Developmental Models of Supervision: Is It Development?

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Developmental models of supervision have become the zeitgeist of supervision thinking and research. Eighteen different models of supervision that refer to developmental principles have been cited in the psychiatric, psychological, and social work disciplines (Worthington, 1984). Numerous empirical studies have been designed to investigate developmental paradigms (Roehlke, 1984). If these models are to continue to influence research and practice, it seems warranted that the underlying assumptions and principles of the proposed models be critically examined. This article contains such a critical examination, and the conceptual and methodological approaches currently applied in the research of this topic are discussed from a developmental perspective.

The design of theoretical models for the clinical supervision process has been of interest to counseling psychologists and other clinical disciplines for the last 30 years. For 25 of those years the predominant approach has been the extrapolation of counseling theory to the supervisory experience. Supervision models have been identified traditionally by counseling nomenclature—for example, psychodynamic supervision, rational–emotive theory supervision, and behavioral supervision (Goodyear, Bradley, & Bartlett, 1983). The call for a new approach has come from researchers’ and educators’ recognition that a purely clinical model of training is inadequate in explaining the supervisory phenomenon (Hess, 1980; Holloway, 1984; Holloway & Hosford, 1983; Holloway & Wampold, 1983; Lambert, 1974, 1980; Littrell, Lee-Borden, & Lorenz, 1979; Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982; Stoltenberg, 1981).

In the last 5 years there has been a significant change in the conceptualization of supervision as theorists have begun to apply descriptions of psychosocial development to counselor trainees’ clinical learning in graduate training programs. Eighteen different models of supervision that refer to developmental principles have been cited in the psychiatric, psychological, and social work disciplines (Worthington, 1984). Developmental models of individual supervision that have appeared in the counseling psychology literature include those by Littrell et al. (1979), Stoltenberg (1981), Loganbill et al. (1982), and Blocher (1983). Hogan’s developmental conception of supervision appeared in the clinical literature in 1964 and has been referred to extensively in the more recent counseling models. Developmental models for the group supervision of counselors have also appeared recently (Sansbury, 1982; Yogev, 1982). Numerous empirical studies have been designed to investigate developmental paradigms (Roehlke, 1984). Developmental models of supervision have become the zeitgeist of supervision thinking and research. If these models are to continue to influence research and practice, it seems warranted that the underlying assumptions and principles of the proposed models be critically examined at this stage of their development. In this article, I engage in such a critical examination and discuss from a developmental perspective the conceptual and methodological approaches currently applied in the research of this topic.

Characteristics of the Developmental Models

Essentially, five developmental models of individual supervision have been the focus of thinking and research in the counseling literature; three of these models (Blocher, 1983; Loganbill et al., 1982; Stoltenberg, 1981) have explicitly linked their origins to psychosocial developmental theory. These three models serve as the basis of the conceptual discussion. In the remaining two models, Hogan (1964) and Littrell et al. (1979) characterized the supervisory process, using the terminology and descriptors of development. However, these models do not refer to a particular theory as the origin of their work or to an underlying developmental process that directs the hierarchical progression of clinical learning. Because no explicit reference to traditional developmental theory is claimed, these models are examined only as they have been used as a referent and/or basis for the Stoltenberg, Loganbill et al., and Blocher models.

Little attention has been directed at the unique underlying assumptions of the Stoltenberg (1981), Loganbill et al. (1982), and Blocher (1983) paradigms. Because each appears distinct enough to warrant individual scrutiny, the fundamental developmental characteristics of each of the three models are described in the next sections.
Stoltenberg's Model

Stoltenberg's (1981) model of counselor development is based on Hogan's (1964) descriptions of trainee levels of development and Hunt's (1975) application of Conceptual Systems Theory (CST; Harvey, Hunt, & Schroder, 1961) to the teaching environment. Hunt and his associates extensively investigated the matching of certain learning characteristics of adolescents with optimal learning environments in classrooms. Stoltenberg extrapolated Hunt's person-environment matching scheme to the supervisory situation. He described the counselor's progress across four developmental levels from neophyte to master counselor. He used dimensions of interpersonal perception, identity, motivational orientation, emotionality, and cognitive structural attributes to characterize each of these levels of development. Stoltenberg suggested that the supervision environment should be designed to optimize the trainee's learning at each of the four levels of trainee development. Characteristics of the supervision environment have been adapted from Hogan's work and indicate the type of supervisor role and the instructional content to be emphasized at each level.

