

INFLUENCE OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT ON THE INDUCTION STAGE OF TEACHING

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Abstract

Using the Teacher Career Cycle Model as the theoretical framework, this study extended our understanding of how teachers professionally develop during their first year of teaching. The purpose of this study was to describe the induction activities and socialization process that novice agricultural education teachers experience, and to determine their psychosocial attitude after completion of the first year of teaching. Thirty-one agricultural education teachers in their first year of teaching participated in the study, and both quantitative and qualitative research methodology was utilized to collect and analyze the data. Researchers concluded that factors related to the organizational environment of the school influence the induction stage of teaching. Novice teachers were not prepared for isolation and socialization issues, were challenged by complex program management responsibilities, and expressed frustration by the amount and quality of support that was provided by the school administrator. Novice teachers learned that they serve an important role in students' lives, and reported "love/hate" aspects of their career. It was determined through the use of a semantic differential scale that novice teachers concluded their first year of teaching with an overall positive psychosocial attitude.

Introduction and Theoretical Framework

Teaching may be one of the most difficult of all professions to master, and developing the skills to effectively teach has been described as an exceptionally challenging process (Camp & Heath-Camp, 1989; Joerger, 2003b). Beginning teachers are in the most pivotal year of their career, and the experiences associated with the transition from student to first-year teacher influence their teaching effectiveness and longevity in the profession (Marso & Pigge, 1987). The induction activities and support provided to first-year teachers play a significant role in determining whether they remain in education or pursue a different career (Keil, 1993).

Novice agricultural education teachers have indicated that their socialization into the teaching profession is a demanding

process. Beginning teachers reported elevated levels of stress (Joerger, 2003b), and experienced feelings of confusion, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence (Mundt, 1991) during the first semester of the school year. However, novice teachers indicated that their confidence was increased by receiving positive support and feedback (Knobloch & Whittington, 2002), and they reported satisfaction with receiving psychosocial assistance (Greiman, Birkenholz, & Stewart, 2003). Novice agricultural education teachers were efficacious at the end of the school year (Whittington & Knobloch, 2003), and exhibited a stronger commitment to remain in the profession than did other novice teachers (Edwards & Briers, 2001). Beginning teachers indicated that locus of control, a component of efficacy, had a critical impact on their teaching experience

and was identified by novice teachers as “feeling in control” of their program (Joerger, 2003a). Moir (1990) has theorized that this socialization process follows several phases, with each phase being characterized by a specific attitude that first-year teachers display towards teaching.

Issues pertaining to classroom management and time management have been consistently identified by novice agricultural education teachers as challenges experienced during the first year of teaching (Boone, 2003; Mundt, 1991; Mundt & Connors, 1999; Talbert, Camp, & Heath-Camp, 1994). Additionally, the induction year of teaching presents agricultural education teachers with unique program challenges of preparing for a large number of different classes (Talbert et al.), managing paperwork involving state-required reports and ordering laboratory supplies (Boone; Talbert et al.), gaining administrative, school, and community support (Boone; Mundt; Mundt & Connors), managing the FFA chapter (Mundt; Mundt & Connors), and recruiting students (Mundt & Connors). Beginning agricultural education teachers have management responsibilities for multiple components of their program (i.e., classroom, laboratory, SAE, FFA, advisory committee, alumni, adult education), and educational stakeholders have been encouraged to establish reasonable expectations for a novice teacher (Mundt; Mundt & Connors). Novice teachers require support from multiple sources, and researchers have suggested that educational stakeholders work together to guide and nurture beginning teachers (Greiman, Walker, & Birkenholz, 2002; Joerger, 2003a; Mundt & Connors; Talbert et al.).

Learning to become an effective teacher can be envisioned as a continuum of professional experiences that has been depicted as a complex, life-long process (National Research Council, 2000; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). Researchers have posited that teaching is a developmental process that consists of interactions between the developing teacher and his/her environment (Fuller & Brown, 1975; Steffy, Wolfe, Pasch, & Enz, 2000).

This dynamic approach is exemplified by the Teacher Career Cycle Model developed by Fessler and Christensen (1992), and served as the theoretical framework for this study. The model borrows heavily from social systems theory, and suggests that teacher development is dynamic and flexible, rather than static and fixed. Fessler and Christensen suggested that the professional development of teachers must be understood in the context of an interdependent system involving career stages, personal environment, and organizational environment. Rather than viewing teacher development as a linear process, the Teacher Career Cycle Model posits that teachers “ebb and flow” in their progression through eight life-long career stages (preservice, induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, career frustration, stability, career wind-down, career exit) in response to environmental influences and interactions from both personal and organizational dimensions. The preservice stage begins this process and represents the period of initial teacher preparation at a college or university, while the career exit stage represents the period of time after the teacher leaves the job.

