was given draft versions of observational protocol forms to use during meetings or other events. During data analysis, I remained conscious of when data was being interpreted through my own lens rather than through the lens of each participant and adjustments will be made. Lastly, verbatim quotes from participants will be included in findings to assure credibility.

In addition to being consistently cognizant of biases that could slant data, I utilized evaluative criteria and techniques described by Lincoln and Guba (1985). First, *triangulation* is a technique for establishing credibility that stems from the utilization of multiple methods of data collection to determine consistency (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Yin (2014) notes that case study methodology includes multiple indicators of proof. These indicators, when considered together through triangulation, confirm consistency among findings. This study incorporated five sources for data collection (see Table 6). To be confidently deemed credible, findings must exist within at least three of the sources for data collection. Triangulation is carried out continuously

during a study, not just during a single step (Stake, 2005). Second, transferability establishes trustworthiness by establishing that findings are applicable within other contexts. Transferability can be determined through *thick description* in describing phenomena (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Detail is key to thick description: phenomena were portrayed, reported and explained explicitly and in great detail. Thus, data and findings emerged as transferable to other contexts. Third, trustworthiness can be accomplished through *prolonged engagement* with the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The duration of this study was roughly three and a half months. Within that time, the researcher had direct contact with participants on three occasions.

Ethical Considerations

Although there was little risk for participants taking part in this study, guidelines for ethical research (Patton, 2002) will be strictly followed. The study was conducted according to the protocols set by the Texas State University Institutional Review Board (IRB). Via informed consent, each participant was informed in writing about all aspects of the study in advance of their agreement to participate. Volunteers who consented to become participants in this study were given a copy of the signed form for their records. Via informed consent, potential participants were made aware of known risks, inconveniences, or discomforts that they may have had while participating. Chief among these was the potential for disagreements to arise with their supervisor during the study. Moreover, there was potential for participants to become emotional or have recollections of bad memories related to their supervisory and work experiences. Participants were given contact information for their university's Employee Assistance Program as well as a local community counseling resource. They were also made aware of the time

commitments involved in this study, the extent of confidentiality, the benefits of participation, and how knowledge gained from this study could be utilized. Lastly, participants were informed of their right to decline to answer interview questions or to completely withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

In addition to informed consent, ethical practices regarding the protection of data will be employed. Team names were assigned to each dyad of participants in order to protect their identities. The name and location of the site will also be confidential. Pictures taken during the study did not feature the participants and were used only by me for reflection purposes. Data was coded and stored on a password-protected computer and external hard drive. A volunteer Graduate Assistant/typist was utilized to record field notes during the workshop phase of the study. The Graduate Assistant was notified of their right to decline to volunteer and that their time volunteering could not be considered actual work time. As previously mentioned, during the weeks prior to the workshop, the Graduate Assistant completed ethics training for research involving human subjects. The “Social-Behavioral-Educational” track of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) on-line course informed the Graduate Assistant about confidentiality, assessing risks to subjects, and ways to avoid harming subjects (<https://www.citiprogram.org>, n.d.). The Graduate Assistant also became familiar with the informed consent process and associated form.

APPENDIX D

ON-SITE INTERVIEW FOR SUPERVISEES SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Past Experiences

1. How did you get into the Student Affairs field?
2. As a new professional, what challenges have you encountered?
3. Tell me about your first day on this job.

Present Experiences

4. Tell me about a typical day at work.
5. What is your opinion about being supervised?
6. What do you see as effective supervision?
7. Provide examples of what good supervision looks like.
8. How do you feel about your ability to reach your own goals as a professional?
9. In what ways do you feel supported as a new professional?
10. In what ways don't you feel supported as a new professional?
11. Tell me about the structure of your supervision meetings.
12. What, if anything, do you learn from supervision meetings?
13. How do you feel at the end of your supervision meetings?
14. What have you heard from your peers about the way they are supervised?
15. Suppose it was your second year under the supervision of xyz. What would be your expectations?
16. If someone were to ask you about your experience with your supervisor, what would you say?
17. Some people would say that supervisors don't put enough energy into the professional development of their staff members. What would you say to them?
18. Would you describe what an ideal supervisory relationship would be like?
19. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor?
20. How has this relationship impacted the way you do your job?
21. What is the perception you think others have of you due to the work you do?

