



The supervisory role of the elementary school principal in Montana
by Donald Louis Easton

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
Montana State University
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Abstract:

It was the purpose of the study to compare perceptions and predictions of supervisory responsibility that various Montana educator groups held for the elementary school principalship, and to investigate the existence of significant differences of response of three educator-groups for twenty selected supervisory practices. It was also the purpose of the study to suggest methods of adjusting existing programs and planning future programs of elementary supervision to better meet the expectations of participating educators.

Identical survey instruments were sent to participating Montana school districts which contained elementary schools of twelve or more classroom teachers. On closed-response survey instruments, district superintendents, elementary teachers, and elementary principals estimated the current supervisory responsibility of the elementary principal for twenty supervisory practices, and predicted change in that responsibility. The total response of 382 participants represented an average return of 88.4 percent for the three educator groups.

Major findings of the study were: (1) Significant differences of perception and prediction were found to exist among the three educator groups. (2) Greatest agreement was found between the two administrator groups; greatest differences were found between the teacher and administrator groups. (3) Evidence suggested that superintendents and principals ascribed greater importance to the classroom visit than did the classroom teachers. (4) Smallest prediction for increase in supervisory responsibility was shown for those practices which employ large-group meeting procedures. (5) All educator groups provided evidence of predicted increase in the supervisory responsibility of the elementary principal. (6) Evidence for greatest increase was provided by superintendents; smallest evidence was provided by elementary teachers. (7) All educator groups agreed upon increased future responsibility for those supervisory practices which involve the elementary principal as an instructional leader. (8) In age, level of formal preparation, and extent of professional experience, superintendents ranked first, followed by principals and classroom teachers. (9) Although principals and superintendents reported broad experience in both elementary and secondary teaching, elementary teachers reported little secondary experience.

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SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN MONTANA

by

DONALD LOUIS EASTON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial
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of

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ABSTRACT

It was the purpose of the study to compare perceptions and predictions of supervisory responsibility that various Montana educator groups held for the elementary school principalship, and to investigate the existence of significant differences of response of three educator groups for twenty selected supervisory practices. It was also the purpose of the study to suggest methods of adjusting existing programs and planning future programs of elementary supervision to better meet the expectations of participating educators.

Identical survey instruments were sent to participating Montana school districts which contained elementary schools of twelve or more classroom teachers. On closed-response survey instruments, district superintendents, elementary teachers, and elementary principals estimated the current supervisory responsibility of the elementary principal for twenty supervisory practices, and predicted change in that responsibility. The total response of 382 participants represented an average return of 88.4 percent for the three educator groups.

Major findings of the study were: (1) Significant differences of perception and prediction were found to exist among the three educator groups. (2) Greatest agreement was found between the two administrator groups; greatest differences were found between the teacher and administrator groups. (3) Evidence suggested that superintendents and principals ascribed greater importance to the classroom visit than did the classroom teachers. (4) Smallest prediction for increase in supervisory responsibility was shown for those practices which employ large-group meeting procedures. (5) All educator groups provided evidence of predicted increase in the supervisory responsibility of the elementary principal. (6) Evidence for greatest increase was provided by superintendents; smallest evidence was provided by elementary teachers. (7) All educator groups agreed upon increased future responsibility for those supervisory practices which involve the elementary principal as an instructional leader. (8) In age, level of formal preparation, and extent of professional experience, superintendents ranked first, followed by principals and classroom teachers. (9) Although principals and superintendents reported broad experience in both elementary and secondary teaching, elementary teachers reported little secondary experience.

Chapter 1

SUPERVISION AND THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

Introduction

After serving three years as an elementary school principal, a disappointed Montana educator resigned his position to return to classroom work. He summarized his frustration and disappointment with the single statement that, "Whenever I tried to accomplish something, the superintendent suggested that I leave things as they were."

Student teachers have suggested that their assignment in an elementary school is a very difficult one because of their obligation to meet the expectations of the college supervisor, the cooperating teacher, and the building principal. Too frequently, they suggest, all three have varying and even conflicting explanations and suggestions for the improvement of student teacher performance.

Elementary classroom teachers, too, may feel that their own estimates of successful teaching and their impressions of effective procedures may not agree with those of their building principal, and may conclude that their teaching effectiveness is limited by the lack of agreement.

Elementary principals are hired by the district superintendent to represent the school administration and the board of trustees, and often feel that their educational role is made difficult by a multiple

responsibility to various groups and individuals. Elementary principals tend to recognize responsibility for interpreting educational programs and philosophies to school patrons and the school community, for reflecting philosophies and policies of the school superintendent, and for maintaining and improving instructional programs that conform to the general goals and objectives of the school district. Elementary principals also recognize their responsibility to provide instructional leadership that is consistent with the expectations of the building of instructional staff. To the extent that goals of concerned educators vary, the effectiveness of the elementary principal is limited.