Personal environment variables that influence the career stages include family support structures; positive critical incidents such as marriage, birth of children, or religious experiences; life crises such as illness, death, financial loss, or legal problems; individual dispositions related to behavioral traits, aspirations, and values; avocational outlets such as hobbies or travel; and life stages. The second major category of influences upon the career stages is the organizational environment of the school. The variables having an impact are school regulations such as student testing mandates, management style of administrators and supervisors, the atmosphere of public trust present in a community, the societal expectations that communities place upon a school, the activities of professional organizations such as the National Association of Agricultural Educators, and the union atmosphere present in the school system (i.e., National Education Association).

This study was conducted because additional research is needed to extend our understanding of how novice agricultural education teachers professionally develop during their first year of teaching. The reflections of novice teachers should be explored regarding the socialization process, and how their perceptions about teaching change during the year. The findings of such research will assist in the successful induction of novice teachers within a model of life-long professional development.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to describe the induction activities and socialization process that novice agricultural education teachers experience and to determine their psychosocial attitude after completion of the first year of teaching. The specific questions this study sought to answer were:

1. What were the demographic characteristics of novice agricultural education teachers and their teaching environment?
2. What induction activities were provided to novice agricultural education teachers by school districts at the start of the school year, and what were the themes pertaining to additional induction support that would have been useful?
3. Did novice agricultural education teachers receive program management assistance from within their school district, to what extent were they satisfied with the assistance, and what were the themes of additional program management assistance that would have been helpful?
4. What was the psychosocial attitude of novice agricultural education teachers after completion of the first year of teaching, and what were the themes pertaining to their changed perceptions about teaching?

Methods and Procedures

This study employed survey research methods, and both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized to collect and analyze the data (Krathwohl, 1998). The population consisted of agricultural education teachers ($N = 31$) who had completed their first year of teaching at high schools or area vocational technical schools in Missouri, and the population frame for the study was obtained from the Missouri Professional Development Specialist. The researchers created a data collection instrument by modifying a previously developed questionnaire (Wilkinson, 1997), and incorporated applicable material pertaining to the induction of agricultural education teachers (Mundt & Connors, 1999). Former agricultural education teachers served as the expert panel, and they reviewed the instrument for content and face validity. Several changes pertaining to clarity and formatting of the questionnaire were made as a result of the expert panel input. An estimate of reliability of the data collection instrument was calculated post-hoc, which resulted in a Cronbach's alpha of .82 for scaled items corresponding to psychosocial attitude.

The data collection instrument was comprised of four parts. The first part requested that novice agricultural education teachers indicate yes/no to questions regarding the induction activities provided by the school district at the start of the school year. To probe for more detail, novice teachers were asked in an open-ended question to identify additional induction support that would have been useful at the start of their first year of teaching. The second part of the questionnaire asked respondents to indicate yes/no whether they had received program management assistance in 19 different areas. If novice teachers answered "yes" to receiving program management assistance, they were asked to indicate the extent of their satisfaction with the assistance. A 5-point Likert-type scale comprised of

response options ranging from 1 (*not satisfied*) to 5 (*very satisfied*) was utilized to capture the information. In addition, an open-ended question asked beginning teachers to identify additional program management assistance that would have been helpful during the first year of teaching. The third part of the questionnaire asked teachers to reflect on their psychosocial attitude after completion of their first year of teaching by use of 12 pairs of bipolar descriptors. A 7-point semantic differential scale was utilized to measure difficulty, satisfaction, and efficacy categories pertaining to psychosocial attitude (Wilkinson, 1989). Further, an open-ended question asked novice teachers to describe how their perceptions of teaching had changed during the first year of teaching. The final part of the data collection instrument requested respondents to report demographic information related to themselves and the environment where they taught.

