

SUPERVISION in Rural Schools

A Report on Beliefs and Practices

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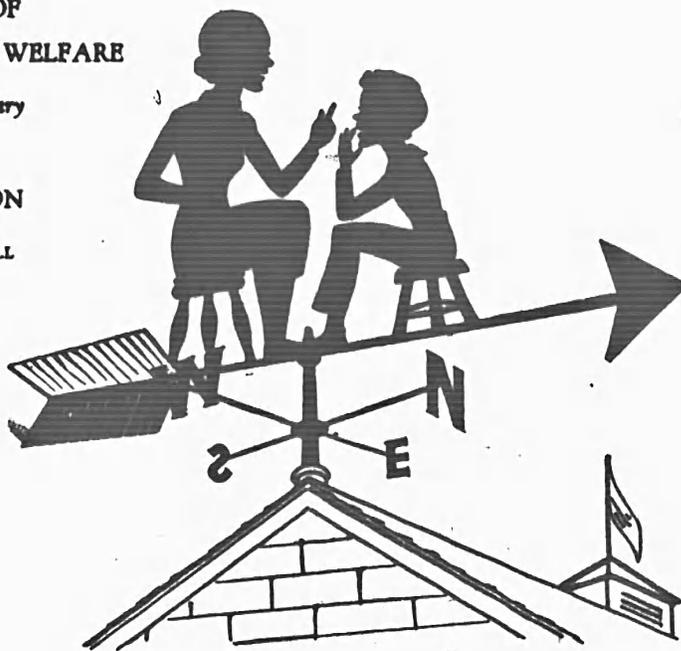
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FOREWORD

MANY PEOPLE are helping to improve the quality of rural education in the United States in order to provide better education for country children and youth. This publication reports the beliefs of many educators about the kind of supervision or leadership that is most effective, the guiding principles which they consider most important, and some practices which illustrate the principles. It also includes some reports on ways used to appraise the effectiveness of supervision.

The appreciation of the Office of Education is gratefully extended to the many supervisors, principals, superintendents, classroom teachers, college professors, and State department of education consultants who helped to make this study possible.

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I

What Is Good Supervision?

Background

The function of supervision is to help schools do their work better. Systematic appraisal of objectives and procedures in supervision is continually pointing the way to more effective methods of accomplishing this purpose. The typical supervisor used to spend much time rating teachers, reporting their strengths and weaknesses, and trying to persuade or coerce them into following certain prescribed standards. Because educators have become dissatisfied with the outcomes of this kind of supervision, many of them are seeking more effective ways of bringing about improvement in supervisory practices. Although the educators who participated in this study expressed many differences of opinion, most of them believe that good school supervision is a resource, consultant, and leadership service that schools use to help them provide better learning situations for children and adults in their communities. The general aim of education, they agree, is the development of intelligent, responsible citizens concerned about the welfare of all people. Good supervision furthers progress toward this end. It may be provided by a principal, a superintendent, a supervisor,¹ or any other person who accepts responsibility for the improvement of instruction.

This publication reports the beliefs of many educators about supervision, the principles upon which there is most agreement, and some

¹The word "supervisor" refers to any person who has leadership responsibility to improve instruction. Other titles are: consultant, helping teacher, supervising teacher, director of instruction, curriculum coordinator, specialist, and supervising principal. In some rural areas, the superintendent is the only supervisor.

practices in rural school supervision that illustrate the principles. It also includes some reports on ways to appraise the effectiveness of supervision.

How Information Was Secured

Many educators in the United States have contributed to this bulletin: teachers, supervisors, principals, college teachers, State department consultants, county and rural area superintendents, deans of education, and specialists in the Office of Education. Through correspondence, work conferences, individual interviews, observing supervisors at work, research studies, and committee work they have answered the questions: What is good supervision? What are the guiding principles? What are some of the best supervisory practices in rural areas? How can the effectiveness of supervision be appraised?

To begin this search for information, the writer took advantage of many opportunities to learn what supervisors believed to be good supervision. After taking part in many discussions and serving as consultant in many work conferences she prepared some statements on supervision which appeared to be in harmony with the major beliefs of the educational leaders with whom she had been working. These statements were discussed with a number of educational leadership groups.¹ See appendix, "What Is Good Supervision?"

Through individual conferences and correspondence the writer asked selected persons to comment on the statements. These persons

¹ Connecticut Supervisors' Association; Wisconsin Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; Florida County School Supervisors' Association; a South Carolina workshop on supervision; a Texas workshop on supervision; National Conference of County and Rural Area Superintendents; a child study workshop at University of Maryland; West Virginia Supervisors' Association; a workshop for rural teachers at University of Minnesota; Cooperative Project on Educational Administration in Tennessee and West Virginia; Tennessee Supervising Teachers' Association; a University of North Carolina workshop on supervision; work conferences for county school superintendents in Kansas; New Jersey Elementary School Workshop; Michigan State Helping Teacher Workshop; Georgia Supervisors' Association; a South Dakota county school superintendents' conference; a conference of county school superintendents in North Dakota; Alabama Supervisors' Association; Southern States Work Conference; Iowa County School Supervisors' Work Conference; a University of Kentucky workshop on leadership; principals' study meetings in Prince Georges County and Howard County, Maryland; a State conference of county school superintendents in Pennsylvania; Virginia Supervisors' Association; a conference of supervisors in Puerto Rico; Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; and the Department of Rural Education of the National Educational Association.

included at least one consultant in each State department of education, authors of recent books, college professors, county and rural- area superintendents, county-school supervisors, and principals in 21 States.⁹

A few county supervisors obtained opinions on the statements from about 150 classroom teachers in Wisconsin, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey, and West Virginia.

An Office advisory committee made up of specialists in elementary, secondary, higher, and vocational education, school administration, guidance, and library services also made suggestions.

Supervision in Rural Schools reports the beliefs on supervision of many educational leaders throughout the United States, but it is not intended to speak for all supervisors. It represents a consensus of opinions, including major differences in beliefs, of several hundred educators who are active in the organizations and groups referred to earlier and of consultants in State departments of education. A summary of their answers to two questions is reported in this chapter: What is good supervision? What are the guiding principles?

Another way used to get information for this study was to invite several rural supervisors, principals, and State department consultants in different sections of the United States to submit descriptions of some of their practices in supervision. Practices described by the participants in the study and some of those observed by the writer are reported in chapter II. They illustrate the principles upon which there is most agreement. Descriptions of ways used to appraise supervision are reported in chapter III.

Guiding Principles

Good supervision is a resource, consultant, and leadership service which helps schools do their work better. The specific ways in which this service is provided vary widely, depending on the particular skills and competencies of the supervisors, the needs of the situation, and the individual differences of the people with whom the supervisors work. However, there is considerable agreement on the guiding principles of supervision. Most of the educators participating in this study say that

⁹ Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

supervision is most effective in helping to provide better learning situations for pupils:

1. When it contributes significantly to the solution of problems considered important by the teachers as well as the supervisors
2. When the teachers help decide what the supervisory service should be
3. When supervision is successful in providing an atmosphere of acceptance, support, and understanding, and
4. When supervision fosters a scientific approach to a study of problems.

Application of Principles

The most effective supervisor, many educators believe, does not prescribe what teachers should do. The authority which he accepts as most useful is the one he earns because people value what he does to help them do a better job. He may tell teachers what he thinks would help solve a problem, but he doesn't expect them to follow his advice unless they believe he is right. Sometimes he and the teachers study the facts related to a problem, and together they decide on action, each accepting responsibilities for getting a job done.

Several reports adapted from records of supervisors help to illustrate the kind of supervision which many of the participants believe most useful in improving teaching practices.

For several months, the teachers in the Stoney Creek School had been studying ways of using a variety of materials on a wide range of reading levels so as to meet individual differences of their pupils and to provide a richer environment for learning. Miss J., the supervisor, had been helping the teachers study the problems involved. The study included selection of new social studies textbooks. The advantages and disadvantages of using several different books were discussed. Some teachers thought they could make better adjustment to individual differences if a few copies of each of three or four texts could be made available. Others preferred using one text for the whole class.

It was not possible for Miss J. to attend all of the meetings of this study group, but she accepted the invitation to participate when the teachers asked her to help them choose a new series of social studies books. It appeared now that the idea of choosing several different books instead of one had been discarded. The teacher chairman had asked her to give the staff her

appraisal of each of three series which they were considering and to tell them which one she liked best.

Miss J. agreed to do this and told the staff what she knew about the three series which they were considering. As Miss J. concluded her appraisal, she said, "It appears that you have decided to choose just one book. I recall that at one time you talked about selecting 3 or 4 texts instead of 35 copies of the same book."

Several of the teachers looked puzzled, but one of them said, "We talked about that, but we didn't think the administration would give us permission to order several different texts, so we gave it up."

Miss J. responded that she was not sure either, but if the teachers thought the idea worth considering, she would be glad to find out what the superintendent thought about it.

The example illustrates supervision as a service centered on a problem of concern to the teachers and the supervisor. The supervisor was a resource member of the group, helping to supply the facts and to study them. All who were involved had a part in deciding action. The supervisor helped find better ways of doing things and accepted responsibility for doing some of the work. She also helped to provide an atmosphere of support and understanding.

Here is another example of supervision as a service based on the problems of interest to teachers. Notice especially what the supervisor did to become better informed about a situation, what she did to help one teacher gain self-confidence, and in another school how she provided information. The report is an adaptation of a diary written by a county supervisor.