The emphasis of Stoltenberg's (1981) model on the systematic matching of instructional environments in supervision with learner characteristics is a critical step in advancing the utility of supervision as an instructional strategy; however, the manner in which CST has been used to justify the counselor's learning as a developmental process is not consistent with the theory's underlying constructs. A careful reading of CST (Harvey et al., 1961) and Hunt's (1975) "matching model" reveals significant discrepancies between this supervision model and the developmental theory on which it is based.

The primary construct in CST is the person organismic variable named conceptual level (CL). CL is a cognitive variable that refers to the structural aspects of cognition and in particular social cognition. CL is described by Hunt (1978) as "a personality characteristic that describes persons on a developmental hierarchy of increasing conceptual complexity, self-responsibility and independence" (p. 78). Of these three characteristics, it is conceptual complexity that describes fundamental perceptual processes of differentiation and integration and determines acts of perceiving, thinking, and judging. The remaining two descriptors reflect a person's interpersonal belief system. The developmental hierarchy of CST is characterized by discrete stages representing qualitative shifts in behavior. Theoretically, CL is professed to be a global, organismic variable of cognition, although the global nature of the construct has been questioned and is not yet empirically validated (Miller & Wilson, 1979). CL is the construct central to the theory's structure; it is the governing principle in information processing.

The fundamental characteristics of CL have been somewhat distorted in the Stoltenberg (1981) model. Stoltenberg's model implies that counselors in training recapitulate their development on CL; that is, they begin at low levels of CL upon entry to training and progress through the stages as they gain experience. Although Stoltenberg stated that "No specific time table of progress through the four levels has been presented, as this varies significantly from trainee to trainee" (p. 60), the model describes a sequential and hierarchical developmental framework that is driven by changes on the dimensions of social cognition and information processing—in essence, CL. In this model there is not sufficient attention given to the influence of previously established cognitive structures on the trainee's progression through the learning experience. The model suggests that most trainees will use elementary cognitive structures to cope with their new environment, which thus implies that entry level into a program may result in a developmental regression on an organismic construct. Furthermore, it suggests that the experience of learning the skills of counseling may affect developmental change in established cognitive structures. If CL is a central construct in personality development, what renders the experience of being a counselor so powerful that a graduate student abandons previous acquired cognitive structures and resorts to elementary levels of information processing on entry into counselor training? According to Hunt's (Hunt & Sullivan, 1974) theory, cognitively complex students would adapt to the new environment readily; different learning environments would be needed by students with different levels of CL. Thus the design of learning environments would be driven by level of CL and not by level of experience.

Regardless of the inconsistencies between the theory and model, CL and Hunt's (1975) matching model of learning may still have merit in the design of counselor instruction and supervision programs. For instance, entry-level counselors could be assessed on CL, and instructional environments could be matched to their cognitive structure in order to maximize their acquisition of counselor skills. In numerous studies, researchers have investigated the relationship between CL and counseling-related tasks. In a recent meta-analysis of studies in which the matching model was investigated in counseling, Holloway and Wampold (1986) validated the overall potency of the matching model in counselor education. If directors of training programs believe that a higher level of CL is either a necessary or a preferred style for the counselor, then learning environments could be created to facilitate a trainee's movement from lower to higher levels of cognitive functioning. In these strategies, in contrast to the Stoltenberg approach, CL, rather than the trainee's experience level in the training program, would be targeted as the factor in determining instructional environments, or CL would be targeted for change in training counselors. Of course, the burden then would be to show how CL and trainee proficiency or client outcome relate.

Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth's Model

The Loganbill et al. (1982) model is perhaps the most comprehensive developmental model of supervision. It is based primarily on the theories and assumptions of developmental psychology, particularly those of Margaret Mahler, Erik Erikson, and Arthur Chickering. Four assumptions form the basis for the model: (a) core concepts in developmental theory apply to learning to be a professional counselor insofar
as the training experience is more than the incremental build-up of skills and is rather "the integrated formulation of a therapist with an identity" (Loganbill et al., 1982, p. 15); (b) there are distinct, sequential, hierarchical, and necessary stages in the development of the counselor: Just as "infants learn to crawl before they learn to walk, though the ultimate goal is not to crawl well... So it is with the supervisee... [S]ome of the stages and processes may be very painful, but it is developmentally important for the supervisee to experience them fully" (p. 4); (c) although the stages are sequential, different learning tasks may be at different developmental levels; and (d) to progress within and between stages, one assumes "a careful sequence of experience and reflection" (p. 15). The model does not just reflect development during the life of a formal training program but is continuous throughout one's professional life. To account for this ongoing process, Loganbill et al. suggested that the stage model is actually one in which a counselor "may cycle and recycle through these various stages at increasingly deeper levels" (p. 17).

The model as described has characteristics similar to developmental models of maturation (distinct, sequential, and hierarchical stages) and similar to pluralistic life-span development theories (continuous recycling of stages on various tasks, not all of which may be executed at the same developmental level; Baltes, 1983). The reliance on both a maturational and pluralistic view of development to explain trainee change during graduate training has resulted in a rather un parsimonious and contradictory explanation, creating a situation that forces the reader to question the integrity of the developmental nature of the model.

Rest (1979), a leading theorist in moral development, described two conditions that refute the basic structure of a developmental construct: Individuals do not change, or individuals change in every possible way, disregarding sequentiality (or upward directionality). Rest, however, described three permissible types of developmental paradigms: (a) a simple stage model, (b) a modified stage model, and (c) an atomistic model. Although there is some similarity between Loganbill et al.'s (1982) model and the first two of Rest's paradigms, it is the atomistic model that seems to be most applicable.

A simple stage model is one in which a particular type of thinking dominates during a particular period of development and is then replaced in a series of stages by qualitatively different systems. The modified stage system is one in which a stage still represents a qualitatively different system, but an individual is not assigned one-for-one to a stage. In this system the type of organizational system that a person might bring to a problem can be influenced by the content and particular qualities of the problem. However, there remains in this stage system an upward trend of increasingly more complex schemes being used more frequently. Change is represented by a shift in the distribution of the use of different types of responses. Loganbill et al.'s (1982) supervision model seems to have characteristics of both of these paradigms. For example, they likened the counselor's developmental process to a maturational description of learning to walk and at the same time stated that a person could be at different stages on different tasks. This inherent contradiction makes the alternative atomistic model more plausible than the typological approach of the simple or modified stage models.

The atomistic approach is a content-specific model in which evidence of psychological unity between isolated, disconnected concepts is sought. Cohesiveness among the concepts must be substantiated in order to justify the usefulness of a developmental framework over a descriptive approach. Loganbill et al. (1982) proposed that there exists a logical interconnectedness among content, task, and performance factors of the trainee's learning. The cohesive force among the events and encounters of training is the struggle to form a professional identity. The acceptance of the Loganbill et al. (1982) model as an atomistic developmental structure hinges on the acceptance that the professional identity process is sufficiently powerful to trigger a developmental event. Although the task of becoming a counselor is complex indeed, it is difficult to be convinced that it is any different from learning the skills of any other professional role.

