

USE AND VALUE OF SUPERVISED OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE
PROGRAMS AND RELATED INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES
IN THE WESTERN REGION

by
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ABSTRACT

This study determined the perceptions of Western Region vocational agriculture teachers and state or regional FFA proficiency award winners in ten selected areas of ownership and placement in supervised occupational experience relating to the amount of time spent and perceived value of supervised occupational experience instructional activities.

The study consisted of two instruments, one developed for teachers of state or regional proficiency award winners and one developed for the state or regional proficiency award winner. Each respondent was asked to indicate the amount of time spent on classroom instruction concerning SOE and the amount of time spent on instructional on-site visitations. The respondents were asked to rank selected activities as to what activities influenced a student to conduct an SOE program, what activities are the most beneficial to students, and what activities are the most important in the development of an SOE program. All respondents were directed to respond to twenty statements indicative of standards common to vocational agriculture programs and to Supervised Occupation Experience Programs. By rating each question either "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree," or "strongly disagree," a four-point value Likert-type scale was used to weigh each statement equally and to reflect the intensity of each respondent's attitude. The mean, standard deviation, and t-score at the .05 confidence level were used to compare each question. Of the 105 questionnaires mailed to FFA state or regional proficiency award winners in the Western Region, 64 were returned. Of the 152 questionnaires mailed to teachers of state or regional proficiency award winners, 92 were returned.

The results of the study indicated that there is a high correlation of agreement between the Western Region FFA proficiency award winners and vocational agriculture teachers as to the amount of time spent in developing a proficiency award winner for state or national recognition. The success of the proficiency award winner is due to the involvement of the vocational agriculture teacher and is in part a reflection of his/her vocational agriculture program. Also, because teachers are the most important factor affecting Supervised Occupational Experience Programs, they have the ability to improve the aspects of a Supervised Occupational Experience Program. Further, the study indicated that teachers are spending more time and assistance on activities that are easier to teach than on more difficult subject areas such as locating an SOE, obtaining financial assistance, and teaching management strategies.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The summer program of vocational agriculture has been recognized by agricultural educators as a key component of the total vocational agriculture program since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917. This act initiated federal support for vocational agriculture in public schools and specifically mandated that all students be engaged in supervised farming for a minimum of six months.

It is apparent from this legislation that the process of "learning by doing" was considered essential to learning. The importance of SOE is summarized by Peterson and McCreight (1973):

One of the first requirements of an agriculture educator is to have a real dedication and commitment to a supervised occupational experience program for every student. The 'heart and backbone' of a vocational agriculture curriculum is the supervised occupational experience program.

Research has been conducted to determine the value of a year-round program and, more specifically, the value of the extended contract. Lantis (1976) conducted a study in Montana to determine the contributions a summer program makes to the success of the total program of vocational agriculture at the high school level. He found that when varying lengths of summer employment were compared, teachers employed over a longer period of time in the summer benefited the program by more

on-site instructional visitations; more awards were received by the school's FFA members; and more time was spent by the teachers supervising occupational experience projects.

Statement of the Problem

The supervised occupational experience should be as important as classroom and laboratory instruction in vocational agriculture, as outlined by the SOE handbook. Research was needed to demonstrate the relationship of supervised occupational experience to that of perceived values and time spent between vocational agriculture students and their instructors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research project was to compare the time involved and perceived value of SOE and related instructional activities among those students and their instructors who applied for and received a state and/or regional proficiency award from the Western Region of the FFA in 1984.

Objectives

The major objectives of this research project were:

- (1) To determine the perceptions of Western Region vocational agriculture teachers and state/regional FFA proficiency award winners in ten selected areas relating to:
 - (a) the amount of time spent on SOE instructional activities, and
 - (b) the perceived value of SOE instructional activities.

- (2) To compare the perceived values of selected SOE activities of Western Region vocational agriculture teachers and state/regional FFA proficiency award winners in ten selected areas.

This study was restricted to ten areas of the twenty-two (22) proficiency award areas in 1984, of which five (5) will be ownership areas and five (5) will be placement areas. These areas were as follows:

<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Placement</u>
Beef Production	Agricultural Electrification
Crop Production	Agricultural Mechanics
Diversified Livestock	Agricultural Processing
Swine Production	Agricultural Sales and Service
Sheep Production	Home and Farmstead Improvement

Statement of Need

Effective vocational agriculture programs have four major components: (1) in-school instruction, (2) Future Farmers of America, (3) adult instruction, and (4) supervised occupational experience programs.

Binkley (1977), in Agricultural Education magazine, warns:

The profession must develop a strong offense for the experience programs of our students. We had them at one time; we need them now. If we don't use the experience programs, we will lose them and end up teaching general agriculture.

Leising and Zilbert (1983) suggest:

Although agriculture educators have been committed to involving students in SOE, many educators have begun to question the quality, quantity, and integral nature of the experimental component of vocational agriculture programs.

Shelhamer's (1984) research indicates that some Montana vocational agriculture programs are doing a poor job of involving students in SOE

programs, while other programs are doing an excellent job. Consequently, this researcher and others are asking questions such as: Are students and vocational agriculture teachers committed to developing an excellent SOE program? How much time is spent in development an SOE? What are the values that are developed in the students as a result of the SOE? What are the perceived values of SOE as determined by the vocational agriculture instructor?

In response to this need, a study was developed to determine the values and the time spent on supervised occupational experience programs in the Western FFA Region.

Definitions

- (1) *Instructor:* A teacher of vocational agriculture in a secondary school.
- (2) *Vocational Agriculture:* An area of the high school curriculum which was established by the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, and consists of three elements, namely organized instruction, supervised occupational experience, and FFA activities.
- (3) *Extended Contract:* A contract that exceeds the traditional nine-month contract of teachers.
- (4) *FFA:* Future Farmers of America; national youth organization for individuals enrolled in vocational agriculture.
- (5) *SOE:* A part of the vocational agriculture instructional program designed to develop competencies in agriculture. The program may utilize facilities of home, farm, school, or community business and

industries. Programs include a variety of activities dealing with production, placement or employment, and school laboratory.

- (6) *Western FFA Region:* A regional division of the National Future Farmers of America organization which consists of fifteen states (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming).

Limitations

- (1) The study was limited to the fifteen states in the Western Region, as established by the National FFA constitution. The states are: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.
- (2) The population was limited to 1984 Western FFA Region state and/or regional proficiency award winners and their instructors.
- (3) The study was restricted to ten (10) of the twenty-two (22) proficiency award areas in 1984, of which five (5) were ownership areas and five (5) were placement.

Assumptions

To accomplish the objectives set forth, the researcher made the following assumptions:

- (1) That vocational agriculture teachers and students in vocational agriculture are the best qualified to determine the value of the supervised occupational experience program.

- (2) That the frequency of vocational agriculture teacher visitations and the success of proficiency award winners can be compared and that conclusions can be obtained from that comparison.
- (3) That supervised occupational experience instructional activities can be compared to the success of the proficiency award winners.

