

## **A Description of the Nature and Impact of Teaching Events and Alternate Forms of Beginning Teacher Assistance Experienced by Beginning Minnesota Agricultural Education Teachers**

Richard Joerger  
Glenn Boettcher  
University of Minnesota

### **Abstract**

Between 1993 and 1995, 6.1% of United States public school teachers left teaching. Only 3 out of 10 teachers left for retirement (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Researchers report that new teachers often experienced difficulty with classroom management and discipline, student motivation, room and lesson organization, locating adequate teaching materials, and understanding complex school systems (Griffen, 1985; Odell, 1986; Veenman, 1984). Thoughtfully designed induction programs appear to be one solution to retaining quality teachers. Beginning teachers involved in induction programs improve their self-confidence and classroom management, lesson planning, and discipline (Conner, 1984; Eisner, 1984). Teachers involved in induction programs also have more positive attitudes toward teaching and plan to stay teaching longer than those not involved in induction programs (Henry, 1988; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986).

This study sought to determine the impact and occurrence of different forms of assistance provided by local school districts to 19 beginning Minnesota agricultural education teachers. Using measures from a questionnaire developed by Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert and Barber (1992), the results of the study show that the forms of assistance that had the greatest impact were parental support for the program, adequate written instructional materials, and available planning time before school started. The most frequently reported forms of assistance were an orientation on school policies, planning time before school, parental support, and a new teacher workshop.

The study also sought to describe events experienced by the beginning teachers. Seven of the 39 listed events were perceived to have a critical impact. The events were: 'I feel in control of my program', 'students act with respect towards me', 'I feel self confident in my classroom teaching', 'I experience satisfaction when an activity succeeds', 'I see my students succeeding in my class, 'my principal supports me', and 'I have more work to do than I have time to do it'. Three events that happened the least and had a major impact on the beginning teachers were: 'receiving feedback from my principal', 'having inadequate curriculum materials', and 'receiving gratitude from my students'.

Thirty-seven percent of the teachers were involved in a locally administered beginning teacher assistance program. Findings revealed the beginning teachers were moderately satisfied and experiencing high levels of stress. Only 53% of the teachers indicated they planned to continue teaching one year later.

The findings of this study support many of the findings reported by Camp et al. (1992). Results of this study were used to inform the practice of the coordinator, mentors, and partners involved with the Minnesota Teacher Induction Program during the 1999-2000 academic year.

## Introduction and Theoretical Framework

The retention of quality teachers in the public school systems has been a topic of continuing concern. Between the 1993-94 and 1994-95 school years, 6.1 % of the teachers in the United States left the teaching profession. Seventy percent of the teachers leave the profession for reasons other than retirement (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Unfortunately, up to 50% of our beginning teachers consistently leave the profession before the end of their sixth year of teaching (Curtis, 1985; Jensen, 1986).

According to Schulman (1987), teaching may be one of the most difficult of all professions to master. Few other professions expect the first-year practitioner to immediately perform at the same level as their experienced colleagues. This pressure results in a transition from student to first-year teacher that is traumatic for many and has been referred to in the literature as “reality shock” (Marso and Pigge, 1987). Many education scholars agree the first year of teaching is exceptionally challenging (Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Hay, & Edelfelt, 1989; Veenman, 1984).

Research conducted in the 1980’s found that beginning teachers are less confident, qualified, or competent than teachers who graduated from teacher education programs in earlier years (Gardner, 1983). New teachers often experienced difficulty with classroom management and discipline, student motivation, room and lesson organization, locating adequate teaching materials, understanding complex school systems and policies, and meeting the needs of individual students (Griffen, 1985; Odell, 1986; Veenman, 1984). Findings from research conducted in the 1990’s also support these findings.

In a descriptive study of eight beginning agricultural education teachers in Idaho, Mundt (1991) found many of the same problems and concerns. The most notable problems and concerns were the conditions of the physical facilities; classroom management and discipline problems; organizational issues; managing the FFA component; a need for more supervision and help from the principal; and determining curriculum scope, sequence, and pace. Additionally, Mundt found that the beginning teachers were quiet, frustrated, isolated, afraid, angry, confused, and generally lacked confidence.

Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert and Barber (1992) conducted a national study and reported that many schools did provide support activities for beginning teachers. However, nearly 25% of the beginning teachers were not given a curriculum guide and 25% were never observed or visited by the principal during their entire first year of teaching. In case studies of three beginning agricultural education teachers, Talbert, Camp, & Heath-Camp (1994) found the important problems included student discipline, advising the FFA chapter, preparing for multiple classes, managing the laboratory, ordering supplies, time management, lesson planning, and classroom/laboratory management.

In a study of state winners of the NVATA Outstanding Young Member Awards, Mundt and Connors (1999) also found the young members experienced many of the same concerns as reported for other beginning teachers. The primary concerns of the young members were: managing the overall activities of the local FFA Chapter; building support within the school system; balancing professional and personal responsibilities; recruiting and motivating students in agricultural education; using proper classroom management and discipline strategies; time management; organizing and managing safe and attractive facilities; and building support from parents, organizations and adult groups within the community.

Many of the problems experienced by the beginning teachers may correspond with different stages within alternate models of teacher development. Fuller and Bown (1975) suggest that there are three stages in the development of teachers (survival, teacher situation concerns, and pupil concerns). Waters (1988) followed a similar framework when he described a three-stage model for teacher professional development consisting of self, task, and impact. Ryan (1986) conceptualized the development of teachers to include an initial fantasy stage, followed by survival, mastery, and impact. Furlong and Maynard (1995) proposed a five-stage model after studying the activities, practices and experiences of a large cohort of student teachers. The stages include early idealism, personal survival, dealing with difficulties, hitting a plateau, and moving on.

To increase retention and improve instruction during each stage of induction and development, reformers have called for teacher induction programs to ease the transition of beginning teachers into full-time teaching (Huling-Austin, 1990; Odell, 1986). Interest in beginning teacher induction programs has spread rapidly in the U.S.A. The occurrence of state-level induction activities increased from 14 states in 1983 to 47 states in 1988 (Defino and Hoffman, 1984; Neuweiler, 1988). In 1999, the percentage of beginning full-time public school teachers who had participated in a formal induction program during their first year of teaching had increased from 59% in 1993-94 to 65% in 1998. The report also indicated that 22% of the formal induction programs were 8 months or less; 66% were 9 months to one year, and 12% were more than one year (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

Though implemented to assist in their socialization into the profession and improve their quality of teaching, beginning teachers enrolled in teacher induction programs improve in self-confidence and classroom management (Conner, 1984), lesson planning and discipline (Eisner, 1984), and specific behaviors such as voice inflection, eye contact, and review techniques (Huling-Austin and Murphy, 1987). Research results also indicate that teachers involved in induction programs have more positive attitudes toward teaching and plan to continue in the profession longer than those who have not participated in induction programs (Henry, 1988; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986).

Minnesota can ill-afford to lose beginning agricultural education teachers. Increased student enrollments at the secondary, postsecondary, and adult level along with the annual retirement of many of its best teachers has left the state with a shortage of teachers. The Division of Agricultural, Food, and Environmental Education at the University of Minnesota has initiated a multi-faceted approach to recruitment, preparation, and retention of quality instructors in response to the current and upcoming teacher shortages. Aware of these needs as well as the need for the beginning teachers to be properly socialized into the teaching profession, leaders of agricultural education in Minnesota established a teacher induction project for beginning agricultural education teachers. The pilot teacher induction program was developed in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning; the Minnesota Association of Agricultural Educators; local school district administrators; and the Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council. In order to provide for more effective planning, monitoring, and delivery of the teacher induction project programming, researchers understood the importance of further understanding the backgrounds, characteristics, and needs of the diverse cohort of beginning teachers that came from five Midwestern agricultural education teacher education programs and 19 different secondary Minnesota schools.

## Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study, therefore, was to determine the nature of the events experienced and forms of beginning teacher assistance provided by school personnel to beginning Minnesota secondary agricultural education teachers. The objectives of the study were to describe the:

1. demographic characteristics of the beginning agricultural education teachers;
2. nature and impact of the assistance provided to beginning agricultural education teachers by local school district personnel;
3. nature and impact of the events experienced by beginning agricultural education teachers; and
4. perceptions of the beginning agricultural education teachers relating to their levels of stress, satisfaction with their jobs, and mentoring assistance provided by local school district personnel.