In conclusion, the Loganbill et al.'s (1982) model is exceedingly complex and lacks the elegance and simplicity usually expected of "truth." They adopted such a broad definition to account for the trainee's cognitive, affective, and social learning behaviors that it endangers the usefulness of the developmental approach. For example, the model refers to three sequential stages and two transitional periods for which "eight key issues in supervision have been identified..." (The supervisee is hypothesized to be in any one stage of functioning for each of the eight issues at a given point in time" (p. 17). This means that a supervisee could be operating at 40 different points of development at any given time. This is compounded further by the model's claim that an individual may cycle and recycle through this system on each of the eight key issues at different times. The model's expansion of the developmental paradigm has resulted in such specificity that any behavioral change is equated with a developmental change. Thus the value of the developmental paradigm has been lost. This approach to supervision might be described more accurately as an interesting and complex descriptive mechanism for ordering some of the events of professional growth and is an analog of development rather than developmental per se.

**Blocher's Cognitive Developmental Approach**

Blocher's (1983) understanding of the supervision process is based on Dewey's (1916) approach to learning and cognitive developmental theory and research related to "developmental person perception" (Blocher, 1983, p. 27), which focuses on the influence of cognitive structures on social perception and judgment. This approach represents a "constructivist" view of human cognitive functioning as postulated by Kelly (1963), Lewin (1935), and Werner (1978). Like Stoltenberg (1981), Blocher was interested in the creation of a supervisory learning environment that would optimize a trainee's learning; however, Blocher applied the principles of cognitive development to supervision quite differently. Blocher used the knowledge in human cognitive development (including authors such as Harvey et al., 1961; Loevinger, 1976; Perry, 1968; and Piaget...
& Inhelder, 1969) to postulate the growth and development in cognition available to a student of counseling. The development of the trainee is not arranged in a series of hierarchical stages; rather, the individual's growth is seen as an idiosyncratic process determined by his or her own unique learning style and developmental history. In the model there is an assumption that there is a demand for highly complex functioning in the counseling situation. Thus the supervisor, when designing the learning environment, must focus on the ultimate goal of the trainee's acquisition of new, more complex, and more comprehensive schemata for understanding human interaction. The creation of optimal person–environment fits between trainee needs and supervisory strategies results in systematic instructional learning. Blocher saw supervision as "psychological education in the fullest and most complete sense of the term. It uses psychological content in a systematic way to change the psychological functioning of the learner" (p. 28).

At this point one may remark that some of these assumptions regarding the need for highly developed cognitive processes and environmental match are very reminiscent of the Stoltenberg (1981) model; however, a critical difference should also be evident. Blocher (1983) did not assume that counselor preparation would create a distinct set of developmental stages motivated by the type of task demanded of the learner. In contrast, he stated:

The ultimate focus of the developmental supervisory model is, however, on the acquisition of new more complex and more comprehensive schemata for understanding human interaction. These schemas in their most general sense are analogous to the cognitive stage concepts in the Loevinger (1976) or Perry (1970) developmental models. It should be noted that the goals involving cognitive change are not viewed narrowly. This kind of growth in schemas for information-processing is viewed as a central ingredient in all interpersonal functioning. (p. 30; emphasis added)

Thus Blocher differed from Stoltenberg in his use of cognitive developmental principles as a basis for understanding learner needs and the cognitive demands of the counseling situation to devise supervisory instructional strategies that would enhance learner development toward the application of processing schemata by the student. He suggested, not that such schemata are content specific to counseling or that a unique set of developmental stages unfold in the counselor training process, but rather that counselor preparation and particularly supervision can provide a context in which cognitive structure in a more global sense can be affected.

Research on the Developmental Models

Since the appearance of the developmental models of supervision, there have been numerous research projects in which researchers investigated the learning experience of counselor trainees. Because an extensive review of this empirical literature is presented elsewhere in this issue, I focus only on those studies directly relevant to the models reviewed in the previous section and on the characteristics and results of these scientific inquiries vis-à-vis a developmental perspective. Seven studies (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Hill, Charles, & Reed, 1981; Mians et al., 1983; Reising & Daniels, 1983; Wiley & Ray, 1986; Worthington, 1984; Worthington & Stern, 1985) appeared in the counseling psychology literature, and the researchers explicitly tested one or more of the developmental models that I discuss. These studies are discussed on three dimensions: (a) the experimental questions, (b) the methodological approaches, and (c) the conclusions that might be drawn from the results.

