

2020

## Mindfulness-Based Supervision: Awakening to New Possibilities

Steven Haberlin

Wesleyan College, shaberlin@wesleyancollege.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/jes>



Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), and the [Elementary Education and Teaching Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Haberlin, S. (2020). Mindfulness-Based Supervision: Awakening to New Possibilities. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 3 (3). <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.3.3.6>

This Conceptual is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Educational Supervision by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

# Mindfulness-Based Supervision: Awakening to New Possibilities

Journal of Educational Supervision

75 – 89

Volume 3, Issue 3, 2020

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.3.3.6>  
<https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/jes/>

**Steven Haberlin<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Up until the resurgence of an academic journal, the field of educational supervision has had to travel incognito (Glanz & Hazi, 2019; Mette, 2019). With the development of the *Journal of Educational Supervision*, however, supervision scholars have been invited to push new boundaries and experiment with non-traditional approaches about the conceptualization of supervision. In that spirit, I present a *mindfulness-based approach to supervision*, one that could help supervisors meet the present challenges of remaining more consciously skilled while simultaneously helping teachers practice self-care. While mindfulness-based programs and approaches have taken root in other PK-12 education and higher education fields, supervision remains behind the curve in this area. As such, I use this article to discuss the possibilities of grounding supervision in a more meditative fashion and entertain the concept of the Awakened Supervisor, an exaggerated caricature to demonstrate how mindfulness might be conceptualized. I also address what this might look like in actual practice.

## **Keywords**

educational supervision; mindfulness education; mindfulness-based supervision

---

<sup>1</sup> Wesleyan College, Georgia, USA

### **Corresponding Author:**

Steven Haberlin (Education, Wesleyan College, 4760 Forsyth Rd., Macon, GA 31210, USA)  
email: [shaberlin@wesleyancollege.edu](mailto:shaberlin@wesleyancollege.edu)

## Introduction

Recently, Mette (2019) called for supervision to “shed its mask” (p. 1) and stop traveling incognito to survive as a legitimate academic field (Glanz & Hazi, 2019). In this assertion, Mette emphasized the need for clearly defined discourse communities within supervision, noting that discourse within “teacher preparation supervision literature seems to push the boundaries more than other supervision discourse communities with alternative theories and concepts that could have a profound impact on clinical supervision” (p. 4). In that spirit, I would like to continue that push, gently but firmly, perhaps as a skilled martial artist might exert force while maintaining balance and being cognizant of the forces around her. The ideas presented in this article build off the foundational work of the supervision scholars who have preceded me and made new paradigms even possible. That said, channeling the sentiments of Burns (2019), who when sharing her supervision scholarship to her mentor, stated “what you have done is important and great, but it’s incomplete” (n.p.). To understand where instructional supervision gaps persist, I first want to consider the larger scope of education.

Since the start of the 21st century, US education approaches have been labeled as having too narrow of a vision (Glazer, 1999; Kessler, 2000; Lantieri, 2002; Miller, 2010), but also teaching with a hyper-focus on cognitive outcomes and not enough of a focus on the interpersonal and intrapersonal domains (Donaldson, 2008). Calls have come for a more holistic, contemplative curriculum that emphasizes spiritual dimensions and the whole child (Kessler, 2000, Miller, 2010). For instance, mindfulness practices have gained much attention as an approach to promote calmness, emotional regulation, focused attention, and stress reduction among teachers and students (Albrecht et al., 2012; Bellinger et al., 2015; Schonert-Reichl, & Lawlor, 2010; Semple et al., 2017). While numerous definitions exist, a commonly used explanation for mindfulness is provided by Kabat-Zinn (2003) as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment” (p. 145). Teacher education scholars (e.g. Alderfer, 2015; Dorman et al., 2017; Korthagen et al., 2013) also have joined this call, realizing the benefits of introducing pre-service teachers to contemplative practices as they prepare for the classroom.

However, this expanding view of education – this move toward addressing the inner world of consciousness and awareness – has yet to permeate instructional supervision. Case in point: a search in the *Journal of Educational Supervision* archives produces no mention of the terms ‘mindfulness,’ ‘meditation,’ ‘consciousness,’ or ‘contemplative’ in article titles. Popular supervision books including *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership: A Developmental Approach, 10th Edition* (Glickman et al., 2017), *Supervision: A Redefinition, 9th Edition* (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2014), *Effective Supervision: Supporting the Art & Science of Teaching* (Marzano et al., 2011), and *Supervision That Improves Teaching and Learning: Strategies and Techniques* (Sullivan & Glanz, 2013), are also largely absent of the topics of mindfulness, meditation, yoga, and other contemplative practices. During the past two years at the annual Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision (COPIS) conference, there were no presentations on these topics, minus ones I solely presented on Zen and mindfulness. That said, it’s time for scholars to consider supervision that nourishes the soul and addresses the interiority of those involved in its practices. This article will make the case for a new supervision paradigm and present a conceptual framework for a *mindfulness-based supervision model*.

