

# **An Observational Analysis of Agricultural Education Faculty During On-Site Supervisory Visits with Pre-service Teachers**

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*Historically, university supervisors have struggled balancing their role as a supervisor and evaluator of preservice teachers. A university supervisor's role has transformed to include a greater focus on collaboration between themselves and the preservice teacher. This observational case study utilized the Supervisory Options for Instructional Leaders (SOIL) model to identify and classify the level of supervision that was utilized during the on-site visits of four faculty members who each served as university supervisors of preservice teachers at the University of Florida. Results indicated that the university supervisors utilized structured supervision practices. University supervisors conducted supervisory visits that included both pre- and post-observation conferences, as well as an observation of the preservice teacher instructing in a classroom. In addition, university supervisors utilized questioning strategies to guide preservice teachers through reflective practices. The researchers recommend that planning meetings are held to review the supervision techniques used during supervisory visits, to achieve consistency.*

**Key Words:** university supervisors, preservice teachers, student teachers, supervision.

Nolan and Hoover (2008) stated that teacher education has struggled to balance the evaluation and supervision components related to the concept of instructional supervision. Historically, university supervisors have possessed a more prominent role as an evaluator rather than a supervisor (Bolin & Panaritis, 1992; Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Nolan and Hoover defined evaluation as a definite judgment regarding a teacher's performance in the classroom or during instruction, while supervision was defined as the ability to promote teacher growth and development through reflection and improvement in instructional practice and efficacy. More recently, a supervisor's role has shifted to include collaboration, with the preservice teacher, through an individualized progressive approach (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon, 2001; Nolan & Hoover, 2008). To assist in achieving this shift, Nolan and Hoover (2008) introduced seven dimensions that distinguished the role differences between an evaluator and supervisor in teacher preparation: "1) their basic purpose; 2) the rationale for their existence; 3) their scope; 4) the nature of the relationship between the teacher (preservice teacher) and the administrator (uni-

versity supervisors); 5) the focus for data collection procedures; 6) the role of expertise; and 7) the teachers perspective on the entire process" (p. 7).

Nolan and Hoover's (2008) dimensions have been used to compose meaning for supervision and evaluation. Hazi (1994) reported that many school districts attempted to reduce the fear of evaluation through promoting teacher improvement and development during evaluation processes. However, Nolan and Hoover (2008) argued that if appropriately implemented and utilized together, evaluation and supervision create a collaborative environment that develops the teacher professionally while undergoing a formal assessment.

## **Supervision Techniques**

Supervisory techniques, supervisory practices, and continual learning are vital for the success of an educational system (Montgomery, 1999). The educational system demands practices that bring "together the discrete elements of instructional effectiveness into a whole educational action" (Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-

Gordon, 2001, p. 15). University supervisors must nurture an environment that encourages preservice teachers to develop professionally through reflection and inquiry (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Bennie (1972) stated that the supervisory technique used when observing preservice teachers is of utmost importance to the development of their teaching ability. Moreover, the technique used by supervisors can impact the preservice teachers' perception of the profession (Bennie, 1972) and satisfaction of the student teaching internship (Blair, 2000). When appropriate supervisory techniques are utilized, a preservice teacher and university supervisor will have a better chance of developing a relationship built on trust and respect (Garman, 1982). In turn, faculty members should have an understanding of various supervisory techniques that can be employed based on the needs and ability of the preservice teacher (Fritz & Miller, 2003).

### **Evaluation**

Stronge (1997) argued that evaluation techniques are a valuable component in the professional development of preservice and inservice teachers. For high quality evaluations to be conducted, data should be collected from different sources and time periods throughout the internship (Peterson & Peterson, 2006). The collected data should include information regarding the influence the preservice teachers' effectiveness and ability had on student learning and achievement (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Nolan and Hoover (2008) stressed that the techniques used to evaluate a preservice teacher should reflect a student-to-mentor relationship rather than an evaluator-to-ee relationship, suggesting that the utilization of scaffolding as an appropriate evaluation technique.

### **Observation of Preservice Teachers**

During the supervision process, university supervisors should engage in a minimum of two conferences (a pre-observation and a post-observation conference) with the preservice teacher and an observation of the preservice teacher engaging in classroom instruction (Acheson & Gall, 2003; Hopkins & Moore, 1993; Nolan & Hoover, 2008). During the pre-

observation the supervisor inquires about the preservice teacher's learning objectives, anticipated student outcomes, lesson structure, and assessment tools that will be used during the observational visit (Acheson & Gall, 2003). The supervisor should also collect pertinent data during the classroom observation, including detailed notes regarding the teacher's behaviors, movement habits, student interaction/engagement charts, and potential questions for use during the post-conference (Acheson & Gall, 2003; Cogan, 1973; Goldhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1993; Hopkins & Moore, 1992). Finally, a post-observation conference should be utilized as a time to discuss the observation, ask questions to guide the preservice teacher through reflective practices, develop future teaching and professional development goals, and evaluate student learning during the lesson(s) (Nolan & Hoover, 2008).