The Experimental Questions

Experimental hypotheses in general were focused on changes that might occur in trainees' or supervisors' perceptions of the supervisory experience during the trainees' progression from a neophyte to master counselor. Two issues are noteworthy in the characterization of the hypotheses and are discussed in this section. First, experimental questions were posed in order to contrast supervisory experiences among trainees at various levels of training. Second, confirmation of the developmental paradigm was typically an inferential, post hoc enterprise.

From a developmental perspective, the use of experimental questions that focus on differences at various experience levels is problematic at this point in the scientific inquiry of counselor development. Although there are advantages in comparing clusters of naturally occurring and rationally chosen groups (usually second-year or predoctoral interns) to determine whether such groups also represent qualitative differences in behavior, there are also recognized hazards. Developmentalists point out that the chosen groups do not necessarily represent the actual periods in which change occurs. In other words, by structuring the hypotheses around nonrandomly chosen times at which one expects to find differences, one risks the possibility of ignoring points of change between data collection times. In finding differences the researcher perhaps erroneously concludes that behavior changes occur in a lock-step fashion that is concurrent with existing time structures. This could be a problem in this body of research for two reasons.

First, research regarding characteristics of trainee development is in its infancy. There is no established literature to justify the choice of particular points of data collection. In the majority of studies' hypotheses, trainees in beginning practica, advanced practica, and internships are compared. These data collection times could be anywhere from 4 months to 5 years apart. The probability that significant training events would occur between these times seems high. It would be more revealing to randomly choose points in time to access data, and thus it would be more likely to describe the naturally occurring developmental progression. Researchers cannot assume that developmental change is necessarily linked to academic programming. Reising and Daniels (1983) identified this problem and designed a study in which they first looked for factors that might distinguish among trainees and then determined these factors' relationship to different experience levels. More studies in which this approach is used are needed.
to test the underlying developmental structure of these models.

The second problem with investigations of developmental progression is that only two studies have been devised to test the characteristics of a specific developmental model: Reising and Daniels (1983) tested Hogan's (1964) paradigm, and Wiley and Ray (1986) tested Stoltenberg's (1981) model. In most cases, experimental questions have tested the influence of experience on trainees' perceptions of supervision. Any evidence of a developmental structure has been inferred by researchers looking for similarities between trainees' characteristics and those qualities described in the various models. Consequently, a post hoc inferential process has been used primarily in judging the validity of the developmental process. In future research, experimental questions must relate more explicitly to the models presented in the literature if investigators are interested in remarking on their validity.

**Methodology**

The methodology in the studies under discussion here tended not to be developmentally sensitive. Three factors account for this situation: (a) traditional cross-sectional designs, (b) types of measurement devices, and (c) sources of data collection.

**Cross-sectional designs.** At present, the most obvious problem in supervision research is the absence of longitudinal data to investigate developmental change. Hill et al.'s (1981) study is the only investigation in which a longitudinal approach was used, and they asked only as an exploratory part of the project that students report what changes in counseling skills and what personal changes they experienced during graduate training. The necessity of longitudinal data in studying an adult behavioral change was explained aptly by Baltes (1983):

> Individuals live in a changing biocultural context, . . . the explanation of long-term processes is apt to involve complex historical paradigms, and . . . long-term processes are likely candidates for explanatory discontinuity rather than simple cumulative causal explanations. . . . (p. 101)