Professional preparation for a specific educational position in education cannot insure success. Frequently, the lack of success has been the result of an inability to work cooperatively and harmoniously with other members of the professional team or with the patrons of the school. The need that successful educators meet the expectations of various groups provides the purpose of this study.

It was the purpose of this study to examine the supervisory role perceptions that elementary teachers, elementary principals, and district superintendents in Montana hold for the elementary principalship. It was also the purpose of this study to identify changes that the three professional groups anticipate for the supervisory role of the elementary principal, and to identify patterns of response that suggest supervisory responsibilities of the elementary principal that

will be consistent with the role expectations of the three educator groups. It was a final purpose to analyze and interpret the information assembled by the study and to offer suggestions which could contribute to improved future programs of elementary supervision.

Definition of Terms

In order to provide greater clarity of meaning and to aid the reader in the interpretation of this study, the terms, as they are used in this study, are defined as follows:

Elementary school principal. An administrative or supervisory officer responsible for an elementary school, usually limited to a single school or attendance area (Good, 28:197).

Supervising elementary school principal. An elementary school principal who has been relieved of instructional duties to devote half time or more to the supervision of instruction.

Superintendent. The chief advisory and executive officer of a city school system, usually elected by and responsible to the local board of education.

Teacher. A person employed in an official capacity to guide and direct the learning experiences of pupils in an educational institution.

Supervision. All efforts of designated school officials directed toward providing leadership to teachers and other educational workers in the improvement of instruction (Good, 28:539).

Role. Behavior patterns or functions expected of or carried out by an individual in a given societal or professional context (Good, 28:471).

Mean. The mean of a series of measures is equal to the sum of the measures divided by their number. "It is the 'average' most often referred to in popular usage" (Lindquist, 50:52).

Supervisory technique. A particular procedure or process employed to stimulate teacher attitude or action which leads to the improvement of learning.

Human relations. The interaction of personalities among individuals who identify with a particular group of educators.

Administration. Consists of those activities which have for their purpose the general regulation, direction, and control of the affairs of the school district that are not confined to one school, subject, or phase of school activity (Mort, 62:383).

Evolution of Supervision

The American people have always been characterized by their high regard for education. The regard is shown by evidence that schools were established early in the American colonies when the courts ordered towns to secure teachers of religious and moral qualities for the instruction of the children.

Further evidence of regard and concern for education is shown by frequent visits to the colonial elementary schools made by local citizens, religious officers, and special committees of laymen. The various members of the community were granted the power to visit and "inspect the schools" (Lucio, 51:4). Thus, first attempts in programs of supervision of instruction were begun.

The initial attempts were characterized by their emphasis on autocratic inspection. Through arbitrarily set standards, examinations, and school visitations, members of the community attempted to improve instruction by removing those teachers whom they judged to be deficient.

The transition from community to professional responsibility for programs of elementary supervision was not deliberate. While little was done to provide for expanded or improved programs of supervision and inspection of schools, the towns and cities continued to increase in size until it became common for several teachers to be assigned to a single school building. As a result, community leaders began singling out instructors whom they considered to be most competent, and

assigning those instructors certain additional administrative and managerial duties. Those instructors were designated "head teachers" and represented the earliest form of the elementary principalship in America.

Although lay members of the community were reluctant to relinquish their supervisory authority over the elementary schools, the first legal provision for instructional supervision by school officials was authorized in 1654 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony General Court (McKean, 52:2). Thus, began a tradition in American education under which supervisory responsibility was placed with the "principal teacher", the "head teacher", or the "schoolmaster", and thus managerial control by an educator within the school had its beginning.

Earliest attempts at programs of supervision by educators were characterized by efforts to improve or remove those teachers who did not meet expected levels of performance, and early in the nineteenth century the powers and duties of supervision were placed in the hands of school "boards", the "school clerk", or the "school superintendent". Lucio and McNiel (51:4) have aptly summarized the purpose of the supervisory programs of that era, ". . . upgrading the work of the teacher became a recognized function."

Since the colonial period, school organizations have appointed an administrative head who was responsible for programs of supervision. In the earlier schools, he was called the schoolmaster or head teacher,

and in later schools a teaching or supervising principal. Although the principals possessed backgrounds of experience in common with those of other members of the instructional staff, early attempts at supervision by professional educators reflected the influences of the previous programs which had been developed by religious and community leaders. For several decades after the turn of the century, school principals continued programs of supervision that were concerned primarily with raising teacher performance to a level of acceptance and insuring that the "best" methods of instruction were being used. The supervision was based upon the belief that there were known and fixed methods of instruction which had been identified and which could be judged through observation of a teacher's work. It was also based upon the assumption that inspection would stimulate the teacher to do better work.

