

An Analysis of the Georgia Program

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Those who have read previous articles in *EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP* describing the Georgia program will be interested in this evaluation of the preparation of supervisors by Jane Franseth, specialist for rural schools, U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C.

GEORGIA'S most recent venture in the education of school supervisors is now in its fifth year. It is different from most other supervisory training programs in these respects:

► *The prospective supervisors are carefully selected.* In most states there is no attempt to determine fitness of candidates for supervision before they begin preparing themselves for the job.

► *The Georgia program combines college campus study and guided practice in county school supervision in a way designed to meet individual needs of the supervisors.* Through trips, research, reading, discussions, lectures, audio-visual aids, practice in supervision, and a variety of other activities the prospective supervisors are provided with experiences which help to develop understandings in child development, psychology of learning, and curriculum construction. They are continually seeking better answers to such questions as: What is teaching? What is democratic leadership? Most states provide no coordinated program of education for the preparation of supervisors.

► *The program is a cooperative endeavor of many educational groups in the state.* It is guided by the Georgia Teacher Education Council which is composed of representatives from the State Department of Education, county superintendents, supervisors, teachers colleges, and the State University. Significant contributions in a coordinated state program are made by Georgia State College for Women, West Georgia College, Georgia Teachers College, and the State University. County superintendents and supervisors help to provide opportunities for observation and practice. The State Department of Education helps to provide supervision for the total program.

Two consultants from the University and one from the State Department serve as coordinators and directors. In most states the training of supervisors is done chiefly through a few courses in supervision in each of several institutions without relation to each other and without opportunities for observation and practice. There is little attempt to coordinate the efforts of several education groups toward the accomplishment of common objectives.

► *Another respect in which this program differs from others is in the opportunities provided for the prospective supervisors to help determine their own objectives, decide upon their own activities, and to participate in the evaluation of their outcomes.* In most institutions throughout the country courses in supervision are planned entirely by the professors of education assigned to the teaching of such courses. The professors may spend a considerable amount of time discussing the importance of cooperative planning, but not many realize the importance of actually providing prospective supervisors with such experience.

Indications of Quality

Scientific evidence to show effects of the Georgia program of supervision on the quality of living is not yet available. However, judgments based on evidence observed by state supervisors and consultants from the colleges supplemented by information from teachers, children, administrators, and parents seem to indicate the quality of education in supervised schools is better than that provided for children in unsupervised schools.

A summary of judgments from these sources, comparing supervised and unsupervised schools, is as follows:

Supervised schools on the average show that children have more ability in the use of skills such as reading, arithmetic, spelling, and English. Results of standard tests substantiate this opinion.

Children are better able to solve problems cooperatively.

They show more use of creative abilities.

There are more adjustments to individual differences.

More classrooms are laboratories for learning rather than sitting rooms for mere recitation of facts.

Findings for the Future

How can further achievements be made is a question to which answers are always being sought. Though the Georgia people are proud of their program for educating supervisors, improvements need to be made. At meetings of the advisory committee, workshop and individual conferences, through correspondence, and informal discussions attempts have been made to get suggestions for improving the program. Here are a few of the most recent recommendations.

► *More opportunities to observe and participate in good children's schools should be provided for the prospective supervisors before they begin their supervision internship.*

Though all supervisors have some opportunities to observe in schools for children in the early part of their training, this need undoubtedly has not been adequately met. They ask for more opportunities to observe good teaching.

The prospective supervisors begin their specialized education in the summer when the opportunities for seeing or helping children in normal school situations are somewhat limited, but more could probably be provided. Perhaps a children's school might be organized for this special purpose. The program for some of the supervisors should probably begin in the Spring when opportunities for observation of children and practice teaching are more plentiful.

Provision for such opportunities is especially important to round out a prospective supervisor's range of experience from primary through high school. One person suggested that some experience in teaching be provided during the year of internship. Many prospective supervisors have not had experience in both elementary and secondary teaching before they enter the supervisory program. As supervisors they must be prepared to give help to both elementary and secondary teachers.