The current reliance on cross-sectional data is not an adequate approach to the developmental issue for the following reasons. First, researchers have not gained access to the historical and cultural development of the trainee: therefore, the effect of existing personality structures such as ego, cognitive, and moral levels cannot be used to understand contemporary observations. Reising and Daniels (1983) concluded in their study that assessment of basic personality structures are a necessary step in furthering the understanding of the trainee's experience. Second, the lack of information on intraindividual changes across the course of a training program seriously weakens a developmental explanation of behavior change because any observed group change does not necessarily represent a behavior change for a particular individual, nor does it describe the particular pattern of change experienced by an individual. Third, long-term processes are involved in adult development, and empirical investigations have typically been limited to approximately 4-year time spans or that time during which the training program starts and finishes. In using cross-sectional data, one assumes that there are no selection biases in sampling, no differences between cohort groups entering graduate programs at different times, and no historical effects that may affect groups differentially. These assumptions cannot be made within the context of graduate training programs. Clearly there are changes in curriculum, instructional personnel and perhaps theoretical orientation within the same program across several years.

Longitudinal studies would mitigate some of these problems, but unfortunately they include their own deficits such as testing effects, sampling bias, and generation effects. More innovative methodological strategies that combine cross-sectional and longitudinal techniques have been proposed in the developmental psychology literature (Achenbach, 1978). These techniques include longitudinal sequential, cross-sectional sequential, and time-lag sequential designs. The details of these designs are available in other sources (e.g., Achenbach, 1978), and it is enough to say here that each strategy helps to control for effects that are attributable to cohort, point of measurement, and date of measurement in different manners; each strategy has its own methodological advantages depending on the experimental question being posed.

**Methods of measurement.** Methods of measurement may also be jeopardizing a developmental understanding of the supervision phenomenon. In these studies, with the exception of Hill et al. (1981), measurement involves the use of structured self-report questionnaires to assess trainee and supervisor perceptions. The use of self-report techniques is a standard practice in developmental research; however, in initial investigations, preferred methods include (in increasing order of preference) open-ended questionnaires, structured and semi-structured clinical interviews, and direct observation (Rest, 1979). The use of structured questionnaires before more open-ended techniques unnecessarily biases the results in favor of the experimenters' understanding of what they should find and emphasizes the comparison of subjects on quantitative changes.

**Sources of data.** Sources of data collection are a critical factor in the design of these supervision studies. Investigations have been restricted to the context of the supervisory relationship. Specifically, researchers have examined trainees' perception of their needs in supervision (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Hill et al., 1981; Reising & Daniels, 1983; Worthington, 1984; Worthington & Stern, 1985). Supervisors' perceptions of their supervisory practice with different levels of trainees (Miars et al., 1983; Wiley & Ray, 1986; Worthington & Stern, 1985), trainees' consumption of supervisors' behaviors in supervision (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Worthington, 1984; Worthington & Stern, 1985), and supervisors' judgments of trainees' behaviors (Wiley & Ray, 1986; Worthington & Stern, 1985). From these vantage points they attempt to understand both issues of the developmental model: the trainee's changing and the supervisor's changing supervision strategies to accom-
moderate the trainee. However, an examination of the source of these perceptions reveals that they are relevant primarily to the supervision relationship. Trainees and supervisors are asked to remark on events in supervision that reflect emotional, relationship, and professional needs. An assumption underlying this approach to data collection is that the supervisory event captures the essence of the trainee's development and is the best source of information on this phenomenon. Although the supervisor's observation of the trainee may be valuable as a reflection of his or her own behavior and judgment of the trainee in supervision, it is confounded by the supervisor's own experience of the relationship. Similarly, the trainee's judgments of his or her own training needs are influenced by the relationship. Investigators need to tap the trainee's changes as a counselor more directly, but not by assuming that changes as a supervisee necessarily represent those changes as a counselor. If the course of the supervisory relationship is the object of study, then current sources of information may be relevant and informative. However, because it is the trainee's development as a counselor that is the professed target of interest, contexts of counselor behavior must also be assessed.