During the late 1800's, additional subjects such as music, art, home economics, and manual training were added to the school curriculum. A new type of supervision, "specialized supervision", resulted when it was recognized that neither classroom instructors nor school administrators possessed the qualifications required to be expert in the new curriculum offerings. When instruction could not be offered by specialized teachers, specialized supervisors offered assistance and instruction to the regular classroom instructors. The programs of specialized supervision were supplemented by the supervisory attempts of administrators who continued serving as instructional experts. The

assumption that school administrators are qualified instructional supervisors has persisted. Many school organizations currently rely upon supervisory programs performed by school administrators and depend upon programs of supervision that could be called "administrative supervision" (Ayer, 4:9-13).

By the year 1900, a marked change could be identified in programs of elementary supervision. Until that time, it had been common practice to improve instruction through critical selection and retention of teachers. After the turn of the century, however, attention was shifted toward the improvement and critical selection of approved instructional procedures. Within this new approach to supervision, teachers were regarded as instruments of education that could be instructed and supervised to ensure that they followed methods of instruction which had been determined by administrators and supervisors to be most effective. Scientific management, a prominent approach to supervision during the first three decades of this century, proposed that the best methods of instruction were to be found by supervisors and their use was to be enforced on teachers. Within this philosophy, teacher qualifications were specified, scientific measurements were used to assess results, data were gathered and analyzed, and specific scientific methods of instruction were encouraged. Basic to this philosophy was the expectation that administrators and supervisors be skilled in the most effective teaching procedures and that they keep

teachers informed with detailed instructions, provide the appliances and materials necessary, and assist teachers in the practice of proved instructional practices. Supervisors accepted the responsibility for the discovery of the best methods and processes of teaching, and teachers were expected to use those best methods. Complete and detailed courses of study for each curriculum area were often a result, and in some cases they were produced at the state level for distribution to teachers for use as guidelines and course content outlines.

School administrators, influenced by the scientific management approach to supervision, pointed with pride to the efficient and economical operation of their schools and to the scientifically proved results which had been achieved. Professional writers of the time, in describing efficient supervisory programs, devoted entire chapters to such topics as observational devices, tests, rating scales for teachers, and improvement of courses of study (Barr, 6:1-762). Within the philosophy of scientific management, the human side of man was minimized and emphasis was placed upon making education an efficient process through scientific study.

Although the traditional inspection and scientific management methods of supervision have not disappeared, autocratic methods of supervision came into serious criticism during the 1930's. During the second quarter of the current century, more democratic methods of supervision emerged and programs for the improvement of instruction

came to be seen as practices in human relations. This view endowed teachers with feelings and motives, and recognized faculty morale and social and mental welfare of teachers as being vital and essential to programs of quality education (Lucio, 51:3). Within the context of the human relations approach to supervision, the administrator or supervisor has attempted to operate as a cooperating instructional leader rather than as a director. Teacher cooperation and participation have been sought in problem solving, and greater respect for the teacher as an individual resulted. Creativity among teachers was encouraged, as they were assisted in the discovery of their own best approaches to instruction.

The most apparent change in professional writings in regard to programs of supervision has been the transition in emphasis from descriptions of mechanics of supervision to that of participation in group processes. The shift of emphasis from mechanics of supervision to processes of group activities in human relations programs is best seen in the current Encyclopedia of Educational Research. The entire supervision section of this authoritative publication offers impressive evidence that the study of supervisory programs has found a new approach within recent years. Methods and practices of individualized supervision have been omitted in the summary of recent research. Instead, the entire section on supervision is devoted to the topic of effective leadership. Authors have directed themselves to the subject of effective

group leadership situations and relations. The importance of human relations and individual participation in group processes is emphasized throughout the report. One paragraph aptly summarized the new approach to the study of supervisory programs,

These studies lead to the conclusion that the supervisor who hopes to be successful in promoting curriculum improvement will follow a procedure which involves the staff in the decision-making process (Harris, 37:1442-5).

The recent view of supervision has also been succinctly summarized by Taylor and McPherson (73:337) who described the change as one from telling teachers what to do and how to do it, to one of working cooperatively with teachers to solve those problems which confront them in their teaching.

The Emerging Supervisory Role of the Elementary Principal

An effective program of supervision has traditionally been considered an essential part of American education. Changes and the development of various supervisory programs have been identified at all periods throughout the history of American education. Before the turn of the century, supervisory programs were administered by lay individuals, members of the clergy, the school clerk, or the school superintendent. Programs of supervision have shown transitions through types administered by specialists, through those imposing results of research by scientific methods, through democratic human relations, and into programs that involve large group processes.

The principal as a supervisory member of the educational staff, however, is a relative newcomer. Because of clerical and instructional duties, the supervisory role of the elementary principal lagged far behind that of the superintendent and did not become well known until the twentieth century (Lucio and McNiel, 51:5). The elementary principal, then, has not been considered an accepted member of the supervisory staff until comparatively modern times.

