

Current and Expected Roles of Agriculture Supervisors

R. Kirby Barrick, Associate Professor
Agricultural Education
The Ohio State University

Accepted for Publication December 1985

The professional atmosphere that exists in a school, according to Prater (1969), determines to a large extent how well a good supervisor can serve teachers. The continued interaction of teachers, supervisors and administrators is a key condition of a good supervisory program.

Supervisors often have seemingly endless responsibilities. Despite that concern, Prater (1969) simply suggests that effective supervision is the result of a wise combination of four factors:

1. The kind of person who serves as supervisor.
2. The school environment relating to the supervision.
3. The technical know-how of the supervisor.
4. The quality of planning carried on with effective supervision.

A fifth factor could be proposed as having some influence on the effectiveness of supervision. That factor is the perception of the role of the supervisor as seen by the supervisor and the teacher being served. Earlier studies (Barrick, 1985) revealed that differences did exist among teachers, supervisors and administrators regarding their perceptions of the role of the supervisor in vocational education.

Supervision has been viewed as both a role and a process. Persons whose primary role is the improvement of instruction also engage in supervisory processes, such as staff development and motivation, but normally those processes revolve around the primary role (Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1983). Supervisory roles can be characterized as serving as an educational program and instructional leader, communicating with both teachers and administrators and living within limits of authority.

Supervision has further been separated from administration by role definition rather than title. Supervisors are extensively involved in the instructional process, including planning, actualization, description, analysis and generalization. The supervisor, then, is a leader in the instructional process (Finch & McGough, 1982).

The purpose of establishing supervisory positions at various levels in education has been to improve instruction. Local vocational supervisors have estimated that approximately 60% of their time was spent on improvement of instruction activities. The remainder of their time was spent in administrative duties, such as inventory and disciplinary activities relating to students, and in related activities such as hall duty and parking lot monitoring.

Although the concept of local agricultural education supervisors is not widespread, vocational agriculture teachers are supervised by others at the local level, including principals, superintendents, head teachers and/or others. A better understanding of what teachers perceive is the role of supervisory personnel and differences between teacher and supervisor perceptions may assist in planning more effective supervision of vocational agriculture teachers and in preparing teachers with skills to work with their supervisors.

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to investigate the duties and responsibilities of local agriculture supervisors. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To describe the current role of local agriculture supervisors in Ohio as perceived by vocational agriculture teachers and local and state agricultural education supervisors.
2. To describe the expected role of local agriculture supervisors in Ohio as perceived by the same groups.
3. To ascertain the differences that exist among the perceptions of the groups regarding the current and expected roles of local agriculture supervisors.

Procedures

The population for the study included the local agriculture supervisors, state agricultural education supervisors and local vocational agriculture teachers in Ohio. Because of the low number of state supervisors, the local and state supervisors were combined into one group. A random sample of 19 local and 6 state supervisors was included in the study. A systematic random sample of 150 local agriculture teachers was included in the sample of teachers (approximately 25% of the population, deemed sufficient according to Cochran's formula).

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two questionnaire groups. One group completed a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of the current role of local agriculture supervisors. The other group responded with their perceptions of the expected role of local supervisors. Both instruments included a series of 47 statements of duties that could be a part of the role of local supervisors. The instruments were field tested independently and found to be reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .93$ for each instrument).

Respondents indicated the degree to which they perceived the statement is a duty or responsibility (current role) or their perceptions of the degree to which each statement should be (expected role) a duty of local supervisors. Responses were marked on a scale with values ranging from 6 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Mean scores were calculated for each of the 47 statements for both current role and expected role. Means were determined for the responses of the teachers and for the supervisors. T-tests for independent groups were performed for each statement to determine any statistically significant differences between teachers and supervisors ($\alpha=.05$), using the separate variance estimate to account for unequal sample sizes.

Results

Generally, both groups (teachers and supervisors) agreed that the 47 statements are and should be a part of the role of local agriculture supervisors (Table 1). On only four statements did the groups indicate that the duty is not and should not be a part of the role of local supervisors (mean < 3.50). Those statements included: Supervise non-vocational teachers, Perform hall duty, Monitor parking lots and Assist with athletic activities. On one statement, the teachers rated the duty below 3.50 for expected role. That duty was Organize the instructional side of the laboratory work and plan teachers' schedules. However, there was not a statistically significant difference between the groups.