Methodology

Population Identification

The design of the research is ex post facto; therefore, individual students and instructors selected themselves into the population. A list of 105 student names was obtained from the National FFA center in Alexandria, Virginia, of the Western FFA Region proficiency award winner from each state. The researcher then contacted each state FFA supervisor for the addresses of these students, along with 152 advisors' names and addresses. A greater number of teachers were identified because of multiple vocational agriculture teachers in a vocational agriculture department.

Instrument Design and Distribution

The researcher chose a closed and open form questionnaire that required the population to respond to items pertaining to their supervised occupational experience. The instrument was developed with advice from the researcher's graduate committee members, and from graduate students in Agriculture Education at Montana State University. After several questionnaire revisions, a cover letter and a follow-up letter were prepared. The questionnaire, cover letter, and a stamped, self

addressed envelope were mailed to the students and teachers in September of 1985 (Appendices A and B). A follow-up letter with another questionnaire was mailed two weeks later to non-respondents.

Of the 105 questionnaires mailed to FFA students in the Western FFA Region, 74 (70.4%) were returned. Of those 74 returns, 10 were returned as undeliverable. This provided a usable return of 64 questionnaires, for a return rate of 60.9%. Table 1 shows the return rate for each of the states in the Western Region.

Table 1. Number of Student Respondents by State.

State	Number	Respondents	Percent
Alaska	4	1	1.5
Arizona	10	7	10.9
California	9	7	10.9
Colorado	9	8	12.5
Idaho	6	3	4.7
Montana	4	4	6.3
Nevada	6	3	4.7
New Mexico	6	4	6.3
Oklahoma	9	6	9.4
Oregon	9	4	6.3
Texas	9	5	7.8
Utah	7	2	3.1
Washington	9	7	10.9
Wyoming	8	3	4.7

One hundred and fifty-two questionnaires were mailed to the instructors of the proficiency award winners in the Western Region as identified by the state supervisors for FFA and vocational agriculture

teachers in 1984. Of those 152, 104 (68.4%) were returned. Of those 104 returns, 12 (7.8%) were returned as undeliverable. This provided a usable return of 92 questionnaires, for a return rate of 60.5%. The data in Table 2 show the return rate of the instructors in each of the states of the Western Region.

Table 2. Number of Instructor Respondents by State.

State	Number	Respondents	Percent
Alaska	2	1	1.1
Arizona	13	8	8.7
California	21	10	10.8
Colorado	11	8	8.7
Idaho	6	4	4.4
Montana	6	6	6.5
Nevada	6	4	4.4
New Mexico	8	4	4.4
Oklahoma	19	11	11.9
Oregon	7	6	6.5
Texas	14	8	8.7
Utah	12	5	5.5
Washington	17	12	12.9
Wyoming	10	5	5.5

Data Analysis

The data-gathering techniques used for the twenty questions were descriptive in nature. The possible responses were given numerical values: Strongly Agree (SA) = 1; Agree (A) = 2; Disagree (D) = 3; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 4. Raw data from the returned questionnaires

were compiled and statistically analyzed for its mean and standard deviation of each question item for the students and the teachers.

A mean for each question item was then computed. The item mean was the mean of the Likert values recorded for that question item. The mean ($\bar{X}$) for the students and the mean ($\bar{Y}$) for the teachers was determined by the formula:

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{X}) = \sum P_i X_i \text{ for the student respondents.}$$

$$\text{Mean } (\bar{Y}) = \sum P_i Y_i \text{ for the teacher respondents.}$$

where:

$$P_i = \frac{n_i}{n} \text{ and } P_i = \text{probability of } X = 1, 2, 3, 4 \text{ or } Y = 1, 2, 3, 4$$

$$i = 1, 2, 3, \text{ or } 4$$

$$n_i = \text{frequency of occurrence of } 1, 2, 3, \text{ or } 4$$

$$n = \text{total frequency of all } 1, 2, 3, \text{ and } 4$$

The expected variance of ($\bar{X}$) and ($\bar{Y}$) was calculated using the following formula:

$$S_x^2 = P_i (X_i - \bar{X})^2 \text{ for student respondents}$$

$$S_y^2 = P_i (Y_i - \bar{Y})^2 \text{ for teacher respondents}$$

$$SD = \sqrt{s}$$

A two-tailed t distribution was then calculated to test the hypotheses about differences of means for the independent samples in each of the twenty questions in the survey using the following equation:

$$t = \frac{(X - Y)}{\sqrt{\frac{(n_x - 1)s_x^2 + (n_y - 1)s_y^2}{(n_x + n_y) - 2} \left(\frac{1}{n} + \frac{1}{n} \right)}}$$

where:

n_x = student responses for that individual question

n_y = teacher responses for that individual question

The standard t-score for a 95 percent confidence level is 1.96.

Using $(n + n) - 2$ degrees of freedom, $(64 + 92) - 2 = 154$ degrees of freedom, it was found that t at the 0.05 level must be at least 1.96. Any calculated t -score above 1.96 was observed to have a significant difference between the two samples under study. The researcher used a standard deviation (SD) value in the t -test tables; however, the variance of the standard deviation must be used to determine the calculated t -score.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Supervised occupational experience (SOE) programs are designed and conducted, along with FFA activities, classroom and laboratory instruction, to develop skills, concepts and values needed by workers in the agriculture industry. Since the inception of the program with the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, supervised occupational experience programs have been included as a part of vocational agriculture education.

Sutphin and Berkey (1981) reported that SOE programs for students in vocational agriculture are a national priority. This priority was identified at the Spring 1978 business meeting of the National Advisory Council for Vocational Agriculture, and at a 1980 national conference, to determine issues affecting agriculture education for the remainder of the Twentieth Century.

The National Commission on Secondary Vocational Education (The Unfinished Agenda, 1984) recognized the importance of SOE as a field-based learning program where actual experience is gained in the workplace or through community service, and made the following recommendation: "Field-based learning is grossly underutilized. Therefore we recommend that supervised, field-based learning experiences be made available to all students."

Factors Affecting SOE

Supervised occupational experience has continued because most agriculture educators believe that it has accomplished one or more of the following purposes (Peterson and McCreight, 1973):

- (1) SOE is an extension of the classroom;
- (2) SOE encourages use of approved practices;
- (3) SOE promotes close cooperation between agribusiness and education;
- (4) SOE informs the teacher about the situation of the student through home visits;
- (5) SOE helps students see the relevance of instruction;
- (6) SOE makes effective teaching in a real-life situation.

Horner (1979) denotes that studies have shown consistently that the highest priority acceptable in activities for a summer program center around students within the local community.

Robinson (1976) expressed the view that the vocational agriculture teacher should spend at least half of their summer hours in the broad area of student supervision.

Everett Rhodes (1983) has concluded that:

- (1) The stronger a teacher's conviction of the value and need for SOE programs, the greater will be the rate of student participation.
- (2) Teachers with a strong philosophical belief in the value and need for SOE do things which increase student participation.
- (3) Student participation in SOE is enhanced when it is treated as an integral, required part of the vocational agriculture program. Written policies and standards supporting this belief are useful in maintaining a high percentage of SOE participation.

Morton (1979) denotes that SOE programs for students enrolled in vocational agriculture are a universally accepted principle and adapted practice. His study of the relationship between the quality of supervised occupational experience programs and achievement of students indicated that learning by doing is important and should be researched in greater detail.