Trainees' perceptions of supervisors' behaviors and characteristics have also been studied. These can be seen as an indirect reflection of the trainee's developmental stage as well as more obviously a comment on the supervisor's actual change. In the former case it is inferred that trainees will change their judgments of different supervisory behaviors in accordance with their developmental level. Clearly, one's perceptions do change through growth; however, with current research designs, trainees' perceptions are confounded by supervisors' characteristics and actual supervisors' behaviors. As a consequence of confounding trainee characteristics and qualities of the relationship, results cannot be used to confirm developmental change of the trainee. In addition, predominant use of self-report strategies that rely on perceptions of self must be augmented with actual observations of supervisory and counseling processes.

**Results**

The overall results of the studies examined are relatively consistent and give marginal support for a developmental model. However, because of the previously discussed methodological characteristics of these studies, one must exercise caution in drawing conclusions regarding the developmental implications of the results.

The predominant finding regarding trainee characteristics across various levels of trainee experience indicate that differences exist only between very beginning-level and intern-level trainees and that these differences center on relationship characteristics (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Miars et al., 1983; Reising & Daniels, 1983; Wiley & Ray, 1986; Worthington, 1984; Worthington & Stern, 1985). For example, initial-level trainees appear to require more support and encouragement in supervision, whereas interns demonstrate increasing independence from the supervisor (Hill et al., 1981; Reising & Daniels, 1983; Wiley & Ray, 1986; Worthington, 1984; Worthington & Stern, 1985) and more pronounced interest in higher level skills and personal issues affecting counseling (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Hill et al., 1981; Worthington & Stern, 1985). Certainly these results do not provide confirmation of a sequential change process distinguished by a series of hierarchical stages.

Evidence of supervisory change across experience levels parallels findings regarding trainee change. In the three studies in which researchers examined supervisors' perceptions of their behaviors with trainees of different experience levels, only distinctions between entry-level trainees and interns were found (Miars et al., 1983; Wiley & Ray, 1986; Worthington & Stern, 1985). Supervisors reported that they recognized more variable need during the relationship with beginning-level students, whereas interns' supervisory relationships were more stable (Worthington & Stern, 1985). Supervisors saw themselves providing different learning environments for entry-level and intern-level trainees (Miars et al., 1983; Wiley & Ray, 1986).

In summary, the results regarding trainee and supervisory change across levels of experience were disappointing from a developmental perspective. The empirical discovery that more support may be needed early on in training and that more sophisticated skills are the focus in later learning is easily understood from a task mastery perspective. Goulet's (1973) comment regarding learning progression is an example of this perspective:

[V]ery little new information is actually acquired in a learning experiment since subjects usually have the basic requisites of task mastery already available in their repertoire of habits and skills. . . . [L]earning not to respond in a particular fashion is likely just as responsible for performance changes with practice as the two mechanisms which are most commonly identified with the phenomenon of learning, i.e., the acquisition of a specific habit or skill, and the selection or use of an appropriate skill or strategy available in the subject's behavioral repertoire. (pp. 281–282)

The question at issue is whether elaborate developmental models are needed in order to explain the research findings. Noteworthy in these studies was the discovery of moderating variables that have exhibited a relationship with supervisory experience. Wiley and Ray (1986) and Reising and Daniels (1983) found that only supervised practica experience and not nonsupervised counseling experience correlated with differences in supervisory needs of trainees. Hill et al. (1981), in their examination of students' acquisition of counseling skills, concluded that previous counseling experience did not accelerate students' clinical progression in the training program. These findings imply that changes in the trainee depend more on the particular context of the supervisory relationship than on the actual process of establishing a professional identity. Additional variables of interest are Worthington's (1984) discovery that supervisory differences across training levels varied with geographical location, and Worthington's (1984) and Reising and Daniel's (1983) findings that theoretical orientation correlated with the supervisor's report of behaviors. These results suggest that a general model of trainee
development may not be governing the supervisory experience but rather that other aspects of training such as philosophy of training programs and characteristics of supervisors may be the most influential factors on trainees' learning experiences.

Although these researchers are interpreting their results as tentatively supporting a developmental model, lack of developmental-specific methodology, confinement to the supervisory experience as a source of information, predominant use of structured self-report questionnaires, and lack of evidence of distinct, sequential stages in trainees' growth reflect the prematurity of such claims.