## Procedures

This census study was descriptive in nature. The population consisted of 19 self-selected beginning secondary agricultural education teachers who registered to participate in the Minnesota Agricultural Education Teacher Induction Project.

The research instrument consisted of a questionnaire developed and tested by Heath-Camp et al. (1992). The instrument was re-formatted to improve readability (different font, layout, and line spacing). The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographic information, forms of assistance provided by local school personnel, and events experienced by beginning teachers. For listed items in the 'form of assistance provided by local school personnel' section, the subjects indicated whether the event had occurred (yes/no) and then selected an impact rating on a five point Likert-type scale. For the listed items in the 'events experienced by beginning teachers' section, the subjects indicated the frequency rating on a five point Likert-type scale and then selected an impact rating on a five point Likert-type scale. The internal consistency values reported by Heath-Camp et al. (1992) were a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .74 for the OCCURRED/FREQUENCY scales and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .88 for the EVENTS/IMPACT scale.

The questionnaire was initially distributed and administered by the researchers at a seminar for beginning agricultural education teachers in October of 1999. Participants unable to attend the seminar were contacted and provided a questionnaire. Questionnaires were returned through the mail within ten days of the seminar. The data from the questionnaire were entered into and analyzed in EXCEL©. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data from the three sections of the questionnaire.

## Findings

Objective 1 Describe the demographic characteristics of the beginning agricultural education teachers.

The mean age of the 19 Caucasian agricultural education teachers participating in the teacher induction program was 25.4 (SD=5.24) years. Sixteen teachers were employed on a full-time basis, three teachers taught on a part-time basis. The cohort of 47% (n=9) married and (53%) (n=10) unmarried teachers was made up of 58% (n=11) females and 42% (n=8) males. Eleven percent (n=2) and 89% (n=17) of the teachers completed masters and bachelors degrees, respectively.

The average length of contracts for the 16 full-time teachers was 10.5 (SD=1.04) months. The average salary for the full-time instructors was \$29,013 (SD= \$2157). The beginning teachers were afforded from two to thirty days to attend workshops and prepare for classes before the beginning of the 1999 – 2000 fall term.

Ninety five percent (n=18) and 16% (n=3) of the teachers taught in Minnesota high schools and middle schools, respectively. The teachers taught in schools and communities with a variety of populations. One or more members of the beginning agricultural education cohort taught classes in grades seven through twelve. Ninety-five percent (n=18) of the teachers taught students in grade 10-12. Five percent (n=1), 21% (n=4), and 74% (n=14) of the instructors taught students in grades 7, 8, and 9, respectively. All (n=19) of the teachers taught agricultural education courses. Sixteen percent (n=3) taught a course or courses in biology or industrial and technology education.

The mean time spent teaching in-school students was 21.11 (SD=9.18) hours per week. Planning for teaching, grading papers, and other teaching roles accounted for 19.26 (SD=8.77) hours each week. Completing non-teaching activities, such as working with the FFA and other committees, occupied 7.17 (SD=6.78) hours of their weekly schedule. Supervision of student work experience beyond regular school hours required a weekly investment of 1.58 (SD=2.29) hours. The mean time investment for the full-time teachers was 54.88 (SD=13.4) hours per week

Objective 2 Describe the nature and impact of the assistance provided to beginning agricultural education teachers by local school district personnel.

The beginning agricultural education teachers were asked whether each of the assistance items in the questionnaire had occurred. The four most frequently reported forms of assistance were planning time before school (100%), orientation on school policies (89%), new teacher workshop (84%), and parental support (83%). See Table 1. Fourteen of the twenty-two forms of assistance provided by local school district personnel were perceived to have a major or critical impact on the beginning teachers (mean impact rating = 3.50 or higher). Parental support (M=4.37, SD=0.60) for the agricultural education program along with adequate materials, textbooks, and provided workbooks (M=4.26, SD=0.73) were the top two situations perceived to have the greatest impact on the teachers. The lowest rated item was orientation to the vocational student organization (M=2.95, SD=1.43).