The Handbook on Supervised Occupational Experiences (FFA Foundation, 1982) expresses the importance of SOE programs as follows:

Learning through supervised experience is a very effective and meaningful way of developing essential occupational competencies. Every program of vocational agriculture should involve each student in an occupational experience.

Research conducted by David L. Williams (1977) at Iowa State University identified factors that students felt were important in planning and conducting their SOE programs. Students perceived their parents and their vocational agriculture classes as the two most important factors in developing their vocational agriculture ownership SOE programs. Also, students with placement types of SOE programs recognized their vocational agriculture teacher as an important factor. Vocational agriculture classes provide an opportunity for the teacher to give group help by teaching units that will help beginning vocational agriculture students select and plan their SOE programs. Instruction that will help students conduct and expand their SOE programs should also be included in the vocational agriculture curriculum.

Research has also revealed several factors that have increased student participation in conducting supervised occupational experience programs while they are enrolled in vocational agriculture. Long (1982)

indicated that in Utah teacher experience was the most critical factor in distinguishing between those programs with a high percentage of SOE participation and those programs with a low percentage of SOE participation. Studies conducted by agriculture teacher educators, Zurbrick (1984) in Arizona, Vaughn (1983) in New Mexico, and Leising (1983) in California indicate that when students participated in FFA they also conducted an SOE program. Factors contributing to whether or not students conducted SOE programs were: (1) desire by the students to gain experience for a future career, (2) desire to make money, (3) required for the vocational agriculture program, (4) part of their grade, (5) number of visits by teacher, (6) student grade point average, (7) required to keep record book, and (8) type of school setting -- rural or city.

Research conducted by Gebhardt (1985) of Montana vocational agriculture teachers revealed that the most important factors associated with students participating in supervised occupational experience programs were:

- (1) Teacher commitment to supervised occupational experience programs;
- (2) Communities understanding the FFA and supervised occupational experience program;
- (3) Local program with extended contract for on-site instruction; and
- (4) Parent/guardian or employer support of agricultural education.

Colleen Kaczor (1983) reports:

When assisting a student in developing a SOE program, several factors should be considered by the instructor. The scope of the project depends upon parental permission, the student's interest, the student's capabilities, and the resources available. Instructors should

remember that the planned growth and maturation of the student should be considered if it is to be meaningful and challenging.

The importance of on-site instruction for SOE was summarized by Robert Bell (1977) when he stated that the way in which his students received many awards was simply:

Farm visits, farm visits, farm visits. Those visits served to help students and their parents set goals, plan enterprises, secure quality livestock and seed, and, possibly most important ... indicate to that student and that family that you care about them.

Shelhamer (1984), in a study of the effectiveness of SOE in Montana's vocational agriculture program, found that:

- (1) There is a failure on the part of Montana vocational agriculture teachers to effectively communicate to all vocational agriculture students that SOE is a required part of the program.
- (2) The low frequency of on-site instruction to freshman students could be a major reason why one-third of the beginning students don't get an early start with their SOE.
- (3) Montana vocational agriculture teachers view the primary purpose of SOE to be the teaching of record keeping.
- (4) Montana vocational agriculture instructors need to spend more time planning for on-site instructional visits.

Summary

If SOE programs are to be strengthened, each agriculture educator must be committed to improving the supervised occupational experience aspect of the vocational agriculture program. It is important to reveal some of the basic concepts of successful supervised occupational experience programs and what the instructors and students perceive to be important factors to the success of their programs. The literature

clearly indicates a continuing need for strong and effective SOE programs in vocational agriculture.

CHAPTER 3

PRESENTATION OF DATA

Introduction

In order to meet the objectives of this study, data were collected from vocational agriculture students who were regional/state winners of proficiency awards in the Western FFA Region in 1984 and their vocational agriculture teacher. The data were then statistically analyzed to provide the information necessary for the completion of this study. The results of this study are divided into three major sections. These sections are as follows: (1) Student Demographic Information, (2) Teacher Demographic Information, and (3) Effectiveness and use of SOE Activities.

Student Demographic Information

One hundred and five (105) questionnaires were mailed to vocational agriculture students that were identified by the National FFA Center as state and/or regional proficiency award winners for 1984. Of those 105, 74 (70.4%) were returned; 10 (.09%) were returned as undeliverable. This provided a usable return of 64 questionnaires, for a 60.9% return rate. The data in Table 1 (page 7) show the return rate for each of the states in the Western Region. Of the 64 usable returns, the highest number (8, or 12.5%) came from Colorado, while the lowest return (1, or 1.5%) came from Alaska.

The number of years a student was enrolled in vocational agriculture is displayed in Table 3. Fifty (78.1%) student participants responded that they had been enrolled in vocational agriculture for four years. Twelve students (18.8%) were enrolled for three years. Two students (3.1%) were enrolled for two years.

Table 3. Number of Years Students Enrolled in Vocational Agriculture.

	4 Years	3 Years	2 Years	1 Year	Total
Frequency	50	12	2	-0-	64
Percent	78.1	18.8	3.1	-0-	100.0

Data in Table 4 reveal the number of years students have conducted a supervised occupational experience program. Of the respondents, 52 (81.2%) conducted an SOE for four or more years, of which 13 (20.3%) conducted an SOE for four years, 10 (15.7%) conducted an SOE for five years, 9 (14.0%) conducted an SOE for six years, and 20 (31.2%) conducted an SOE for over six years. Twelve (18.8%) student respondents conducted an SOE for three or less years, of which 8 (12.5%) conducted an SOE for three years, 3 (4.7%) conducted an SOE for two years, and 1 (1.6%) conducted an SOE for one year.

Table 4. Number of Years Students Conducted SOE.

	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	6 Years	> 6 Years	Total
Frequency	1	3	8	13	10	9	20	64
Percent	1.6	4.7	12.5	20.3	15.7	14.0	31.2	100.0

Teacher Demographic Information

One hundred and fifty-two (152) questionnaires were mailed to the instructors of the proficiency award winners in the Western Region as identified by the state supervisors for FFA and vocational agriculture teachers in 1984. Of those 152, 104 (68.4%) were returned. Of those 104 instruments, 12 (7.8%) were returned as undeliverable. This provided a usable return of 92 questionnaires, for a return rate of 60.5%. The data in Table 2 (page 8) show the return rate of the instructors in each of the states of the Western Region. Of the 92 usable returns, the highest number (12, or 12.9%) came from Washington, while the lowest return (1, or 1.1%) came from Alaska.

The demographic information section of the survey instrument revealed that 80 (86.8%) respondents were employed under contracts for 10.5 months or longer. One (1%) was employed for nine months. The length of teaching experience ranged from one year of teaching to thirty-seven years of teaching, with thirteen years of teaching experience being the mean. The teachers reporting on this survey taught in the same school system from one to thirty-three years. The mean for tenure was nine years. Sixty-four (69%) of the teachers reported that they had been enrolled in vocational agriculture as a high school student. Forty-eight (75%) indicated they were active in a local FFA chapter.

Effectiveness and Use of SOE Activities

Data in Table 5 reveal that 61 (95%) student respondents were required to keep record books on their SOE, while 38 (59%) of the

respondents revealed that they were required to have an SOE program to be enrolled in vocational agriculture.