The primary teacher in the Brownsville School asked for help in teaching reading. The second- and third-graders were retarded in reading, she told me. I wondered if the children were actually reading on a lower level than they should be or whether the teacher was expecting all children to reach the same standard. In my early days of supervision, I would have immediately offered a remedy for a problem like this, but I now believe that a supervisor can often provide better help if she isn't too quick to give advice. Until I could get more facts, I decided I could contribute most to the teaching of reading in this situation by helping the teacher release the pressure on herself.

"Well, maybe together we can decide on something that might help," I said. "May I observe the children while you go on with your work? If I get clues, I will be glad to tell you what I think." The teacher gave me

permission to do this and asked if I would pay particular attention to Donald, Pete, and Susie.

I spent the next 40 minutes observing the children. It seemed to me they were getting along very well. Later, when the teacher and I found time to talk, it wasn't necessary for me to say much. She knew quite a bit about the children, and her plans for helping them seemed to be well worked out. As we talked she relaxed and appeared to lose much of her nervous tension. Discussing her problems seemed to give her new confidence in herself. I told her I thought the children were doing as well as we could expect them to do and that she seemed to be doing as much as could be expected of her. Although I didn't give this teacher any ideas about teaching reading, I felt that I had made an important contribution to the teaching of reading that day. I had helped to relieve an anxious teacher of some of her tension. I think this helped her remove some of the pressure she was putting on the children. "Listening" is very often an important supervisory activity. In my opinion, it was especially useful today.

Next, I visited the upper-grade children in Brownsville. They were studying their local water problem. The community was having difficulty getting water that was safe for drinking. The teacher had asked me to help study their situation. I brought with me some reference material on purification of water. I told the children about the methods of purifying water in the Henson station and suggested that they might want to visit it. Some of the children thought that their community might have a purifying station some day.

I was pleased to give the teacher and children encouragement about using the problem-solving approach in finding answers to questions of importance to them in their community. During a later visit to this school, I heard the children report on their findings about the water situation and what the community might do to provide a safer supply of water. It was good to learn that several members of the community had also helped in this study. Children, parents, the teacher, and the supervisor are learning to use a scientific approach to a study of problems.

Agreement on Principles Not Complete

Although most of the participants in the study agree on the guiding principles of supervision, some had reservations and questions.

Is supervision always most effective when it contributes to the solution of problems or accomplishment of goals that are recognized as important by the teachers?

Not all of the participants in the study believe that the answer is

"yes." Some of them doubt, for example, whether all teachers know they have problems that are important in relation to the improvement of education for their pupils. Furthermore, some teachers may not want to discuss them with supervisors. Some participants believe that supervisors cannot afford to wait for such teachers to recognize problems. The principle cannot be applied in all situations, they say.

Some participants are also troubled about expecting the teacher to help decide what the supervisor should do. "Should we just wait until teachers ask us to visit schools? If we visit schools only on invitation, what about the people who may need help but never request it?" they ask. One supervisor answers questions like these in this way:

Effective supervision is not a "waiting-to-be invited" kind of process. Both teachers and supervisors should have a part in deciding what needs to be done and why. The best results usually come when everyone involved helps decide what problems need study and what the action should be. It is not a responsibility to be taken by either the supervisor or the teacher alone.

In an earlier illustration, the teacher expressed concern about her retarded readers. The supervisor asked if she might observe the children for a while, saying that maybe together they could decide on something that might help. The help the supervisor gave was in relation to the teacher's problems. She learned about them by listening to the teacher's questions. The teacher and the supervisor discussed the situation together. In effective supervision, neither the supervisor nor the teacher has all of the "say so."

Another example may help to clarify the idea of supervision as a service in cooperative efforts to solve problems of concern to teachers. In a county teachers' meeting the supervisor said, "At the last planning committee meeting, we studied the suggestions that you submitted on the problems of teaching reading. Since then you have had meetings with your principal to consider the recommendations made by the planning committee. I don't know how you feel, but after attending many of these meetings I am encouraged by what's happening: I should like to visit the classrooms next month to give whatever help I can, and to keep myself informed about our practices in teaching reading. I've written a tentative schedule for my visits on the board. Will you tell me what you think of it?"

A few of the participants in this study asked questions on the use of the scientific approach in supervision. To one person it seemed unnecessary to discuss it, because the need for using it was obvious. "What other approaches are there?" he asked. Another person thought that the word "scientific" in relation to supervision was unrealistic and that scientific methods could not be used in the solution of everyday problems. One person said that the words "scientific method" should be reserved for use in studies of problems where "pretty firm data" could be found to support what was said. In general, however, the participants seem to agree that the scientific approach to problems is possible and appropriate in supervision. Action based on adequate information is always important, they said. Effective supervisors act on the basis of adequate data as much as possible. On the other hand, this does not mean that every person needs to go through all the steps of the scientific method each time he is confronted with a problem. Among other things, the extent of exploration necessary will depend on the need, the possibilities, and the quality and kinds of answers already available.

A few of the participants in the study questioned the emphasis on the principle of providing an atmosphere of support and acceptance. "Shouldn't the leader do more than provide an atmosphere of euphoria?" asked one of them. "Do you mean that it is an achievement when people have not been put on the defensive?" asked another. One person questioned the use of such statements in the supervisor's reports as: "I will be glad to help." "I don't think I have any ideas at the moment." "If you think of ways I can help . . ." In his opinion, statements like these tend to make supervision purposeless and superficial. "They are the results of trying to supervise without a hint of dictation or domination," he said.

More discussion of the activities involved in providing an atmosphere of support and acceptance in supervision may be necessary to insure accurate reporting. However, only a few of the participants commented unfavorably on this principle. The others apparently accepted it. But the strongest supporters appear to agree that "avoidance of putting people on the defensive" is one of the elements that should be considered in providing a climate of acceptance and support. It should also be noted however, that it may be the extent to which people are put on the defensive that makes the difference.

Discussion of controversial issues should be encouraged, but when people are on the defensive to the extent that self-protection seems paramount, they often become unable to look at facts or to accept new suggestions for thinking and action. In such instances, energy which might otherwise be used for constructive action is often dissipated. This is the opinion expressed by some of the supporters of the principle that supervision is most effective when it helps people experience feelings of worth, support, and understanding.

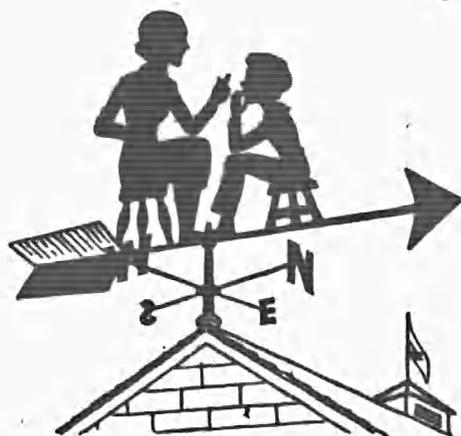
Some people question the use of the word "supervisor." They believe that consultant, resource person, or coordinator is more in keeping with the kind of assistance which schools should get. Some, on the other hand, believe that changing the name is not nearly as important as providing the kind of service which is in harmony with good principles.

In the opinion of some, the terms "supervisor" and "consultant" should not be used synonymously because supervisors, they believe, should be given more power to direct teachers than is generally given to consultants. One part of the supervisor's task is to provide consultant service, but this is only part of the job of the participants, they say.

Who does the supervising? This is another question which was asked by some of the participants. Although many of the ideas and examples included in this study have been slanted toward the work of the general supervisor, much of the kind of leadership service discussed is often provided by principals, superintendents, special supervisors, and teachers. Who provides the supervision depends very much on the competencies of the personnel available and the kind of assistance that is needed.

Summary

Though they are not in complete agreement, most of the participants in this study believe that good supervision is a resource, consultant, and leadership service which contributes significantly to the solution of problems which teachers consider important. It is most effective when teachers have a part in deciding what the supervisor should do; when it provides an atmosphere of acceptance, support, and understanding; and when a scientific approach to a study of problems is used.



II

Supervisors at Work

SUPERVISORS work in classrooms, in staff meetings, in group conferences, in the office, in workshops, in the community, and in State and national organizations. They work with the teachers, administrators, supervisors, lay citizens, and others to help improve learning experiences for children and adults. Among their activities are observing and participating in classroom activities; serving as consultant, participant, or discussion leader in meetings; helping teachers understand children; interpreting and using the findings of research on human development and the learning process; participating in action research studies; helping to prepare curriculum guides; using resources of community agencies for curriculum enrichment; locating and procuring services of public and private agencies concerned with the welfare of children and growth; helping schools pioneer in the use of materials and methods; helping schools select and use teaching materials; helping to interpret schools to the public; helping to involve lay citizens in school improvement; directing work conferences; and helping to appraise educational progress.

The ways in which supervisors perform their tasks in this variety of activities depend largely upon their fundamental beliefs, their competencies, and the demands of the situations in which they work. The extent to which supervisory practices are in harmony with the principles on which there is the most agreement in this study is not easily determined. In this chapter an attempt is made, however, to report examples which illustrate the principles of good supervision discussed in chapter I.

The following descriptions are adaptations of reports submitted by rural supervisors from different sections of the United States and of experiences and observations of the writer. These reports were selected because they were considered most representative of the material available.

For obvious reasons, the names of the persons and places and some of the details have been changed to avoid identification. The reports include examples from a variety of situations in which supervisors work. The readers are encouraged to examine the activities described in the light of principles of supervision named earlier.