## A “New” Supervision Mindset

Various definitions exist for the concept of an instructional or educational supervisor. The term ‘supervisor’ in this article is being seen as “both a role and a function” (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2014, p. 5). For instance, a school principal enacts a formal supervisory role when engaging in observations, conducting formal evaluations, and demonstrating instructional strategies, but others not in formal supervisory roles can also engage in supervisory functions. As an example, a teacher engages in supervision when visiting a colleagues’ classroom to suggest teaching techniques or analyzing a lesson plan.

In recent years, the mindset of the instructional supervisor has come into question. It’s not enough to know about commonly used supervision practices, for instance, how to conduct classroom observations or conference with teachers and provide instructional support. Supervisors must become more aware of when to employ a specific practice or task – they must become “consciously skilled...being metacognitive about how to skillfully select, couple, and enact different pedagogical routines of supervisory practice” (Burns et al., 2019, p. 23).

Borrowing from Glanz’s (1997) work connecting Taoist ideas with supervision, Burns, Jacobs, and Yendol-Hoppey called this being consciously skilled, or being able to balance the instructional and affective needs of candidates, the *Tao of Teacher Candidate Supervision*. A more conscious mindset also has been echoed within the larger landscape of teacher education. For instance, clinically based teacher educators must embrace a type of pedagogical mindfulness – not reacting but being mindful or more aware of practice (AACTE, 2018). Becoming more conscious of practice must make its way into current supervision models and approaches. However, to provide this type of support, supervisors must be skilled in their own self-management, knowing how to navigate the “zig and zag of their own emotional lives” (Donahue-Keegan, 2018, p. 235).

Like teaching, supervision can be emotionally charged, as supervisors might face internal struggles and external conflicts with others (Burns & Badiali, 2016). While teacher self-care has become a major concern and scholarship has been increasing around the topic (see Hyde, 2012; Jennings, 2015; Schussler et al., 2016; Villate & Butand, 2017), little has been published on supervisor self-care. Burns and Badiali (2016) reported that supervisors often coped with stress in the field by validating their existing beliefs, which only heightened the stress. They recommended emotional mentoring or “consoling the novice supervisor or diffusing the intensity of the emotions that arise from disorienting dilemmas encountered while they were working in the field as supervisors” (p. 415). While this strategy might help, supervisors need methods or approaches for self-management, techniques they can employ both in the field and in their own lives to reduce stress and increase well-being. The concept of self-management is highly neglected in present-day supervision models and frameworks.

## Awareness: The Common Denominator

In examining popular educational supervision frameworks (Burns et al., 2019; Garmston et al., 1993; Glickman et al., 2017; Marzano et al. 2011; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2014), it becomes apparent that the main purpose or end-goal is to improve student learning and teacher reflection.

How this occurs, and what's the best way to assist teachers in reaching this goal, depends on the various frameworks and models. That's where the separation occurs. However, a closer look reveals that all supervision frameworks share a common denominator: the need for the supervisor to possess *awareness*. An effective supervisor must have awareness of the functions, practices, and tasks of supervision; the pedagogical skills of supervision; awareness of the knowledge base that builds effective teaching and expertise (Marzano et al., 2011); awareness of the instructional supports that teachers require based on their particular development stage (Glickman et al., 2017); awareness of the social-emotional needs of supervisees and of when to employ the proper practice or task (Burns et al., 2019); and awareness of the moral implications or social justice issues within supervision (Glickman et al., 2017; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2014). They must also be aware of their physical environment, the needs of the partnership school, the dynamic of a teacher's classroom, etc. (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2014).

