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## Lessons from the Past: Ideas from Supervision Books Published from 1920 through 1950

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### Abstract

By understanding its past, a field of study and practice can better understand its present and improve its future, yet the field of educational supervision has done very little to document or contemplate its history. In this paper, 10 books on supervision published from 1920 through 1950 are reviewed, including books by Nutt (1920), Burton (1922), Crabbs (1925), Barr and Burton (1926), Nutt (1928), Kyte (1930), Barr (1931), Rorer (1942), Barr, Burton, and Brueckner (1947), and Wiles (1950). The discussion of each book is organized into three parts. First, the author discusses a concept from the book that he believes should be *retained*, meaning the concept should continue to be discussed and acted upon. Second, the author reviews a concept no longer valued or utilized that he argues should be revived in order to improve present-day supervision. Third, the author describes a concept discussed in the book under review that he maintains should be *reproved* as a negative influence on the field. The reader is urged to review historical literature on supervision and form her or his own perspectives on the value of historical concepts to modern supervision.

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From the 1920s on, new ideas were transforming art and music, and architecture, too, was caught up in the modernising culture. People wanted buildings which were not just copies of the past. Having abandoned both classical and Gothic styles, the challenge was to create - to invent -something really new. Luckily, this change in attitude came at the same time as exciting new engineering materials were becoming available. British architecture is going through a dynamic period, with several big international names such as James Stirling and Norman Foster. Perhaps the architect best known in Britain is the designer of the Millennium Dome, Richard Rogers. He too, has carried out many major projects abroad. Through detailed examination of 44 cases, Bowlby was able to link their symptoms to histories of maternal deprivation and separation. Although World War II led to an interruption in Bowlby's budding career as a practicing child psychiatrist, it laid further groundwork for his career as a researcher. His assignment was to collaborate on officer selection procedures with a group of distinguished colleagues from the Tavistock Clinic in London, an experience that gave Bowlby a level of methodological and statistical expertise then unusual for a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. This training is obvious Learning lessons from the past. Many past societies collapsed or vanished, leaving behind monumental ruins such as those that the poet Shelley imagined in his sonnet, Ozymandias. By collapse, I mean a drastic decrease in human population size and/or political/economic/social complexity, over a considerable area, for an extended time. The monumental ruins left behind by those past societies hold a fascination for all of us. We marvel at them when as children we first learn of them through pictures. When we grow up, many of us plan vacations in order to experience them at first hand. We feel drawn to their often spectacular and haunting beauty, and also to the mysteries that they pose.