

FEATURED TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM MODELS

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Teacher induction in agricultural education has become an integral component of many teacher preparation programs in the USA. Faced with a shortage of teachers for decades, the profession has expanded its mission by making an effort to retain the teachers. Teacher educators interviewed for this report feel that providing a means of making beginning teachers more effective and giving them personal assistance in their early years of teaching will result in teachers staying in the profession and being better prepared for the challenges teachers face today.

The information for describing selected induction programs was secured from interviews that were preceded by questionnaires that were sent as an email attachments or through a facsimile machine. Once the information from each interview was summarized, the project assistant returned the report to the interviewee to establish clarity, understanding, and removal of all errors. A brief synthesis of key and common features of the programs are initially summarized in this document. A listing of the details of each induction program are subsequently presented in tabular form.

Summary

Some states have mandated induction programs for all beginning teachers in all subject disciplines. These programs generally involve some type of in-school mentoring and oversight by administrators. It is evident that some agricultural education induction programs do support these activities in some states (i.e., Oklahoma). In other states, the agricultural education discipline is leading the way in developing teacher induction programs (i.e., Oregon, Minnesota). The following sections feature the programming and infrastructures of several agricultural education teacher induction programs. The information from a series of questions was gathered using phone interviews to the program leaders in seven states.

Individuals Providing Leadership to the Induction Programs

While department of education leaders and NAAE-affiliate officers and members are involved, teacher educators provide the leadership and serve as or manage the coordinators for the majority agricultural education teacher induction program.

Entry-Level Teachers Enrolled in Teacher Induction Programs

Although some states include second and third-year teachers of agricultural education, induction programs in most states focus on entry-level or first-year agricultural education teachers.

Primary Goals of the Induction Programs

The primary goals of most programs are the retention of teachers, providing support and assistance that leads to socialization, and improving the ability to effectively teach and advise the FFA. While it appears states differ as to the order of the goals for their programs, many seem to feel retention will occur if they are assisting teachers to be more effective teachers.

Providers of Mentoring

The primary providers of the mentoring are experienced middle or secondary school teachers. As one teacher educator stated, "Beginning teachers want to hear from those in the real world facing the issues each day." It appears that experienced teachers serve primarily as supportive mentors along with providing ideas about sources and use of curricula, and as a source and ideas for teaching practices. The mentors from some states are provided a small honorarium to conduct in-school and personal visits with the entry-level teachers.

Once mentors are selected, they are usually provided with some training about the roles and activities of a mentor. In nearly every state, the mentors also serve as presenters at entry-level teacher workshops or seminars. The entry-level teachers receive one to four in-school visits by teacher educators or mentors in most states. The more effective induction programs feature experienced and/or retired teachers who have frequent interactions with the entry-level teachers. Teacher educators often function as program coordinators, but involvement of experienced mentors with the entry-level teachers is key to building productive and meaningful relationships.

In most states, the beginning teacher has a voluntary opportunity to receive graduate level credit, though only a small percentage of beginning teachers actually register for credit due primarily to cost. Some states have been creative in offering unique "no tuition" costs for courses. Despite not enrolling in courses, a high percentage of the entry-level teachers in each state elect to participate in the induction programs of their state.

Sources of Funding

The major source of funding for programs in most states comes through the agricultural education section or division of the State Department of Education. In some instances, the only funds available come from the budget of the agricultural education department at a university. The salaries and benefits of the university faculty who work on the induction programs are funded by their institution as an in-kind contribution to the program. The amount of funds available for an agricultural education teacher induction program ranges from \$3,000.00 to \$30,000.00. The greatest barrier to providing comprehensive induction programming in most states is a lack or limited funding.

Number of Seminars or Workshops

The number of seminar or workshop sessions varies from one four-hour or half-day session to three or four three-hour sessions conducted during the summer, fall and winter terms. Most states team with the NAAE-affiliate organizations and hold sessions for entry-level teachers during their annual professional development conferences. Mentoring by local, area, or assigned emeriti faculty is a common component of the featured induction programs.