### **University Supervisors**

University faculty members are needed as university supervisors due to the role that they possess in the supervision and evaluation of the student teaching internship (Beck & Kosnik, 2002; Casey & Howson, 1993; Fritz & Miller, 2004). Beck and Kosnik (2002) presented three reasons that limit university faculty members' interactions with preservice teachers: (1) time management and university responsibilities, (2) lack of importance placed on supervision for promotion and tenure, and (3) a perception that research has a larger impact on education than preservice teacher supervision. However, Beck and Kosnik stated that the aforementioned disadvantages were outweighed by the positive impact that the university faculty member (as a university supervisor) made on the preservice teacher, cooperating teacher, cooperating school, and campus program. According to Zimpher, deVoss, and Nott (1980), a university supervisor holds a vital role in the student internship process, providing not only observational feedback, but significant contributions to the student internship process. University supervisors contribute through mentoring, guiding reflective practices, and coaching. During observations, it is the university supervisor's responsibility to possess the role of both a supervisor and evalua-

tor simultaneously, due to the unique complexities of the student teaching internship (Nolan & Hoover, 2008).

Fritz and Miller (2004) conducted a national study that investigated agricultural education university faculty members' supervisory techniques. This study compared the supervision techniques of university supervisors at Research I institutions and supervisors at non-Research I institutions. The researchers found that faculty members at Research I institutions used a structured supervision technique. Conversely, the authors indicated that teacher educators at regional or non-Research I universities more frequently used a moderately structured technique for supervision. The study recommended that teacher education programs examine university supervisors' knowledge of supervision techniques. Following, programs should determine if training is needed to ensure that similar supervision techniques are utilized when conducting preservice teacher observations.

The need exists to determine if university faculty member's practices of supervision and evaluation are philosophically similar in approach within a university (Fritz & Miller, 2004). Priority area five of the *National Research Agenda* calls for the need of efficient and effective agricultural education programs (Doerfert, 2011). Currently at the University of Florida supervisory approaches of university faculty members are not discussed and could utilize various approaches. Philosophically, the supervisory approach proves to be important because

high-quality student teaching internship experiences are essential for preservice teachers to learn how to teach (Allen, 2003; McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson, & Robinson, 2008). Each visit should be cohesive enough to provide an environment where the preservice teacher can develop the means to become an effective classroom teacher. The role of supervision is to provide guidance and scaffolding for the preservice teacher, while evaluation is formative and provides professional development opportunities (Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Further, a review of literature yielded few studies conducted that examined the techniques that university faculty members employ when observing preservice agriscience teachers. Therefore, there is a need to describe the supervisory practices of university faculty members at the University of Florida to ensure preservice teachers receive an effective internship experience.

### Conceptual Framework

This study utilized Fritz & Miller (2003)'s Supervisory Opinions for Instructional Leaders (SOIL) model as the conceptual model for this study (Figure 1). This model was selected for the study due to the usage of this model in the agricultural education literature base (Fritz & Miller, 2004; Stephens & Little, 2010; Stephens & Waters, 2009). Previous studies have shown this model effective for the supervision of agriscience preservice teachers.

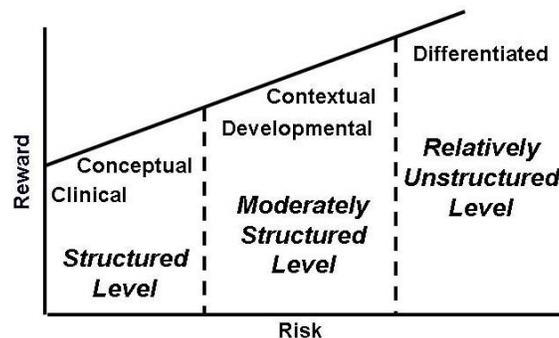


Figure 1. Supervisory Options for Instructional Leaders (SOIL) Model (Fritz & Miller, 2003)

Fritz & Miller's (2003) SOIL model includes three supervisory levels: structured, moderately structured, and relatively unstructured. The three levels of supervision are ordered from left to right, by increasing reward. Risk is conceptually defined as a negative impact to the university supervisor and preservice teacher in relation to their teaching, job title, professional identity, and collegial involvement. Reward is then conceptually defined as the positive outcome of the supervisory visit. As the risk of errors or misconceptions increases, the possibility of reward increases as well, allowing the preservice teacher's self-efficacy to increase. Therefore, when the student makes successful choices or decisions the reward is of greater value and promotes positive outcomes. The concept of reward was demonstrated through increased reflective practices, collaborative efforts, job satisfaction, and flexible supervision techniques (Fritz & Miller, 2003). Fritz and Miller (2004) posited that the teachers' readiness should be examined by the university supervisor when selecting a supervisory technique.