For the current role, there was a statistically significant difference between teachers and supervisors on 12 statements. Supervisors rated the duty higher than teachers on 11 of the 12 statements. The one statement that teachers rated higher than supervisors was Assist with athletic activities, and both groups indicated that the supervisors do not currently perform that duty. It is interesting to note that, although both groups rated the items above 4.75 on the 6-point scale, perceptions of teachers and supervisors were significantly different on the statements, Observe on-site teaching, Describe the teaching performance, Provide an analysis of teaching for instructors and Assisting teachers in implementing change in instruction. For each statement, the supervisors rated the item higher than the teachers.

For the expected role, there was a statistically significant difference between teachers and supervisors on 16 statements. Supervisors rated the duty higher than teachers on all 16 statements. However, teachers and supervisors both indicated that the duty should be a part of the role of local supervisors (mean > 3.50) for 15 of the 16 statements. On the statement Supervise vocational teachers outside of agriculture, teachers rated the item 2.39 (moderately disagree) and supervisors rated the item 3.58 (slightly agree).

Conclusions

Generally there was agreement that most of the statements included on the instrument are a part of the current and expected roles of local agriculture supervisors. Teachers and supervisors do not perceive that non-instructional, non-vocational activities such as hall duty and parking lot monitoring are or should be duties of supervisors. The remaining statements were perceived as being current and expected duties of local supervisors.

For those statements where there was disagreement between teachers and supervisors regarding current and expected roles of supervisors, the

differences may not be of major practical significance. In most cases, teachers and supervisors rated the statements in the "agree" categories, indicating that the statement is and should be part of the role of local supervisors. The differences generally existed in the magnitude of agreement rather than between agreement and disagreement.

Implications and Recommendations

The following implications and recommendations are derived from the study:

1. Supervisors should be made aware of the possible differences in perceptions of their role. Supervision courses and other training and inservice programs should emphasize that teachers probably do not rate supervisory roles as highly as supervisors.

2. Teachers should be made aware of the role of the supervisory personnel with whom they may be working. Misconceptions regarding the role of the supervisor, whether that person is a principal or vocational supervisor, could lead to conflict between teachers and supervisory personnel.

3. Teacher preparation programs should stress that supervisory personnel are available and prepared to assist in activities such as inventorying, purchasing, planning, curriculum development and classroom and laboratory instruction.

4. Inservice education should be provided for supervisors to assist them in providing services to teachers.

5. Where local and state supervisors disagree, efforts should be made to identify the most acceptable duties and resolve possible conflict in expectations of local supervisors.

References

- Barrick, R. K. (1985). The role of local vocational education supervisors as perceived by superintendents, teachers and state and local supervisors in Ohio (Summary of Research Series No. SR 42). Columbus: The Ohio State University, Department of Agricultural Education.
- Finch, C. R., & McGough, R. L. (1982). Administering and supervising occupational education. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Prater, J. (1969). Improving the skills of teaching. In R. R. Leeper (Ed.), Supervision: Emergency profession (pp. 132-125). Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- Sergiovanni, T. J., & Starratt, R. J. (1983). Supervision: Human perceptions. New York: McGraw Hill.