Helping in the Classroom

The typical supervisor used to spend much time in observing teachers in the classroom, preparing evaluation reports on what he observed, and pointing out the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. According to the opinions of most of the participants in this study, this kind of supervision is not very effective in improving practices in the classroom. They believe that the most effective supervisor is a cooperating participant in the classroom. He spends some time in observing pupils and teachers at work, but he is also active in helping them find answers to their questions. At times he helps the teacher and the pupils plan a unit of work, or he takes part in a discussion, or he helps appraise results. However, whatever he does in the classrooms is determined in cooperation with the teachers and the administrators.

The following illustrations are taken from Carrie Smith's diary.

September 13: The principals at their meeting last week helped me make a tentative plan for visiting schools. They named some of the problems which were disturbing them. Some of them had made suggestions about the ways in which they wanted me to help.

When I arrived at the Smithville 2-teacher school, I found the children in the upper grades checking plans for the week's work. Miss Brooks, who was also the principal, said she wanted me to know what they were doing and asked Bob to tell me about their plans. The plans for today included committee work on the study of Mexico; individual practice on arithmetic skills; learning how to write a report; discussion of books they enjoyed

most; singing; art activities; making a magnet; and physical education activities.

When the children began their committee work, Miss Brooks asked me if I would visit as many groups as I could and to give them any suggestions that I thought would help. She also asked me if I would give her suggestions about things she could do to help improve her work with the pupils in the school.

The food committee wanted to try grinding corn by pounding it on a large stone like the one they had seen in one of their books on Mexico. I suggested that the person in charge of the museum in the nearby town might help them. A few of the children had been in the museum and said they had seen a Mexican exhibit.

The committee studying customs had difficulty finding books which would answer their questions. Miss Brooks asked Pedro if he thought his mother would help them. (She was born in Mexico.) He agreed to ask her.

While the committees were at work, Miss Brooks and I found a little time to talk. She asked me what I thought about their unit on Mexico. What did I think should be accomplished through it? I told her I could probably do a better job of answering her question if she would tell me first about her own hopes. She named such things as better understanding of our neighbors, improved study habits, improved reading skills, and improved cooperation. I told Miss Brooks that I would have a hard time adding to her list. However, another accomplishment that I would be expecting was development of skills in analytical thinking, and I referred to the method of studying Mexico as an example. Most of the pupils, I said, seemed to understand the major purpose of their study. They were trying to find out how Mexico had contributed to the living of the people in their community. They were collecting facts to help accomplish their purpose. I anticipated that their study would increase their understanding about contributions from Mexico and thus help facilitate cooperation between us and our Mexican neighbors.

When I left the room, the children were putting aside their materials about Mexico and were getting ready for individual practice in arithmetic skills. I told Miss Brooks I had enjoyed being with her and congratulated her on her skill in helping each child find a place for himself where he could make contributions that had meaning to him and to the group.

Miss Brooks seemed to appreciate this statement. She was just learning how to make better adjustments to individual differences, she said, and so words of encouragement helped.

I spent the next hour in the primary room talking with Miss Beach about teaching reading. While the children were busy painting pictures, model-

ing clay, looking at picture books, and reading to themselves, Miss Beach and I talked about teaching reading. She asked many questions. What is the best way to teach phonics? Do you think we should make experience charts in the second grade? Do you think my second-graders should be learning to use cursive writing or will this interfere with their reading? I referred to some of the research findings about reading and told her as much as I could in the brief time we had. We didn't have much time to talk, however, so I agreed to return after school to continue our discussion. Before leaving the building, I stopped to tell the principal about our plans.

September 16: There are times in a supervisor's life when she is not able to give much on-the-spot assistance even if the teachers seem anxious to get help. The best she can hope for is that they will not be put on the defensive because of something she says and thus make learning better ways more difficult. This is especially true if teachers have not had many opportunities to study child development and how learning takes place. This was the kind of situation in which I found myself in the Banks School today. A way may be found to help these teachers find better answers to their questions, but the best course of action today, I thought, was to do what I could to increase my own understanding of the situation.

When I came into the first-grade room, 17 children were at the board making numbers; the other 10 children were in their seats ready to begin a reading lesson. The teacher pointed to the group seated and said, "These are my repeaters." To divert the teacher's attention into something more pleasant, I commented on the attractive room and asked the children and the teacher if they had something interesting to tell me. They showed me some pictures they were drawing. The teacher then asked the children if they would like to sing a song. The teacher encouraged them to sing with loud and strained voices. She was probably doing the best she knew how to do. I hope I didn't look too distressed.

The second- and third-grade teacher, who is also the principal, asked for help in arranging her room and getting more bulletin board space. There are blackboards on three walls. I thought one of them might be used as a bulletin board. She didn't agree. She needed all the blackboard space she could get, she said. The blackboards were covered with seat work directions and arithmetic problems. Above the blackboards were borders of tulips which the children had apparently cut out and colored according to the teacher's directions. I saw no way to provide the kind of help the principal or the other teachers wanted today. I thanked them for the opportunity to visit and went on my way. As soon as possible, I will talk with them about joining a child study group. I believe that systematic help in studying children over a period of time will help these teachers provide better learning experiences for their children.

Helping in a Staff Meeting

As was stated earlier, the supervisor may be a principal, a superintendent, or a person who has the title "supervisor." In some situations, several supervisors may be participating. In the following example, the principal, Mr. Black, is assuming major leadership. The general supervisor, Miss James, attends the first meeting of the staff to become acquainted with the situation and to find her role in the program.

On a Tuesday afternoon in October, the six members of the staff of Calkins Community School had one of their regular meetings. At the beginning of the meeting, Mr. Black asked the new teachers how they were getting along.

"If I could find some interesting readers easy enough for a couple of my third-graders, I think I could do better," said Miss Church.

"I presume you want them for John and Henry," said Miss Wells. "As you know, they were in my room last year. I think I put the lists of the books they read last year in their folders. Have you seen them?"

"No, I'm afraid I haven't looked, but I will," said Miss Church.

"I have some new books in my room," said Miss Wells. "Some of them are first- and a second-grade level books, but they are not labeled. Why don't you come in and look them over?"

"I hope we have been doing everything we can for John and Henry," said Mr. Black. "We have been studying their needs and abilities since they started to school, but I am not sure how well we have succeeded."

"What about the newsprint for reading charts?" inquired Miss Howard, the other new teacher. "Has it arrived?"

"Oh yes," said Mr. Black, "it came this morning."

Mr. Black asked if the group was ready to talk about some of the major projects to be undertaken by the different age groups. "We invited Miss James (the supervisor) to help us with our programs," he began, "so Miss James, will you join us in our discussion?"

"I will be glad to help in any way I can," I said.

"O. K. Let's begin with the first grade. Miss Wright, will you tell us what will be one of the major topics for study in your room?"

"Well, we have been talking about the things we need to know about our school and home. I guess most of what we will do, for a long time anyway, will be to study our immediate surroundings."

In the same way, the other teachers told about the plans under way with their children. Miss James kept a record of the purposes which some of the teachers mentioned as the plans were reported. When the listing of major topics was completed, this is the way it appeared on the board:

First	home and school
Second	our helpers
Third	animals in our community
Fourth	transportation
Fifth	how America was discovered
Sixth	life in other countries

"I would like to ask you what you think about our plans, Miss James?" said Miss Davis.

"They sound all right to me," said Miss James. "I was especially interested in some of the purposes that you mentioned in relation to your plans. May I read the ones I heard to see if I recorded them correctly?"

The rest of the time was spent on a discussion of the school's objectives and how they might be accomplished through the plans which had been outlined. Some of the objectives which the supervisor had recorded were: to help children understand their culture; to improve work study skills; to help children learn problem-solving skills; and to improve reading ability.

At the close of the meeting, several teachers asked if the supervisor would help them find reading materials on a wide range of reading levels on the topics they had chosen for study. She told them she would look for stories in some of the books she had in her office. She agreed to return to the Calkins Community School on October 19.

Helping in a Group Conference

Much of a supervisor's time is spent in group conferences working on problems of common concern. Ethel Peters reports on a conference with first-grade teachers.

Some of the first-grade teachers in the county were not happy about the additional work which their new health cards required. They thought it took too much time to fill in all the information. I invited the teachers to my office to talk about this problem and to discuss next steps in the health program that had been agreed upon earlier.

I suggested that we discuss the purposes, the need, and the value of the record. All of the teachers entered into the discussion, and afterward, almost all of them appeared to feel better about it.

To help the teachers learn how to fill in the information more efficiently, I suggested that we study a copy of the form for a few minutes. I gave each teacher a copy and referred to the manual of suggestions as we discussed the questions that the teachers considered most important.

Then the teachers asked questions and exchanged ideas about ways to help parents get their children ready for school. The group decided to work during the year on a booklet of information and suggestions for parents

of preschool children. All teachers were asked to submit suggestions. We shall meet for the committee's recommendations at a later date. The booklet will be presented to the parents at our clinics next spring. A committee was appointed to gather material for it.

The problem of having children examined was discussed. It was agreed that the best solution might be to ask the county doctor and nurse to visit each school, set up a clinic, and have the children go in for the checkup and vaccination. "I will be glad to work with the doctor," I told them. "I suggest that no child be forced to go."