The data collection instrument was administered to novice agricultural education teachers at the start of their second year of teaching. Questionnaires were collected from 21 respondents during a beginning teacher induction program. Teachers who were unable to attend the program were contacted by telephone to explain the study, and were mailed a cover letter, the data collection instrument, and a self-addressed, postage paid envelope. Follow-up telephone calls were made one week later requesting questionnaires from non-respondents. Completed data collection instruments were received from 30 respondents, which resulted in a 97% response rate. Nonresponse error was not considered to be a threat to the validity of the study due to the high response rate (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and analyze the quantitative data, while content analysis of open-ended questions was conducted to better understand the meaning constructed by novice teachers (Gall et al., 1996). The researchers assumed an interpretive and naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) when analyzing the qualitative data, and the constant comparative method

(Merriam, 2001) was utilized by the researchers to develop themes. In this method, the responses by the novice teachers were analyzed for meaningful segments of data and coded, and then organized into categories. During this process, the researchers began to discriminate more clearly the criteria for categories, and thus some categories were subdivided and others combined to form themes. Trustworthiness was established by the researchers individually and collaboratively arriving at the themes to aid in credibility, by purposive sampling and a thick description to enhance transferability, and by an audit trail to assist with dependability (Merriam).

Results and Findings

The first objective of this study was to identify the demographic information of novice agricultural education teachers and their teaching environment. The mean age of novice teachers was 27.6 ($SD = 6.06$), with a range from 22 to 43 years of age. Twenty (67%) of the novice teachers were male, and 10 (33%) were female. Eighty-seven percent ($n = 26$) and 13% ($n = 4$) of the teachers had completed their bachelor's and master's degrees, respectively. Schools of novice teachers were located in communities with a median population of 1000-2500 people. Ninety percent ($n = 27$) of the teachers taught in comprehensive high schools, while 10% ($n = 3$) taught in an area vocational technical school/career center. Half ($n = 15$) of the teachers taught in a block system, and an almost equal number ($n = 14$, 47%) taught in a traditional 7- or 8-period class schedule. Novice teachers taught in high schools with a mean enrollment of 271 students ($SD = 142.73$), and a range of 70 to 525 students. The mean number of students in the agricultural education programs of novice teachers was 92 ($SD = 49.22$), with a range of 20 to 206 students. Sixty percent ($n = 18$) of novice teachers were in a single-teacher agricultural education program, 37% ($n = 11$) were in a two-teacher department, and one (3%) was in a three-teacher program.

The second objective sought to describe the induction activities provided to novice

agricultural education teachers by school districts at the start of the school year, and to identify themes pertaining to additional support that would have been useful. Ninety percent ($n = 27$) of the respondents stated that they were given an orientation to the school buildings and facilities before school began. A majority of novice teachers reported that they were made aware of the school policies and other procedural information, either verbally ($n = 26$, 87%) or in printed form ($n = 25$, 83%). Sixty percent ($n = 18$) of the respondents indicated that the school administrator made his/her expectations clear regarding the level of teaching performance desired. As part of a state-mandated teacher induction program in Missouri, 93% ($n = 28$) of novice teachers had a formal mentor provided by the school district.

Thirteen teachers responded to the open-ended question that asked for identification of additional induction activities that would have been useful at the start of the school year. The responses to the open-ended question were coded and organized into categories and four major themes emerged: paper work, isolation/socialization, classroom management, and pedagogy. The most frequently mentioned theme centered on paper work, and the need for additional assistance with completing forms, reports, applications, grants, and other paper work. Representative responses from teachers indicated that they needed "more information on filling out state reports," and needed additional assistance with "paper work (purchase orders, resale, etc.)," "how to complete my roster and...order shop supplies," and how to "prepare state degree applications." A second theme revealed novice teachers' feelings of isolation as they began their teaching career, and a need for socialization. One novice teacher reported that the advice of a formal mentor was needed before school started, but a formal mentor was not assigned until later in the school year. Another teacher observed that their mentor was very busy at the start of the

school year, and did not have time to devote to the dyad relationship. Novice agricultural education teachers reported that they valued the experiences of current teachers and wished to learn from them. One teacher indicated that overcoming isolation and gaining early assistance was critical to success, "My best advice to all future first-year teachers is don't be afraid to ask questions and ask early." The third most common theme focused on the need for additional support with classroom management. A representative response from a teacher was, "Provide more information about classroom management and...provide some ideas on how to deal with difficult students and how to connect with them." The fourth theme regarding additional induction support focused on pedagogy. Novice teachers found that they needed more advice and ideas on how to engage students in learning, and how to create more experiential activities.