However, a supervisor should also possess *self-awareness* or "an internal awareness of one's cognitions and emotions" (Richards et al., 2010, p. 251). This means to be aware of one's practices, needs of those supervised, and moral and social justice issues on a consistent basis, a supervisor would ideally be turning to contemplative methods of some sort, perhaps journaling, reflecting, meditating, or listening deeply to others. In essence, a supervisor could benefit from having *mindfulness*, or being aware of both one's inner emotions and thinking and the outside environment (Richards et al., 2010). For example, Langer (1997) found that mindfulness can help individuals view issues and situations from different perspectives, see information in novel ways, and create new possible solutions. Early mindfulness research with teachers and pre-service teachers has shown increases in job performance (Bernay, 2014). For example, Murphy (2017) wrote that pre-service teachers introduced to mindfulness techniques reported enhanced ability to manage their classrooms. Cognitive abilities enhanced through mindfulness appear to have some benefit for supervisors, though I cannot at this point make the leap and say practicing mindfulness would automatically improve one's supervision practice or give them the power to know when to enact a certain practice or task. Table 1 attempts to illustrate how the constructs of awareness and mindfulness might intersect with supervision models (of course, these models do not represent the complete gamut of supervisory approaches but provide some examples).

The theories posited in Table 1 provide a starting point for the possibilities of a mindfulness-based supervision paradigm. For instance, how mindfulness might interact with each model could be nuanced, as each supervision approach has its own tenets, principles, strategies, and areas of emphasis. Naturally, questions arise from the idea of overlaying or infusing mindfulness into existing supervisory structures, such as *Might the underlying practices, motivations, and assumptions of the existing model go unexamined or get lost somehow? Might the practice of mindfulness get diluted, corrupted, or just be outright incompatible with existing models?* These are legitimate concerns and would need to be fleshed out more through research, careful analysis, and discourse.

In my own experience (Haberlin, 2019), I found that using mindfulness-based methods in the context of the clinical supervision model showed promise and were complimentary, particularly in the area of conferencing and conducting classroom observations. I discovered that experimenting with ways to be more aware when observing teaching and using what I called *mindful notetaking*, or scripting as well as recording my inner thoughts and feelings during the

**Table 1. Mindfulness-Based Supervision Interacting with Existing Supervision Models**

| Supervision Model  | Intersection of Awareness and Mindfulness and Supervision  |
|--|--|
| <p>Supervisory Leadership (Sergiovanni &amp; Starratt, 2014):</p> <p><i>The framework for supervision under this model describes three trajectories for development of teachers: 1) instructional capacity—a school’s organizational characteristics that support teaching and learning, 2) instructional quality or curriculum content based in deep understanding and application, and 3) student engagement—students’ commitment and participation in the learning process.</i></p>   | <p>Supervisor grows more aware of the present capacity of the teacher and what is possible. As a leader, the mindful supervisor becomes attuned to the present abilities and needs of the supervisee.</p>  |
| <p>Teacher Expertise (Marzano et al., 2011):</p> <p><i>Establishing clear criteria for effective teaching and provide opportunities to deliberately practice. In this model, supervisors require a knowledge base of teacher expertise consisting of 1) classroom strategies and behaviors, 2) preparation and planning, 3) reflecting on teaching practice, and 4) collegiality and professionalism. Additionally, in this model, “Teacher evaluation should recognize different stages of development progressing towards expertise” (p. 104).</i></p>   | <p>With increased awareness, the mindfulness-based supervisor remains highly conscious of the knowledge base and criteria needed for effective teaching but also keys into the individual teacher’s current performance and what is needed for growth (e.g. being highly mindful during a classroom observation and when gathering student artifact data).</p> |
| <p>Developmental Supervision (Glickman et al., 2017):</p> <p><i>Supervision as communal leadership, where supervisors lead with school knowledge, technical skills, and interpersonal skills. Supervisors tailor efforts based on the current developmental stage of the teacher. A major notion of this model is that a supervisor initially uses a direct approach (directing and standardizing), moves to a collaborative approach (presenting, negotiating) and finally to a non-direct approach (listening, clarifying, reflecting). Of course, this requires knowing when an individual current skill level and knowledge warrant moving to the next approach.</i></p> | <p>The mindful supervisor possesses the heightened awareness to be aligned with the current stage of development of the teacher. Other skills, such as the ability to foster and maintain positive collaboration and relationships, can also be enhanced through mindfulness of the supervisor.</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Clinical Supervision Model (Cogan, 1972; Goldhammer, 1969)</p> <p><i>Supervisors coach and collaborate with teachers, using a five-step model centered on the observation conference and classroom observation. Evaluation tools are used to provide feedback.</i></p> | <p>Mindfulness-based supervision can benefit the observation cycle by helping supervisors become more aware during the entire process. For example, they can be more aware of their interactions (e.g. words, gestures, feedback) when conferencing and also more conscious of themselves and what they observed during classroom observations and the use of formative and summative evaluation tools.</p> |
| <p>Cognitive Coaching (Garmston et al., 1993):</p> <p><i>Informed by clinical supervision, the focus is on developing reflective practice and teacher autonomy by making teachers aware of their mental map.</i></p>  | <p>The mindful supervisor becomes a better model of engaging in mindful, conscious practice. Mindfulness methods might be used to enhance teacher reflection and becoming more aware of teaching practices.</p>   |
| <p>Scope and Nature of Teacher Candidate Supervision (Burns et al., 2019):</p> <p><i>Supervisors must become consciously skilled knowing when to employ particular high-leverage practices and tasks.</i></p>   | <p>Mindfulness-based supervision can aid in becoming more consciously skilled and maintaining balance.</p>  |