Forty-five (70%) of the student respondents indicated the instructors use SOE as a part of the student's vocational agriculture grade. Of the teacher respondents, 72 (78%) indicated that they give grades for SOE, and that the percentage for determining an SOE grade ranged from 5% to 50%, with the mean being 20%.

The students indicated that 42 (66%) had a long-range plan for development of their SOE within the first nine weeks of enrollment in vocational agriculture; also, 55 (86%) of the student respondents agreed that they kept within their occupational goals and that they progressed in preparation for an agricultural occupation through the SOE that they selected.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Student SOE Planned Activities.

Planned Activities	Frequency			
	Yes	%	No	%
SOE required to be enrolled in vocational agriculture?	38	59	26	41
Required to keep an SOE record book?	61	95	3	5
SOE used to determine your vo-ag grade?	45	70	19	30
Prepared a long-range plan for SOE in the first nine weeks of vo-ag?	42	66	22	34
Selected SOE within individual occupational goals?	55	86	9	14
Progressed in preparation for agricultural occupation, through SOE program?	55	86	9	14

As indicated by data in Table 6, 27 (42.2%) of the students were starting their SOE one or two months after enrolling in vocational agriculture, while 26 (40.6%) respondents indicated "other," which suggested that the students had their SOE in place prior to enrollment in vocational agriculture. Of the 26 (40.6%) student respondents who indicated other, 18 revealed that they had continued their SOE program from an existing 4-H program. Twelve (13%) of the teachers reported that they required the students to have an SOE within one or two months of enrollment in vocational agriculture. The teachers indicated that 62 (12 + 27 + 23, or 67.4%) required the students to have an SOE within five or six months after enrolling in vocational agriculture.

Table 6. Elapsed Time from Enrollment in Vocational Agriculture to Starting Time of SOE as Reported by Students and Teachers.

Time	Students (N=64)		Teachers (N=92)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 or 2 months	27	42.2	12	13.0
3 or 4 months	5	7.8	27	29.4
5 or 6 months	2	3.1	23	25.0
7 or 8 months	1	1.6	8	8.7
9 or 10 months	1	1.6	6	6.5
11 or 12 months	2	3.1	13	14.1
Other	26	40.6	3	3.3

The teachers' questionnaire asked how they inform the students entering their program about SOE and vocational agriculture. As shown by the data in Table 7, 73 (79.3%) teachers informed students entering

their program about SOE and vocational agriculture through classroom lessons. Thirty-three (35.9%) teachers reported the first on-site visitation as the second most frequently used method, followed by FFA meetings 25 (27.2%) and parent night 22 (23.9%).

Table 7. Activities Used to Inform Students of SOE and Vocational Agriculture.

Activity	Frequency	Percent*
Department brochure	18	19.6
Parent Night	22	23.9
FFA meetings	25	27.2
Classroom lessons	73	79.3
First on-site visit	33	35.9
Other	16	17.4

*Percent greater than 100 because respondents could check more than one item.

Upon examining the data in Table 8 for assistance given to the student by the vocational agriculture teacher when starting an SOE, it can be observed that 29 (45.3%) of the student respondents believed that their vocational agriculture teacher assisted them a great deal, while 24 (37.5%) of the student respondents felt that their vocational agriculture teacher gave average assistance. Four (6.3%) of the respondents indicated no assistance, and 7 (10.9%) indicated very little assistance.

Table 8. Assistance Given to Students by Vocational Agriculture Teacher When Starting an SOE.

	Assistance				Total
	None	Very Little	Average	Great Deal	
Number	4	7	24	29	64
Percent	6.3	10.9	37.5	45.3	100.0

To further ascertain the perceptions of state and/or proficiency award winners in the Western FFA Region, the data were analyzed to determine the percent of vocational agriculture teacher visits made to discuss the student's SOE. The data in Table 9 reveal the times per year that the vocational agriculture teacher visited the student to discuss his/her SOE. The data show that 15 (23.4%) students were visited by their vocational agriculture teacher two times a year.

Table 9. Frequency that Vocational Agriculture Teacher Visited Student to Discuss SOE.

	Frequency						Total
	Zero	One	Two	Three	Four	> Four	
Number	2	9	15	10	5	23	64
Percent	3.1	14.1	23.4	15.6	7.8	36.0	100.0

Nine (14.1%) students were visited one time a year, while two (3.1%) were not visited during the year, and 23 (36%) of the students reported that they were visited by their vocational agriculture teacher more than four times during the year. Five (7.8%) students indicated they were

visited four times a year, and 10 (15.6%) students were visited three times a year.

The amount of time spent on classroom instruction relative to SOE by grade level is reflected in Table 10. Thirty-two (34.8%) teachers reported that they spent 16 to 20 hours instructing the freshmen students on supervised occupational experience programs, whereas 10 (10.9%) teachers spent 11 to 15 hours and 24 (26.1%) spent 6 to 10 hours teaching instruction on SOE. During the senior year, students received fewer hours of instruction, with 27 (29.3%) teachers reporting they spent 1 to 2 hours, and 17 (18.5%) indicating 3 to 5 hours of instructional time on supervised occupational experience.

Table 10. Hours of Classroom Time Spent on SOE by Grade Levels as Reported by Teachers.

Hours	Grade Level							
	Senior		Junior		Sophomore		Freshman	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0 to 2	27	29.3	21	22.8	14	15.2	11	11.9
3 to 5	17	18.5	17	18.5	15	16.3	6	6.5
6 to 10	23	25.0	20	21.7	21	22.8	24	26.1
11 to 15	10	10.9	14	15.2	14	15.2	10	10.9
16 to 20	6	6.5	11	11.9	19	20.6	32	34.8
No Time	9	9.8	9	9.8	9	9.8	9	9.8

The data in Table 11 reveal the amount of time spent by teachers with the student during an on-site instructional visit, with 63% of the teachers indicating that they spent two or less hours with a student on

an on-site instructional visit. Of the 63%, 8 (8.7%) teachers revealed they spent two hours, 8 (8.7%) indicated 1.5 hours of on-site instructional time, and 42 (45.6%) indicated that they spent one hour. Student responses show that 64% were visited about their SOE for two hours or less. Of the 64%, 13 (20.3%) students indicated they were visited for two hours, 8 (12.5%) students for 1.5 hours, and 20 (31.2%) were contacted by their vocational agriculture teacher for an on-site instructional visitation.

Table 11. Time Spent Conducting On-Site Instruction as Perceived by Students and Teachers.

Hours	<u>Students</u>		<u>Teachers</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%
1.0	20	31.2	42	45.6
1.5	8	12.5	8	8.7
2.0	13	20.3	8	8.7
2.5	1	1.6	2	2.2
3.0	2	3.1	1	1.1
3.5	0	0	0	0
4.0	1	1.6	0	0
> 4.0	8	12.5	1	1.1

As reported in Table 12, 15 (23.4%) students revealed that vocational agriculture teachers were extremely helpful, 12 (18.8%) students indicated they were very helpful, and 16 (25%) indicated they were helpful when conducting an on-site instructional visitation. Only 5 (7.8%) students felt that their vocational agriculture teacher's on-site

visitations were not helpful, while 16 (25%) indicated that the on-site visitation was somewhat helpful.