The third research question sought to discern whether novice agricultural education teachers received program management assistance from within their school district, to what extent were they satisfied with the assistance, and what were the themes of additional program management assistance that novice teachers would have found helpful. Sources of assistance within the school district were determined to be faculty members, school administrators, and parents. As shown in Table 1, respondents reported parents (96.7%) and faculty members (96.7%) as the most common sources of program management assistance. Novice teachers indicated a higher level of satisfaction with the assistance from parents ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.09$) than from faculty members ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 0.95$). School administrators were identified by less than half (46.7%) of the respondents as providing program management assistance, and novice teachers were mixed in their level of satisfaction ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.33$) regarding the assistance received.

Table 1
Satisfaction with Program Management Assistance as Perceived by Novice Teachers (N = 30)

Program management assistance	Received assistance		Level of satisfaction	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Sources of assistance				
Parents	29	96.7	3.86	1.09
Faculty members	29	96.7	3.55	0.95
School administrator	14	46.7	3.07	1.33
Areas of assistance				
Classroom supplies and materials	22	73.3	3.86	1.21
Supplies and equipment for laboratory/program	20	66.7	3.65	1.23
Individual differences of students	20	66.7	3.40	1.14
Classroom/laboratory management	16	53.3	3.56	1.15
Advisory committee	16	53.3	3.31	1.08
FFA fund-raising activities	15	51.7	3.53	1.19
Role as FFA advisor	13	43.3	3.23	1.24
Teaching methods	11	36.7	3.64	0.81
Summer program	11	36.7	3.09	1.14
FFA officer elections	8	26.7	4.13	1.13
Student recruitment	8	26.7	3.38	1.06
Time management	8	26.7	2.88	0.99
Balancing personal/professional responsibilities	7	23.3	2.86	1.07
Development of lesson plans	6	20.0	3.50	1.05
SAE programs	6	20.0	3.43	0.98
Adult education in the program	6	20.0	3.17	1.47

Note. 5-point scale (1 = not satisfied to 5 = very satisfied).

As indicated in Table 1, novice agricultural education teachers most commonly received program management assistance with obtaining classroom supplies and materials (73.3%), purchasing supplies and equipment for the laboratory/program (66.7%), and addressing the individual differences of students (66.7%). Respondents indicated lower levels of program management assistance in regard to development of lesson plans (20.0%), SAE programs (20.0%), and adult education (20.0%). Approximately 50% of the novice teachers did not receive assistance in 13 of the 16 program management areas. Novice teachers were the most satisfied with program management assistance regarding FFA officer elections ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.13$), while the lowest rated means for level of satisfaction were time management ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.99$), and balancing

personal/professional responsibilities ($M = 2.86$, $SD = 1.07$).

Responses were obtained from 11 teachers regarding the open-ended question that asked for identification of additional program management assistance that would have been helpful. Two major themes emerged from the discussion provided by the teachers: complex program responsibilities, and school administrator. Responses by novice teachers indicated they could have benefited from additional program management assistance regarding a broad range of areas, including technology, laboratory management, paper work, classroom management, and adult education. To assist with managing complex program responsibilities, one teacher recommended that "a list of things suggested to do in the first year be provided by Ag teachers and the State Department." The second most

frequently mentioned theme centered on additional assistance from the school administrator. Novice teachers reported that they would have liked for their administrator to have been more helpful and knowledgeable about the agricultural education program, and to have been more constructive regarding expectations. One teacher commented, "The administration didn't know what SAE was or why I had to make visits. Even after I explained the basics, I still was met with a lot of resistance."

The fourth research objective was to determine the psychosocial attitude of teachers after completing the first year of teaching, and to identify themes pertaining

to changed perceptions about teaching that novice teachers experienced during the year. As shown in Table 2, the psychosocial attitude of novice teachers after completing the first year of teaching was positive ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.39$) in regard to the 12 bipolar descriptors. Using four as the midpoint on the 7-point semantic differential scale reveals that novice teachers expressed the most positive psychosocial attitude regarding feelings of excitement ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 1.03$) and security ($M = 5.77$, $SD = 1.17$). Conversely, novice teachers reported a negative psychosocial attitude regarding only one of the descriptors, that being thoughts of exhaustion ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.75$).