process, provided new insights, which led to new conversations with teacher candidates about their practice. Listening more mindfully during pre-and-post conferences also yielded benefits. For example, I grew more conscious of how often I interrupted and when to shift gears from providing instructional guidance to emotional support. One consideration for other supervisors experimenting with mindfulness is that I had already possessed a reasonably strong understanding and had previous experience with engaging in supervision through the clinical supervision model. Again, more work needs to be done to determine whether mindfulness practices support, diminish, or have a neutral impact on a model's original tenets and structures.

## **The Possibilities of Mindfulness-Based Supervision**

Mindfulness is an ancient Buddhist technique now used in many areas of Western society, including medicine, sports, business, and education. Interest in mindfulness seems to have reached a cultural "tipping point" (Jennings, 2015, p. 181, referencing Gladwell, 2006), appearing on the cover of *Time Magazine* and some 1,000 mindfulness-based stress reduction instructors offering training around the world. Research on the results of practicing mindfulness-based methods is promising, including but not limited to the idea that:

- Mindfulness has been found to lower stress levels, boost the immune system, reduce chronic pain, help in managing negative emotions, expand awareness of harmful negative patterns, improve relationships, develop positive emotions, and enhance concentration and attention (Baer et al., 2006; Creswell et al., 2007; Larrivee, 2012).
- Mindfulness has increased facets of the brain associated with executive functioning, particularly short-term memory, impulse control, attention, planning, and mental flexibility (Hassed & Chambers, 2014). One study showed that when postsecondary students practiced a brief mindfulness meditation before a class lecture, retention levels of the information significantly increased (Chambers et al., 2008).

US public schools have also begun to embrace mindfulness, while research is still in the early stages, evidence suggests that mindfulness can benefit education (Albrecht et al., 2012; Bellinger, et al., 2015; Schonert-Reichl., & Lawlor, 2010; Semple et al., 2017). For example, Shoerberlein (2009) noted that mindfulness can assist teachers in improving focus, enhancing the classroom climate and becoming more responsive to students' needs. It can also improve students' readiness to learn, strengthen their focus and concentration, and enhance social-emotional learning.

Teacher education scholars have also begun to study the implications of mindfulness (Alderfer, 2015; Dorman et al., 2017; Korthagen et al., 2013). For example, Villate and Butand (2017) reported that teacher candidates participating in a mindfulness-based teaching program generally experienced less stress, higher states of calm, and were more present for their students. The authors concluded that teaching teacher candidates specific coping strategies helped them manage stress levels, improve self-esteem and feelings of competence. While the literature is extremely thin on mindfulness and those in supervisory roles, Wells (2013) explored using mindfulness as a way to help school administrators, such as principals, cope with the constant pressures.

Educational supervision could improve outcomes for supervisors by exploring how mindfulness might impact the field. As stated previously, very few studies on this topic exist. In a study of 72 counselor education supervisors, Wyatt (2011) found that supervisor mindfulness was a “significant positive predictor” of a supervisor’s perceptions of the supervisory relationship that a supervisee’s mindfulness was a positive predictor of self-reported self-efficacy (p. 148). I have found that mindfulness enhanced aspects of clinical teacher candidate preparation, including becoming more aware of one’s own practice, becoming more attuned to the affective needs of candidates, and enhancing functional tasks such as conducting observations and conferences (Haberlin, 2019). In theory, a mindfulness-based approach to educational supervision holds many possibilities, such as:

- Providing practical tools for supervisors to enhance awareness of both one’s inner and outer environment;
- Assisting in the emotional regulation and self-management or supervisor self-care;
- Possibly enhancing regularly performed practices and tasks, such as observing and evaluating teachers; and,
- Promoting interconnectivity and deep, interpersonal relationships with those involved in the supervision process (e.g. teachers, teacher candidates, mentor teachers, school administrators).

