

A STUDY OF THE PROBLEMS OF BEGINNING SUPERVISORS IN FLORIDA SCHOOLS

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The Problem

The need for the study of the problems of beginning supervisors emerged from a growing concern regarding the identity of problems of beginning supervisors in Florida. It was the purpose of this study to identify these problems; to ascertain if their problems are related to selected phases of their professional or experiential background; and to arrive at implications for in-service educational programs, and university preparatory programs for supervisors.

Procedures

The method of investigation involved the collection of data through personal interviews with 44 of the total population of 47 beginning supervisors appointed in the school years 1958-59 and 1959-60. A partially structured interview form was used. A problem check list was constructed using the literature as a basis. Data collected in this manner were used to answer ten major questions: (1) What are the big problem areas; (2) In each area, what problems are uppermost; (3) What problems are beginning supervisors encountering which are not suggested by the literature; (4) Do supervisors appointed from within the county system have the same number and kinds of problems as those coming from elsewhere in the state, outside the state; (5) Do supervisors with advanced training -- sixth or seventh year -- have the same number and kinds of problems as those with a master's degree only, or master's degree plus no more than 12 semester hours; (6) Do men and women supervisors have the same kinds and frequency of problems; (7) Do persons with previous supervisory experience have the same number and kinds of problems as those without supervisory experience; (8) Do persons with previous experience as principals have the same number and kinds of problems as those without experience as principals; (9) What questions are there for future workshops for beginning supervisors and in-service education programs; and (10) What suggestions are there for the preparatory programs of supervisors.

From a study of the literature the writer compiled a list of nine major problem areas into which the problems of beginning supervisors could be placed. These areas were: (1) supervision of learning, (2) curriculum

development, (3) evaluation, (4) instructional aids, (5) professional growth, (6) public relations, (7) human relations, (8) establishment of supervisory program, and (9) ethnic and national problems. Forty-four beginning Florida supervisors were asked to rank the list of problem areas according to the degree of difficulty.

Results

The beginning supervisors ranked the nine major problem areas as follows:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Problem Area</u>
1.5	Curriculum
1.5	Establishing the Supervisory Program
3	Supervision of Learning
4	Professional Growth
5	Human Relations
6	Evaluation
8	Instructional Aids
8	Public Relations
8	Ethnic and National Problems

Within each problem area, the most frequently cited specific problem is noted below.

- I. Supervision of Learning--Inspiring creative thinking
- II. Curriculum--Encouraging instruction leading to critical thinking
- III. Evaluation--Helping teachers to evaluate their progress
- IV. Instructional Aids--Promoting the wise use of available materials
- V. Professional Growth--School time for teacher meetings
- VI. Public Relations--Interpreting modern curriculum to the public
- VII. Human Relations--Teacher security feelings during a process of change
- VIII. Establishing the Supervisory Program--Budgeting the supervisor's time
- IX. Ethnic and National Problems--none indicated

Beginning supervisors are vexed generally with two problems not suggested by the literature. These are working with teachers and the work load of the supervisor. The data indicated that beginning supervisors hired from Florida, but from outside the immediate county of employment, had the most problems per person. Those hired from outside of Florida had the fewest problems per person. Those with only a master's degree had very slightly more problems per person than the group having additional preparation of up to 12 semester hours. Those with more than 12 semester hours beyond the master's degree had the most problems per person. It was found that men averaged more problems per person than women. Those with previous supervisory experience had fewer problems. The group having had experience as principals had more problems per person.

Supervisors were most concerned with the location of in-service education programs, and next most concerned with the type of help desired. Help from the State Department of Education is much desired and central conferences at the State Capital are considered beneficial. More on-the-job help is needed with more individual assistance by the state department personnel to solve individual problems. Beginning supervisors want an opportunity for inter-county visitation and for local or regional conferences to discuss mutual problems. Workshop emphasis should be placed on practical solutions to local problems and needs. Response in this study indicated a desire for shorter but more frequent workshops. The comments and suggestions of the supervisors in this study show that there is a need for education in the field of human dynamics. An intern program for beginning supervisors is also needed. Familiarity with the total curriculum is essential in the preparation of general supervisors. Courses and methods, as well as a philosophy of supervision, are necessary for a successful supervisor.