Seminar and Workshop Topics

There seems to be commonality of topics addressed in the seminars and workshops of the featured states. The following topics are discussed (generally led by experienced teachers): managing student behavior, motivating students, securing teaching resources, strategies for gaining student support, balancing professional and personal life, implementing FFA advising strategies, implementing SAE programs, using reflection to improve teaching, creating a professional development plan, and creating units, courses and topics. Each state also has some unique topics such as using advisory councils, marketing a program, program evaluation, making home visits, and meeting state program standards. One state (Texas), offers a website that addresses a wide range of topics.

Successful Induction Program Practices and Activities

Open sharing of ideas, instructional resources, frustrations, joys and concerns is a highly successful activity for the entry-level teachers. Some coordinators indicated the sharing activities were the best aspects of their program. It is also evident that teacher mentors add a great deal to programs. Mentor and mentee relationships, in a non-threatening or evaluative framework, seem most effective. If anything seems to add value to these agricultural education programs, it is the use of selected agricultural education teachers who function as mentors, seminar/workshop leaders, and serve as a friend. Interviewees suggest that program outcomes are more strong when teacher educators do not serve as mentors. It seems that the agricultural education teacher induction programs are effective because they do not simply “go through the motions” of naming an in-school mentor to satisfy a state-mandated law. Feedback to the interviewed teacher educators from program participants in their programs indicate that the entry-level teachers apparently feel they are helped in a meaningful manner through the teacher induction programs.

Entry-Level Teacher Assessments and Program Evaluation Strategies

Formative and summative assessments of the needs of the entry-level teacher are conducted in many programs. Likewise, summative annual evaluations of the features, practices, and outcomes of the induction programs are conducted by the program leaders of many induction programs. Most induction programs do assist entry-level teachers in identifying their teaching strengths and challenges. Outcomes of the assessments are kept confidential and used solely for helping the teacher become more effective in the classroom and as an FFA advisor.

Communications with the principal about the experiences of the entry-level teacher occurs but is general in nature and used to express support for the teacher. One state arranges for an in-school committee consisting of a teacher educator, an in-school mentor, and a local school administrator. Their purpose is to provide the entry-level teacher and their principal with a listing of actions that need to be addressed by the entry-level in order to continue their licensure.

Barriers to the Success of Induction Programs

The lack of adequate and dependable annual sources of financial support is the greatest barrier to maintaining quality induction programs in this group of featured induction programs. The lack of time or personnel to carry out the plan is another barrier. Low participation rates by entry-level teachers are problematic in some states. Despite these barriers, the teacher induction programming efforts are designed to strengthen teacher effectiveness, and by most accounts, seem to be worth continuing each year.

Summary of Selected Agricultural Education State Induction Program Features Spring 2006

Table 1

Features of the Agricultural Education Induction Programs of California and Minnesota.

Program Component	State	
	California (SLO)	Minnesota
Primary Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of teachers Improve the performance of entry-level teachers Improve the effectiveness of the teachers in the classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retention of teachers Improve the performance of entry-level teachers Improve the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California Polytechnic State University (San Luis Obispo) Dept of Agricultural Education and Communications California State Dept of Ed Local School Districts 1st/2nd/3rd year teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> University of Minnesota - Ag Ed Faculty Minnesota Dept. of Education Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council Minnesota Association of Ag Educators Local School Districts Entry Level Teachers
Primary Providers of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected California high school agricultural education teachers. California State Dept of Education State Supervisor Agricultural Education and six regional supervisors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UM Agricultural Education Faculty Selected senior mentors who serve 3-6 beginning teachers per mentor. Mentors are generally recently retired successful teachers of agricultural education who have been prepared to serve as mentors. They make personal visits to teachers in their schools over the course of the year. Selected teachers of agricultural education. These teachers are asked to share their expertise and various aspects of the agricultural education program.
Type of Mentoring Provided by the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local in school district mentors (state mandated law for 1st/2nd and 3rd year teachers to obtain a clear license) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior mentors provide the in-school, one-on-one supervision on the entry level teachers. They make four personal visits each year to each new teacher.
Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> California State Department of Education California Polytechnic State University Department of Agricultural Education and Communications (in-kind) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minnesota State Department of Education. University of Minnesota College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Science College of Education and Human Development Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators (MAAE) Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC)
Means and Occasions of Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email, in-school mentors area agricultural education teachers (optional), seminar workshop sessions, regular mail, telephone, fax, contact by SLO faculty at professional regional meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Email, email listserv, video conferencing, in-school mentoring (local school), area agricultural education teacher mentors (optional), senior mentors (purposely selected for their experience and performance), program , seminars/workshop sessions, college course(s), special sessions in coordination with the MAAE (state teachers association), regular mail, telephone, fax