Although many authors have aptly described the development of the supervisory role of the elementary school principal, the succinct summary offered by Cramer and Domain seems most appropriate for this writer's purpose:

1. One-teacher Stage: Chief Duty Teaching. One-teacher stage began with the first public schools. Because the school had only one teacher, there was no need for a principal. Later, as schools grew in size, one of the most successful teachers in each building was given some authority, but continued as a full-time teacher.

2. The Head Teacher Stage: Chief Duty Teaching. After the 1840's, the head teacher was called upon to assume certain building duties, and was paid additionally for the increased assignment. This stage represented the beginning of the idea that administrative duties in an elementary school deserve extra compensation. This stage of development still exists in many smaller elementary schools.

3. Teaching Principal Stage: Chief Duty Teaching. School superintendents found various problems in elementary schools that needed skillful and prompt attention, so the administrative responsibilities of the teaching principal were increased. To enable teaching principals to accept the additional responsibilities, superintendents gave partial relief from teaching duties.

4. Building Principal Stage: Chief Duty Administration. Resulted when school officials accepted the premise that it was desirable to have the principal devote his full energies to administrative

duties. This type of principalship did not become common until about 1880. Important responsibilities were those of overseeing janitors and their work, attendance, conduct and health of students, order and distribution of supplies, and inventories of stock rooms.

5. Supervising Principal Stage: Chief Duty Supervision and Educational Leadership. Since approximately 1920, the elementary principal has increasingly come to be recognized as the supervisory head of the classroom, the school, and the community. Has become the key person in the development of an effective school and community relationship (Cramer and Domain, 12:360-4).

Many authors agree that the elementary principalship is now generally recognized and accepted as a supervisory position. Harold Spears (68:187) writes that, "In those elementary schools where principals are freed of instructional duties, direct classroom supervision has been commonly established." He continues with the note that elementary principals in San Francisco, California, commonly spend from one-third to one-half of their school days in classroom supervision. Jacobson, Reavis, and Logsdon (42:20-1) agree that school boards and superintendents have encouraged elementary principals to accept the supervisory responsibility, and comment that, "Authorities in school administration for years have stressed the importance of the principal's devoting much time to the supervision of instruction." McKean and Mills (52:127) agree that the principal typically carries the supervisory load, but the summary statement by Curtin (13:207) is an apt expression of the professional opinion of many authors,

Of all those who have responsibility for improvement of instruction, the elementary school principal holds a unique position . . . perhaps more than any other supervisory personnel, he is involved in the ongoing day-to-day work of the school.

The supervisory role of the elementary school principal appears firmly established, but it has not become stable. During an era of change--in society, in education, and in programs of supervision--it is imperative that elementary principals accept the supervisory responsibility which has been offered, and continue the search for those supervisory practices which will result in the most effective instructional programs. Within his own school, the principal is expected to supervise the programs under his direction. How he views his supervisor role can have a direct influence upon his success with this activity (Goldman, 27:48). Mr. Ernest H. Hofmann (58:1), immediate past president of the Montana Department of Elementary School Principals, hinted at the ramifications involved when he wrote in his letter of welcome in November of 1969, "The concept of the elementary principal has experienced quite a change in the past ten or fifteen years. No longer is the position a keeper of books, a counter of lunch money, or merely a title." His statement clearly implies that currently successful elementary principals are concerned primarily with effective leadership practices rather than with managerial tasks. In Montana, a state with only two recognized metropolitan areas, the supervisory role of the elementary school principal is particularly important. In typically smaller school districts which cannot provide the services of central office supervisory personnel, the elementary principal is obligated to assume the leadership role for the improvement of instruction. The principal's

obligation to a program of supervision has been recognized by various organizations and individuals. The Standards for Accreditation of Montana Elementary Schools, printed by the office of the state superintendent of public instruction in March of 1970 (60:4), specifically states that:

Schools employing eight to twelve teachers shall be administered by a qualified, certified, elementary principal who devotes at least one-half of each school day to supervision and for whom adequate clerical assistance is provided.

When speaking in Helena in 1964, Dr. Robert J. Alfonso (1:1-2) stressed the supervisory importance of the Montana elementary principalship in his address to the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development;

From what I have been able to find out, one way in which Montana differs from numerous other states is that you do not have a large number of personnel specifically designated as "supervisors". On the contrary, the supervision done in Montana (if done at all) is the responsibility of an administrator most often a building principal.

Although the Montana elementary principal has only recently come to be recognized as an administrator who is responsible for programs in elementary supervision, current evidence reflects his general acceptance as a member of the supervisory team, and also suggests that he must be prepared to offer the instructional leadership essential to effective programs of instruction. The increased responsibility of the elementary principal is consistent with the prediction of authors who anticipate larger elementary school systems with increased stress

upon the role of the principal as the supervisor of instruction. They predict that clerical assistance will be increased so that those routine duties which are presently being performed by principals will be handled by school clerks (Stoops and Marks, 72:88).

Although supervisory responsibility for the elementary principal has been tardy in general acceptance, a future of continued and increased responsibility appears assured.