The first level of the SOIL model, the structured level, includes clinical and conceptual supervision practices. These two forms of supervision have prescribed steps that allow for ideal support and structure during a supervisory visit. Acheson & Gall (2003) argued that a preservice teacher supervisory visit should include three main components: (1) a pre-observational conference, (2) physical classroom observation, and (3) a post-observational conference. These three components allow the preservice teacher to become comfortable and aware of the process that will be followed during a supervisory visit (Fritz and Miller, 2003).

The moderately structured level is designed for preservice teachers that may benefit from more flexible supervision. The two main forms of supervision practices at this level are contextual and developmental supervision. The moderately structured level of supervision allows for reflective practices to increase, resulting in an increased understanding of supervision for both the supervisor and preservice teacher. This level of supervision becomes more individualized, the components of structured supervision decrease while allowing the teacher to gain a deeper understanding of their teaching practices and in-

crease their self-confidence (Fritz & Miller, 2003).

The final level of the SOIL model, relatively unstructured, includes a differentiated approach to supervision. Since this level of supervision is teacher driven and comprised of little structure, this level of supervision requires both an experienced supervisor and classroom teacher. Due to little structure during the supervision, the relatively unstructured level is considered to be the most powerful and rewarding supervisory approach (Fritz and Miller, 2003).

### **Purpose**

To meet the recommendation purposed by Fritz & Miller (2004), this study examined the techniques used at the University of Florida by Agricultural Education faculty members who served as a university supervisor for the 2012 preservice teaching internship. The objectives of this observational study were: (1) to describe the supervisory practices utilized by university faculty members' during supervisory visits of preservice teachers; (2) to describe the differences in supervisory practices of the university faculty members; and (3) to describe how the data found can inform current practice within agricultural teacher education.

### **Methods**

Qualitative methodology was utilized for this study to collect thick descriptive data of the phenomenon (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). An observational case study was used to describe the supervisory techniques employed by faculty members from the University of Florida who served as university supervisors for preservice teachers during the spring 2012 term. Each faculty member of the University of Florida was personally asked to participate in the study by the researcher. Prior to data collection, the research protocol was submitted and approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Florida. The supervision sites were purposively selected based on the investigators availability. This study utilized a single exposure approach to data collection through "first-hand eyewitness accounts" (Schwandt, 1997, p. 106) that examined a given phenomenon (supervision

practices). Schwandt (1997) posited that a phenomenon can be a “person, process, event, group, organization” (p. 12).

Observations, follow-up interviews, and observational forms completed by the university supervisor were used to fully ascertain the components and methods that the university supervisors employed for supervisory visits. Three different data collection methods were used to increase the rigor of the data and study (Flick, 2006). Each university supervisor was observed for one complete supervisory visit of a preservice teacher by the investigator, who served as the data collection instrument (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). To ensure trustworthiness, the researchers assured credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was established through triangulating the data, peer debriefing, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability was ensured through the use of thick descriptions and purposive sampling of participants. Dependability was addressed by assigning each participant a pseudonym. The use of an audit trail and the acknowledgement of the researchers’ bias were used to ensure that confirmability was upheld (Dooley, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This research protocol followed the six factors suggested by Denzin (1989): (1) selection of the observation setting; (2) researcher training in data collection; (3) establishment of data collection protocol; (4) established data collection criteria; (5) selection of appropriate participants; and (6) achievement of theoretical saturation. The data could not be collected in a manner that would allow for theoretical saturation to occur in each case study due to the nature of a single exposure data collection approach. However, theoretical saturation was achieved through the completion of four observations. Furthermore, the investigator opted to limit the university supervisors’ knowledge regarding the full extent of the complete research questions or goals, as to not influence their behaviors and supervision techniques during the observations (Flick, 2006).

The observational and follow-up interview notes were transcribed into a Word document and analyzed using Glaser’s (1965) constant comparative method. Categories were established and compared between the case studies

to ensure that appropriate themes were developed. The data collection and analysis was conducted by the lead researcher, who was a doctoral student with training in teacher preparation and preservice teacher supervision. A faculty member was used to triangulate the accuracy of the findings and conclusions.