Means Used to Determine Content/Topics to be Addressed in the Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal survey to determine needs • An informal survey by interacting with teachers (beginning and experienced). Listening to concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of in-service needs • Personal interviews with beginning teachers and senior mentors based on observations. • Teacher-student planning time at the beginning of each session. • A review of current literature on teacher induction • A review of topics addressed in other teacher induction programs around the country. • A review of websites of existing programs
Number of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One meeting (Winter, December) (2 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • August (pre-school) seminar/workshop is an evening (picnic dinner) and all day on the following day. Session is held on campus. • October workshop (3 hours) held in conjunction with the Agricultural Education Invitational CDE event. Session is held on campus. • January workshop (3 hours) held in conjunction with the MAAE "High Tech" conference on a Friday evening. • June workshop (6-8 hours) held on an afternoon, evening and morning. A closure and debriefing session is held on campus.
Direct Cost of the Program To The Entry-Level Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no costs unless overnight lodging for one evening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no direct cost to the entry-level teachers unless they enroll in a 2 credit graduate course. Scholarships are supplied by MAAE to offset a portion of the tuition.
Most Successful Practices or Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The "New Professionals Institute" Teachers can attend three times...supplements and complements the M.Ed. program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of the senior mentors • The team approach of creating and maintaining the program
Reported Successes or Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a feeling that teachers are part of a state program that cares and is supportive. • Less stress on teachers. • More enthusiasm for the profession. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced retention of teachers • Less stress on teachers • More enthusiasm for the profession • More confidence in handling issues such as discipline, FFA, SAE, classroom activities • Creating unity among the entry level teachers, agricultural education staff, state supervisor staff and teachers of agricultural education across the state.
Difficulties and Barriers to Implementing a Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to service the entire state. • Generating a desire in the new teachers that they need to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a very time intensive effort. The program is impressive, but few recognize the demand for time and consequently the cost to implement the program effectively. • The senior mentors are key in this program, and more time is needed for mentor needs assessment and training. • From a research perspective, more participants would provide more impressive results. • The high cost of tuition tends to discourage most entry level teachers (who have a cash shortage) from participating in the credit aspect of the course.
Type of Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute is evaluated at the close of the 2-day session 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program is evaluated on the basis of a survey. This survey form is sent to local school principals, entry level teachers and the senior mentors. Based on the results of this customized program evaluation, changes are made in the program.
Contact Individual(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Kellogg • Bob Cummins • California State Polytechnic University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dick Joerger, djoerger@umn.edu • Brad Greiman, bgreiman@umn.edu • University of Minnesota

Table X

Features of the Agricultural Education Induction Programs of Oklahoma, Texas, and Missouri