Table 2

Psychosocial Attitude of Novice Teachers After Completion of First Year of Teaching (N = 30)

Bipolar Descriptor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Bored/excited	5.80	1.03	3 – 7
Insecure/secure	5.77	1.17	3 – 7
Helpless/in charge	5.53	1.14	2 – 7
Unproductive/productive	5.47	1.14	3 – 7
Unfamiliar/familiar	5.37	1.47	2 – 7
Ineffective/effective	5.33	1.12	3 – 7
Dissatisfied/satisfied	5.20	1.42	1 – 7
Disorganized/organized	4.93	1.66	1 – 7
Not rewarded/rewarded	4.83	1.70	1 – 7
Isolated/connected	4.80	1.50	2 – 7
Out of control/in control	4.80	1.54	2 – 7
Exhausted/refreshed	3.67	1.75	1 – 7
Total	5.13	1.39	

Note. 7-point semantic differential scale where 1 represented more negative evaluation and 7 represented a more positive evaluation.

Twelve teachers provided a narrative response to the open-ended question pertaining to their changed perceptions about teaching that they experienced during their induction year. The four themes that emerged from coding the data were: central person in students' lives, career satisfaction/dissatisfaction, pedagogy, and time requirement. The most frequently mentioned theme dealt with the importance and influence that a teacher has on the lives of students. Novice teachers saw themselves

as a central person in students' lives, and were surprised to develop close relationships with students during their first year at the school. The concept of a teacher being a more encompassing person than strictly a classroom teacher emerged from the narratives of novice teachers. One teacher stated that they became an "individual for students to talk with," and another commented, "I didn't realize how much I would become involved in students' lives, and how they depend on teachers to be the

constant in their life.” The second most frequently mentioned theme focused on aspects of satisfaction/dissatisfaction of teaching. Novice teachers experienced both of these feelings during the year, and reported comments such as, “Still love to teach, still hate the politics,” and “Tired of dealing with a high school principal who does not support the program at all. Sadly, he was a former ag teacher.” Another teacher “thought that teaching was about the students, and discovered that politics are more important to administrators than a teacher doing a good job.” The third most common theme regarding novice teachers’ changed perceptions was in regard to pedagogy. Novice teachers emphasized that developing *student interest* in classroom concepts was more important than their *knowledge* of subject matter. As one teacher stated, “I realized that it is not the subject matter that really matters; it is my excitement [about the topic] and caring that you show students.” Novice teachers expressed the importance of developing student interest by creating a context for learning, and that classroom management problems were reduced when students saw the relevance of what they were learning. The fourth most common theme was the time requirement necessary to manage complex program responsibilities. Novice teachers learned that there was much more to being a teacher than what they initially thought, and that the many expectations of being an agricultural education teacher challenged their energy level, and demanded their time. An example of a frequent response from a teacher was, “I am a friend, repair man...do paper work for school/state, and have extra duties.” Another novice teacher commented, “I never imagined how much personal time would be taken by my obligations to teaching and FFA.”

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

The target population that the researchers sought to generalize to consisted of the census of novice teachers who were in their first year of teaching agricultural education in Missouri. It can be concluded from the responses provided by this cohort

group that factors related to the organizational environment of the school influence the induction stage of teaching. This is consistent with the Teacher Career Cycle Model posited by Fessler and Christensen (1992), and emphasizes the important role that faculty, staff, mentors, administration, and parents have in regard to the induction and socialization of novice teachers. Almost all novice teachers received an orientation from school district personnel regarding school buildings, facilities, school policies, and procedural information at the start of the school year. School districts are mandated by state legislation in Missouri to provide a formal mentor for each beginning teacher, and this study found almost all novice agricultural education teachers had been matched with a formal mentor. However, it was disconcerting that two of the 30 first-year teachers did not have an assigned mentor, and one assignment was made after the school year had started. Further, this study concluded that program management assistance, advice, and support was provided by faculty and parents in the school district, and novice teachers were satisfied with this support. This confirms Joerger’s (2003b) finding that parental support has a major impact on the induction of beginning agricultural education teachers.

Beginning agricultural education teachers were not prepared for isolation and socialization issues that are part of the organizational environment of schools. Consistent with research conducted by Talbert et al. (1994), novice teachers experienced feelings of isolation as they began their teaching career, and expressed a need for socialization within the school. They desired more interaction with mentors, faculty, and staff early in the school year, and novice teachers appear to have wanted greater support and advocacy at this critical time. Novice teachers recognize the importance of establishing communication with mentor teachers early and often at the start of the school year. Additionally, novice agricultural education teachers were frustrated by the amount and quality of support that was provided by the school administration. Less than half of the teachers received assistance from their administrators

in making program management decisions, and satisfaction with the assistance was mixed. It could be inferred that administrators trust the program management skills of novice teachers and do not wish to micro-manage the agricultural education program, or it might also be inferred that there are barriers to communication with administrators.