## Findings

The study participants were male teacher education faculty members in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida ( $N = 4$ ). The participants had a range of teaching experience from four to eleven years in a school-based agricultural education classroom. Two participants had served as state supervisors for agricultural education. Each participant received a Ph.D. in agricultural teacher education from a land-grant university. The supervisors were employed at the university level for a range of two to thirty-two years. Each of the four university supervisors was given an alias to ensure data anonymity. The observations were conducted in late April and early May 2012. Dave, Barry, Jared, and Darrel conducted observations in high schools located in north-central and central Florida. Each school-based agricultural education program was a multi-teacher department. Two departments were housed in a separate building from the rest of the school. Three of the four preservice teachers observed were female.

During the follow-up interviews, two of the four students were classified, by their university supervisor, as having a mediocre display of effective teaching, as described during the follow-up interview. The other two preservice teachers were classified, by their university supervisors, as having above satisfactory teaching effectiveness. Each observation included a pre-conference, classroom observation, and post-conference. The observed supervisory visit was the second supervisory visit that the university supervisor conducted with the preservice teacher.

## Pre-Conference

Each conference included similar aspects and questioning strategies. The length of the

pre-conference ranged from 10 to 30 minutes based on the current level of the preservice teacher and the number of comments made by the cooperating and preservice teachers. The pre-conference was conducted two different ways: 1) with the preservice and cooperating teacher at separate times; or 2) with only the preservice teacher. Dave did not conduct a pre-conference with the cooperating teacher. During the supervisory visit the cooperating teacher entered and left the room frequently and worked on other projects. Jared and Barry began their supervisory visits by meeting with the cooperating teacher privately, then immediately met privately with the preservice teacher. Darrell met with the preservice teacher as they traveled to a field-based experience at a local farm. The pre-conference Darrell conducted with the cooperating teacher was split in two parts: at the farm during the field-based experience, and the second occurred in the afternoon in the classroom. Later, it was noted that this preconference was interrupted because county supervisors were observing the cooperating teacher.

**Meeting with the cooperating teacher.** Jared, Darrel, and Barry held a pre-conference with the cooperating teacher regarding the current performance of the preservice teacher. In two of the pre-conferences, the cooperating teacher immediately began with positive comments such as “She (preservice teacher) has a great rapport with the students and staff” and “She (preservice teacher) has made some significant improvements since your last (university supervisor) visit.” The university supervisors then asked individualized questions about the areas of improvement that were identified during the last supervisory visit. Jared asked “Has she (preservice teacher) become the teacher?” and “Has she (preservice teacher) increased student engagement and interest in the class?” In one case, Barry directly asked the cooperating teacher about the working relationship of the two preservice teachers that had been assigned to one cooperating school in order to determine if any additional areas of concern existed. During Jared’s pre-conference with the cooperating teacher, he had to redirect the conversation multiple times due to the cooperating teacher’s lack of focus on discussing the preservice teacher. Some of the questions that Jared used were:

“How has [preservice teacher] dealt with that student?” and “How often have you (cooperating teacher) met with [preservice teacher] to discuss her lesson planning?” Finally, Jared utilized the pre-conference as a time to review the activities and assignments that were required to be completed before the end of the student teaching internship.

**Meeting with the preservice teacher.** Each university supervisor began the pre-conference meeting by asking how the student internship was progressing. All but one of the preservice teachers responded positively. Barry’s preservice teacher immediately discussed negative occurrences related to classroom management, rather than positive experiences. To encourage the preservice teacher to focus on positive occurrences, Barry redirected the preservice teacher by responding, “What has gone well in your classes?” and “What comments have you received from your cooperating teacher?”. The second question helped to illustrate the positive work that the cooperating teacher had seen and presented during the previous supervisory visit and subsequent weeks of teaching. For the three other preservice teachers, the university supervisors noted the positive comments.

The pre-conference continued with a discussion about the lesson(s) to be observed and the preservice teachers’ improvements since the first supervisory visit. Three of the preservice teachers verbally discussed the components of their lesson(s), while Dave’s preservice teacher presented a bound copy of the lesson plans, worksheets, and presentation tools. Dave spent time reading through the packet of information and asked clarifying questions periodically such as “How do you (preservice teacher) plan to incorporate this worksheet into the lesson?” and “How will you (preservice teacher) ensure that students are taking the notes that are provided on the board?” Darrell also used questioning strategies to delve deeper into his preservice teacher’s lesson: “What are some of the things you want them (the students) to consider during the lesson?” and “How will you use questioning to engage students in the lesson?” The use of questions by Barry and Darrell established that the preservice teachers had considered each aspect of the lesson, including how the students would progress and learn. Each preservice teacher was

then asked what the supervisor should focus on during the observation. Barry asked "What aspects of your teaching do you still want to improve upon?" Jared, on the other hand, directly asked his preservice teacher "What would you like me to focus on during your lesson?"

