

In-Service Education of Supervisors

SUPERVISORS are challenged today as never before to continue their study on the job. The many demands for rapid changes in the instructional program have brought about this challenge. New insights as to how learning occurs, new discoveries in the content fields, developments in research methodology and numerous proposals for curriculum change make such adjustments mandatory. Supervisors, therefore, must seek opportunities to increase their understandings and improve their skills in providing leadership toward a more effective instructional program.

What are some ways in which supervisors can improve their skills and understandings through in-service education? This article contains some examples of opportunities provided for the in-service education of supervisors in Georgia.

Internship

The internship is one kind of learning opportunity provided for supervisors in service. During the period of the internship the supervisor is employed as a full-time supervisor in a school system. An advisor from the state university is assigned to work with each supervisor for the period of the internship. The advisor visits the supervisor at least three times during the school year and assists him in planning and evaluating his supervisory activities.

The visits to the supervisor are cooperatively planned, as to time and purpose, by the supervisor and the advisor. The advisor gives help with the problems about which the supervisor is concerned. The supervisor participates in a program of individual instruction based on the real problems which he encounters.

During each visit to the supervisor, the advisor spends some time in reading and discussing the supervisor's diary or daily log, and other materials prepared by the supervisor, and discussing activities in which the supervisor has participated or plans to participate. The visits help the supervisor to determine progress that he is making toward improving his needed skills and understandings. Other activities are planned for the supervisor in terms of his needs. He may be advised to visit a supervisor in a nearby system, visit schools in which experimentation is being carried on, confer with a particular person, or read certain professional material. The visits enable the supervisor to identify other learning opportunities he should seek following the internship.

Seminars in Geographical Areas

For the past three years the University of Georgia has offered seminars for experienced supervisors in certain geographical areas of the state. The supervisors requested the seminars and assumed responsibility for making the

necessary arrangements regarding place of meeting, time and length of each session. Members of the seminar and a staff member from the University met once a month for a six-hour session.

The seminar was planned on the assumption that members of the seminar have familiarity with basic principles of supervision, of teaching and learning, and that supervisors feel fairly "comfortable" in applying these principles. The specific purpose of the seminar was to assist supervisors in "raising their sights and undergirding their understandings" regarding these basic principles.

It was the belief of the staff members in supervision that one way to help supervisors "raise their sights and undergird their understandings" was to help them gain better understanding of *themselves* and the *people* with whom they work. It was further believed that as supervisors gain such understandings, their work as supervisors will be affected positively.

In terms of these beliefs, the seminars were organized to provide opportunities for individual investigation of one or more specific *personal* problems and concentrated group study of selected theories which would assist with a better understanding of the personal problem selected.

As a means of helping individuals in the identification of personal problems, the following questions were presented to the members of the seminar:

1. What are some of the tensions or pressures that come from your job? For example, are you frustrated by lack of time, information, know-how or skill?

2. What are some of the tensions or pressures that you place on yourself? For example, do you want to be the kind of super-

visor that Mr. X is? Do you wish that you were different in disposition, attitudes, values and general appearance?

3. What are some of the tensions or pressures that others cause? For example, does the superintendent or principal expect you to do the "impossible"? Does your family make demands that you can't meet? Does it bother you when *everyone* is not enthusiastic about and accepting of your ideas?

4. What are some of the tensions or pressures that come from your relationships with others—administrators, teachers, parents, children, other supervisors?

5. What are other pressures or tensions that you have as a supervisor? or as a person?

Each member of the group identified one or more specific pressures or tension points relating to his own behavior which he wished to "ease" during the year. Some tensions identified were ones to be investigated in an individual's private world. Some tensions were presented to members of the group for their help.

Sessions of the seminar were devoted to a study of specific topics, such as the nature and meaning of perception and learning, beliefs, values, needs, self-concept, experience, threat and the implications of these for education and, more specifically, supervision. As each of the areas was explored, members of the seminar investigated readings in philosophy, psychology, social psychology, anthropology, sociology, as well as educational literature, and assumed responsibility for sharing their readings with members of the group. Other staff members from the University, representing various disciplines, met with the group frequently to assist in the "raising of sights and undergirding of understandings."

Each six-hour session consisted of three blocks of time. The first block, approximately three hours, was referred

to as the *theory session*. During this block, the major topic for study provided a basis for discussion. The second block of time was devoted to discussion of the *personal* problem. The remaining time was spent in testing ideas for action programs in the participant's back-home situation.