Table 1

Current and Expected Roles of Agriculture Supervisors

| Duties | Current Role | | | Expected Role | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | | t | Mean | | t |
| | Teachers n=53 | Super- visors n=11 | | Teachers n=57 | Super- visors n=12 | |
| 1. Attend conference called by State Assistant Director of service area or authorized representative to discuss state and local problems. | 5.32 | 5.73 | -2.07 ^a | 5.50 | 5.58 | -0.40 |
| 2. Report to the Superintendent and/or Director of Vocational Education concerning the work and progress of the department. | 5.26 | 5.64 | -1.80 | 5.30 | 5.67 | -2.10 ^a |
| 3. Conduct departmental meetings and conferences with the staff as a group, and individually, concerning administrative policies, methods, difficulties, etc. | 5.26 | 5.73 | -2.08 ^a | 5.44 | 5.92 | -3.37 ^a |
| 4. Attend and participate in the annual local supervisors' workshops. | 5.15 | 5.63 | -0.96 | 5.30 | 5.58 | -1.36 |
| 5. Visit laboratories and classrooms to evaluate both student and instructor activity and to offer constructive help in the improvement of learning conditions. | 5.04 | 5.70 | -2.88 ^a | 5.32 | 5.75 | -1.98 |
| 6. Observe on-site teaching. | 5.04 | 5.90 | -4.63 ^a | 5.18 | 5.75 | -3.49 ^a |
| 7. Coordinate the department activities with administrative practices and policies affecting all departments and overall Vocational Program operation. | 4.92 | 5.27 | -1.39 | 5.00 | 5.25 | -0.98 |

(table continues)

| Duties | Current Role | | | Expected Role | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | | t | Mean | | t |
| | Teachers n=53 | Super- visors n=11 | | Teachers n=57 | Super- visors n=12 | |
| 8. Develop a well-organized plan for program supervision through consultation with local supervisory, administrative and teaching personnel, through the VEPD | 4.91 | 4.46 | 0.96 ^{ab} | 4.96 | 5.58 | -2.58 ^a |
| 9. Establish and maintain good relations with community organizations. | 4.89 | 4.91 | -0.06 | 5.40 | 5.50 | -0.37 |
| 10. Provide an analysis of teaching for instructors. | 4.87 | 5.45 | -1.90 | 4.74 | 5.83 | -6.41 ^a |
| 11. Describe the teaching performance. | 4.80 | 5.55 | -2.79 ^a | 4.77 | 5.67 | -4.36 ^a |
| 12. Develop and promote organized youth activities supporting the program. | 4.79 | 5.27 | -1.59 | 4.75 | 5.25 | -1.76 |
| 13. Coordinate and utilize the state services in administration support, teacher development, achievement testing and follow-up. | 4.79 | 5.00 | -0.78 | 4.96 | 4.75 | 0.84 |
| 14. Assist teachers in implementing change in instruction. | 4.79 | 5.45 | -2.34 ^a | 5.00 | 5.92 | -6.27 |
| 15. Assist in the selection, employment and inservice training of teachers. | 4.77 | 4.91 | -0.28 | 5.04 | 5.58 | -2.60 ^a |
| 16. Cooperate with State Department special service programs and personnel. | 4.73 | 4.73 | 0.01 | 5.00 | 5.17 | -0.69 |
| 17. Prepare local and state reports. | 4.70 | 5.18 | -1.53 | 5.03 | 5.08 | -0.16 |

(table continues)

| Duties | Current Role | | | Expected Role | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| | Mean | | t | Mean | | t |
| | Teachers n=53 | Super- visors n=11 | | Teachers n=57 | Super- visors n=12 | |
| 18. Develop an overall plan for the service area of supervision to satisfy present and future needs, under the provisions provided in the Ohio Plan for Vocational Education. | 4.66 | 4.73 | -0.21 | 5.05 | 5.17 | -0.31 |
| 19. Use professional services provided through teacher educators, area supervisors and others. | 4.63 | 5.09 | -1.66 | 4.96 | 5.25 | -0.92 |
| 20. Coordinate the activities of the service area throughout the VEPA. | 4.60 | 3.82 | 1.49 ^b | 4.53 | 5.25 | =2.26 ^a |
| 21. Coordinate the Vocational Service program with the trends and needs of the community. | 4.56 | 5.18 | -2.33 ^a | 4.89 | 5.08 | -0.64 |
| 22. Develop a program of inservice training involving group and individual conferences. | 4.55 | 5.00 | -1.54 | 4.71 | 5.42 | -3.48 ^a |
| 23. Develop a program of curriculum study and review. | 4.42 | 5.36 | -3.57 ^a | 4.49 | 5.17 | -2.32 ^a |
| 24. Coordinate the instructional activities between the school and cooperating business, industrial or health agencies. | 4.38 | 3.82 | 1.09 | 4.34 | 4.25 | 0.22 |
| 25. Assist in determining course content for vocational programs. | 4.37 | 4.91 | -1.58 | 4.35 | 5.50 | -5.24 ^a |
| 26. Coordinate the development of new programs between the school and the local Job Training and Partnership Act. | 4.36 | 3.27 | 1.92 ^b | 4.59 | 4.00 | 1.18 ^b |
| 27. Prepare and administer the budget. | 4.35 | 4.73 | -0.89 | 4.64 | 5.17 | -1.80 |