Helping Teachers Plan With Students

Sara Johnson, the supervisor, had invited to her office all the teachers in Cook County who had asked for help in planning with students. Her role in this meeting was to help teachers understand the purposes of pupil-teaching planning and to discuss ways of planning with pupils. A part of her report about the meeting follows:

"I don't know how to let children in on planning," said Kenneth Tatum, one of the social studies teachers. "I wish you would come into my room and show me how to do it the next time you come to our school."

"That's a big order," I said, "but I will do the best I can the next time I visit your school."

"I suggest that we begin the discussion this afternoon by finding out if we agree on some of the reasons for giving children a part in planning what they are going to do." A pause and a nodding of heads were followed by expressions from some of the teachers. "Sounds O. K." "Let's begin." "Why don't you start us off?"

With much help from me, emphasis was placed on these reasons for helping children get experiences in planning:

1. The ability to plan in an organized way is an important skill for everybody in our country to acquire.
2. Learning how to plan with others so that group projects can be carried out effectively is important.
3. Taking part in planning helps children understand the purposes of the lesson and the ways of carrying them out. This is not usually true if the teacher makes the plans and merely tells the children what to do.
4. Participating in planning provides many opportunities for learning how to think and to act on the basis of facts.

The latter part of the meeting was spent in discussing examples of pupil-teacher planning. Then tentative arrangements were made for me to help in some of the classrooms during the next month.

Working in the Office

Some of the supervisors' time is necessarily spent in the office. The following excerpts from Ethel Peters' report will illustrate some of their activities:

September 16: So much office work had accumulated . . . I worked all day in the office. I answered some letters, checked on the films for Johnson School, talked to the county doctor about our health plans, and did some thinking about the writing lesson that the primary teacher in Johnson School had asked me to teach.

Late this afternoon Mary Cox from the Holt School came in for a conference. She had decided to concentrate on some special reading needs of three mentally retarded children. We talked about materials to use, ways of having them work along with their age group in other things besides reading, and about ways of appraising their progress. We ordered tests which we expected to use to help us learn more about their abilities and achievements. Since Miss Cox is in a very small school (two teachers) and has only 14 children in her room, she is in an ideal situation to carry on a program in which individual differences can be taken into account.

September 24: The representative from C. O. Publishing Co. came in. We discussed his reading program. We are using his material as supplementary material, and he would like to have us use his consultant on October 20. It is doubtful that we can arrange for this, however, as the time is short and we are not yet as familiar with his material as we should be.

Mrs. Patterson, principal of the Box School, came by to get some reading materials for her first-grade teacher and to make final plans to go to Comer with me for the principal's meeting on October 4.

Vera Paulson came by to ask about getting some art materials. Carol Fultz called to ask if I would help her choose some reading aids for her first-grade children.

Helping Teachers Understand Children

Among a supervisor's responsibilities is helping teachers study children. Assistance is provided through child study groups and/or through individual conferences. The following report illustrates a way in which some supervisors in the United States help teachers use a scientific approach to a study of children. Grace Love, supervisor, has recorded some of her experiences.

November 4: I met with the teachers in one of their regular study meetings today. Each teacher had chosen a child for study and had been collecting

as much data about the child as she could find in school records and through home visits. In addition, each teacher had been recording at least one anecdote a day describing exactly what she observed the child doing. These teachers had been trying to learn how to record facts, to write exactly what they saw without recording opinion. At this meeting the teachers were organizing the data about one child as Miss A read her anecdotal record. A part of the information follows:

BEULAH, Grade 5

Physical Area

Age 10
Weight, 90 lbs.
Height, 56 in.

Peer Culture

Beulah, as usual, didn't join her classmates in games today. I tried to get her to play, but she said nobody liked her. She didn't want to play.

Self-Development

Beulah scored grade 6 on the standard reading test. She also scored above average in arithmetic and spelling.

Affectional Area

Beulah said to the teacher this morning, "Mother likes my brother better than me. She gives him whatever he wants."

Socialization

I heard Beulah tell Connie today that her mother said it was wrong to go to the movies.

Self-Adjustment

Nothing recorded.

In typical-organized child study groups, after hearing reports on a child, the teachers at subsequent meetings analyze the information by looking for recurring problems in a child's behavior. They study their findings in relation to scientific facts about child development and try to see causes for the behavior. Increased understanding of causes helps teachers improve their ways of working with them. This was the procedure used in this group.

Near the close of this particular meeting, I complimented the teachers on their progress in using scientific methods to study children. I asked them how they thought they were getting along. The study group leader replied that she thought they were getting along quite well, although she wasn't sure that all of the teachers understood the purpose of collecting and organizing all this information about a child.

These teachers had discussed the purpose of child study when they joined the group. However, I am never surprised when teachers want assurance that they are getting somewhere in child study, for understanding human behavior is usually difficult.

"I shall be glad to tell you how child study helps me," I said. "As we

know, understanding human behavior is not easy even for those who have devoted their lives to a study of it. Without careful and intelligent study most of us are apt to draw conclusions about a child's behavior before we have sufficient data about the child, or before we have enough understanding of the information to know what it means. In child study groups we learn to postpone judgments until we have more basis for making them. This experience has helped me to deal more wisely with children. It has kept me from making as many mistakes as I used to make, and it has helped me to get more insight into the many causes of behavior. It has helped me to find out what the child himself is trying to do, what he is up against, and what I might do to help him. I am becoming better able to center my concern on his problems, hopes, and aspirations. It is helping me to become a more effective teacher."

After I had talked about my experiences for a few minutes, some of the teachers began telling about changes they were making in their teaching. Two of the teachers were still skeptical but the time for this meeting had come to a close. I said I would try to attend their next child study meeting if they wanted me.

Working With an Individual Teacher

Supervisors and principals hold many individual conferences with teachers, administrators, parents, and others. The following example shows how a supervisor and a principal worked with a teacher to find ways of helping a student. Clyde Armstrong, the supervisor, reports as follows:

Mrs. Carrie Winn, one of the high school English teachers in Jordan Valley Consolidated School had talked to me several times about a boy in the ninth grade who had violated all the rules of good conduct. Today, Principal Brown, Mrs. Winn, and I had a long conference trying to decide what our next steps should be. Mrs. Winn, a member of a child study group, had chosen Shelton for special study. She had collected many facts about him. The recurring pattern which was particularly disturbing to Mrs. Winn was "talking back" in a loud voice and refusing to do the things she asked him to do. He was also a poor student, hardly ever doing the assignments and if he did not doing them well.

Mr. Brown, Mrs. Winn, and I knew there were causes for Shelton's behavior and that in some way we must find them before our work with him would be effective. I asked Mrs. Winn to tell us what she had found out about the boy. She reviewed the facts she had collected from the home, school records, and the ones she had reported in her anecdotal record. Mr. Brown complimented Mrs. Winn on the amount of study she had done on

Shelton and asked if she had come to any tentative conclusion on the possible causes of his rebellious behavior.

"Well, as I think about the things he has gone through, I am sure I would act in the same way, but still I don't think I can let things go on like this. What shall I do?"

"Would you think," I said, "that because Shelton has experienced very little feeling of success in his school work that this might be one reason for his being a disturber of the peace in class?"

"Yes, I think so," said Mrs. Winn, "but I don't know what to do about it. I don't know how to help him succeed."

"We don't have evidence that he is receiving affection either at home or at school," said Mr. Brown. "To know that somebody cares about you is quite important in the making of a desirable person. We can be quite sure about this."

Though it was apparent to all of us that helping Shelton would remain a difficult task, we agreed that if we could find ways of helping him to feel he was achieving in school and to give him some assurance that we cared about him, there was some hope. I felt reasonably sure that Mr. Brown and I could improve Shelton's situation if we could help Mrs. Winn to feel easier about her own role. She had apparently become anxious about her own lack of success in dealing with the boy, and until she could become more self-confident she would not be able to work with him without increasing his tension and thus cause him to become more self-defensive.

"It seems to me," I said, "that you have already taken some very important steps to help the boy. You have many facts about him and you know some of the causes for his behavior. Nothing can be more important. I know the picture still looks dark to you but since we can't undo the many unpleasant things that Shelton has already experienced, we can't hope for big improvement no matter what we do. However, all of us realize that knowing the facts and understanding the causes of a person's behavior has in other instances helped us to work more wisely. This should give us hope in helping Shelton with his problems."

"One idea has occurred to me," said Mrs. Winn. "Shelton is interested in automobile mechanics. I understand that he can take a car apart and put it together again and it still runs. If I knew something about cars, perhaps I could help."

It was past time to go home and we had not come to any conclusion about our next steps, but I agreed to return for another conference the following week. In the meantime Mr. Brown said he and Mrs. Winn would try to find ways to help Shelton through his interest in mechanics.

In the following conference, Mr. Brown reported that plans were under way to provide opportunities in auto mechanics for several boys. A father

of one of the boys, a mechanic, had agreed to help. Mrs. Winn had talked with Shelton about this and he seemed interested. I agreed to talk with the county agricultural agent to see if he had some ideas about providing experiences in farm mechanics for some of the boys. We still had the problem of helping Mrs. Winn relate experiences in mechanics to the English curriculum, but first signs of progress were encouraging.

I saw Mr. Brown a month later. He told me that they had not yet worked out satisfactory plans for the boys interested in mechanics, but that Shelton was getting along better. Mrs. Winn was apparently helping him feel better about himself and his habit of "talking back" was occurring less frequently. He told me also that the faculty had decided to make a study of better ways of meeting individual differences. Mrs. Winn was only one of the teachers who felt the need of knowing better ways of helping pupils, especially the ones who had unusual problems.