A comparison of the columns of data in Table 1 indicates that the assistance items rated as major or critical were also among the most frequently reported. Of the fourteen items rated at an impact score of 3.50 or higher, nine were reported to have occurred by over half of the respondents. The extra planning period for beginning teachers was viewed by the cohort of beginning teachers to have a potential major impact (M=3.79, SD=1.23), however, it was experienced by only 5% of the respondents.

The assistance items rated as having a moderate impact (2.50 – 3.49) were also the least frequently reported. Of the eight items having a moderate impact, seven were reported to have occurred by less than half of the respondents. The workshops for new teachers were rated as having a moderate impact item (M=3.42, SD=0.96), although they were reported by 84% of the respondents.

Table 1 Occurrence and Impact of Selected Forms of Assistance Provided by Local School District Personnel for Beginning Agricultural Education Teachers

Forms of Assistance	Impact <sup>1</sup>		Percent
	M	SD	Occurrence <sup>2</sup>
My students' parents provide support for my program	4.37	0.60	83
Adequate materials, textbooks, and workbooks are provided	4.26	0.73	74
Planning time was available before school started	4.16	1.01	100
Curriculum guides are available for my program area	3.95	1.22	42
My principal provided helpful evaluation and feedback	3.89	1.05	56
Extra planning period is provided for beginning teachers	3.79	1.23	5
Information on purchasing supplies/equipment is provided	3.79	1.08	53
Clerical support is provided for beginning teachers	3.79	1.03	42
A mentor or buddy teacher provided	3.74	1.10	63
A list of available resources and vendors was provided	3.72	1.13	37
An in-service on classroom management was provided	3.68	1.11	21
An orientation on school policies was given	3.63	1.01	89
An orientation tour of school facilities was given	3.58	1.30	58
Time is available to observe other teachers teaching	3.50	1.15	26
A teacher's aid is provided to beginning teachers	3.42	1.46	11
An in-service on time and stress management was provided	3.42	1.17	11
A workshop for new teachers was held	3.42	0.96	84
A beginning teachers' handbook was provided	3.37	1.12	42
Extra duties (bus, etc.) reduced for beginning teachers	3.21	1.44	26
An in-service on counseling students was provided	3.16	1.12	5
An in-service to explain the curriculum was provided	3.05	1.39	5
A Vocational Student Organization orientation was held	2.95	1.43	0

Note: <sup>1</sup> Impact Scale: 1 = None, 2 = Minor, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Major, 5 = Critical.

<sup>2</sup> Occurrence = percent of teachers reporting the occurrence.

Objective 3 Describe the nature and impact of the events experienced by beginning agricultural education teachers.

Table 2 Events and the Perceived Impact of the Events on the Beginning Agricultural Education Teachers

Events	Impact <sup>2</sup>		Frequency <sup>2</sup>	
	M	SD	M	SD
I feel in control of my program	4.79	0.42	3.63	0.68
Students act with respect towards me	4.74	0.56	3.79	0.54
I feel self-confident in my classroom teaching	4.74	0.45	3.74	0.73
I experience satisfaction when an activity succeeds	4.68	0.48	4.68	0.58
I see my students succeeding in my class	4.68	0.48	3.74	0.56
My principal supports me	4.63	0.60	3.84	1.30
I have more work to do than I have time to do it	4.53	0.70	4.63	0.68
My job allows me to be creative	4.42	0.61	4.37	0.68
I receive positive feedback from my principal	4.37	0.83	2.95	1.43
My peers act with respect towards me	4.37	0.68	4.26	0.73
The subject matter I teach is already familiar to me	4.37	0.60	3.53	0.61
I have insufficient funds for supplies and equipment	4.33	0.91	3.11	1.10
I see my students working to have a better future	4.32	0.82	3.00	0.58
I receive positive feedback from my students	4.32	0.75	3.06	0.64
Job tasks that I am doing are already familiar to me	4.26	0.73	3.53	0.77
My students show pride in their accomplishments	4.26	0.65	3.63	0.68
My students participate in vocational club activities (FFA)	4.26	0.56	3.58	0.61
I receive positive feedback from my peers	4.22	0.73	3.68	1.00
Local businesses provide support for my program	4.21	0.63	3.74	0.65
I have obtained the goals that I set for myself	4.16	0.96	3.42	0.61
My program is misunderstood by others; such as parents, students, counselors, and/or administrators.	4.11	0.99	3.47	0.90
I receive expressions of gratitude from my students	4.11	0.81	2.84	0.69
My students display a lack of self-discipline	4.05	0.78	3.37	0.83
I have inadequate facilities (classroom, lab, etc.)	4.00	1.25	3.53	1.07
I am taking classes to further my education	4.00	1.14	3.56	0.98
My home life is negatively affected because of my school work	3.95	1.39	3.00	1.11
I have inadequate curriculum materials	3.89	1.45	2.84	1.12
I have had success using new teaching approaches	3.84	0.96	3.63	0.60
I have to do recruitment activities for my program	3.84	0.96	3.11	0.99
My students act unmotivated towards my subject area	3.84	0.76	3.32	0.67
I have inadequate equipment	3.79	1.13	3.58	0.96
My class sizes are not appropriate for my subject	3.74	1.24	2.58	1.07
I receive help from my state vocational supervisor	3.63	1.21	2.74	0.99
I receive help from my local vocational supervisor/director	3.28	1.36	2.44	1.15
I have trouble making and sequencing lesson plans	3.28	1.36	2.26	0.81
I run into problems because my administrator does not give clear job expectations	3.11	1.45	1.84	0.96