Like Murphy (2017) learned when working with pre-service teachers, mindfulness would serve as “unique entry point” for supervisors by “introducing and integrating contemplative practices to support well-being and success of individuals” (n.p.). Mindfulness methods could connect the holistic contemplative movement within education to instructional supervision.

### **A Mindfulness-Based Conceptual Framework**

What might a mindful or more meditative approach to supervision look like? A conceptual framework can assist in formalizing some of these ideas. Expanding the current paradigms within supervision requires building off those that have already been presented and upheld. From there, those paradigms or boundaries can be pushed. To illustrate existing paradigms and approaches to supervision, Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) presented four types of supervisors or exaggerated caricatures. Burns (2012) later added to these conceptions giving them names and associated power sources (see Table 2).

The images suggest that a supervisor was originally perceived as one who inspects, monitors, and exemplifies authority and bureaucracy. This conceptualization later gave way to viewing the supervisor as more collegiate and collaborative. Notions of teacher leadership also entered the paradigm mix. What’s missing from these existing images is a more contemplative paradigm, one that emphasizes notions of consciousness, awareness, and mindfulness. This supervisor caricature is present-centered, highly aware of her thoughts and emotions but also what occurs in the environment. This supervisor is *awakened* if you will. To develop and articulate this conception of the Awakened Supervisor, I grounded this concept in the work of Kabat-Zinn and Hanh (2009) and the seven attitudes of mindfulness (Table 3).

**Table 2. Images of the Supervisor**

| <b>Moniker</b>             | <b>Description</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>The Monitor</b>         | Scientific Management Era<br>Efficiency, Training,<br>Evaluation, Hierarchal Relationship |
| <b>Ms. Congeniality</b>    | Human Relations<br>Relationships take precedence  |
| <b>The Critical Friend</b> | Relationships and Discomfort<br>Mutual Dissatisfaction                                    |
| <b>The Organic Member</b>  | Learning Community & Ideas<br>Shared Values/ Norms  |

**Table 3. The Awakened Supervisor Image**

| <b>Image</b>               | <b>Description</b>  |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Awakened Supervisor</b> | Non-judgement<br>Patience<br>Beginner's mind<br>Trust<br>Non-striving<br>Acceptance<br>Letting go |

Thus, the Awakened Supervisor would embrace *non-judgment*, impartially witnessing the constant stream of thoughts that pass, and rather than reacting, observing them and making more conscious responses. Possessing *patience*, the supervisor would operate from a space of wisdom, remembering that changes and growth – both for himself and those he supervises – are a gradual process and can occur in their own time. A *beginner's mind* means being open to new supervisory moments as the supervisory practice unfolds, not being bound by old habits, routines, and practices that no longer serve a teacher or teacher candidate. The Awakened Supervisor *trusts* herself, realizing the power of intuition and inner feelings. In *non-striving*, a supervisor still pursues objectives but understands that the real goal is the process itself. Thus, he or she *accepts* the present situation as it is, not forcing solutions on problems but remaining alert for new possibilities. Finally, the Awakened Supervisor *lets go* when situations arise in the field

that are beyond her control and doesn't attach to practices or traditions that no longer serve the supervisor or teacher.

Guided by the Awakened Supervisor image, supervisors might inform their current supervision stance in varied ways, depending on how they approach practice. For instance, a supervisor using a developmental model could benefit from developing *patience* as they help a supervisee work through stages of growth. In the same vein that mindfulness might interact differently with various supervision models, a supervisor subscribing to or representing one of the above images could find that mindfulness practices color their own supervisory approach and experience in varying ways. For example, the Monitor type supervisor might gravitate toward mindfulness as a tool for increasing their classroom observation and evaluation powers while the Ms. Congeniality type might dive into mindfulness to intensify the existing emphasis on relationships and connectivity. On the other hand, the mindfulness paradigm could make certain supervisors uncomfortable or feel more vulnerable in their practice, such as the Monitor supervisor who begins to awaken to the fact that they lack deep connections or meaningful relationships. While I do not identify with the Monitor type, I experienced an uneasiness after mindfulness practices and data collected from teacher candidates (Haberlin, 2019) illuminated me that my relationships with mentor teachers fell far short of how I envisioned them.