Taking Part in Action Research

For a long time research projects have been carried on only by the well-trained scientists. When research is done only by the research specialists, however, the findings are often slow to affect practice. Realization of this fact has caused many educators to try in other ways to foster needed change. Action research is one of them. Teachers, principals, supervisors, and superintendents in many places are using the scientific approach in cooperative study of their own problems. This process is helping to bring about more improvement in practice than is usually possible when research scientists work alone. One example is given to illustrate:

A number of junior high school teachers were concerned about the effect of various kinds of grouping of their students on their achievement and behavior. One of the supervisors accepted leadership to help them find out. Standardized tests, social behavior scales, and opinionnaires were used at the beginning of the year and again 4 months later with several hundred students. The staff tried to find out if their methods of grouping made a difference on achievement and social behavior. Some students were grouped according to ability as measured by an intelligence test. Some classes were organized according to their interests and worked through the interest group method during the 4 months' experimental period. In other classes, the students were divided according to friendships. Some classes were divided according to letters of the alphabet represented by the initial letters in names and for some, an arbitrary grouping method was used. The students worked in whatever kind of grouping procedure was chosen

for them for the 4 months' period. There were five classes for each kind of grouping. This experiment included seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade classes in science, social science, mathematics, home economics, agriculture, and English.

The supervisor who directed the study reported the results as follows:

For the purposes within the limits of the study and as revealed by the study, when all factors or measures used were considered, the five kinds of groupings arranged themselves in the following order of effectiveness: friendship, interest, ability, arbitrary or alphabetical depending on which measures are given greatest weight.

Satisfactory growth was found in achievement and social behavior in the friendship and interest groups. Growth in the ability, arbitrary, and alphabetical groups was on the average less than normal.¹

Helping To Build Community Schools

It is generally agreed that good schools are community schools. The school is one of the instruments which the community uses to improve itself. The school is centered on the needs of the community. The resources in the community contribute to the improvement of the schools. The effectiveness of the educational program is measured partly by determining the extent to which the citizens in the community become better able to solve their problems because of the school.

In a good community school, all of the people help. The effective supervisor provides resource, consultant, or leadership aid which the school uses to do its job better. One of the responsibilities of the supervisor is to help the citizen and the school personnel understand what a good school can do and how each person can contribute toward its development. He participates in or leads discussion or study groups of parents, teachers, and other citizens. Individual conferences are held with parents, health or welfare department personnel, public librarians, presidents of local organizations, school board members, and many others. He gives talks to community groups and participates in civic organizations. He helps schools use community resources effectively.

Many supervisors work with committees of parents and teachers in

¹Delvin Dae Harrah. *A Study of the Effectiveness of Five Kinds of Grouping in the Classroom*. (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1955), p. 183.

their study of objectives and of better ways of reporting to parents the research findings in the teaching of reading, spelling, social studies, and similar topics.

Activities which tie the school and community together are important for teachers, principals, supervisors, and superintendents, and all others who are concerned about the development of good education for their community. This example shows one supervisor's role in building community schools.

Robert Francis, the supervisor in Brooks County, had become concerned about the way in which health was being taught in most of the schools in the county. Many of the children seemed undernourished. Malaria and hookworm disease were serious handicaps to successful living in the county. Yet most of the health education was textbook centered and was not closely related to the problems in the county.

Mr. Francis discussed his observations with teachers and principals to find out what they thought. Some appeared satisfied with what they were doing, but a few were interested in finding ways to improve their work. A few of the teachers, two principals, and Mr. Francis began to inform themselves about some of the health resources available and to consider ways to study their problems. After talking with some of the local physicians they decided to make a special effort to inform themselves about hookworm disease, what caused it, and how it could be prevented.

At a meeting of the principals in January, the supervisor asked for an opportunity to discuss the health situation as he saw it and how to get their opinions on it. This marked the beginning of a series of meetings and activities dealing with hookworm disease. Committees of teachers were appointed to carry out various phases of the plans which were made.

At first the supervisor met with each committee, helping the members to plan for study and action. Activities of these committees included: getting information about the available resources in the State department of health, finding ways in which local doctors could help, preparing reading references for children, and preparing information about hookworm which children could read. The activities also included preparation of suggestive teaching units and making plans for hookworm examination in the county.

Another way in which the supervisor helped was to talk with the children in most of the classrooms of the county about hookworm disease and its prevention. Several community groups invited him to talk about the health program in the county.

Mr. Francis tried to serve as a resource person in relation to problems which were recognized by the people in the county. He also helped them recognize new problems and assisted them in finding solutions. Over a

period of 3 years, the most outstanding evidences of progress were: (1) Hookworm incidence was reduced from 80 percent to 63 percent, (2) community interest in health grew to the extent that plans for a county health department were made, and (3) the school curriculum became more problem-centered in other areas as well as health.

Providing Specialized Help

Many rural schools do not have access to the help of special supervisors in areas such as art, music, pupil guidance, and physical education. However, they are becoming more easily available in many parts of the country. The following example shows a supervisor helping teachers learn how to provide opportunities for their pupils in the creative arts.

Miss Paulson with the help of an art committee collected inexpensive materials and put them on large tables in a large room in the building where a workshop was to be held. Among the materials were different sizes and colors of string, a few stacks of old newspapers, clay, a roll of wrapping paper, a few cans of powder paints and brushes, some finger paints, crayons, newsprint, pieces of cloth, and scissors.

On an afternoon in early fall approximately 60 classroom teachers in the county who had asked for help in art came to the workshop to learn ways to help children develop skill in art. The supervisor introduced the program by telling the teachers about the materials available for their use and urged them to let their imagination go and commented that they might be surprised at what they could do and especially at the fun they could have. After all, she explained, the joy that comes from experimenting with use of different material is important in art. To give the teachers some ideas to start with she offered them a few suggestions on handling materials. She asked them for ideas and also encouraged them to ask questions. After a brief period of discussion the teachers began working with the materials, each in his own way.

Sessions such as these were held one afternoon a week from 3 to 5 o'clock. The supervisor spent much of her time in helping individuals as they seemed to want it and in directing group discussions based on the teachers' questions, purposes in teaching art, ways to help children, and on art materials. Most teachers made a variety of things—ash trays, murals, mobile units, puppets, table decoration, and paintings.

That afternoon and other afternoons throughout the fall workshop experiences continued. As the teachers became more confident in the use of art materials, they provided more opportunities for their children to use them in the classrooms. The supervisor also visited the classrooms and assisted the teachers in their work with children.

The following example shows a music supervisor helping children and their teacher enjoy music:

"When can you help us with our tonets?" asked the fourth- and fifth-graders in Madras School. They were talking to the music supervisor who had come into their room to see if she could help them and their teacher with music.

In a few minutes, Miss Futter, the children, and the supervisor were enthusiastically trying out their skills in reading music and in producing two-part harmony in Christmas carols, using their newly acquired tonets.

Before the supervisor left the room, the children told her about an album of Christmas carols which they had purchased. They invited her to come with them to the auditorium to hear them. (The record player was in the auditorium where they had access to an electric outlet.) During the recess period, it was observed that not only the fourth- and fifth-graders enjoyed the Christmas recordings, but when several children from the other rooms heard the music, they came too. The supervisor complimented the children on what they were doing and thanked them for the chance to hear the records.

Directing a Workshop

Many rural principals are full-time teachers and do not have much time to supervise instruction. More and more, however, they are being relieved of teaching duties and are expected to accept responsibility for supervision. Some of them have had very little preparation for this kind of leadership and are seeking ways to improve their understanding and skills in the supervision of instruction.

In some systems the county or district supervisors spend more of their time working with principals and less with teachers. They help the principals work on their problems, especially those most closely related to leadership in the improvement of classroom instruction. In some instances the principals and supervisors together seek help from an outside consultant and invite him to work with them on the improvement of instructional leadership. The following example taken from the secretary's report shows workshop director, John Greene, helping principals and supervisors study their problems.

June 23-24: Twenty-five principals and supervisors in a workshop wanted to become better informed about the kind of leadership that would help them contribute more to the improvement of teaching in their own com-

munities. The director of the workshop explained that he wanted to help them find answers to as many of their questions as possible.

Many questions were asked. Many of the first questions were on reading readiness. How can I help my first-grade teacher see all aspects involved in reading readiness? She expects all children to be ready to read at the end of 4 weeks. I wonder about this. What can be done to help teachers teach reading better to all children? What about ability grouping? How can we get traditional teachers to change their methods? What is the role of the principal? Of the supervisor?

Because so many of the questions were on reading readiness and on the principal's and supervisor's roles, in relation to this problem it was agreed that the workshop should begin with a study of leadership in relation to helping teachers improve their programs in reading readiness. Dr. Greene asked the group what approach they thought advisable for working on these problems. The following suggestions were made:

One member volunteered to bring a paper he had written about reading readiness. It included some references.

Another said that we should list and classify all of our questions before beginning a study of any of them.

Several members volunteered to bring books which they thought might be helpful on reading readiness and supervision.

As is so often true when questions for study are presented in a group, some members volunteered answers to the questions immediately whether or not they had facts to support what they said.

The workshop director suggested that we try a scientific approach to a study of the problems we decided to work on. "Merely sharing opinions about ways to solve difficult problems is really not a sound method," he said.

"How can we use a scientific approach in a workshop?" asked one of the members. "That doesn't sound possible. Will you explain what you mean?"