Future

22. What are your questions and concerns surrounding participating in the remainder of this study?

Closing

23. Is there anything that I didn't ask that you thought I was going to ask?

APPENDIX E

ON-SITE INTERVIEW FOR SUPERVISORS SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Past Experiences

1. How did you emerge from entry-level to mid-level? (Previous positions, etc.)
2. What significant moments in your professional experience taught you to be a better supervisor?
3. Describe your best experience being supervised.
4. Describe your worst experience being supervised.
5. Describe your best experience supervising someone else.
6. Describe your worst experience supervising someone else.
7. Describe a significant moment in your past as a supervisor that really stands out as an “ah ha” moment?
8. Describe a significant moment from your career that taught you to be a better supervisor.

Present Experiences

9. Please describe the traits from previous supervisors that you have adopted in your practice.
10. What challenges do you encounter as a supervisor?
11. What traits previous supervisors have you adopted into your current practice?
12. What traits previous supervisors have you avoided for your current practice?
13. What, if anything, do you learn from supervision meetings with your supervisor?
14. Have you kept up with any of your previous supervisees?
15. Have you kept up with any of your previous supervisors?
16. What is your opinion about being supervised?
17. What do you see as effective supervision?
18. Provide examples of what good supervision looks like.
19. How do you feel about your ability to reach your own goals as a professional?

- 20. In what ways do you feel supported as a mid-level professional?
- 21. In what ways do you not feel supported as a mid-level professional?

Future Goals

- 22. Would you describe what an ideal supervisory relationship would be like for you?
- 23. In your opinion, what should the Student Affairs profession do to teach mid-level supervisors how to be most effective in their roles?
- 24. What about supervision would you like to learn from participating in this study?
- 25. What are your concerns and questions surrounding participating in the remainder of this study?

Closing

- 26. Is there anything that I did not ask that you thought I was going to ask?

APPENDIX F

WORKSHOP PROCEDURE

Time	Topic	Duration in minutes	Activity
8:00am	Set up	60	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get computer ready • Connect to projector • Put out snacks/drinks • Put out handout packets
9:00am	Welcome and Introductions	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make name plates as they arrive • I am... • Engaging with each other • Explain handout packet • Overview of the day • Objectives
9:30am	Activity 1: defining supervision	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In silence, participants will answer questions about their philosophies and definitions of supervision on notecards and pass them to the front. • The notecards will be shuffled and read aloud. • On butcher paper, two lists will be made: one containing similarities and one containing differences/ things we have in common and things we do differently
10:00am	Synergistic Supervision explained	15	I will briefly go over the concept plus the 9 components and indicators.
10:15am	Activity 2: identifying strategies	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify intentional strategies • Identify difficult strategies
10:45am	Activity 3: reflection and dialogue	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups will reflect and deliberate on questions, summarizing on newsprint. • Everyone will then wander the room and respond in writing. • Short discussion
11:30am	Lunch	30	Lunch
12:00pm	Activity 4: Synergistic supervision in practice	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each group of supervisors will be assigned one of two case studies. • Each group of supervisees will be assigned one of two case studies. • All groups will present their solutions.
12:45	Activity 5: Co-constructing supervisory relationships	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supervisory dyads will plan together how they will use what they have learned
12:50	Evaluation Surveys	15	

APPENDIX G

OBSERVATION PROTOCOL FORM

For Workshop

Type only. Do not worry about grammar, spelling, punctuation. Just keep typing. Always identify who said what and record the time often. Record every interaction. "Items to Observe" not an exhaustive list. Every detail matters, especially what people say. The boxes will expand as you type.