### Observation

During the observations, each university supervisor chose a seat either in the back or on the side of the room in order to reduce the influence they had on the classroom dynamics. This seat provided a clear view of the entire classroom, ensuring that the university supervisor could observe the actions of both the students and preservice teacher. Each university supervisor utilized a two-column sheet for their notes during the class. Each university supervisor used a new sheet for each class session observed. Jared stated that on the left hand side of the paper he noted what worked well during the lesson and overall observations of the students. He used the right hand side of the sheet to note different items that could be addressed during the post-conference such as: questions, comments, and suggestions. All university supervisors utilized the two-column notes in the same manner to capture the events for the observed period. Furthermore, Barry and Jared both utilized a diagram of the classroom to document the interactions between the preservice teacher and students. Jared also documented the preservice teacher's movements throughout the classroom. These diagrams were used by Jared and Barry during the post-conference to discuss different conclusions that were reached.

During the observation, university supervisors focused on the overall activities that occurred in the classroom. At one point, Darrell exhibited signs of being distraught due to the preservice teacher's lack of preparedness during the lesson and perceived wasting of instructional time. Darrell indicated being distraught by: rolling his eyes, shaking his head, and tapping his pen. However, these physical signs occurred in a manner that was not obvious to the preservice teacher. Dave made note of the preservice teacher and students' behavior in the classroom, utilizing the information to assist the preservice

teacher in adapting the teaching for the following period(s).

At the end of each observation, the university supervisor would utilize five to ten minutes of time to complete paperwork required by the College of Education at the [University]. Each supervisor completed the forms with the use of their notes compiled during the classroom observations. Jared and Barry utilized the diagrams as a form of documentation. Barry also included a sketched copy of the diagram on his completed forms. Each university supervisor provided a copy of the required forms to the preservice teacher following the supervisory visit.

### Post-Conference

A post-conference was conducted by each university supervisor. Dave only met with the preservice teacher, while the other supervisors met with both the preservice and cooperating teacher. Darrell and Jared chose to meet with the cooperating and the preservice teacher together, while Barry met with the cooperating and preservice teacher separately. The post-conference varied in length based on the preservice teacher's skill level and the amount of input provided by the individuals that were present. The length of the post-conference ranged from 20 to 90 minutes in length. Later, it was noted that if the supervisory visit went well then the length of the post-conference(s) was short. If the preservice teacher was ill-prepared or struggled during the supervisory visit, the post-conference took more time. During the follow-up interview, each university supervisor noted that they wanted the preservice teacher to feel positive and able to implement instructional changes once the visit had finished, regardless of their skill level.

**Meeting with preservice teacher and cooperating teacher together.** Darrell and Jared both took the opportunity to discuss the observation with the cooperating teacher and preservice teacher together. Both post-conference meetings initially began with casual conversation that transitioned into questioning the preservice teacher about their overall thoughts of the lesson that was presented. Darrell asked "How do you think that your classes went today?" while Jared asked "What do you think

went well during your lessons today?” Both forms of questioning caused the preservice teachers to begin to evaluate and reflect on their performance. When asked to discuss the lesson in general, Darrell’s preservice teacher focused on positive aspects, though the lesson and performance were mediocre. Conversely, Jared’s preservice teacher struggled to focus on positive aspects of the lesson, leading him to constantly redirect the preservice teacher to focus on positive aspects rather than negative. Jared redirected the preservice teacher by asking new questions such as: “Do you think that you have improved upon your teacher presence in the classroom?” Each question Jared asked related to an area of improvement that he believed the preservice teacher had made. However, the preservice teacher continued to struggle with focusing on positive comments.

Following the initial questioning, both Jared and Darrell presented positive aspects of the lesson that they had noted during the observation. While both preservice teachers agreed with the positive comments, they were both more argumentative when areas of concern were presented by the university supervisor. The preservice teachers observed by Jared and Darrell were considered to be struggling or mediocre. Jared presented areas of concern in ways that began with a solution. For example, when discussing issues concerning the interactions between the preservice teacher and students, Jared began by asking if the classroom layout could be adapted. When the preservice teacher stated that it could not, Jared then discussed his reason for a change in the classroom layout and how this could improve the overall interaction between teacher and student. Once Jared presented his thoughts, the preservice teacher began to question the cooperating teacher regarding some minor changes to the room structure. Overall, Jared’s preservice teacher accepted the comments and wanted to improve.