Table 12. Helpfulness of On-Site Instruction as Perceived by Students.

Degree of Helpfulness	Number	Percent
Not helpful	5	7.8
Somewhat helpful	16	25.0
Helpful	16	25.0
Very helpful	12	18.8
Extremely helpful	15	23.4

The students were asked, by means of an open-ended question, to indicate the assistance the vocational agriculture teachers provided while conducting their SOE visit. As shown in Table 13, the vocational agriculture instructor most frequently provided assistance in record keeping (52, 81.2%), followed by classroom instruction (30, 46.9%), setting SOE goals (28, 43.7%), and evaluating the student's SOE (25, 39.1%). The least assistance provided to the students was reported to be in the areas of locating an SOE (5, 7.8%), obtaining financial assistance (7, 10.9%), and other (7, 10.9%). Assistance in management strategies and planning of the SOE were provided to 20 (31.2%) of the students.

The students and the teachers were asked what were the most important activities in the development of an individualized SOE program. Table 14 data indicate that the students believe that the most important activities are: to gain occupational experience (48, 75.0%); to become

Table 13. Assistance Provided to Students by Teachers in Conducting an SOE.

Assistance	Number	Percent*
Setting SOE goals	28	43.7
Planning an SOE	20	31.2
Record Keeping	52	81.2
Classroom Instruction	30	46.9
Evaluating the SOE	25	39.1
Management Strategies	20	31.2
Obtaining Finances	7	10.9
Locating an SOE	5	7.8
Other	7	10.9

*Percent may exceed 100 because students could have up to four responses.

responsible and develop self-confidence (48, 75.0%); to practice leadership and economic skills (42, 65.6%); and to earn and manage money (37, 57.8%).

The teachers agree with the students on the most important activities, which are: to gain occupational experience (20, 26.1%); to become responsible and develop self-confidence (79, 85.9%); to practice leadership and economic skills (47, 51.1%); and to earn and manage money (47, 51.1%). Fifty-nine (64.1%) of the teacher also indicated that the development of agricultural competencies was an important activity in the development of an individualized SOE program.

Table 14. Activities Important in Developing an Individualized SOE Program.

Activity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent*	Number	Percent*
Make career choices	30	46.9	39	42.4
Develop agricultural competencies	25	39.1	59	64.1
Gain occupational experience	48	75.0	70	76.1
Practice leadership and economic skills	42	65.6	47	51.1
Earn and manage money	37	57.8	47	51.1
Be responsible and have self-confidence	48	75.0	79	85.9
Become economically independent	12	18.8	4	4.3
Develop management skills and habits.	24	37.5	23	25.0

*Percent may exceed 100 because respondents could have up to four responses.

The data in Table 15 reveal the beneficial aspects of conducting an SOE program. The students perceive that the following are the important benefits of an SOE program: developing occupational skills (35, 54.7%); and to gain decision making experience (45, 70.3%). The students also chose developing management skills (43, 67.2%) and developing occupational skills (35, 54.7%) as important benefits of conducting an SOE program.

The teachers agree with the students regarding important benefits of an SOE program in developing occupational skills (66, 71.7%) and to

gain decision making experience (64, 69.6%). However, 55 (59.8%) of the teachers selected making the classroom and laboratory instruction relevant and 42 (45.6%) teachers chose to gain experience in money management as important benefits of conducting an SOE program.

Table 15. The Beneficial Aspects of Conducting an SOE Program.

Activity	Students		Teachers	
	Number	Percent*	Number	Percent*
Develop occupational skills	35	54.7	66	71.7
Make classroom and laboratory relevant	11	17.2	55	59.8
Gain experience in money management	31	48.4	42	45.6
Solve agricultural problems	16	25.0	32	34.8
Gain decision making experience	45	70.3	64	69.6
Develop career and personal goals	36	56.2	38	41.3
Develop human relation skills	23	35.9	30	32.6
Develop management skills	43	67.2	41	44.6

*Percent may exceed 100 because respondents could have up to four responses.

The researcher asked the teachers what they believed influenced the student to conduct an SOE program. As indicated in Table 16, the teachers revealed that the four most influential factors are: desire to make money (65, 70.6%); to qualify for FFA degrees and awards (62, 67.4%); the vocational agriculture teacher's influence (55, 59.8%); and the success of other vocational agriculture students (46, 50.0%). The least

influential factors were: to maintain grades in vocational agriculture (21, 22.8%); and to gain experience for a career (31, 33.7%).

Table 16. Factors that Teachers Believe Influence a Student to Conduct an SOE Program.

Factor	Frequency	Percent*
Desire to make money	65	70.6
Required to stay in vo-ag	40	43.5
Qualify for FFA degrees and awards	62	67.4
Gain experience for career	31	33.7
Maintain grades in vo-ag	21	22.8
Success of other vo-ag students	46	50.0
Vo-ag teacher influence	55	59.8
Parental influence	42	45.6

*Percent may exceed 100 because respondents could have up to four responses

Twenty questions from the questionnaire have been grouped into four categories:

- (1) Employment characteristics of an SOE program.
- (2) Conducting an SOE program.
- (3) Supervision aspects of an SOE program.
- (4) Reflection of the quality of an SOE program.

The researcher has selected the following number range to indicate and explain the meaning of $\bar{X}$ and $\bar{Y}$ scores. Strongly Agree = 1.00 to 1.99; Agree = 2.00 to 2.99; Disagree = 3.00 to 3.99; and Strongly Disagree = 4.00 to 4.99.

Table 17 data present information on employment characteristics as perceived by the students and teachers. The students ($\bar{X} = 1.41$) strongly agree that the SOE program is helpful in preparing for employment, while the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.63$) do not tend to agree as strongly. Students ($\bar{X} = 1.27$) strongly agree that the SOE program is valuable for self-employment, whereas the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.65$) did not reveal as strong a feeling. The students ($\bar{X} = 1.86$) strongly agree that the SOE program relates to the occupational goals of the student, whereas the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 2.09$) agree. Students ($\bar{X} = 1.23$) strongly agree that the SOE provides an opportunity to learn valuable traits such as work ethics, while the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.46$) agree to a lesser extent. Both the students ($\bar{X} = 3.47$) and teachers ($\bar{Y} = 3.46$) disagree that an SOE program is not as important for students planning on attending college.

Table 17. Employment Characteristics of an SOE Program.

Characteristics	Students		Teachers		t-score
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{Y}$	SD	
Helpful in preparing for employment	1.41	.5218	1.63	.5257	2.58*
Valuable for self-employment	1.27	.4482	1.65	.5724	4.44*
SOE relates to occupational goals	1.86	.8092	2.09	.6412	1.98*
To learn valuable traits such as work ethics	1.23	.4175	1.46	.4981	3.02*
SOE not important for college-bound students	3.47	.7701	3.46	.7132	0.08

*Significant difference at the .05 level of confidence.