Program Component	State		
	Oklahoma	Missouri	Oregon
Primary Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom • Improve the performance of entry-level teachers • Improve the ability to perform as an entry-level teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of teachers • Improve the effectiveness of teachers • Improve the ability to perform as an entry-level teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the performance of entry-level teachers • Improve the effectiveness of the teachers in the classroom • Retention of teachers
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oklahoma State University Agricultural Education Faculty • Oklahoma State University Adjunct Faculty (individuals employed exclusively for this program) • Selected Agricultural Education teachers • Oklahoma State Department of Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of Missouri Columbia • Northwest Missouri State University • Missouri State University • Central Missouri State University • Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No partners (The Department of Agricultural Education and General Agriculture at Oregon State University carries the full responsibility of the program)
Primary Providers of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oklahoma State University Agricultural Education Faculty • Oklahoma State University Adjunct Faculty (Special for this program) • Selected Agricultural Education teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Ulmer, University of Missouri, Columbia • Teacher Education faculty from the four cooperating universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Thompson, Oregon State University Professor • Reynold Gardner, Instructor • Don Jansen, Instructor • Mentor-teachers, Agricultural Education (on-site) • Selected teachers at beginning teachers conference
Type of Mentoring Provided by the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school member (local) • Area agricultural education teachers (informal) • Adjunct teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced agricultural education teachers in a neighboring school or within the agricultural education district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Agricultural Education teachers selected to serve as mentors. Expected to make 2 visits to the beginning teacher - winter term • Oregon State University faculty make two personal visits...one in Sept., one in Dec.
Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oklahoma State Department of Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missouri State Department of Elementary and Secondary Education • Missouri Center for Career Education, Warrensburg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Agricultural Education and General Agriculture, Oregon State University
Means and Occasions of Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • Area agricultural education teacher (mentor) • Adjunct faculty member • In-school mentor • Local school administrator • Regular mail • Telephone • Blackboard (electronic discussion system) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • Area (neighboring) established agricultural education teachers • Program seminars, workshops, college courses • Telephone • Blackboard/chat room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • In-school monitoring • Area agricultural education teacher mentor • College course • Special sessions with Oregon Agricultural Education Teachers Association • Regular mail • Telephone

Means Used to Determine Content/Topics to be Addressed in the Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations and meetings with adjunct faculty • Observations OSU faculty members • Observations of in-school mentor • Self-report by beginning teachers • Observations of in-school committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey of needs of beginning teachers • Verbal interaction with previous enrollees • Program/course evaluations previous year • Teacher educator input from four institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During summer conference, teachers choose high priority topics • Faculty observations during personal visits
Number of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three mandatory all-day in-school visits • Two all-day (Fall) September and November • One debriefing all-day session (May) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 sessions are held (Summer - July) (Fall - Sept/Oct) (Winter - Jan) • Sessions are held in each of six districts across state (Summer - all together), Fall - each district, Winter - each district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two in-service workshops (Fall - October) (Summer Conference in June)
Direct Cost of the Program To The Entry-Level Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No costs for entry-level teachers • If they decide to enroll in a graduate-level course - tuition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$75.00 for all entry-level teachers • Credit (2 credits) costs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Northwest Missouri State \$75.00/cr. * Central Missouri State \$80.00/cr. ** U of Missouri Columbia \$174.00/cr. ** Missouri State University \$185.00/cr. * Must pay \$75.00 fee. ** Fee is paid by the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of tuition for 4-6 credits = about \$1,300.00
Most Successful Practices or Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mentoring by three all-day in-school visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open discussion times at each session • Sharing teaching aids and ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two one-on-one all-day personal visits to the beginning teacher in their school • Bringing the beginning teachers together at the Oregon Agricultural Education
Reported Successes or Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less stress on teachers • More confidence in handling issues such as discipline, FFA, SAE, classroom activities • Retention of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced retention • Less stress on teachers • More enthusiasm for the profession • More confidence in handling the routine of teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced retention • More enthusiasm for the profession • More confidence in handling issues such as discipline, FFA, SAE, classroom activities • More ability to work with principals
Difficulties and Barriers to Implementing a Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited participation in graduate credit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to repeat each session six times across state • Different approaches each institution takes, in the preparation of teachers. Finding commonalities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of people resources (faculty) to carry out the program
Type of Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-school committee consisting of one teacher educator, one in-school mentor, a local school administrator makes a recommendation regarding the teacher's strengths and weaknesses. This is done in late fall (Dec.). These signals to the principal and beginning teacher actions that needs to be addressed to make the teacher more effective. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No report or consultation with principal • Mentors must review various assignments and give their comments prior to submission to the program leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying strengths and weaknesses and checking format teachers must follow to meet licensure standards. • Only interaction with principal is a sharing of general impressions in early September. • No intent to make an evaluative report to principal. • Work on building trust with the teacher. • Summary letter sent to teacher following the visits. Copy may or may not be sent to principal.
Contact Individual(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Ramsey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jon Ulmer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greg Thompson