Current Status of the Elementary Principal

Although the purpose for programs of supervision has always been the improvement of instruction, a history of American education includes various types of programs of supervision and shows a transition in the recognized responsibilities of the elementary principal. Initially, he was considered responsible for the evaluation of teachers but later came to be recognized as a curriculum and instructional expert who explained and prescribed instructional procedures and materials for classroom teachers. The supervisory program consisted primarily of the classroom visitation which was followed by a conference in which the expert principal told the teacher how her performance could be improved. Programs of supervision in which the principal assumed the role of expert have not disappeared from American education, but the expert approach to supervisory programs has been severely criticized during the past four decades.

Since the recent advent of larger school districts, the improved

professional preparation of teachers, and the increased knowledge concerning learning processes, more and more educators have come to recognize that supervisors and building principals are unable to master teaching competencies which exceed those combined abilities of the teachers with whom they associate. Evidence exists that the staffs of the schools today have an increasingly high level of preparation and a deepening desire as professionals to participate in decision making. It is not unusual to discover members of a teaching staff who have as much--or more--professional preparation than the principal of their school (Taylor and McPherson, 73:31).

Erickson (18:60) has written a humorous but critical description of the current elementary principal who continues to pose as an instructional expert,

He is expected to sally in and out of classrooms like some charismatic general, dropping a suggestion here, correcting a foible there, using the magic of his pedagogic know-how to spur the flagging spirits of his troops.

Erickson concluded his article by stating his belief that teachers will respect supervising principals so long as they demonstrate competence, but that the principals alienate their staffs when giving directions in areas where they are unable to perform proficiently. He suggested that the expert principal is outmoded, and predicted that authority of position will be replaced by a collegial authority of competence among teachers. The modern elementary principal, Erickson suggested, will become a strategist who works with the human components

of the school to combine their abilities to construct an efficiently functioning unit.

Various programs of supervision have been categorized according to their various approaches to the improvement of instruction. Two recent classifications reflect the increased regard shown teachers as members of the supervisory staff and merit mention here. Lucio and McNeil (51:13-17) have placed the recent humanistic approaches to supervision in two categories: (1) the Method of Reason, and (2) the Method of Practical Intelligence. The first rests on the belief that knowledge is best obtained through a system which guides actions, and the second suggests that faith in the capacities of professional people is an effective method of inquiry.

Both approaches are noteworthy for the value that they place upon teacher competence and illustrate the gradual transition which has occurred within programs of supervision. Throughout its development supervision has gradually moved from individual programs for the improvement of instruction to the group process approach to the improvement of learning.

Need for the Study

In keeping with a society recently characterized by very rapid changes, American education has experienced considerable change within the past two decades. Labor group pressure upon educational organizations, consolidation of districts into fewer but larger administrative

units, governmental participation in various educational programs, and increased and advanced preparation of classroom teachers all have had a marked influence upon public education.

Larger and more active organizations of teachers within the enlarged educational units have employed collective activity to obtain roles in administrative activities that long have been considered the responsibility of the superintendent. Strengthened professional organizations of teachers no longer limit their collective activity to the determination of salaries, but now have extended their influence to include many decision-making areas of the educational program.

Morton Godine (17:33) has suggested that as teachers become more active in the decision-making process, they will become concerned with such questions as summer programs, in-service programs, opportunities for appointment, classroom size, discipline, and academic freedom.

The successful elementary principal has long been the one whose philosophy of education was consistent with those of the district superintendent and the board of trustees. The superintendent, with the prerogative of appointing principals, has generally been able to appoint those who share his educational views. The importance of agreement in basic beliefs is indicated on page 7 of the Montana Department of Elementary School Principals Tentative Handbook (59:7): "The principal is responsible for establishing school atmosphere and attitudes in keeping with his own philosophy and that of the superintendent."

Increased professional activity and improved professional preparation, however, have recently required that classroom teacher expectations also be considered. The philosophy of the school and the program of supervision no longer rely entirely upon the school administrators, but recently have come to include the planning and participation of classroom instructors. Lloyd Taylor (73:83) described the importance of the recently altered working relationship when he wrote: "The superintendent looks to the principal for supervision and evaluation. Most important, however, he expects the principal to develop ways of involving teachers in the process."

"Teacher militancy" is a term often used to describe recent pressures from the instructional personnel to share in the many administrative decisions formerly considered to be the unilateral responsibility of the school board and the district superintendent. Some principals are reluctant to accept the change, and Luvern Cunningham has reported that many principals expect their professional obligations to become more difficult as principal-teacher relationships change (Elam and others, 17:299). But regardless of terminology, it appears evident that major change in professional relationships is eminent.

Muriel Crosby (Leeper, 46:47) has expressed concern for the transitional role of the supervisor, and described the altered position of the supervisor in the changing educational organization by stating,

The current revolution, with its tremendous impact upon the schools and upon education, the rising militancy of teachers and

of the American public have created what might be legitimately described as a crisis situation for supervisors.