► *More attention should be paid to providing opportunities to study social issues.* Although a part of each summer is usually spent in the sharing of information and reading about current problems, in the opinion of some supervisors this area of experience should be developed more fully.

One handicap to providing such experiences has been the dearth of available resource people. Many professors of social studies do fairly well in helping students study the past, but not many contribute much to an analysis of present-day problems in light of the past.

Supervisors want more help in the study of such problems as: What are the fundamental differences between the various political and economic theories? What are the basic considerations in the development of a sound agricultural economy? What is the relation of sound agricultural economy to a well-balanced national economy? What are the basic conflicts, if any, between capital and labor? What is the position of agriculture in the total scene? How can international understanding be promoted? How can local and state governments be improved?

► *More specialized help in science is needed.* Many of the opportunities in science provided by the colleges and the University are designed to help prospective scientists, not teachers or their supervisors. However, improvement in this area in Georgia is now under way.

Prospective supervisors spend some time each year studying science, even though the help from science specialists has been limited. Only a few of the available science specialists know the needs of teachers. It is hoped that future experiences for supervisors in the science area will contribute more significantly toward objectives such as: (1) To help children develop more skill in the use of the scientific method in the solution of everyday problems. (2) To help children approach problems with an open mind free of superstitions. (3) To help children become acquainted with many living things, their habits and activities, so that they may see their own dependence upon living things.

To help teachers in the accomplishment of objectives such as these, it is important that they know how to help answer questions that children often ask: What makes iron rust? How can we protect the iron in our farm machinery? Why does a candle go out? What causes rain? Why can't scientists make rain when we need it? What makes bread mold?

► *More study of counties to which the interns will go before they begin work.* "I wish prospective supervisors could make a more concentrated study of the counties to which they will go before they actually begin work there," said one of the interns. "If I had known

more about the needs of the county to which I was going while I was studying, I could have centered more attention on getting better prepared for those specific needs."

Though many supervisors are well acquainted with the counties in which they will work, all supervisors would benefit from more systematic study of needs in advance of their initial participation. It is doubtful, however, that such studies could be made very meaningful before the supervisors are actually established.

A good survey, for example, requires the assistance of all the personnel involved. Teachers, parents, and children should have a part in making the study. This cannot be done very well during the summer, but some visits should be made to the counties where the supervisors will work to get as much orientation as possible. Many supervisors have this orientation before they enter the program because they were selected for supervision from the staff of the counties where they taught.

► *Keeping the program from becoming a "closed corporation" is important.* One of the consultants said, "Perhaps the second summer should be spent somewhere other than in Georgia. Some supervisors would be helped by studying at other institutions in other states. Or perhaps a leave of absence for a quarter during the second year of internship might be spent visiting schools in other sections of the country. It is necessary to broaden the base of experience for supervisors. Providing experiences outside the state should help to prevent too much inbreeding of Georgia ideas."

One of the problems in the Georgia program is undoubtedly that of keeping it from becoming a "closed corporation." Because it has been so difficult to get the kinds of experiences in other states which Georgia considers important in the training of supervisors, there may be a tendency to limit experiences to what Georgia can do. However, the advisory committee has tried to keep this from happening.

There is no one program even though many of the common problems are solved cooperatively. Each supervisor's needs are studied and the program is planned accordingly. Some have had supervisory training in other institutions before they apply for entrance into the Georgia program and the kinds of experiences they have had are taken into account in planning further study.

A recent step which should help prevent too much inbreeding of Georgia ideas has been the employment of a consultant from another state. The director of the program is a Georgian, but her new assistant is a person who has demonstrated successful leadership in another state.

The On-Going Program Improves

Critical analysis of the program is continually underway. Pooling judgments is one method most commonly used. Scientific studies are also underway. One study is investigating some of the effects of supervision on the quality of living of the children; and another is concerned with the changes taking place in the supervisors themselves. Improvements are made as new needs are seen and as new light helps to show better ways of accomplishing objectives.

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