(table continues)

Events	Impact <sup>2</sup>		Frequency <sup>2</sup>	
	M	SD	M	SD
I experience problems because I don't understand school policies or procedures	3.11	1.41	2.26	0.87
I run into problems because of my poor organizational skills	3.00	1.56	2.26	0.87
I am compared to the former teacher in this program	2.94	1.43	3.47	1.43

Note: <sup>1</sup> Impact Scale: 1 = None, 2 = Minor, 3 = Moderate, 4 = Major, 5 = Critical.

<sup>2</sup> Frequency Scale: 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = Always.

The data in Table 2 show that 7 of the 39 events experienced by the beginning teachers were perceived to have a critical impact (mean impact rating=4.50 and above) on their teaching. A comparison of the two columns of data shows that all seven items rated as critical were also among the most frequently reported. All seven of the items rated as critical were also rated as occurring often (mean frequency rating = 3.50 and above). 'I feel in control of my program', which occurred often (M=3.63, SD=0.68) had a critical impact (M=4.79, SD=0.42) on their experience. Other events that occurred often that had a critical impact included 'students act with respect towards me' (M=4.74; SD=0.56), 'I feel self confident in my classroom teaching' (M=4.74, SD=0.45), 'I experience satisfaction when an activity succeeds' (M=4.68, SD=.48), 'I see my students succeeding in my class' (M=4.68; SD=.48), 'my principal supports me (M=4.63; SD=0.60)', and 'I have more work to do than I have time to do it' (M=4.53; SD=0.70). Twenty-six of the 39 events were perceived to have a major impact (mean score = 3.50 – 4.49) on their teaching. Twelve of those events were reported to occur often (mean frequency rating = 3.50 or above) and fourteen were reported to occur occasionally (mean frequency rating = 2.50 – 3.49).

As shown by the data in Table 2, fifteen events happened on an occasional basis (mean score of 2.50-3.49). Even though they occurred on an occasional basis, all events were perceived to have a major impact (mean score of 3.50-4.49) with the exception of 'being compared to the former teacher', which had a moderate impact. The five events that occasionally happened the least and had a major impact on the beginning teachers were 'receiving feedback from my principal', 'having inadequate curriculum materials', 'receiving gratitude from my students', 'receiving help from my state vocational supervisor', and 'inappropriate class sizes for my subject'.

Objective 4 Describe the perceptions of the beginning agricultural education teachers relating to their levels of stress, satisfaction with their jobs and mentoring assistance provided by local school district personnel.