Dr. Greene continued, "This would mean that

"1. A problem chosen for study should be clearly stated.

"2. Several hypotheses or the best tentative answers should be made in the light of information we have.

"3. Information should be sought from many sources including research papers, personal experiences, educational journals, case histories, direct observations, experimentation, interviews, and books.

"4. The information should be organized and classified.

"5. Our hypotheses should be tested in the light of the additional information.

"6. Conclusions should be based on the information in relation to the problem under consideration and recommendations for action proposed.

"7. Our action should be based on the judgments reached after a careful study of the facts."

Several members of the workshop group thought that the director's suggestion sounded impractical, but they agreed to try it. Because many of the participants were concerned about reading readiness, they decided to try out the scientific approach in a study of: "How to help teachers grow in their understanding of reading readiness?" It was also decided that the range for our study should be grades 1 through 12.

The discussion that followed pointed out two major aspects of the problem: (1) To become better informed about what constitutes a good readiness program and (2) to learn how to work with teachers in improving their understanding of reading readiness.

We made a list of hypotheses based on present knowledge about helping children get ready to read. Study of research findings and the experiences of successful teachers would help us decide whether our hypotheses could be supported by adequate information. The hypotheses which we decided to test were:

1. To help a child get ready for reading we must know about his interests, background, and his emotional and mental maturity.
2. The classroom environment makes a difference in developing readiness for reading.
3. In teaching reading effectively we need to capitalize on intrinsic interests.
4. Most children want to learn to read.
5. If the reading readiness program has been effective, all children should be ready for reading by the end of the sixth week.
6. Children should not be given any readers until the end of the reading readiness period.
7. Building readiness for reading is important throughout a child's school career.
8. Individuals differ in their readiness for reading.
9. All kinds of experiences at home and school contribute to reading readiness.
10. To foster readiness for reading the teacher should help provide an atmosphere of acceptance and support.

Dr. Greene suggested that additional hypotheses could be added as we proceeded, but he believed we were ready to begin testing our hypotheses. To do this we needed more information, some of which we could obtain

from reading reports on research studies and from reading what authorities had found out. Some information could be obtained from sharing and analyzing personal experiences in helping children get ready for reading.

The participants began to bring together the results of studies, to analyze the data that applied to the problem, and to prepare to substantiate or disprove the hypotheses.

June 25: The meeting began with a report from the recorder on the work of the first two days, after which Dr. Greene suggested that we present the information we had found. He also reminded us that we were using this problem to help us practice the scientific approach to the study of problems.

Various members of the group presented evidence from several sources to disprove or substantiate the hypotheses on the board. Each time that evidence supporting a hypothesis was presented, a plus sign was placed before it. A minus sign was used when evidence seemed to disprove a hypothesis.

Among the sources used for evidence were; personal experiences and observations, research findings, interpretations by leading authorities such as Hildreth, Bond, Gray, Bills, Gates, and Witty; and research findings in child development by such investigators as Olson, Hurlock, Havighurst, and Strang.

Much evidence was found to support hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10. However, uncertainty was expressed about hypotheses 5 and 6. Many members presented evidence to disprove them. Although final judgment about these was postponed, most of the members contended that because children vary widely in many ways, all of them could not be expected to be ready for reading at the same time. Some would begin reading before coming to school. Others might not be ready to read for many months after coming to school. It was also agreed by most of the members that children should have easy access to readers as soon as they showed any signs of readiness for reading from them.

At the close of the session the group agreed to study the guiding principles of leadership at the next day's session with special application to assisting teachers in arriving at a better understanding of how to help children get ready to read. It was suggested that books on supervision by the following authors would be useful: Kim Wiles, John Bartky, and W. Melchior. It was also suggested that the consultant from the U. S. Office of Education, who was in the group, to help start the workshop be requested to give her opinions on important principles of leadership in helping to improve instruction in the schools.

June 26: The discussion today centered on the ideas about leadership and supervision presented by the consultant from the U. S. Office of Education.

(For a summary of what she said, see chapter I of this publication.) The principles were discussed in relationship to helping teachers study such problems as reading readiness.

Much time in subsequent workshop sessions was spent in trying to arrive at a better understanding of the meaning of guiding principles of supervision, the evidence of their value, and their application in working with people in our home communities. Members of the group accepted many opportunities to practice leadership principles through participating in cooperative planning in the workshop toward the solution of their problems, serving as discussion leaders, reporting the results of research in areas where the group needs appeared greatest, recording highlights of the group sessions and reporting on them at subsequent sessions, analyzing scientific methods of studying problems, presenting films applicable to the needs of the group, and participating in the work of such committees as the steering, recreation, or evaluation committee.

In addition to reading readiness, the problems studied were: how to help the beginning teacher; how to get parents interested in the school; how to bring about changes in the teacher who is set in her ways; how to help retarded children; how to build good human relations; how to improve school attendance; what are good practices in grading, grade placement, promotions, reporting to parents, and evaluation of pupil progress.

At the close of the workshop period, the group reexamined some of the principles of leadership which they had practiced. They said, "We analyzed the director's leadership in the workshop. We discussed the things he did to get us started on a study of problems of importance to us; what he did to help us use scientific approach to a study of problems; how he provided opportunities for us to participate in planning our study; and how he helped to provide an atmosphere of support and understanding as we worked toward the solution of our problems."

Summary

In a variety of ways supervisors are providing consultant, resource, and leadership service to improve rural education in the United States. The examples show supervisors helping to solve problems important to teachers and to others who are working to make schools better. They illustrate ways in which teachers help decide what the supervisory service should be, and ways in which supervisors help to provide an atmosphere of acceptance and support in order to facilitate learning more effective ways of teaching. They show supervisors helping schools use a scientific approach to a study of problems.



III

Appraising School Supervision

SUPERVISION is an integral part of the total school program. It is difficult, therefore, to study its effectiveness apart from the whole. But if we are to learn how to make supervision better, we must make every effort possible to find ways to appraise its effectiveness.

Some studies help test the effectiveness of the principles of supervision discussed in this publication. However, the purpose of this chapter is to report ways that are being used to help evaluate supervision, although results of a few studies will be given. The various methods of evaluation used will be discussed in relation to these topics:

- Finding the effects of supervision on achievement of pupils
- Finding the effects of supervision on teaching
- Finding what teachers value most in supervision
- Examining supervisory practices.

Finding the Effects of Supervision on Achievement of Pupils

Because the main purpose of school supervision is to help provide better learning situations for children and youth, the most direct way to appraise supervision is to study its effects on the learners. This is also the most difficult approach. There is no way of being sure which changes in the children's development can be attributed to supervision because hundreds of other forces are affecting them at the same time. Attempts are being made, however, to appraise supervision by studying some of its effects on the learners.

A study which compares the achievement of children in supervised

schools was conducted by Franseth¹ in Georgia. It was found that the supervised children, according to results of the Iowa Every Pupil tests, were achieving more than the children in unsupervised schools in reading, work-study skills, arithmetic, and language. It was found also that children in these supervised schools were developing more skill in democratic citizenship. McCall's School Practices Questionnaire was used to help appraise skills in democratic citizenship. It was concluded that the supervision provided in these schools helped students to achieve more in the areas of learning examined. In these schools there was a conscious attempt to practice the principles of supervision discussed in chapter I.

In the study reported above, the equated groups method was used. Achievements of two groups as nearly equal in all respects as possible, except for supervision, were compared. The difficulties involved in using this method are obvious, but if the limiting factors are taken into account, methods of comparing achievements of supervised and unsupervised groups may have some merit as a part of a process of appraising the effectiveness of supervision.

Finding the Effects of Supervision on Teaching

If supervision is effective, schools become better able to do their work. Teaching improves and the learning opportunities for children become richer. Again, it is difficult to measure the effects of supervision, but some schools are trying to examine the changes in teaching that are taking place where certain supervisory services are available. A few examples are given.

Many supervisors provide service by helping teachers understand children. Some do this through an organized child study program. In some school systems the help from local leaders is supplemented by regular consultant service from a university. Greene² made an analysis of teachers' anecdotal records to find out whether teachers

¹ Jane Franseth. *Learning to Supervise Schools*. Washington, Superintendent of Documents Government Printing Office, 1951. 50 pp.

² John Greene, *A Study of Some Curriculum Changes of Teachers Who Participated in the Child Study Program*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.) Institute for Child Study, University of Maryland, 1952.

enrolled in a child study group changed their practices in working with children. Major findings were:

Changes in Teacher-Pupil Relationship

During the 3-year period studied, there was a statistically significant increase in the more positive ways teachers handled children. Based on pupil response to these positive ways of handling, it appears that reasoning or guiding, motivating intrinsically, and being supportive are effective methods which teachers use in teacher-pupil relationships.

There was a highly significant decrease in the more negative ways teachers handled children at the 3-year levels of the program. This suggests that teachers learned more readily the things not to do to children, such as using shame, sarcasm, threat, and other negative ways of handling.

Evidence supported the hypothesis that the child study program was effective with high school teachers and elementary teachers in improving teacher-pupil relationships.

Changes in Classroom Organization

There was an increase in evidence of more democratically organized classrooms at each of the 3-year levels of the child study program; during the same period, there was a decrease in evidence of more autocratically organized classrooms. A detailed analysis revealed that the changes were greater in elementary than in high school classrooms. Evidence in classroom organization in high schools indicated some change from first-year level of the program, but evidence at the third-year level indicated a tendency of high school teachers to revert to original methods of classroom organizations.