Conclusions and Alternative Explanations

Any developmental theory must not only describe but also explain. Although the developmental models of supervision provide a framework with which to describe some of the behaviors typically observed by clinical supervisors, they do not provide an adequate developmental explanation from the standpoint of developmental psychology. Critical to each of these models is the context of the supervisory relationship as the primary environmental arena in which the development of the supervisee is evidenced. Although the power and significance of supervision should not be underemphasized in the training program, supervision is only one component of a comprehensive training approach, and indeed the training program is only one aspect of the student's life. How are the developmental shifts that are postulated in these models evidenced? (a) outside of the supervisee role, (b) in the counselor role, (c) in the student role, and (d) in other roles of the person's life? If indeed these changes are seen as qualitative shifts central to a counselor's growing professional identity, then they must also be influencing other contexts of life. In fact, it has been frequently argued in counseling approaches that the professional identity is a part of and integrated into the personal identity, insofar as without such congruency between professional behavior and self, the counselor lacks authenticity and consequently potency in the counseling relationship. Thus professional identity cannot be held separate from other areas of one's self, and changes must be considered outside of the supervisory situation in order to validate the developmental nature of the trainee's learning process. Neither the models nor the research sufficiently addresses this consideration and thus has not yet dealt with the underlying constructs of a developmental model.

Although it is not surprising that researchers in the field have chosen to conceptualize counselor training from a developmental perspective (after all, most psychologists are educated to think in terms of personality structure and change), there are some equally appealing and more heuristic ways in which to approach the understanding of the trainee's learning experience other than developmental paradigms. I entertain a few of these ideas, not because I am convinced that developmental modeling in supervision is misguided, but rather because it is so intuitively attractive that I fear it will not be sufficiently challenged before psychologists are convinced of its validity. As Hess (in press) commented in a recent paper on supervisee growth, "these (developmental) schemas are heuristic devices to help understand the student but may be a function of shared fictions by the authors."

Alternative explanations for trainee change may be that the supervisory relationship itself creates a trainee's initial vulnerability and final independence. In other words, the trainee's feelings are not intrinsic to becoming a counselor or establishing a professional identity but are a result of being in an intensive, evaluative, ongoing, and demanding relationship. In most formal relationships, particularly of inequitable power, there are feelings of vulnerability and requests for specificity of role expectations expressed by the subordinate partner. As trainees become more accustomed to the role of supervisee and as they progress toward learning a profession, they naturally become more confident and focus on the tasks of counseling rather than on the degree of support in the supervisory relationship. Worthington and Stern's (1985) research on the supervisory relationship at different levels of training could be very adequately interpreted from this framework.

Another approach to understanding current observations of a trainee's learning experience is an instructional one. The psychiatric literature on supervision has referred to the resident's clinical growth in terms of a learning experience (Barnat, 1974; Cohen & DeBetz, 1977; Fleming, 1953; Fleming & Benedek, 1964; Gaoni & Neumann, 1974; Schlessinger, 1966). In addition, the literature in counseling psychology has recently promoted the instructional mission and characteristics of the supervisory relationship (Abbey, Hunt, & Weiser, 1985; Friedlander & Ward, 1984; Goodyear et al., 1983; Hess, 1980; Holloway, 1982; Holloway & Wampold, 1983); thus there is conceptual and empirical support for a pedagogical understanding of the student's clinical training. Knowledge in educational psychology regarding instructional strategies based on characteristics of the learning task, student's level of skill acquisition, and student's learning style all seem to have direct relevance to issues dealt with in the tutorial of supervision. Abbey et al.'s (1985) use of Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle is an excellent example of the application of instructional models to counseling and supervision.

It is not clear that what occurs in clinical training is better described by various developmental models than by such alternative conceptions as those used in learning theory and other models to explain the acquisition of other cognitive and affective skills. It remains incumbent upon developmentalists to substantiate that a structural, qualitative, and predictable change occurs as a result of training to be a counselor.

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