On the other hand, Darrell’s preservice teacher continually ignored the constructive feedback and had various excuses as to why each area of concern occurred during the lesson. Many times, the preservice teacher blamed the students and the cooperating teacher. Darrell presented areas of concern slightly differently than Jared by asking a question related to a

teaching concept during the lesson. For example, Darrell asked, “Do you know how long the beginning (introduction) of your lesson was?” The preservice teacher responded with “It was supposed to be 10 minutes”. In actuality, this portion of the lesson took 18 minutes of a 42 minute period. When presented with this information, the preservice teacher immediately began to create an excuse about needing to make copies of packets for the students that signed up for various CDEs and that the students really enjoyed this time of the class. At many points during the post-conference Darrell had to reiterate, in a more direct fashion, the areas of concern while clarifying that an excuse was not needed but a solution had to be found. The same behavior occurred when the cooperating teacher presented issues that had occurred during the student teaching internship. Towards the end of the post conference, the preservice teacher began to accept the constructive feedback. However, there was always at least one excuse that was presented to Darrell and the cooperating teacher.

As the post-conference continued, Darrell and Jared took different approaches to instructing the preservice teacher. Darrell required the preservice teacher to complete a professional development plan to assist in the development of a solution for the areas of concern presented. Jared used personal stories from teaching to reiterate points made throughout the post-conference. Both methods were successful and as the post-conference ended, each preservice teacher could clearly identify the areas of improvement that needed to be addressed prior the next supervisory visit. Darrell and Jared both concluded the post-conference by reiterating the assignments required for each preservice teacher to complete the student teaching internship. A final supervisory visit date was established by both university supervisors and the areas of concern were reinforced, to the preservice and cooperating teacher. Jared also informed the preservice teacher of the grade assigned for the performance during this particular observation.

#### **Meeting with only the preservice teacher.**

Dave held a post-conference with only the preservice teacher following the classroom observation. Dave conducted his post-conference slightly different than the other university supervisors by addressing small concerns in between classes

with the preservice teacher. After the observation was complete, Dave asked the preservice teacher, "Are you having fun (during the student teaching internship)?" and "Are you going to teach?" Dave used these two questions to reiterate the outstanding work that the preservice teacher exemplified during the student teaching internship. Several times during the post-conference, Dave worked to encourage the preservice teacher to accept a teaching position. The preservice teacher was confined to a given geographical area due to an established family life.

When addressing the positive aspects and areas of concern, Dave reiterated the points that he made during the short conferences conducted between classes. Dave discussed his observation period-by-period and started the discussion of each class by asking the preservice teacher, "So how do you think it went?" The preservice teacher provided additional positive comments and addressed the comments for improvement made between classes. The new comments were positive in nature, reassuring the preservice teacher of the quality performance observed and encouraging the preservice teacher to apply for a teaching position. During the post-conference, Dave used several personal stories that focused around his decision to teach and how he conducted his classroom. At the end of the post-conference, Dave reiterated the assignments that had to be completed before the preservice teacher ended the student teaching internship.

**Meeting with the preservice and cooperating teacher independently.** Barry met with the preservice and cooperating teacher independently, when conducting his post-conference. Barry began the conference with the preservice teacher and reviewed the classroom diagram that was used to depict the preservice teacher's interactions with students in the class. Barry asked the preservice teacher, "What do you notice about the diagram?" The preservice teacher immediately noticed that there were a few students that had been called upon during the lesson. The preservice teacher then asked, "How do I ensure that this doesn't happen in the future?" Barry discussed different solutions with the preservice teacher and assisted in the development of a solution that would be utilized during the remaining portion of the student teaching internship.

The preservice teacher was directed to communicate with Barry and the cooperating teacher to inform them if the solution was working. During this discussion, Barry presented that different levels of instruction were given to students who returned from scheduling courses and provided possible solutions to be employed.

Barry informed the preservice teacher what was done well during the lesson, such as the preservice teacher's presence and movement during the quiz. Following, the preservice teacher was asked, "What else went well during the lesson?" and "What would you (preservice teacher) do differently when teaching this lesson again?" The preservice teacher immediately discussed what would be done differently, describing actions that could have been taken to assist students who returned from scheduling courses, such as providing instruction to the class prior to dismissing students called to schedule courses. The preservice teacher was very receptive to the critiques and proposed adaptations to the lesson, stating that the recommended changes would be implemented immediately. When discussing areas of concern or improvement, Barry encouraged the preservice teacher to self-identify the concerns and promote reflective practices. Due to the concerns presented by the preservice teacher during the pre-conference, Barry asked the preservice teacher to "describe what issues occurred related to student motivation." The preservice teacher mentioned a few items that Barry agreed with and provided an example of a student who sat towards the back of the room. Barry reinforced the positive behaviors that the preservice teacher demonstrated during the lesson and presented different behaviors that could be implemented if the issue occurred again. Barry reviewed the notes that were compiled during the observation. The conference transitioned into a discussion about the differences between the student teaching internship and a teacher's first year. Before ending the conference, Barry discussed improvements that the preservice teacher had made since the last supervisory visit as well as items to be completed before the end of the student teaching internship.