In another study, the effect of supervision through helping teachers understand children is being examined by analyzing the recurring patterns of teaching and curriculum practices observed in teachers' anecdotal records. The supervisor is directing a child study program. The following recurring patterns seem to be typical in the classrooms of the teachers who are participating in the child study program:

Children are being helped to feel a sense of achievement—threat of failure by teachers is at a minimum.

They are helped to feel assured that their teachers care about them.

Many experiences are being provided to help children use creative abilities, especially in art.

Much of the curriculum content is based on the interests of the children.

Skills such as reading, arithmetic, and English are being taught through many kinds of meaningful experiences.

Individual differences are taken into account especially in regard to the use of reading materials.³

Another method of analyzing the effects of organized child study is currently being used in Hartsville,⁴ S. C. Local supervision is provided by the superintendent and principals. The staff of the Institute for Child Study at the University of Maryland, in cooperation with the Hartsville school staff, has been collecting data periodically since the child study program began there in 1951. Information sought includes teachers' understanding about child development, teaching, and curriculum practices. The data will be analyzed to see if teaching practices are changed. Instruments and methods used to get data are: "Q" Sort on teaching practices, Mickey Murphy test, interviews with teachers about what they are doing, and observations of classroom teaching. Results of this study are not yet available, but the methods being used may be suggestive to supervisors interested in finding ways to appraise the effectiveness of what they do.

Finding What Teachers Value Most in Supervision

Another approach to the evaluation of supervision is that of asking teachers what helps them most to do a good job of teaching. Unfortunately the reports on teachers' opinions do not include information on the achievement of the children or the growth of the teachers of these children or the growth of the teachers in the school systems reporting this method of appraising supervision. Objective evidence comparing the quality of the school program as a result of supervision and the kind of supervision teachers value most in their schools is not available. However, many educational leaders report that improvement in teaching and the kind of supervision which teachers value seem to go together. Though more research is needed to test this hypothesis, it may be assumed that supervisors who want to improve their methods can learn much by seeking the opinions of their teachers. A few studies of this nature are reported here.

³ Jane Franseth. Data on file, Office of Education, United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C.

⁴ Institute for Child Study. *Data and Reports on File*. College Park, Md., The Institute, University of Maryland, 1955.

Monroe County, W. Va., Teachers' Appraise Supervision

Through an open-end questionnaire 88 teachers in Monroe County, W. Va., answered the question, "What do you like about the supervisory program we now have?" A summary of their answers follows: Helpfulness of the personnel was mentioned 24 times; friendliness was listed 16 times; cooperation and understanding problems and needs of children were listed 15 times; and interest in teacher and close contact with her, 7 times. The responses show that the Monroe County teachers value most in their supervisors friendliness, helpfulness, cooperation, and understanding of mutual problems which they provide.

In addition to desirable personnel characteristics of the supervisor, meetings were ranked high. County meetings of various kinds were mentioned 33 times; printed material, 33 times; supervisory visits, 21 times. Satisfaction with what their supervisor does was expressed by 24 people.

These teachers also answered the question, "What would you like to have a supervisor to do that is not now being done?" A summary of answers follows: 33 wanted more criticism (8 teachers said they would like more discussion of their weak points); 18, more classroom visits by the supervisor; 18, more demonstration teaching; 18, to have more specialized supervision, in such subjects as music, art, reading, arithmetic; 12, more meetings, especially the discussion kind; and 13, more materials and supplies.

The following is a summary of replies to the question: "What kinds of experiences do you want a supervisor to arrange to help you become a better teacher?" Observation of demonstration teaching was mentioned 36 times; observation by visiting other teachers, 10 times; meetings, 16 times; conferences and discussions, 12 times; workshops, 8 times; equipment and supplies, 6 times; and a miscellaneous list mentioned 19 different items.

Teachers in Long Branch, N. J., Express Their Views

In Long Branch, N. J., 88 teachers were asked what kind of supervision was most valuable to them. A teacher committee conducted

* Summary of answers to Monroe County, W. Va., Questionnaire on Supervisory Program. On file in Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C.

the study through a questionnaire approach. The following is a summary* of what was said:

a. The *type of supervisory visit* wanted by the largest number of teachers was "on call" to give help with specific problems named by the teachers. Times mentioned—77.

Some teachers considered it valuable for the supervisor to drop in to see the teacher occasionally and to attend culminating activities, special day's programs, and programs for parents.

Only a small number of teachers considered it valuable for supervisors to make visits to get acquainted with new teachers, or to observe the atmosphere or climate in the classrooms.

b. The *most effective activity of the supervisor during a visit* was a brief demonstration lesson to illustrate effective ways of teaching phonics, reading, spelling, and the like. Times mentioned—56.

Other activities considered valuable by teachers were: Discussion of specific problems at teacher's request; bringing in materials and equipment on supervisor's initiative; and discussion with children to help solve a problem.

Considered least valuable by the teachers was observation of class activity and discussion initiated by the supervisor.

c. *Conferences preferred* by the greatest number of teachers were the ones held between the teacher and the supervisor. Times mentioned—41. Some preferred a variety of types, depending on need and situation. Preferred by the smallest number of teachers were the one which involved teacher, supervisor, and the principal together.

d. Sixty-five teachers thought *an orientation period* for helping new teachers was important. Fifty teachers said problem clinics were helpful. Also important in the opinion of many were workshops with experienced teachers. Only eleven teachers thought emergency visits or conferences valuable.

e. Fifty-eight teachers thought *workshops for learning about current teaching material were valuable*. Thirty-six teachers wanted summaries of recent research findings.

Only a few thought an *individual conference* with the supervisor was an effective means of getting acquainted with teaching materials.

Fifty-eight teachers considered *laboratory workshops* an effective method for stimulating thinking. Forty-two teachers found value in having consultants take over a class for demonstration purposes as a way of meeting certain needs.

* Mimeographed reports on the Long Branch Survey on Supervision on file, Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C., 1953.

Eighteen teachers considered inter-visitations valuable.

f. Help from special teachers or supervisors: Fifty-one liked special supervisors or teachers to come to the schools on call; forty-four teacher liked scheduled visits.

Seven teachers considered drop-in visits by special supervisors a good practice.

g. With regard to workshops or extension courses, fifty-nine teachers preferred voluntary to required attendance. Forty-seven teachers thought they should participate in plans but on a voluntary basis. Forty-five teachers thought workshops should be initiated and planned by the teachers and the supervisor. Four thought attendance should be required. Six thought that workshops should be initiated and planned by the supervisor. Eight said that participation of teachers should be on a request basis.

h. With regard to action research, forty-eight thought it should be undertaken voluntarily by teachers and supervisor, and thirty-five by the teachers voluntarily. Eighteen thought that it should be requested of teachers by the supervisor.

i. To facilitate child study, fifty-eight teachers thought it should be done on released time; forty-three suggested scholarships to study at the University of Maryland; eighteen suggested trained leaders to conduct child study in local schools.

j. Fifty-six teachers considered parent-teacher conferences valuable in maintaining good public relations. Participation in PTA meetings was considered important by many teachers and the supervisor should *work with lay committees* on curriculum study. Only four teachers thought teacher-lay committees should discuss school policy.

k. To replace rating schemes, seventy teachers thought that supervisors should provide encouragement and should engage in activities that really help teachers improve. Rating schemes do not foster growth, they said. Two teachers thought that the supervisor should evaluate teacher's efficiency.

l. How to evaluate effectiveness of supervision was also rated by the Long Branch teachers. Seventy-one teachers thought that effectiveness of supervision should be evaluated by looking at the extent to which teachers understand the underlying philosophy of the school. Fifty-seven teachers suggested study of the achievement of boys and girls, thirty-four thought that a study of teachers' attitudes toward teaching might reveal certain results of supervision.

Sheboygan Study

The teachers in Sheboygan County, Wis., were asked to give their reactions to some statements on supervision. (See appendix.) A summary of their replies follows. The figure in parentheses indicates the number of teachers commenting on the particular item.

Good supervision helps teachers: Find effective solutions to their problems (25); develop a realistic sense of confidence in their own abilities (24); feel that they are not working alone but are partners in big and important undertakings (20); experience feelings of support, friendliness, and understanding (19); foster a climate conducive to learning in the classrooms and give them courage to try new and better ways of doing things (18); and develop and use curriculum and teaching practices that are in harmony with the best information known about human development, the learning process, and beliefs about democracy as a way of life (15).

Other aspects of supervision suggested by the Sheboygan County teachers were:

A good supervisor gives constructive criticism in a frank manner and with a smile; is someone to whom you may turn when in doubt; is interested in the results of suggestions given; recognizes strong and weak points which should be developed; knows the needs of the community and helps the teacher meet those needs; lives democratic principles; is inspirational; helps to strengthen the confidence of parents in the work of the teachers; will suggest new ideas and projects observed in other places; permits a two-way exchange of ideas; presents new and better methods of teaching; helps to orient the new teacher; has a knowledge of new materials and the way in which they should be used; and will have conferences with the teachers or in some way give them reports of his classroom visits. One of the teachers, however, said that supervision had not helped her in any way.

Camden County Report

The teachers in Camden County, Ga., were also asked to give their reactions to statements defining good supervision. (See appendix.) There was most agreement on the following: Good supervision helps to reduce tension. It encourages experimentation. It is kind and friendly, and it makes teachers creative in their classwork.