Data in Table 18 indicate that students ($\bar{X} = 1.48$) and teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.20$) strongly agree that all students enrolled in vocational agriculture should be required to have an SOE. Both the students ($\bar{X} = 1.39$) and the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.49$) strongly agree that the SOE program should be continuous and expanding. Students ($\bar{X} = 1.19$) strongly agree that FFA degree and award programs encourage students to conduct an SOE, while the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.65$) do not agree as strongly. The teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.72$) strongly agree that SOE programs should be considered in determining the student's grade, while the students ($\bar{X} = 2.11$) agree to a lesser extent. This corresponds to earlier documentation in the data analysis with 78% of teacher respondents reporting giving grades for SOE and 70% of the student respondents indicating receiving grades for an SOE program.

Table 18. Perceived Aspects of Conducting an SOE Program.

Aspects	Students		Teachers		t-score
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{Y}$	SD	
All students enrolled in vo-ag required to have SOE	1.48	.6780	1.20	.6430	2.61*
FFA degree and awards encourage students	1.19	.4491	1.65	.5910	5.25*
SOE should be continuous and expanding	1.39	.5188	1.49	.5810	1.10
SOE considered to determine grade.	2.11	.7639	1.72	.7207	3.24*

*Significant difference at the .05 level of confidence.

As data indicate in Table 19, the students ($\bar{X} = 1.78$) strongly agree and the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 2.11$) agree as to the responsibility of the student selecting the SOE program. The students ($\bar{X} = 2.53$) agree that the SOE program can be supervised by examining the student's record book, while the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 3.04$) disagree with this statement. Students ($\bar{X} = 1.75$) and teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.92$) strongly agree that the vocational agriculture teacher should conduct on-site visitations to all

Table 19. Activities Concerning Supervision of SOE.

Activities	Students		Teachers		t-score
	$\bar{X}$	SD	$\bar{Y}$	SD	
Selecting SOE should be student's responsibility	1.78	.7684	2.11	.7140	3.69*
SOE can be supervised by examining record book	2.53	.9901	3.04	.7648	3.62*
Vo-ag teacher should conduct visits to all students	1.75	.7571	1.92	.8128	1.32
Less important to visit students of successful parents	3.28	.7226	3.33	.6931	0.44
SOE should be evaluated regularly	1.45	.5282	1.59	.4924	1.69
On-farm programs should involve more than working for parents during the summer	2.05	.8106	1.94	.7248	0.89
Student responsible for own job	2.73	.6822	3.08	.4517	3.57*
Minimum standards for SOE established	1.84	.7068	1.78	.7248	0.50
Additional time needed for proficiency applications	2.39	.9875	2.11	.8875	1.85

*Significant difference at the .05 level of confidence.

students. Students ($\bar{X} = 3.28$) and teachers ($\bar{Y} = 3.33$) disagree that it is less important to visit students of successful parents. Also, the students ($\bar{X} = 1.45$) and the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.59$) strongly agree that the SOE program should be evaluated regularly by the teacher. When asked the question: Should the student be responsible for finding their own job? the students ($\bar{X} = 2.73$) agree, while the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 3.08$) disagree. Teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.84$) and students ($\bar{X} = 1.78$) strongly agree that the vocational agriculture instructor should have minimum standards for an SOE program. The students ($\bar{Y} = 2.05$) agree that the on-farm experience programs should involve more than just working for parents during the summer, while the teachers ($\bar{X} = 1.94$) strongly agree. Students ($\bar{X} = 2.39$) and teachers ($\bar{Y} = 2.11$) agree that additional time is needed to develop a student for proficiency award application.

As indicated in Table 18, the students ($\bar{X} = 1.19$) strongly agree that the FFA degree and awards program encourages FFA members to conduct an SOE program. From Table 20, the students ($\bar{X} = 1.98$) also agree that winning a state and/or regional proficiency award is reflective of the quality of the local vocational agriculture program, whereas the teachers ($\bar{Y} = 2.75$) agree to a lesser degree with this philosophy. However, when asked the question: Does your community believe that proficiency award winners are reflective of the quality of the local vocational agriculture program? both the students ($\bar{X} = 1.81$) and teachers ($\bar{Y} = 1.97$) strongly agree that it is.

While there may be agreement or disagreement between the students and teachers, 11 questions were statistically different at the .05 level of confidence. In the area of employment characteristics of an SOE

Table 20. Reflection of Quality of the SOE Program.

	<u>Students</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		t-score
	<u>X</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Y</u>	<u>SD</u>	
Winning proficiency award is reflective of quality of vo-ag program.	1.98	.8934	2.57	.8858	4.07*
Community believes proficiency winners are reflective of quality of vo-ag program.	1.81	.8094	1.97	.7230	1.29

*Significant difference at the .05 level of confidence.

program (Table 17), a significant difference was found in 4 of the 5 questions. Table 18 shows a significant difference on 3 of the 4 questions concerning perceived aspects of conducting an SOE program. Activities concerning the supervision of the SOE (Table 19) revealed that 3 of the 9 questions have a significant difference at the .05 level. Table 20 shows that 1 of the 2 questions was significantly different.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to compare the time involved and perceived value of SOE and related instructional activities among those students and their instructors who applied for and received a state and/or regional proficiency award from the Western Region of the FFA in 1984.

Using data as presented in Chapter 3 of this study, the following conclusions have been reached:

- (1) Western Region FFA regional and/or state proficiency award winners have been enrolled in a vocational agriculture program for over three years and the majority of the students have conducted an SOE program for four or more years.
- (2) Western Region vocational agriculture teachers require students to have an SOE in place within five or six months of enrollment in vocational agriculture.
- (3) Western Region proficiency award winners are visited two to four times a year to discuss their SOE program and these on-site instructional visitations are two hours or less in duration.
- (4) Western Regional vocational agriculture teachers spend a limited amount of time on classroom instruction on SOE with seniors and a larger amount of time with freshmen.

- (5) Western Region proficiency award winners believe that on-site instruction is helpful and that assistance with the SOE is most frequently provided with record keeping, classroom instruction, setting SOE program goals, and evaluating the student's SOE program.
- (6) Western Region vocational agriculture teachers perceive that a desire to make money, to qualify for FFA degrees and awards, and the success of other vocational agriculture students are the most influential factors for a student to conduct an SOE program. The least influential factors are to maintain grades in vocational agriculture and to gain experience for a career. However, the Western Region proficiency award winner perceive that the most beneficial aspects of an SOE program are developing occupational skills, decision making experience, and management skills. The Western Region vocational agriculture teachers perceive that making classroom and laboratory instruction relevant and to gain experience in money management are the most beneficial aspects to an SOE program. The Western Region proficiency award winners and the Western Region vocational agriculture teachers believe that the most important activities in the development of an SOE program are to gain occupational experience, become responsible and develop self-confidence, to practice leadership and economic skills, and to earn and manage money.
- (7) Western Regional FFA proficiency award winners and their vocational agriculture teachers believe that all students should have an SOE program and that the SOE program should be continuous and

expanding. Both groups also believe that the FFA award and degree program encourages students to conduct an SOE program; that supervision and the conduction of the SOE program is an important aspect of a student's successful chances as a state or regional proficiency award winner; and that winning proficiency awards is a reflection of the quality of the vocational agriculture program.

- (8) Western Regional FFA proficiency award winners have a long-range plan for the development of their SOE within the first nine weeks of enrollment in vocational agriculture and they stay within their occupational goals and have progressed in preparation for an agricultural career through the SOE program that they selected.