Items to Observe	Description/Comments
Beginning of workshop (How do they introduce themselves, did they decorate their name plates, do they seem nervous or relaxed, do they seem tired or awake, do they seem like they are excited about the day, how did they each describe their own supervisory style, how did they react to the rules of engagement and definitions, keep notes on how often and when they seemed to be referring back to handouts)	
Activity 1: Structured Silence (did they seem interested, what was written on the notecards, what was discussed, were there any ah-hah moments, were they whispering amongst each other, were they looking at their phones)	
Activity 2: Supervision Strategies (what strategies did it seem they were familiar with, what strategies seemed new to them, what indicators did they recognize, could they give examples of the indicators in practice, what questions did they ask and what points did they make, what seemed difficult and what seemed easy to them, describe each role play in detail, were people comfortable doing the role plays)	

Items to Observe	Description/Comments
<p>Lunch (what was everyone talking about, did they disengage or enjoy each other's company)</p>	
<p>Activity 3: Synergy in Practice (what happened and how did they react to the videos, how did they react to trust, empathy, honesty, collaboration, what did they have to say, what questions did they ask and what points did they make, what was discussed, what seemed difficult and what seemed easy to them, were there any ah-hah moments)</p>	
<p>Activity 4: Planning Together (what plans did they make, how did others react to the plans)</p>	
<p>Rapport of Dyads (do they sit together, how do they interact with each other, do they interrupt each other, were they respectful of each other, describe the power dynamic, how well does it seem they know each other, are they comfortable with each other, who spoke the most—the supervisor or the supervisee)</p>	
<p>Rapport of all Participants (were they eager to get involved, did they laugh, did they interrupt each other, were they supportive of each other, how well does it seem they know each other, does it seem some know each other better than others, do they exhibit sensitivity to personal cultures, gender differences, and disabilities, do they respond appropriately to one another)</p>	
<p>Reactions to Facilitator (did they agree/disagree, was there something they found repetitive, did they seem bored/engaged/critical)</p>	

Items to Observe	Description/Comments
<p>Physical Aspects of Room (take a picture of room prior to occupancy, draw a map of room and seating arrangement once occupied, describe physical attributes of classroom, layout of room, distractions if any; list any observations of how physical aspects affected content delivery or participant engagement)</p>	
<p>End of Workshop (how did everyone react when it was over, who left first, who stuck around to chat, who had ideas and what were they, who had questions and what were they)</p>	

APPENDIX H

POST WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUPERVISEES

1. The workshop provided knowledge that I can utilize in my daily practice.

Agree Disagree
2. The workshop helped me understand the concept of synergistic supervision.

Agree Disagree
3. Synergistic supervision is an effective model for management of staff.

Agree Disagree
4. The workshop identified some synergistic supervision strategies that my supervisor uses.

Agree Disagree
5. I would recommend this workshop to other student affairs professionals.

Agree Disagree
6. Synergistic strategies currently in use by my supervisor are:
7. Synergistic strategies not currently in use by my supervisor are:
8. Some of my takeaways from today are:
9. Something I learned about my supervisor today is:
10. I have the following questions about today's material:
11. Something else I would like to say is:

APPENDIX I

POST WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUPERVISORS

1. The workshop provided general knowledge that I can utilize in my daily practice.

Agree Disagree

2. The workshop helped me understand the concept of synergistic supervision.

Agree Disagree

3. Synergistic supervision is an effective model for management of staff.

Agree Disagree

4. The workshop helped me identify synergistic supervision strategies that I do not currently use.

Agree Disagree

5. Today, I became familiar with new strategies for supervision.

Agree Disagree

6. I would recommend this workshop to other student affairs professionals.

Agree Disagree

7. Synergistic strategies I currently use are:

8. Synergistic strategies that I learned about today which were new to me are:

9. Some of my takeaways from today are:

10. Something new I learned about my staff member today is:

11. I have the following questions about today's material:

12. Something else I would like to say is:

APPENDIX J

SKYPE INTERVIEW FOR SUPERVISEES SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General

1. If supervision were a snake, lion, horse, or sloth—which one would you pick and why?
2. If supervision was a fruit, what would it be and why?
3. In what ways have you thought about synergistic supervision lately?
4. What is your favorite synergistic strategy and why?
5. Please give me a concrete example.
6. How would you describe the last month working with your supervisor?
7. What advice would you give to a new team about working together in relation to synergistic supervision strategies?