Evaluation of Supervisory Service in Eastern Panhandle¹

The teachers and principals in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia were invited to mark in a list of 90 supervisory services the 20 which they thought most essential to a successful school program. The ones listed most often by 605 teachers (772 responded) were these:

¹ Galen F. Dulin, *Evaluating Supervisory Service*. Eastern Area Supervision Association of West Virginia, 1953. Typewritten report on file in Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C.

1. Help new teachers become oriented
2. Share with teachers their information on the newer teaching methods
3. Act as a friend to the teacher in time of need
4. Provide teachers with sources of materials
5. Try to keep up-to-date materials for teachers
6. Help teacher with special pupils—slow and talented ones
7. Make available good classroom equipment and materials
8. Demonstrate teaching procedures
9. Survey local conditions to determine future needs of the schools
10. Bring consultants and specialists to teachers.

A tabulation of the items marked by the principals showed very little difference between the beliefs of teachers and principals. Teachers and principals placed eight of the same items among the top-ranking 10.

From an analysis of the opinions given by the teachers, the supervisors drew the following conclusions:

1. Seven of the ten first-rank items reflected the teachers' feeling of need for assistance in improving teaching ability
2. The nature of some of the most frequently checked items seemed to indicate desirability of scheduling a definite program for: (a) Helping new teachers become oriented; (b) Demonstrating teaching procedures; (c) Helping teachers with pupils who have special problems; (d) Sharing information about new teaching methods.

Examining Supervisory Practices

Another method of appraising supervision is to examine the practices of a supervisor to find the extent to which he is following good principles of supervision. A study in Georgia illustrates this method. Mrs. Lott, a supervisor, invited the people with whom she worked to keep anecdotal records on what she did for a period of several months. They were asked not to express opinions about her work, but to describe what they observed her doing in as many different situations as possible. Teachers, principals, the county superintendent, school

board members, nurses, and several parents responded. Though it was difficult for some of them to write anecdotes without expressing opinions, many objective data were tabulated and analyzed. The following is a summary of the findings:

1. Our supervisor usually provides assistance which helps solve the problems considered important
2. The people with whom she works usually help decide in what way she should help
3. She helps the people with whom she works to build confidence in their ability to solve their school problems.

Conclusion

Evidence found through those studies supports the following conclusions:

1. Effective supervision makes a difference in the achievement of pupils
2. Supervision that contributes significantly to the solution of problems recognized as important by teachers makes a difference in teaching practices. Teachers change their ways of working with children as their understanding of them increases
3. Supervision is appreciated by teachers when in their opinion it helps them do their work better.



IV On the Road Ahead

PROVIDING enough of the kind of supervision which contributes significantly to the improvement of learning situations for approximately 14 million rural children is a tremendous task. Although much has been done, much more needs to be done. However the road ahead has a number of bright spots.

The Number of Supervisors Is Increasing

The increase in the number of rural supervisors employed during the last 20 years is encouraging. In 1929, 22 percent of the counties or similar units were served by general supervisors. In 1933, the percent was 27; in 1944, 31; in 1950, 42; and in 1953, 50 percent of the counties were supervised. From 1929 to 1953, the total number of general county supervisors had increased from 1,945 to approximately 2,700. There are some rural supervisors in all except 6 States. In 17 States general supervisory services from a central office are available to almost all of the schools.¹ In addition to the help given by general supervisors, supervision is also provided by a large number of principals and superintendents throughout the Nation. It appears certain that the number of supervisors will continue to increase.

Standards Are Improving

Already 40 percent of the States require a minimum of 5 years of college education for certification in supervision, 20 percent require a minimum of 4 years plus some graduate work, and 13 percent require

¹ Jane Franseth, Status of County School Supervision for 1952-53. Unpublished report, Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C.

a minimum of 4 years of college.² Plans are now being made in several States to raise qualifications for certification of supervisors.

Attempts To Evaluate Are Increasing

Attempts to appraise the effectiveness of supervision are increasing, and results in several places show that improvement is taking place. Some of the examples reported in chapter II illustrate this fact. Continuous interest and development in methods of evaluation and improving action as a result of findings are encouraging signs.

Participation in Study Conferences Is Increasing

How to improve supervision is a topic discussed in many work conferences throughout the Nation. These conferences are planned and conducted by the membership of the organizations represented and are centered on problems of concern to supervisors. Consultant help is secured from many sources. Continuous group study of their own problems on local, State, regional, and national levels is helping supervisors to improve the quality of the services they provide. The fact that so many supervisors are critically examining their own roles promises continuous improvement in the quality of supervision.

Quality of Education for Supervisors Is Improving

Some universities and colleges in cooperation with State departments of education consultants and other experienced educators are providing tailormade graduate programs to meet the needs of supervisors. Prospective supervisors are taking advantage of the opportunities offered by these programs to improve their understanding and skill in leadership. As we look into the future, it is apparent that the number of cooperatively developed graduate programs will increase. The results of a few scientific studies³ testify to their value. Though the programs differ, certain characteristics are similar:

² Ibid.

³ Jane Francomb, *Learning to Supervise Schools*. Washington, D. C., Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, 1952, 50 p.

Johnays Cox, *The Effectiveness of the Intern Period in the Georgia Program for Educating Supervisors*. Unpublished dissertation, New York University, N. Y., 1952.

Grace Scott, *The Extent to Which the Present Program for the Education of Supervisors in West Virginia Develops Democratic Leadership*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park, 1954.

1. Effort is made to select prospective supervisors who, in the opinion of a selection committee, possess qualities that are essential to effective supervision.
2. Individual study is made of the skills and needs of each of the participating student supervisors in order to determine what experiences should be included in his education for supervision.
3. The student supervisors have a part in setting up the purposes, planning their own experiences, carrying out the plans, and appraising the outcomes of their education for supervision.
4. The resources of the university are supplemented by those of other colleges, State departments, county superintendents, and many community agencies to meet the needs of the student supervisors.
5. A coordinated plan of observation and participation by the student supervisors in schools is an integral part of the program.
6. A guided internship experience of one or more years is an important feature of the program.

Programs⁴ in which principles such as these serve as important guides are now found in a few States.

Coordinated study and practice programs in supervision for a period of one or more years are not yet generally offered throughout the United States. However, opportunities are provided by some universities and colleges in cooperation with State departments in workshop types of experience which are specifically planned to meet the needs of supervisors and in which the participants have a part in deciding what their experiences should be.⁵

On the road ahead, it appears that the quality and quantity of rural supervision will continue to increase. It is hoped that this publication will make a contribution to this end.

⁴ For information about these programs, see *Southern States Work Conference, Educational Supervision, A Leadership Service*. Tallahassee: Florida State Department of Education, 1955.

⁵ Jane Franseth, *Education of Supervisors*. Typewritten report on file in Office of Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Washington, D. C., 1954.

APPENDIX

What Is Good Supervision?

Good supervision lifts our sights and helps the school fulfill its responsibilities for helping children and adults improve the quality of living. It helps us develop a realistic sense of confidence in our abilities. It helps us change our perception in the light of careful and cooperative analysis of facts. It helps us get satisfaction from productive change. It fosters a climate conducive to learning and gives us courage to try new and better ways of doing things. It helps us feel that we are not working alone; we are partners in big and important undertakings. Helpful supervision reduces tension. It helps us experience a feeling of warmth, friendliness, and understanding.

Good supervision helps us solve problems that seem important to us. It may also help us see other problems, but until we think they are important, it is doubtful that attempts to help us make much difference. Unsolicited or unwanted advice does not usually produce change.

Helping us to know and understand the findings of research about human development and their application in relationship to the problems we face is good supervision. Although we believe teachers can do a better job with their children if they are encouraged to use their own judgment about the particular methods they use, good supervision helps to make these judgments better. It helps us keep informed about research findings and the experiences of others concerning the ways in which children learn, ways to provide desirable curriculum experiences, how to cooperate with parents, and how to appraise the results of our work. It should be remembered, however, that teachers can make better use of such service if it is provided in response to their requests and if they have a part in deciding how and when it should be given.

To provide help that supervisors think teachers should use, merely because the supervisors believe they need it, does not lead to effective ways of bringing about desirable changes in a school. Help is useful only to the extent that people see it as valuable in relationship to their interests and if they can feel reasonably confident that it will not cause their own self-esteem to be lowered.

Good supervision helps us to use scientific ways of thinking about our problems. It makes us unwilling to accept opinions not supported by facts. Supervisors often supply and interpret the facts necessary to intelligent judgments and suggest solutions to problems. With effective supervision the way is clear for all concerned to contribute their ideas.

Use of scientific ways of thinking and acting is important for several reasons. The most obvious one is that judgments are more likely to be sound if they are based on careful study of facts and especially if several people help. Cooperative study of facts followed by interpretation is itself a process which increases understanding and learning. People are more likely to act wisely if they help to do the studying and help to decide on the action. Merely trying to follow requirements or suggestions of supervisors does not usually produce intelligent action or provide for the best learning opportunities for children. Active and cooperative participation in making schools better is a way of learning more effective and productive ways of helping children and adults live and learn.

If supervision lifts our sights and helps the school fulfill its responsibilities for helping children and adults improve the quality, outcomes like the following can be expected: Increased concern for the welfare of all people; better physical and emotional health; more skill in the use of reading, language, numbers, and scientific methods of working; more understanding of social issues; more appreciation of music, art, and literature; more use of creative powers; more skill in human relations; and more skill in working together toward the solution of common problems.

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