In addition, I don't envisage that these other monikers necessarily need to progress towards becoming the Awakened Supervisor any more than say an evaluation-oriented supervisor must or will progress to become relationship or leadership-centered. More than likely, this new conception could encourage supervisors to embody perhaps some of the Awakened qualities or strengthen those that already exist. In other words, a supervisor might work to approach a classroom observation with more openness (*beginner's mind*), strive to be more non-judgmental and patient with supervisees, or attempt to trust their inner guidance as they approach supervision in their chosen manner.

### **Mindfulness-Based Field Techniques**

Actual application of mindfulness-based methods in supervision can include some well-established techniques including:

- *Mindful walking*: supervisors slow down their walk, focusing on their steps and the in-and-out-breath to ground themselves to the here and now;
- *Deep listening*: during conferences and other times with teachers, supervisors listen closely, without judgment, with the intention of building interconnectivity;
- *Mindful notetaking*: During informal and formal observations, supervisors remain open and fresh to new perspectives during observed teaching, keeping themselves in the present moment; and,
- *Meditation*: supervisors establish their own meditation or other contemplative practice to enhance mindfulness and awareness and reduce stress.

These are just some of the methods that could be incorporated into existing supervision models. What's important to note is that I'm not advocating mindfulness as a panacea for supervision but rather an approach that can supplement or possibly enhance existing models and frameworks.

Mindfulness-Based Supervision might also be better thought of as a gradual process, where one awakens to practice overtime. This process begins with becoming aware that one can become more aware within practice, and that tools exist to nurture these conditions. The supervisor progresses by implementing a mindfulness-based technique (or two) into regular practice. Eventually, these mindfulness methods start to become routines or rituals – just part of what you do in the field. Finally, mindfulness-based supervision evolves into a way of being, an embodiment (see Table 4). Consequently, this progression mirrors Broadwell’s (1969) description of the stages of mastery of teaching, where a teacher moves from unconscious incompetence, to conscious competence (or knowing what you don’t know), to unconscious competence, where expertise becomes automatic.

**Table 4. Mindfulness-Based Supervision Progression**

| <b>Stage 1:</b><br><br><b>The Becoming<br/>Conscious<br/>Supervisor</b>   | <b>Stage 2:</b><br><br><b>The Emerging<br/>Mindful Supervisor</b>  | <b>Stage 3:</b><br><br><b>The Mindful<br/>Supervisor</b>   | <b>Stage 4:</b><br><br><b>The Awakened<br/>Supervisor</b>  |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p><i>Growing more conscious of supervisory actions.</i></p> <p>(e.g. becoming more aware of the self during classroom observations and interactions with teachers/teacher candidates).</p> | <p><i>Enacting mindfulness technique(s) in practice.</i></p> <p>(e.g. practicing mindful walking on route to classroom observations)</p> | <p><i>Embedding mindfulness-based methods into routines of practice/high-leverage practices.</i></p> <p>(e.g. engaging in deep listening during conferences; mindful breathing at various points of the workday)</p> | <p><i>“Living” mindfulness in each moment of supervision; maintaining present-moment awareness when performing tasks and functions</i></p> |

Of course, this progression would need to be additionally explored to uncover nuances such as how this progression scale would interact with existing supervision models. For instance, could one model better support or detract progression towards Stage 4? Additionally, I don’t posit the Awakened Stage as an appropriate or reasonable goal for all supervisors. That would be like saying that everyone who takes up a contemplative practice, such as meditation, must set their sights on becoming enlightened and will reach that goal. Practitioners have their different motivations. For example, some might just want to reduce stress or feel better while others want to experience a major transformation in consciousness. Depending on an individual supervisor’s disposition, experience level, beliefs, and existing paradigms, they may resonate with and accelerate through these stages or perhaps graduate to Stage 1 or 2 through mindfulness-based methods. Others, however, may not be suited for this approach or embrace it.

## **Conclusion**

As the field of educational supervision continues its identity crisis, the opportunity remains for supervision scholars to entertain, study, and explore innovative, non-traditional approaches that could assist supervisors in meeting rising challenges. Mindfulness-based supervision is an “open” and “fascinating” area of exploration (C. Glickman, personal communication, October 22, 2019), one that offers many possibilities. Embedding mindfulness in the field not only mirrors what’s occurring in educational settings, where supervisors operate, but also could provide new tools and strategies for focusing and centering, building interconnectivity, and reducing stress. These practices could then be modeled for teachers and teacher candidates. The Awakened Supervisor, for example, represents an open, patient, present, and non-judgmental way to approach supervision. With its transferability, mindfulness might be infused into existing frameworks and models, without the fear of replacing what’s been discovered to work in the field. Like a vitamin supplement, mindfulness techniques hold the possibility to enhance what’s already in place, adding a boost of mental presence, awareness, and consciousness. More research, study, and discourse must occur in this area.