Two-Way Communication: Trust

8. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with your current supervisor. How did you resolve it?
9. If one of your colleagues had a supervisor who became defensive after being given feedback and your colleague stopped trusting them, how would you intervene?
10. In this scenario, what do you see as the problem?
11. How would you fix this communication breakdown?

Joint Effort: Collaboration

12. Tell me about a time when your supervisor collaborated with you to make a decision that they could just have easily have made without consulting you.
13. How do you know your supervisor is doing a good job supervising you?
14. How do you know when you are doing a good job as an entry-level staff member?
15. How have you contributed to being in a synergistic relationship with your supervisor?

Dual Focus: Understanding

16. One of the synergistic strategies is to have a relationship with a dual focus that is based on trust-- when entry-level staff members perceive fairness and their own goals as satisfied by the institution's goals. How does having a dual focus in your relationship with your supervisor regularly play out?

Goal Based: Vision

17. What are the written and unwritten expectations you and your supervisor have of each other?
18. Describe the first time you officially meet with any supervisor and how that meeting will continue to shape your working relationship

Ending

19. Some people would say supervision is a headache because they don't like being told what to do. What would you say to them?
20. How do you envision utilizing synergistic supervision practices in the future?
21. What would you do to improve supervision among professional staff members at your institution?
22. Was there a question that you were prepared to answer that I did not ask?
23. What would you like to share that I have not already asked and what questions do you have now that we have had this conversation?

APPENDIX K

SKYPE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SUPERVISORS SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

General

1. If supervision were a snake, lion, horse, or sloth—which one would you pick and why?
2. If supervision was a fruit, what would it be and why?
3. In what ways have you thought about synergistic supervision lately?
4. What is your favorite synergistic strategy and why?
5. Please give me a concrete example.
6. How would you describe the last month working with your staff member?
7. What is a critical event or situation that has happened in the last month and how did you address it?
8. What advice would you give to a new team about working together in relation to synergistic supervision strategies?
9. What has been the most difficult situation you have faced thus far? How did you resolve it as a supervisor?

Two Way Communication: Trust

10. Tell me about a time when you may have made it uncomfortable for a staff member who you supervised to give you honest feedback.
11. Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with your current entry-level staff member. How did you resolve it?
12. If one of your colleagues had a supervisor who became defensive after being given feedback and your colleague stopped trusting them, how would you intervene?
13. In this scenario, what do you see as the problem?
14. How would you fix this communication breakdown?

Joint Effort: Collaboration

15. Tell me about a time when you collaborated with your staff member to make a decision that you could just have easily have made without consulting them.
16. How do you know when you are doing a good job supervising your staff members?

Dual Focus: Understanding

17. One of the synergistic strategies is to have a relationship with a dual focus that is based on trust-- when staff members perceive fairness and their own goals as satisfied by the institution's goals. How does having a dual focus in your relationship regularly play out?

Goal Based: Vision

18. What are the written and unwritten expectations you and your supervisee have of each other?

19. Describe the first time you officially meet with any entry-level staff member and how that meeting will continue to shape your working relationship

Ending

20. Some people would say supervision is a headache because they don't like being told what to do. What would you say to them?
21. How do you envision utilizing synergistic supervision practices in the future?
22. What would you do to improve supervision among professional staff members at your institution?
23. Was there a question that you were prepared to answer that I did not ask?
24. What would you like to share that I have not already asked and what questions do you have now that we have had this conversation?

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