Implications

Based on the results obtained from this study, the following implications were drawn:

- (1) It may be implied that the high correlation of agreement between the Western Region FFA proficiency award winners and vocational agriculture teachers is influenced by the amount of time spent in developing a proficiency award winner for state or national recognition.
- (2) It may be implied that the success of the proficiency award winner is due to the involvement of the vocational agriculture teacher and is in part a reflection of his/her vocational agriculture program.

- (3) Because teachers are the most important factor affecting supervised occupational experience programs, they have the ability to improve the aspects of a supervised occupational experience program.
- (4) It may be implied that teachers are spending more time and assistance on activities that are easier to teach than on more difficult subject areas such as locating an SOE, obtaining financial assistance, and management strategies.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on results of the study:

- (1) Education workshops and seminars need to be presented to teachers in the field focusing on organizing and conducting SOE programs.
- (2) All vocational agriculture programs in the Western Region need to maintain an extended contract for the on-site instruction of students.
- (3) Written goals and objectives for SOE programs need to be developed and put into action by every state and in every vocational agriculture program in the Western Region.
- (4) Teachers need to implement SOE program requirements for their students in every program.
- (5) Teachers in the Western Region need to promote the FFA awards and degree program to encourage students to conduct an SOE program.

Recommendations for Further Study

The results of the data presented in Chapter 3 indicate the following recommendations for further study:

- (1) Perceptions of what factors are determined by parents/guardians or employer to be important to quality supervised occupational experience programs should be identified.
- (2) Effective on-site instruction and activities for supervised occupational experience programs need to be identified.
- (3) The relationship between participation in FFA activities to occupational success after graduation needs to be determined.
- (4) A study needs to be conducted to determine the role of the FFA in the total vocational agriculture program.
- (5) The relationship between Western Region vocational agriculture students' degree of participation in FFA activities, relative to the size of the FFA chapter, needs to be determined.

Summary

Identifying the perceptions of Western Region vocational agriculture and state or regional proficiency award winners towards factors of time spent and the values of an SOE program is a small step in improving the quality of SOE programs in the Western Region.

Information obtained from the review of related literature indicates that it is imperative for vocational agriculture teachers to have a well-planned and constructed SOE program to meet the needs of vocational agriculture students and to keep "vocational" in the title

"Vocational Agriculture." Effective use and implementation of an SOE program will be beneficial not only to the student, but also to the vocational agriculture teacher. Supervised occupational experience programs are considered an essential element in programs of Vocational Agriculture. The belief that supported SOE was that it furthered learning. The researcher, through this study, addressed the relationship between the values of the SOE and the time spent in achieving quality. These results should prove beneficial in verifying the belief maintained by the profession.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY ON SUPERVISED OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

and

LETTERS OF REQUEST



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

SAMPLE LETTER ACCOMPANYING STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Ken Mapston
P.O. 374
Denton, MT 59430

Dear

I am presently working on a professional paper, as a part of my Masters degree, in the area of regional proficiency award winners. Your accomplishments as a regional FFA proficiency award winner are commendable. It truly must have been a rewarding and gratifying feeling to see your goals and expectations honored by the State and National FFA.

Because of your accomplishments in the FFA, I am asking for your help and opinion. With your assistance other FFA members and advisors may achieve goals such as you have. Please take 15 minutes and respond to the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope. Your cooperation, assistance, and time are greatly appreciated.

Very sincerely,

Ken Mapston



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Ken Mapston
P.O. 374
Denton, MT 59430

Dear

Things are real busy these days, and most of us have a hard time keeping ahead of the obligations which are important and required. I know how the little extra things sometimes recieve our best intentions, but are put off until a better time.

About two weeks ago, you should have received a letter and questionnaire from me. As of today I have received no reply. Perhaps you mislaid the questionnaire, or it may have been lost in the mail--any one of dozens of things could have happened.

In any event, I am enclosing another copy of the questionnaire. I am sure you will try to find fifteen minutes in your busy schedule to check its items and drop it in the nearest postal box. Most of them have been returned. I would like to get them all back. Will you help me?

If you have already returned the questionnaire please accept my apologies.

Thanks. I appreciate your efforts.

Very sincerely,

Ken Mapston

STUDENT SURVEY ON SUPERVISED OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

PART I:

INSTRUCTIONS: Please answer each question by placing a check (✓) next to the answer which is most appropriate.

1. How many years were you enrolled in vocational agriculture?

☐ A. One	☐ C. Three
☐ B. Two	☐ D. Four
2. How many years have you conducted a supervised occupational experience program?

☐ A. One	☐ E. Five
☐ B. Two	☐ F. Six
☐ C. Three	☐ G. More than Six
☐ D. Four	
3. Were you required to have a SOE program to be enrolled in vocational agriculture?

☐ Yes	☐ No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
4. Did your instructor require you to keep a record book on your SOE?

☐ Yes	☐ No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
5. Was your SOE used to determine a part of your grade for vocational agriculture?

☐ Yes	☐ No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
6. Did you prepare a long range plan for the development of your SOE in the first nine weeks of enrollment in vocational agriculture?

☐ Yes	☐ No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
7. In selecting your SOE, did you keep within your individual occupational goals?

☐ Yes	☐ No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
8. Have you progressed in the preparation for an agricultural occupation, through the SOE program that you selected.

☐ Yes	☐ No
------------------------------	-----------------------------
9. How much assistance did your vo-ag teacher provide when you were starting your SOE?

☐ A. None	☐ C. Average
☐ B. Very little	☐ D. A great deal
10. On the average, how many times per year were you visited by the vo-ag instructor to discuss your SOE?

☐ A. Zero	☐ D. Three
☐ B. One	☐ E. Four
☐ C. Two	☐ F. More than Four
11. What is the average number of hours per visit that your instructor spent with you to discuss your SOE?

☐ A. .5 hours	☐ F. 3 hours
☐ B. 1 hour	☐ G. 3.5 hours
☐ C. 1.5 hours	☐ H. 4 hours
☐ D. 2 hours	☐ I. More than 4 hours
☐ E. 2.5 hours	
12. How helpful to you were the teacher's visits in winning your proficiency award?

☐ A. Not helpful
☐ B. Somewhat helpful
☐ C. Helpful
☐ D. Very helpful
☐ E. Extremely helpful
13. How long after enrolling in your first vo-ag class did you actually start your SOE?

☐ A. 1 or 2 months
☐ B. 3 or 4 months
☐ C. 5 or 6 months
☐ D. 7 or 8 months
☐ E. 9 or 10 months
☐ F. 11 or 12 months
☐ G. Other (please specify) _____
14. Check the most appropriate types of assistance you received from the instructor while conducting your SOE program. (Check no more than 4)

☐ A. Helping to set SOE goals
☐ B. Planning the scope of your SOE
☐ C. Providing instruction on record keeping
☐ D. Provided instruction that related to your SOE
☐ E. Helping you evaluate your SOE
☐ F. Suggesting appropriate management strategies
☐ G. Providing assistance in obtaining finances
☐ H. Providing assistance in finding a location in conducting your SOE
☐ I. Other (please specify) _____

INSTRUCTIONS: For the following two questions, please number four choices in ranking order; 1, 2, 3, 4 with number 1 being the most important.