Lucio and McNeil (51:28) agree that the role of the supervisor has changed and suggest that the success of the contemporary supervisor is now dependent upon the extent to which he meets the expectations of his teachers. Because members of teaching faculties are better prepared and because teachers have come to share increasingly in the administrative process, it appears imperative that supervisors understand teacher expectations of supervisory programs. It seems no longer sufficient that the educational philosophies of the elementary principal agree only with those of the superintendent. Instead, it has become increasingly essential that programs of elementary supervision be consistent with the expectations of the school board, the superintendent, and particularly the members of the teaching staff.

In order to identify the attitudes and expectations of Montana educators toward programs of elementary supervision, it seemed necessary that an opportunity for expression be provided. This study provided an opportunity for district superintendents, elementary principals, and elementary teachers to associate the elementary principalship with programs of supervision and to suggest their professional expectations for change. It was felt by this writer that a professional concensus of programs of elementary supervision could provide a contribution of some value in planning and improving supervisory programs for the elementary schools of Montana.

Delimitations

Within the limitations outlined below, this study was conducted as an attempt to identify the supervisory role of the Montana elementary school principal:

1. The study was limited in time to the academic school year, 1969-1970.
2. The study was constructed to consider only programs of elementary supervision and to consider only the elementary school principal as elementary supervisor.
3. Only those educators employed as elementary teachers, elementary principals, and district superintendents were considered as those involved in programs of elementary supervision.
4. School districts selected for participation in the study were only those which, according to the 1969-1970 Montana Education Directory, contained elementary schools of twelve or more full-time classroom instructors (70:121).
5. From those school districts selected for participation, two population groups were included: (1) the district superintendents, and (2) elementary principals responsible for school buildings of twelve or more classroom teachers.
6. Through the use of a replacement sampling procedure, teacher participants for the study were selected on the following basis:
 - a. One participant selected from elementary schools of

twelve to seventeen classroom teachers.

- b. Two participants selected from elementary schools with eighteen or more classroom teachers.

7. The thirty-seven item list of most commonly used supervisory techniques, as provided by Eye and Netzer (20:290-92) was arbitrarily limited to those twenty determined by the writer to be those most appropriate to a study of professional human relationships.

8. In the statistical comparison of response among the three educator groups, the .05 level of confidence was selected for use in the determination of Chi Square levels of significant difference.

Within these limitations, the study was conducted in an attempt to identify the perceptions that elementary teachers, elementary principals, and district superintendents held for the elementary principalship as it related to the list of twenty specified supervisory practices.

Procedures

In an attempt to relate twenty designated supervisory techniques with the perceptions that Montana educators held for the supervisory role of the elementary school principal, the following procedures and materials were used:

1. Through professional literature and personal experience and interest, the problem was selected and defined.
2. To summarize the results of similar studies and to place the study in proper perspective, related literature was examined. The

survey of literature included an examination of the Educational Research Informational Center (E.R.I.C.) materials. The related studies, recorded in the years 1956-1969, appear in the bibliography, and their contributions to the subject appear within the context of this study.

3. Two survey instruments were constructed for use in the survey:

- a. A history sheet for use in the identification and classification of participants and their responses (See Appendix B, page 173).
- b. A closed-response survey form, constructed primarily from a list of commonly-used supervisory techniques suggested by Eye and Netzer (20:290-92) (See Appendix C, page 174).

4. Experimental survey instruments were then tested for clarity and for their ability to obtain the desired types of responses. Revisions were made as required.

5. Supervising elementary principals in Montana were designated by the accreditation standards of the Department of Public Instruction which specify that schools of twelve or more teachers, ". . . shall be administered by a full-time qualified, certified, elementary principal for whom adequate clerical assistance is provided (60:4)."

6. Montana elementary schools of twelve or more full-time classroom teachers were identified in the 1969-70 Montana Education Directory

(70:1-139) and their school districts were selected to be included in the survey.

7. Letters of transmittal were mailed to district superintendents (see Appendix A, page 172). Within the letter, the purpose and nature of the study were explained, samples of the survey forms were provided, and district superintendents were asked to provide written permission for the distribution of materials to principals and teachers within the districts.

8. Upon receipt of written permission from the district superintendents, letters of transmittal and survey forms were distributed to elementary principals throughout the State. No sampling procedures were used in the selection of superintendents and principals. Instead, those selected represented populations of administrators considered to be participants in programs of elementary supervision.

9. To satisfy the conditions of random sampling in a strictly mathematical sense, the replacement sampling procedure, suggested by J. P. Guilford (33:142), was used. From a complete list provided by the Montana State Department of Public Instruction, 4,796 public elementary school teachers were identified by name, county, school district, and school building. Names of teachers from each school were numbered in the order in which they appeared on the State list, and numbered tabs were prepared and used in the drawing which selected elementary teachers for inclusion in the study. One tab was drawn for elementary

schools of twelve to seventeen teachers, and two were drawn for schools of eighteen or more teachers. As names were drawn for participation, they were returned in order to maintain mathematical consistency.