It was concluded that novice agricultural education teachers are challenged by complex program management responsibilities. Novice teachers stated that they were not prepared for the onslaught of paper work tasks such as completing forms, reports, grants, and applications, and indicated that additional assistance would have been helpful. Time management was a concern identified by novice teachers, especially as it pertained to administering multiple components of the agricultural education program. Teaching as well as managing FFA activities and advocating for students took more time and energy than novice teachers anticipated. Most novice teachers were provided with assistance regarding ordering supplies and materials for the classroom and laboratory, but they were less likely to receive assistance in a number of areas that were unique to an agricultural education program. Some of the most difficult challenges facing novice agricultural education teachers are classroom management, time management and balancing personal/professional responsibilities (Boone, 2003, Mundt & Connors, 1999; Talbert et al., 1994). However this study agreed with Joerger (2003b), and concluded that novice teachers were not receiving the necessary amount and quality of assistance with these challenges.

Novice agricultural education teachers came to the realization during their first year of teaching that they were an important and central person in students' lives, and that they were someone students could talk to and depend upon. Novice teachers were surprised to form these relationships with students when they considered the short time they had been at the school. Novice teachers experienced feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with being a teacher, and reported "love/hate" aspects of their career during the induction process. This

perception about the first year of teaching may have been due to the idealistic goals of novice teachers interfacing with the reality and politics of the school environment. Novice teachers also learned important lessons related to pedagogy, and reported that their enthusiasm for teaching and development of student interest impacted learning and the classroom environment more than their knowledge of subject matter. Novice teachers concluded their first year of teaching with an overall positive psychosocial attitude, and expressed the most positive attitudes in regard to feelings of excitement and security. The only negative psychosocial attitude reported by novice teachers pertained to thoughts of exhaustion. It appears that these findings align with research conducted by Moir (1990) on the phases of first-year teachers' attitude towards teaching.

As a result of this study, several recommendations are suggested. In an attempt to address the challenge that novice agricultural education teachers face in managing complex program responsibilities, it is recommended that school districts and/or agricultural education stakeholders conduct professional development programs that address time management and balancing personal/professional responsibility needs of novice teachers. It is further recommended that preservice courses and induction programs for novice teachers include sessions on developing administrator relationships. It appears that strategies to inform and involve administrators in the agricultural education program are needed by novice teachers. Beginning agricultural education teachers have reported that experiencing the support of the principal has a major impact on the induction year of teaching (Joerger, 2003a), and thus it is recommended that a collaborative relationship be developed. School administrators are encouraged to take a proactive role in the mentorship of novice teachers, and novice teachers should seek the advice and input of their administrator through regular communication. It is recommended that future research be conducted on exemplary communication and mentoring strategies that are utilized in

effective teacher and administrator relationships.

This study involved an investigation of the induction and socialization practices experienced by one cohort of novice teachers. To allow for greater generalization and transferability, it is recommended that this study be replicated with more participants in additional states. Moreover, further investigation should be conducted on the role that induction and mentoring practices have on novice teachers' ability to successfully understand and adapt to the organizational environment of the school. Follow-up studies to identify predictors of successful dyad relationships involving novice teachers and their mentor should be planned, and quasi-experimental or experimental research designs should be conducted to identify successful induction and mentoring practices.

It is recommended that an interdependent systems approach, such as the Teacher Career Cycle Model (Fessler & Christensen, 1992), should be embraced by agricultural education stakeholders so that teacher development can be envisioned as a complex and continuous process. Novice teachers must be reminded that socialization into the profession involves challenges pertaining to the organizational environment of the school, and their personal environment. As such, teachers may or may not be able to control some of these variables, and recognizing the difference will allow novice teachers to focus on what they can control. Novice teachers must be encouraged to reach out to support groups (i.e., formal and informal mentors, teachers, administrators, parents) for assistance, to build relationships, and to avoid isolation practices. A plan to address the complex program management responsibilities should include establishing short- and long-range goals, and developing priorities within the context of life-long learning. The competitive nature of the agricultural education profession at times does not give novice teachers the *permission* to establish realistic goals and priorities for managing a complex program. Finally, it is clear that a *community* of support is necessary to assist novice teachers during the induction process, and that this collaborative network

is necessary to sustain the agricultural education teaching profession.

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