Following the preservice teacher meeting, Barry met with the cooperating teacher to discuss what had been observed and the comments that were made to the preservice teacher. This

conference began with casual conversation about the agricultural education department and the National FFA National Chapter Application that was being prepared. Barry transitioned the conversation into a discussion about the positive aspects and areas of improvement observed during the lesson. Barry also took time to discuss the observation and how the preservice teacher dealt with the distractions that occurred from students leaving to meet with their guidance counselor. Once Barry had discussed the observation, Barry reiterated an overall positive comment about the preservice teacher's comfort and ability in front of the classroom.

### **Follow-up Interview and Observational Documents**

Following the supervisory visit, each university supervisor was asked to participate in a semi-structured interview related to their ideal and typical supervisory practice. University supervisors also provided the researcher with their observational notes from the preservice teacher visit. Barry, Jared, Darrell, and Dave were asked a series of six predetermined questions. The six questions were designed to collect additional data and to ensure the accuracy of the data collected. The six questions were: 1) What meetings do you normally have during a supervision visit?; 2) What order do you consider ideal?; 3) If you are informing an intern of an area of concern how do you normally present that idea?; 4) Do you use the same strategies for an intern that is doing well versus an intern that is struggling?; 5) What items do you write in your notes?; and 6) How do you want the intern to feel at the end of the observation?

The university supervisors were first asked, "What meetings do you normally have during a supervisory visit?" Darrell, Barry, and Jared described that they would conduct a pre-conference meeting with the cooperating and preservice teacher, followed by an observation, and a post-conference with the preservice and cooperating teacher. Darrell and Barry explained that the pre-conference and post-conference meetings could be conducted with the preservice and cooperating teacher at the same time, while Jared preferred to always meet with the preservice and cooperating teachers separately. Dave, who

did not meet with a cooperating teacher during the on-site visit, indicated that he normally included the cooperating teacher in the post-conference and would have a separate meeting with the cooperating teacher if there was an issue.

In response to a second question, "What order do you find ideal?" Dave included meeting with the cooperating teacher and preservice teacher during the pre- and post-conference, even though Dave did not meet with the cooperating teacher during the observation. Barry and Jared each conducted a supervisory visit that contained the same meetings and order as their ideal visit, and that were also identified by Dave. However, Darrell included a pre-conference that was typically conducted, by phone, two days prior to the on-site observation. The remaining meetings that Darrell ideally conducts during an observation were the same as the other university supervisors. The order of meetings conducted through the observation was also confirmed by the observational notes made by each of the university supervisors.

When asked "If you are informing an intern of an area of concern, how do you normally present the idea?" Barry, Darrell, and Dave stated that they use questioning strategies to engage-in conversation with preservice teachers regarding an area of concern. Barry stated, "I use questioning strategies to encourage the preservice teacher to reflect on their observation," therefore allowing the preservice teacher to individually interpret the areas of concern. However, Jared stated that his ideal way was to present the data and allow the preservice teacher to interpret the data, rather than specifically stating the area of concern and providing a solution. Following the students response, Jared affirmed the solution or provided alternative solutions that would allow the preservice teacher to be successful. Moreover, if Jared provided an alternative solution, the solution must be agreed upon by the student teacher. Darrell's observational notes indicated the areas of concern that were exhibited during the observation. Written next to each area of concern, Darrell noted the question that he planned to use during the post-conference to engage the preservice teacher in the reflection process.

The university supervisors were then asked, "Do you use the same strategies for an intern that is doing well versus an intern that is struggling?" Each university supervisor stated that the same methods would be used except that more direct comments and questions would be utilized when addressing areas of concerns. Direct comments would be utilized to ensure that the preservice teacher comprehended the areas of concern and put preventative practices into action to fix the situation. Further, the university supervisors continued to promote the need for a preservice teacher to engage in reflection of their teaching. When examining the observational notes Dave used asterisks to indicate important items that should be brought to the preservice teachers' attention. Dave used a system of one asterisk to represent a positive comment and two asterisks to represent an area of concern. Further, Darrell continued to write questions for positive comments that he would ask the preservice teacher, to engage in reflection on the overall process.

The fifth question asked to the university supervisors was, "What items do you write in your notes?" During this portion of the follow-up interview, each university supervisor provided the researcher with a copy of their observation notes. The observation notes were completed in a similar manner. Each university supervisor used a two-column note system. The left side of the observation notes contained examples of effective classroom teaching performances, while the right side of the observation notes contained suggestions, comments, or questions that the university supervisor had for the preservice teacher. Many times the university supervisor would have an observation noted, followed by the question that they used during the post-conference to engage the preservice teacher in reflection. Dave and Barry both used their notes efficiently to recap the progression of the lesson during the class period. They noted the time that the learning activity changed and both kept charts of who was called upon to answer questions during the classroom instruction. This information was used during their post-conferences with the preservice teacher to provide justification for some of the comments they had regarding the observation.