15. Select and rank the four (4) activities that you consider to be the most important in the development of your individualized SOE program.

- ☐ A. Make career choices
- ☐ B. Develop agricultural competencies
- ☐ C. Gain actual occupational experiences
- ☐ D. Practice leadership and economic skills
- ☐ E. Earn and manage money
- ☐ F. Be responsible and have self confidence
- ☐ G. Become economically independent
- ☐ H. Reach career and educational goals

16. Select and rank the four (4) activities that you consider to be the most beneficial to you as the result of your SOE program.

- ☐ A. Develop occupational skills
- ☐ B. Gain experience in money management
- ☐ C. Make classroom and laboratory instruction relevant
- ☐ D. Solve real agricultural problems
- ☐ E. Gain experience in decision making
- ☐ F. Develop plans for career and personal life
- ☐ G. Develop human relations skills
- ☐ H. Develop management skills and habits

PART II

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the response that best describes your feelings about the SOE program.
SA-STRONGLY AGREE; A-AGREE; D-DISAGREE; SD-STRONGLY DISAGREE; N-NO OPINION

NO OPINION
STRONGLY DISAGREE
DISAGREE
AGREE
STRONGLY AGREE

- EXAMPLE: All FFA members should be in official dress while attending the National Convention in Kansas City.....SA A D SD N
1. All students in vo-ag should be required to have a SOE program each year they are enrolled in the program.....SA A D SD N
 2. The SOE program is very helpful in preparing for employment in agriculture or ag-related occupations.....SA A D SD N
 3. The SOE program is extremely valuable in preparing for self-employment.....SA A D SD N
 4. The SOE program should be continued and expanded each year enrolled in vo-ag.....SA A D SD N
 5. Selecting and establishing the SOE program should be the responsibility of the student.....SA A D SD N
 6. The SOE program should be related to the student's planned occupational career goals.....SA A D SD N
 7. SOE program's can be properly supervised by closely examining the student's record book.....SA A D SD N
 8. The SOE program provides an opportunity to learn valuable traits, such as developing work ethics and decision making, which are hard to learn in the classroom.....SA A D SD N
 9. The SOE program is not as important for students planning on attending college as for those who will enter the work force upon graduation.....SA A D SD N
 10. The vo-ag teacher should conduct on-site-instructional visits to all students who are enrolled in vo-ag, regardless if they are in FFA and/or have an SOE program.....SA A D SD N
 11. It is less important for the instructor to visit the SOE program's of those students whose parents are successful farmers/agribusiness persons.....SA A D SD N
 12. The FFA award and degree program promotes and encourages students to conduct SOE programs.....SA A D SD N
 13. The SOE program conducted by the student should be evaluated regularly by the teacher.....SA A D SD N
 14. The SOE program should be considered in determining the students' vo-ag grade.....SA A D SD N

15. The on-farm experience programs should involve more than just working for
parents during the summer.....SA A D SD N
16. Students who have projects other than production should be totally
responsible for finding their own job.....SA A D SD N
17. Teachers should establish minimum standards for the SOE program.....SA A D SD N
18. Winning a state and/or regional proficiency award is reflective of the
quality of the local vocational agriculture program.....SA A D SD N
19. Members of your community believe that proficiency award winners are
reflective of the quality of the local vocational agriculture program.....SA A D SD N
20. Additional time is needed in developing a student for a proficiency award applicant
then that of developing another students SOE program.....SA A D SD N

APPENDIX B

TEACHER SURVEY ON SUPERVISED OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

and

LETTERS OF REQUEST



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

SAMPLE LETTER ACCOMPANYING TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Ken Mapston
P.O. 374
Denton, MT 59430

Dear

I am presently working on a professional paper, as a part of my Masters degree, in the area of regional proficiency award winners. Your accomplishments as an advisor of a regional proficiency award winner are to be commended. It truly must be a rewarding and gratifying feeling to have a student recieve this award.

Because of your accomplishments with proficiency awards, I am asking for your help and opinion. With your assistance other FFA members and advisors may achieve goals such as you have. Please take 15 minutes and respond to the questionnaire and return it in the self addressed stamped envelope. Your cooperation, assistance, and time are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Ken Mapston



Montana State University
Bozeman, Montana 59717

Department of Agricultural and Industrial Education
College of Agriculture

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP LETTER FOR TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Ken Mapston
P.O. 374
Denton, MT 59430

Dear

Things are real busy these days, and most of us have a hard time keeping ahead of the obligations which are important and required. I know how the little extra things sometimes recieve our best intentions, but are put off until a better time.

About two weeks ago, you should have received a letter and questionnaire from me. As of today I have received no reply. Perhaps you mislaid the questionnaire, or it may have been lost in the mail--any one of dozens of things could have happened.

In any event, I am enclosing another copy of the questionnaire. I am sure you will try to find fifteen minutes in your busy schedule to check its items and drop it in the nearest postal box. Most of them have been returned. I would like to get them all back. Will you help me?

If you have already returned the questionnaire please accept my apologies.

Thanks. I appreciate your efforts.

Very sincerely,

Ken Mapston

PART II

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the response that best describes your feelings about the SOE program.
SA-STRONGLY AGREE; A-AGREE; D-DISAGREE; SD-STRONGLY DISAGREE; N-NO OPINION

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO OPINION
EXAMPLE: All FFA members should be in official dress while attending the National Convention in Kansas City.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
1. All students in vo-ag should be required to have a SOE program each year they are enrolled in the program.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
2. The SOE program is very helpful in preparing for employment in agriculture or ag-related occupations.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
3. The SOE program is extremely valuable in preparing for self-employment.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
4. The SOE program should be continued and expanded each year enrolled in vo-ag.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
5. Selecting and establishing the SOE program should be the responsibility of the student.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
6. The SOE program should be related to the student's planned occupational career goals.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
7. SOE program's can be properly supervised by closely examining the student's record book.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
8. The SOE program provides an opportunity to learn valuable traits, such as developing work ethics and decision making, which are hard to learn in the classroom.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
9. The SOE program is not as important for students planning on attending college as for those who will enter the work force upon graduation.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
10. The vo-ag teacher should conduct on-site-instructional visits to all students who are enrolled in vo-ag, regardless if they are in FFA and/or have an SOE program.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
11. It is less important for the instructor to visit the SOE program's of those students whose parents are successful farmers/agribusiness persons.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
12. The FFA award and degree program promotes and encourages students to conduct SOE programs.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
13. The SOE program conducted by the student should be evaluated regularly by the teacher.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
14. The SOE program should be considered in determining the students' vo-ag grade.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
15. The on-farm experience programs should involve more than just working for parents during the summer.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
16. Students who have projects other than production should be totally responsible for finding their own job.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
17. Teachers should establish minimum standards for the SOE program.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
18. Winning a state and/or regional proficiency award is reflective of the quality of the local vocational agriculture program.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
19. Members of your community believe that proficiency award winners are reflective of the quality of the local vocational agriculture program.....	SA	A	D	SD	N
20. Additional time is needed in developing a student for a proficiency award applicant then that of developing another students SOE program.....	SA	A	D	SD	N