(table continues)

| Duties | Current Role | | | Expected Role | | |
|---|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | Mean | | t | Mean | | t |
| | Teachers n=53 | Super- visors n=11 | | Teachers n=57 | Super- visors n=12 | |
| 28. Promote and establish service area programs to meet the needs of the community. | 4.34 | 4.70 | -0.81 | 4.70 | 5.08 | -0.95 |
| 29. Coordinate activities and service in student selection, placement and follow-up. | 4.33 | 4.36 | -0.08 | 4.47 | 4.25 | 0.59 |
| 30. Prepare, approve or recommend supplies and equipment lists for purchasing. | 4.28 | 5.09 | 2.35 ^a | 4.53 | 5.50 | -3.90 ^{ab} |
| 31. Coordinate the cooperative instructional program of student on-the-job experiences with related instructional content. | 4.17 | 3.64 | 1.02 | 4.02 | 4.17 | 0.35 |
| 32. Conduct research and inform staff of results of other studies. | 4.00 | 3.70 | 0.64 | 3.82 | 3.92 | -0.21 |
| 33. Assist in developing student objectives. | 3.92 | 4.36 | -0.99 | 3.93 | 4.64 | -2.25 ^a |
| 34. Establish and maintain an inventory system. | 3.91 | 4.27 | -1.06 | 4.00 | 4.75 | -2.28 ^a |
| 35. Assist in specifying learning experiences. | 3.83 | 4.54 | -1.55 | 3.74 | 4.67 | -3.29 ^a |
| 36. Determine plans and location of laboratory and classroom space, their equipment and supervise the installation of new equipment and replacements. | 3.81 | 4.40 | -1.63 | 3.75 | 4.58 | -1.69 |
| 37. Organize and set up general and craft advisory committee. | 3.58 | 4.73 | -3.71 ^a | 4.05 | 4.67 | -1.31 |
| 38. Assist with in-school assemblies. | 3.47 | 3.36 | 0.21 | 3.65 | 3.25 | 0.91 |

(table continues)

| Duties | Current Role | | | Expected Role | | |
|--|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| | Mean | | | Mean | | |
| | Teachers n=53 | Super- visors n=11 | † | Teachers n=57 | Super- visors n=12 | † |
| 39. Team teach with vocational instructors. | 3.21 | 2.91 | 0.58 | 3.70 | 3.42 | 0.75 |
| 40. Assist with after-school social functions. | 3.08 | 2.91 | 0.37 | 3.02 | 2.92 | 0.22 |
| 41. Supervise vocational teachers outside of supervisor's service area certification. | 3.02 | 3.70 | -0.96 | 2.39 | 3.58 | -2.32 ^{ab} |
| 42. Serve as a substitute teacher. | 3.00 | 2.45 | 0.99 | 3.30 | 2.50 | 1.72 |
| 43. Supervise non-vocational teachers. | 2.74 | 2.91 | -0.27 | 2.30 | 2.33 | -0.07 |
| 44. Organize the instructional side of the laboratory work and plan teachers' schedules. | 2.64 | 3.40 | -2.01 | 2.84 | 3.58 | -1.67 |
| 45. Perform hall duty. | 2.53 | 3.00 | -0.75 | 2.12 | 2.25 | -0.28 |
| 46. Monitor parking lots. | 2.15 | 2.45 | -0.57 | 2.18 | 1.58 | 1.45 |
| 47. Assist with athletic activities. | 1.83 | 1.20 | 2.43 ^a | 1.95 | 1.58 | 1.15 |

Note. Scale: 1=Strongly disagree; 2=Moderately disagree; 3=Slightly disagree; 4=Slightly agree; 5=Moderately agree; 6=Strongly agree.

^aSignificant difference between groups at .05 level. ^bSignificant difference between local and state supervisors at .05 level.