Through the drawings, provision was made to include all Montana elementary public schools of twelve or more teachers in the study.

10. Upon receipt of superintendent's permission, letters of transmittal and survey forms were mailed to those elementary teachers selected.

11. As needed, follow-up letters and telephone calls were used to encourage all qualifying districts to participate in the survey.

12. Because of clerical error (see Appendix C, page 174), Item number 17 on the survey form, "Individual Counseling for Personal or Professional Problems", was not included in the analyses.

13. The responses of the three educator groups were recorded, studied, and statistically analyzed to test the stated null hypotheses that (H_0) no differences existed among the ways in which elementary teachers, elementary principals, and district superintendents perceived the supervisory role of the elementary principal and (H_0) that no differences existed among the predictions for change in that responsibility.

14. Abstract summaries were mailed to those school district superintendents who had expressed an interest in the study results.

Statement of the Problem

The problem considered by this study was that of investigating perceptions which Montana educators held for the supervisory role of the elementary school principal. An attempt was made to identify contrasts and similarities that Montana educators held for that position. Members of three educator groups (elementary teachers, elementary principals, and district superintendents) were selected to represent those educators who were participants in programs of elementary supervision. Through the use of a twenty-item list of commonly used techniques of supervision, an attempt was made to compare the manner in which the groups related the elementary principal to the program of instructional improvement.

As consolidation has increased the size of Montana school organizations, elementary principals have come to assume increased responsibility for the supervision of instructional programs. Recently, however, roles of educators have been altered by innovation in educational programs and by the increased activity of professional organizations. The changes in district size and in educator roles have presented the question: Do Montana elementary teachers, elementary principals, and district superintendents hold similar expectations of the supervisory responsibility of the elementary school principal? The question, in turn, led to the statement of the two null hypotheses with which the study was concerned: (H_0) There are no significant differences in the

perceptions that Montana educators hold for the supervisory role of the elementary school principal; and (H_0) on the basis of prediction-type responses, the future supervisory role of the Montana elementary school principal is not perceived differently by Montana elementary teachers, district superintendents, and elementary principals. The study was prepared and completed as a test of the two stated hypotheses.

Summary

Within this first chapter, the historical development of the elementary principalship has been briefly summarized and increased responsibilities in human relations and group processes have been suggested. Terms used in the study were defined, the problem was stated, and the hypotheses presented. In addition, the need for the study was shown in several areas:

1. In an era of change, education is changing. A need for the re-definition of professional roles exists.
2. Criticisms of traditional supervisory programs suggest that supervision will also be influenced by change.
3. Increased administrative participation by teachers provides new value to their views of supervision.
4. A similar study has not been completed recently in the State of Montana.
5. There is a need to stimulate the investigation of current and suggested programs of elementary supervision.

As indicated by the outline of procedures, this study proposed to identify the perceptions that Montana educators held for the supervisory role of the elementary principal. It also proposed to identify changes anticipated by those who participated in the study.

Montana and its educational programs have been influenced by a period of rapid change. The need for effective programs of elementary supervision is greater today than ever before. During this time when professional organizations and relationships are being altered, it appears appropriate that the professional role of the supervising elementary principal be re-examined.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

An examination of professional literature has shown recent and increased concern for programs of elementary supervision. Many authors agree that programs of supervision will experience change in the future, and also agree that classroom teachers will be important agents of change and active participants in future supervisory programs.

The examination of professional writing provided evidence that authors predict increased importance for group approaches to supervision, and also suggested that many effective supervisory programs of the future will be those in which all educator participants generally agree upon objectives and procedures of supervision.

Professional literature which provided a contribution to the subject of the study has been briefly summarized within this chapter.

Teacher-Principal-Superintendent Relationships

"Supervision in the school setting is seen in various ways by teachers, administrators, supervisors, and laymen (Harris, 37:5)." This statement by Harris, if accurate, could predict potential problems for the cooperative, group-process approaches to programs of supervision that are presently being advocated by various writers. Recent changes in programs of supervision have extended responsibility to an enlarged

number of educators, and one might expect that in an effective program the supervisory team members hold common instructional goals and generally agree upon procedures which will best achieve them.

In his writing concerning supervisory behavior, Stewart (71:525) cites professional literature to support the premise that supervisory success is dependent upon the perceptions of subordinates. Effective supervisory behavior, Stewart believes, is that supervision which teachers perceive to be effective. The real challenge of the supervisor, he concludes, is to provide supervisory programs that enable peer, subordinate, and superordinate members of the supervisory team to perceive the supervisory program as being effective in the achievement of instructional goals.