Thus, I encourage my colleagues in supervision circles to consider where mindfulness-based supervision might fit into their current teaching and research agenda. Additionally, following the progression of those who put this into practice daily would be critically important. We know the present moment is where supervision is shaped, directed, and enhanced, and where its identity is further impacted. For those wanting to find an awakening, the greatest possibility for positive change is right now.

## References

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2018). *A pivot toward clinical practice, it's lexicon, and the renewal of educator preparation: A report of the AACTE Clinical Practice Commission*. AACTE.
- Albrecht, N. J., Albrecht, P. M., & Cohen, M. (2012). Mindfully teaching in the classroom: A literature review. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 37(12), 1-12.
- Alderfer, L. (2015). *Teaching from the Heart of Mindfulness*. Green Writers Press.
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. (2018). *A pivot toward clinical practice, its lexicon, and the renewal of educator preparation: A report of the AACTE Clinical Practice Commission*. Washington, D.C.: AACTE.
- Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment*, 13(1), 27-45. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191105283504>
- Bellinger, D. B., DeCaro, M. S., & Ralston, P. A. (2015). Mindfulness, anxiety, and high-stakes mathematics performance in the laboratory and classroom. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 37, 123-132.
- Bernay, R. (2014). A study of the effects of mindfulness in five primary schools in New Zealand. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 39 (7).
- Broadwell, M. M. (1969). Teaching for learning (XVI.). *The Gospel Guardian*, 20(41), 1-3.
- Burns, R. W. (2012). Conceptualizing supervision in the professional development school context: A case analysis (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest.
- Burns, R. (2019). Vim, vest and perils of resuscitating Glickman's old book. A session presented at the annual meeting of the Council of Professors of Instructional Supervision, Augusta, GA.
- Burns, R. W., & Badiali, B. (2016). Framing conceptual, procedural, and emotional support for supervisors. *Teacher Education and Practice*, 29(2), 397.
- Burns, R. W., Jacobs, J., & Yendol-Hoppey, D. (2019). A framework for naming the scope and nature of preservice teacher supervision in clinically based teacher preparation: Tasks, high-leverage practices, and pedagogical routines of practice. *The Teacher Educator*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08878730.2019.1682091>
- Chambers, R., Lo, B.C.Y. and Allen, N.B (2008). 'The impact of intensive mindfulness training on attentional control, cognitive style, and affect', *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 32(3), 303–22. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10608-007-9119-0>
- Cogan, L.M. (1972). *Clinical supervision*. Houghton Mifflin.
- Creswell, J. D., Way, B. M., Eisenberger, N. I., & Lieberman, M. D. (2007). Neural correlates of dispositional mindfulness during affect labeling. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 69(6), 560-565.
- Donahue-Keegan, D. (2018). Cultivating culturally responsive teaching in teacher preparation. In J. Dalton, E. Hope, and K. Byrnes (Eds.). *The teaching self: Contemplative practices, pedagogy, and research in education* [e-reader version]. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Dorman, E. H., Byrnes, K., & Dalton, J. E. (Eds.). (2017). *Impacting Teaching and Learning: Contemplative Practices, Pedagogy, and Research in Education*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Garmston, R., Linder, C., & Whitaker, J. (1993). Reflections on cognitive coaching. *Educational Leadership*, 51(2), 57-61.