Finally, the university supervisors were asked, "How do you want the intern to feel at the end of the observation?" Barry, Jared, Darrell, and Dave all responded that they wanted the preservice teachers to feel confident in their abilities and positive about the overall visit. However, Darrell did state that this was sometimes difficult depending on the skill level of the preservice teacher. On Darrell's observational notes, he made several notations to ensure that he presented more positive comments than areas of concern. During the interview, Darrell expressed that the preservice teacher he observed did not teach to the best of their ability.

### **Conclusion, Discussion and Recommendations**

The first research question of the study sought to describe the supervisory practices utilized by a university faculty member during their supervisory visits of preservice teachers. The university supervisors each conducted a structured supervision with the preservice teachers they were assigned (Fritz & Miller, 2003, 2004), by following a set protocol of three meetings, a pre-conference, observation, and post-conference (Acheson & Gall, 2003; Nolan & Hoover, 2008). Based on the SOIL model, as preservice teachers complete the preservice teaching internship, a structured (first level) supervisory visit standardized the overall experience for preservice teachers. The utilization of a structured supervisory visit supported the work of Fritz and Miller (2004). Based on the results that university faculty members utilized structured supervision methods, further research should examine the use of structured supervisions practices with preservice teachers. The utilization of structured supervision strategies assisted preservice teachers in the development of reflective teaching skills to enhance a preservice teacher's instructional practice.

Further, university supervisors used scaffolding and questioning techniques to guide the preservice teacher through reflective teaching practices (Zimpher, deVoss, & Nott, 1980; Nolan & Hoover, 2008), which encouraged preservice teachers to critically analyze their teaching. To promote reflective teaching practices, each university supervisor utilized a two-column

observation note sheet approach to organizing and recording their observations, comments, questions, and thoughts during the supervisory visit. Based on the results that university faculty members utilized a similar observational note taking approach to promote reflective teaching practices, teacher educators should consider the use of similar note taking processes to help communicate their observations and considerations during a supervisory visit.

The second research question of the study sought to describe the differences in supervisory practices of the university faculty members. The principle issue identified was inclusion of the cooperating teacher. During this study, one university supervisor did not include the cooperating teacher in the pre- or post-conference. While the other three supervisors each met with the cooperating and preservice teacher separately during the pre-conference, two of the university supervisors met with the cooperating and preservice teachers together during the post-conference. The researchers recommend that further research be conducted to examine the cooperating teacher's inclusion and role during the pre- and post-conference of a supervisory visit. During supervisory visits, university supervisors should consider the inclusion of the cooperating teacher to ensure that each party involved in the supervision of the preservice teacher had similar expectations during the student teaching internship.

The third research question of the study sought to describe how the data found can inform current practice within agricultural teacher education. When preparing preservice teachers, university supervisors must be aware of the supervisory practices that are being used by other university supervisors who are assigned preservice teachers (Fritz & Miller, 2004). Teacher preparation programs should work together to identify and/or improve standard practice that should be utilized when conducting preservice teacher supervisory visits to ensure that all pre-

service teachers in the program received similar experiences during the student teaching internship. In some cases, a university faculty member could be assigned to monitor the supervisory practices that preservice teachers receive while completing the student teaching internship. Teacher preparation programs should also hold a planning meeting for university supervisors to review the student teaching internship practices and supervisory techniques to ensure that consistency is achieved. Teacher educators must continue to improve their practice to ensure that the needs of preservice teachers are met (Fritz & Miller, 2004; Nolan & Hoover, 2008). This practice can have an influence on the teachers' efficacy and their development as a teacher (Allen, 2003; McKinney, Haberman, Stafford-Johnson, & Robinson, 2008). Further, when graduate students or external supervisors serve as university supervisors, a training session should be held to ensure that their practices are similar to university faculty members (Fritz & Miller, 2004).

Based on the findings of this study, five recommendations were made for teacher educators in agricultural education: (1) structured supervision practices should be utilized when conducting student teacher supervisory visits; (2) cooperating teachers should be included in pre- and post-conferences to ensure that consistent expectations and goals are maintained; (3) a structured note taking process should be utilized during the observation to ensure that university supervisors can promote a reflective post-conference; (4) teacher educators should ensure that university supervisors utilize similar supervision strategies when supervising preservice teachers during their student teaching internship; and (5) university supervisors should ensure that pre- and post-conferences promote the utilization of reflective teaching skills to promote preservice teachers utilization of reflection during the remaining portion of their student teaching internship and during throughout their teaching careers.

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