Weekend Seminars

A weekend seminar, consisting of five weekend sessions, was offered during 1960-61 to supervisors at an advanced graduate level at the University of Georgia. Each session consisted of approximately 10 hours of work. The sessions began on Friday evening and ended on Saturday afternoon. The purpose of this seminar was to provide an opportunity for supervisors to identify, describe and investigate causes of problems in supervision and to study research related to problems identified. Each member of the seminar kept a written account of his problem. Each account contained a statement of the problem, description of significant events that demonstrated the problem, and the supervisor's role in the problem situation — his behavior, feelings, relationships, and additional outside factors affecting the problem. These descriptions evolved into case studies in supervision which were used as a basis for discussion in the seminar.

A second purpose of the seminar was to provide an opportunity for supervisors to increase their knowledge and skills in writing for professional journals. Each member of the seminar prepared an article for a professional journal. Time was spent in the seminar for members to edit materials. Many of these articles were submitted and accepted for publication in state and national journals.

A second weekend seminar being offered during 1961-62 is the seminar in group development. This seminar is planned for persons interested in further training in group leadership. Major emphasis is given to helping individuals increase sensitivity, awareness and understanding of self and others in groups; improve behavioral skills in interpersonal relations, group leadership and membership roles; and to improve methods used in planning and conducting conferences and educational programs.

Special attention is given to helping groups analyze and experiment with their own group processes. Opportunities are provided for members to practice behaving skillfully in a variety of common and difficult interpersonal and group situations.

Institutes

A six-week Mathematics Institute for supervisors was held at the University of Georgia during the 1961 summer session. The institute was cooperatively sponsored by the University of Georgia and the State Department of Education and staffed by faculty members from the Mathematics Department and the College of Education of the University of Georgia. The purpose of the institute was to help supervisors become more literate in mathematics and to help them provide leadership in the field of mathematics education. A second purpose of the institute was to build readiness for a new state guide in mathematics which will be ready for trial this fall. As a follow-up of the institute, each participant will conduct a two-week workshop in mathematics during 1961-62, in his local system, and will give leadership to a "pilot school" in the "try-out" of the new state guide in mathematics.

A Curriculum Research Institute was conducted during the 1961 summer session. This institute was planned for experienced supervisors at the advanced graduate level. The purposes of the institute were to help curriculum workers identify and examine curriculum areas in need of study, analyze various approaches to curriculum planning, curriculum designs, and teaching procedures. Enrollees in the institute developed outlines for research projects to be carried out during 1961-62. These students will enroll in appropriate field courses and have the assistance of members of the faculty of the College of Education as plans are executed.

Additional supervisors enroll in regular college courses to strengthen their professional competencies. They enroll in local workshops with teachers to study problems of the local system, and they carry on individual research activities. These are only a few of the ways in which the supervisor can strengthen his own professional work through participation in an in-service program planned to meet his needs.

The illustrations given thus far are descriptions of learning opportunities for supervisors in service, for which college credit is given. Supervisors avail themselves of many other opportunities to continue their professional growth for which college credit is not earned. The following are examples of such programs.

Supervisors meet regularly in their district to study problems of common concern. Principals, superintendents and teachers often meet with them to assist in the study of selected problems.

Some of the most important opportunities for the supervisor to grow professionally on the job are those that exist in the local school system. Classroom

teachers, principals, superintendents, other school personnel as well as lay persons have much to contribute to the continuous education of the supervisor. As these persons identify their problems and plan cooperatively for ways of working toward the solution of these problems, the supervisor gives and receives help.

Experimental programs at the local level afford opportunities for in-service education of supervisors. During 1961-62 thirty-nine school systems in Georgia are experimental centers for nongraded programs. In each of these systems the supervisor is involved in helping a school faculty to study and develop plans for initiating a nongraded program.

Supervisors utilize opportunities to participate in state and national conferences as in-service education programs. Supervisors are often involved in helping to develop guides in the various curriculum areas. In many cases, they may assume major leadership responsibility for the project.

Finding time and maintaining a schedule for professional reading and study are highly essential for the supervisor's growth on the job. Keeping informed of new developments through professional reading is a *must* for the supervisor.

Certain conditions must exist for the development of an effective in-service education program for supervisors. The first and perhaps most important condition is that the supervisor has a zest for knowledge and seeks opportunities for learning on the job.

Time must be provided for the supervisor to participate in in-service education programs. The local administration must recognize the importance of the supervisor's participation in these activities and willingly release him for this purpose.

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