Table X
Features of the Agricultural Education Induction Programs of Texas and Utah

Program Component	Texas	Utah
Primary Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the performance of entry-level teachers • Improve the effectiveness of the teachers in the classroom • Retention of teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of teachers. • Improve the effectiveness of the teacher in the classroom. • Improve the performance of entry-level teachers
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Education Agency • Various media companies (lunch, door prizes) • Department of Agricultural Education and Communications - Texas Tech University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utah State Department of Education. • Utah State University, Agricultural Systems Technology Education Department • Utah Vocational Agriculture Teacher Association
Primary Providers of Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced teachers who make special presentations • The Agricultural Education Coordinator, State of Texas • The Executive Director of the Texas FFA Organization • The Executive Director - Texas Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association • Various media vendors • Selected school administrators, school counselors, special needs specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian Warnick • Utah State Supervisor of Agricultural Education. • UVATA Officers and selected teachers. • Local school principals • Selected teachers mentors
Type of Mentoring Provided by the Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None • Area Agricultural Education Teachers (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school mentoring (not required in the Agricultural Education program but <u>all</u> Utah teachers must have a three-year mentor/teacher. • Area agricultural education teacher mentors (optional - selected by teacher)
Sources of Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texas Education Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utah State Department of Education • Utah State University, The Department of Agricultural Systems Technology Education • Utah Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association
Means and Occasions of Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • Area Agricultural Education teachers • Telephone • Website/Webpage - New Agricultural Teacher Resource Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E-mail • In-school mentor • Area agricultural education teachers (optional) • Program seminars/workshops • College courses • Special sessions with UVATA • Regular mail • Telephone • On-site visits
Means Used to Determine Content/Topics to be Addressed in the Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information from the workshop evaluation form • Coordinator observations and conversations with teachers, school administrators and other teacher educators. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-site visits resulting in observed and reported information by teacher educators. • A survey instrument, which follows the Moir Curve Model, provides an assessment of positive and negative experiences.
Number of Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One session (during the month of July) during Texas Vocational Agriculture Teachers Association meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three formal class or workshop sessions. (Fall, month of October) (Winter, month of January) (Spring-Summer, month of June)

Direct Cost of the Program To The Entry-Level Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no costs for the program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tuition costs. Required to pay \$15.00/credit as a recording fee for 3 credits = \$45.00.
Most Successful Practices or Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The round table discussions at the summer conference using selected presenters for various topics. Webpage "New Agricultural Teacher Resource Center" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-site visits in fall by Utah State faculty. Use of area agricultural education teachers as mentors. A dinner during the UVATA January Conference (time to interact)
Reported Successes or Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less stress on teachers More enthusiasm for the profession More confidence in handling issues such as discipline, FFA, SAE, classroom activities. Enhanced retention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced retention. More enthusiasm for the profession. More confidence in handling issues such as discipline, FFA, SAE, classroom activities. Teachers being more fully integrated into the profession.
Difficulties and Barriers to Implementing a Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping up to date with 700-800 URLs on webpage. Coordinator does not have time to properly manage the webpage. Only one person to serve in a coordinator/supervisory role for 1,600 teachers across the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of financial support. Considerable amount of time required to conduct the program.
Type of Program Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is no formal evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No report is given to the local school principal (intentional). A checklist is used to provide a report on the entry-level teachers in terms of classroom, FFA, and SAE (designed to be supportive not evaluative). Provides a basis for 2 UVATA awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rookie Teacher-of-the-Year Mentor
Contact Individual(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> James H. Smith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brian Warnick