Turner (48:217), in his writings concerning role-taking, offers support to the belief that the most effective group processes are those in which team members hold similar views and generally agree upon the methods through which they can offer the greatest contribution toward the group goals. Turner states: ". . . a person . . . must act in the perspective supplied in part by his relationship to others whose actions reflect roles that he must identify." It may be reasonable to conclude that the most effective programs of supervision are those in which democratic processes are used to involve large numbers of professional team members, and which employ those processes in which superintendents, classroom teachers, and supervising principals hold similar views.

Also, objectives and materials would necessarily be those which had been accepted by the members of the supervisory team. Similarly, one might conclude that superintendents, teachers, and principals, to be effective team members, should hold similar views of their respective supervisory responsibilities.

Lucio and McNeil (51:28) support the premise that successful supervisory team members are those whose performance meets the expectations of their professional associates. In summarizing the findings of studies concerned with teacher-supervisor relationships, the authors report that:

The satisfaction of teachers with the school system has been found to depend upon the extent to which they perceive that the roles of their supervisors meet their expectations. Conversely, those higher in the school's hierarchy judge teachers in terms of how well they conform to personal expectations of the teacher's role.

Because classroom instructors and supervising principals work face-to-face in the day-to-day performance of their instructional responsibilities, it appears particularly important that those professional staff members hold similar views of individual responsibilities and concepts of what constitutes an effective program for the improvement of instruction. Mutual professional respect among supervisory team members appears to be equally important, and is a premise basic to this study. The material assembled by this study may provide valuable information concerning the views that Montana educators hold for existing programs of elementary supervision.

Turner (48:223), concerned with individual motivation and success within group processes, has written that, "Role validation is also anchored in the membership of recognized groups and the occupancy of formalized positions."

Another author, Herman (41:41), appears to agree and has devoted an entire chapter of his writings to the problems of instructional techniques and the consideration that principals must show for the teacher whenever approaches to instructional problems are suggested. Herman has stated the suggestion thus, "What is done should be done in a way that will enable the teacher in question to retain his confidence and positive self-concept."

Lucio and McNiel (51:28) report that the satisfaction of teachers with the school system has been found to depend upon the extent to which they perceive that the roles of their supervisors meet their own expectations. Reciprocal advantages in performance and self-confidence apparently are realized in the converse arrangement, for Gross (31:7-8) has determined that the expected performance of classroom teachers reinforces the position of the principal when his performance is consistent with their expectations. Here is his summarizing statement:

Whether or not teachers have a strong sense of personal loyalty to the principal, if they are satisfied with him as their administrative leader, his risks are reduced because he can count on them even when his own actions might affect their interests adversely.

Gross (31:7-25) concludes his writing with the interesting report that school principals, supported by the approval of their teachers,

tend to conform closely to the performance expectations of the teaching staff. Most authors seem generally agreed that the supervisory success of the elementary principal is dependent upon the acceptance and support his efforts receive from the instructional staff. Success may be limited, however, when a problem is viewed from varying positions. What appears to be desirable from the principal's perspective may not necessarily appear that way to teachers, since they occupy different positions within the school and have somewhat different interests and problems (Gross, 31:2-6).

Some evidence reveals that educators associate at times in an atmosphere which lacks mutual respect and professional confidence. One Montana elementary teacher, responding to survey materials distributed by this study, offered this evaluation of the role of the elementary principal,

I think the role of the elementary principal is over-inflated. The classroom teacher has always carried the load and has always run a building. Most principals, if they do anything, become little dictators and a teacher either gives in or becomes a hard-nosed brown-noser to keep his or her position.

Professional discussions occasionally reflect a lack of consensus concerning the program of supervision and the working relationship of the supervising elementary principal and classroom teachers. During the October, 1969, Montana Education Association convention held in Billings, a panel discussion considered such topics as: playground supervision, discipline, lesson plan requirements, and written.

evaluations of teachers. The topic selected for the discussion had been, "What do the classroom teacher and the principal expect from each other in order to make school more efficient and productive?" Although the topic clearly made reference to the program of supervision of instruction, the various topics which emerged suggested a lack of consensus within the discussion group.

Gross (31:16) has identified the difficulties posed when various persons, concerned with a single problem, may represent contrasting or even conflicting points of view. He aptly described the dilemma of such a situation when he wrote:

A principal, in short, occupies a position that brings him into contact with some people whose perspectives represent in part system-wide interests and problems and others whose perspectives derive in part from problems internal to the school and from the specific district served.

The very nature of the administration and supervision of American public schools requires that much interaction take place between the supervisory and instructional staffs. Teachers, however, do not consistently enjoy the advantage. They are somewhat isolated from their administrators at times, and their interactions tend to be only with other teachers. Without interaction between administrators, supervisors, and teaching faculty, common understandings are difficult to achieve.

Authors clearly point to the importance of professional consensus, agreement, and inter-role support within effective programs of instructional improvement, and some evidence reveals situations in which