- Gladwell, M. (2006). *The tipping point: How little things can make a big difference*. Little, Brown.
- Glanz, J. (1997). The Tao of supervision: Taoist Insights into the theory and practice of educational supervision. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 12(3), 193-211.
- Glanz, J., & Hazi, H. M. (2019). Shedding light on the phenomenon of supervision traveling incognito: A field's struggles for visibility. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 2(1), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.2.1.1>
- Glazer, S. (1999). Conclusion: The heart of learning. In S. Glazer (Ed.), *The heart of learning: Spirituality in education* (pp. 247-250). Tarcher Perigree.
- Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2017). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach (10<sup>th</sup> edition)*. Pearson.
- Goldhammer, R. (1969) *Clinical supervision*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Haberlin, S. (2019). Supervision in every breath: Enacting Zen in an elementary education teacher program. [Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida]. Retrieved from ProQuest.
- Hassed, C., & Chambers, R. (2014). *Mindful learning: Reduce stress and improve brain performance for effective learning*. Exisle Publishing.
- Hyde, A. (2012). The yoga in schools movement: Using standards for educating the whole child and making space for teacher self-care. *Counterpoints*, 425, 109-126.
- Jennings, P. A. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom (the Norton Series on the social neuroscience of education)*. WW Norton & Company.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2003). Mindfulness-based interventions in context: past, present, and future. *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice*, 10(2), 144-156.
- Kabat-Zinn, J., & Hanh, T. N. (2009). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness*. Delta.
- Kessler, R. (2000). *The soul of education: Helping students find connection, compassion, and character at school*. ASCD.
- Korthagen, F. A., Korthagen, F. A., Kim, Y. M., & Greene, W. L. (Eds.). (2013). *Teaching and learning from within: A core reflection approach to quality and inspiration in education*. Routledge.
- Langer, E. J. (1997). *The power of mindful learning*. Addison-Wesley/Addison Wesley Longman.
- Lantieri, L. (Ed.). (2002). *Schools with spirit: Nurturing the inner lives of children and teachers*. Beacon Press.
- Larrivee, B. (2012). *Cultivating teacher renewal: Guarding against stress and burnout*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Marzano, R. J., Frontier, T., & Livingston, D. (2011). *Effective supervision: Supporting the art and science of teaching*. ASCD.
- Mette, I. M. (2019). The state of supervision discourse communities: A call for the future of supervision to shed its mask. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 2(2), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.2.2.1>
- Miller, J. P. (2010). *Whole child education*. University of Toronto Press.
- Muprhy, S. (2017). Preparing teachers for the classroom. In E.H. Dorman, K. Byrnes, and J. Dalton (Eds.). *Impacting Teaching and Learning: Contemplative Practices, Pedagogy, and Research in Education* (pp. 41-52). Rowman & Littlefield.

- Richards, K., Campenni, C., & Muse-Burke, J. (2010). Self-care and well-being in mental health professionals: The mediating effects of self-awareness and mindfulness. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 32(3), 247-264.
- Schonert-Reichl, K. A., & Lawlor, M. S. (2010). The effects of a mindfulness-based education program on pre-and early adolescents' well-being and social and emotional competence. *Mindfulness*, 1(3), 137-151. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-010-0011-8>
- Schussler, D. L., Jennings, P. A., Sharp, J. E., & Frank, J. L. (2016). Improving teacher awareness and well-being through CARE: A qualitative analysis of the underlying mechanisms. *Mindfulness*, 7(1), 130-142. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0422-7>
- Semple, R. J., Droutman, V., & Reid, B. A. (2017). Mindfulness goes to school: Things learned (so far) from research and real-world experiences. *Psychology in the Schools*, 54(1), 29-52.
- Sergiovanni, T., & Starratt, R. (2007). *Supervision: A redefinition*. McGraw-Hill.
- Sergiovanni, T. J., & Starratt, R. J. (2014). *Supervision: A redefinition (9th ed.)*. McGraw Hill.
- Shoerberlein, D (2009). *Mindful teaching and teaching mindfulness*. Wisdom Publications.
- Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2013). *Supervision that improves teaching and learning: Strategies and techniques*. Corwin Press.
- Villate & Butand (2017). In Dorman, E. H., Byrnes, K., & Dalton, J. E. (Eds.). *Impacting Teaching and Learning: Contemplative Practices, Pedagogy, and Research in Education*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Wells, C. M. (2013). Principals responding to constant pressure: Finding a source of stress management. *NASSP Bulletin*, 97(4), 335-349.
- Wyatt, L. (2011). *The role of mindfulness in clinical supervision* (Doctoral dissertation). The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Retrieved from: [https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Wyatt\\_uncg\\_0154D\\_10573.pdf](https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Wyatt_uncg_0154D_10573.pdf)

## Author Biography

**Steve Haberlin** is an assistant professor of education at Wesleyan College. His research interests include contemplative teacher education, contemplative pedagogy, mindfulness and meditation in teaching, and instructional supervision. His first book, *Supervision and the Soul: Using Mindfulness-Based Practices When Preparing and Coaching Teachers* (Rowman & Littlefield) is expected to be released in 2021.