The teachers responded to their levels of satisfaction and stress by circling numbers of responses on seven point Likert-like scales. The mean score of 4.00 (SD=1.67) on the satisfaction scale (0=very unsatisfied and 7=very satisfied) indicates the beginning teachers were moderately satisfied with their teaching experience after the first seven to eight weeks of the fall term. The mean score of 5.47 (SD=.77) on the seven point Likert-like stress scale (0=low stress and 7=very high stress) indicated their perceived level of stress was high. Fifty-three percent (n=10) of the beginning teachers planned to remain in their current teaching position next year, 47% (n=9) stated they expected to do something else other than be teaching at another school.

Thirty-seven percent (n=7) of the beginning agricultural education teachers reported they were involved in a beginning teacher assistance program sponsored by their local school district. Of the seven teachers who reported being involved in a local mentoring program, six indicated that they were assigned a local teacher mentor, and four reported that they attended scheduled seminars or workshops for beginning teachers.

### **Conclusions**

Findings from this study provided the researchers with the information for formulating the following conclusions:

1. There was a greater share of female than male beginning agricultural education teachers (58% female and 42% male) in the Minnesota teacher induction program. This ratio is different than proportion of males and females participants of the Heath-Camp et al. (1992) study which involved a sample of 49 percent female and 51 percent males.
2. Beginning agricultural education teachers enrolled in the teacher induction program were more likely to teach students in grades 10 – 12 than in grades 7 – 9. This reflects that fact that most secondary agricultural education programs where the beginning agricultural education teachers are employed are located in high schools that house grades 10-12.
3. The vast majority of the beginning agricultural education teachers taught courses in the area of their teaching licensure. Minnesota teachers are only allowed to teach in their area of teacher licensure unless a temporary variance is warranted for having them teach outside of their area.
4. The beginning teachers worked more than a forty hour week during the first seven to eight weeks of the 1999-2000 school year in order to complete their classroom and laboratory teaching, supervised agricultural experience program supervision, FFA advising and coaching, and other school-related tasks. The amount of time reported for teaching in-school students was similar to the amount of time planning lessons and grading papers.
5. The forms of assistance provided by local school district personnel that had the highest perceived impact on the beginning agricultural education teachers included parental support, availability of materials and textbooks, planning time, curriculum guides for the program, principal feedback, clerical support and mentor teachers. The order of these findings is almost identical to the order of assistance preferred by the vocational education teachers who participated in the Heath-Camp et al. (1992) study.
6. Though it seldom occurred, beginning agricultural education teachers believe that having an extra planning period would have a major impact on their teaching experience. Respondents in the Heath-Camp et al. (1992) study concurred that this allowance is needed for all beginning career and technical education teachers.
7. Events perceived as having a major impact on the teaching experience of beginning agricultural education teachers were related to control, student respect, self-confidence, personal, satisfaction, student success, support from the principal, and the amount of their workload.
8. The beginning agricultural education teachers were experiencing a high level of stress during the first 7-8 weeks of the school year. The level of stress reported by participants

- of the Heath-Camp et al. (1992) study was lower and may be partially attributed to the fact that they completed the assessment after more weeks of teaching.
9. The beginning teachers were experiencing a moderate amount of job satisfaction at the time they completed the questionnaire. This may be due in part to still becoming acquainted with their roles and responsibilities as a teacher and FFA advisor.
  10. The proportion of the beginning agricultural education teachers enrolled in a beginning teacher assistance program sponsored by their local school district was low compared to what most beginning teachers from across the United States are experiencing. Thirty seven percent of the beginning agriculture teachers in this study were involved in a beginning teacher assistance program sponsored by their local school district. This is higher than the 25% reported by Heath-Camp et al. (1992), but lower than the 65% reported by the U.S. Department of Education (1999).

### **Recommendations**

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the researchers offer the following recommendations for research and practice. First of all, school district personnel responsible for staff development need to take appropriate measures to respond to the forms of assistance that are perceived to have a major or critical impact on the beginning agricultural educators (e.g., parental support for the program; adequate materials, textbooks, and workbooks are provided; planning time available; curricula guides available for the program; feedback from the principal, etc.). Second, district personnel need to be aware of the frequency and impact of the teaching events of the beginning agricultural education teacher(s) and provide interventions that properly affect the desired levels of performance, job satisfaction, and stress. Third, due to the elevated levels of stress and dissatisfaction with the job during the early stage of the teaching year, the perceptions of the beginning agricultural education teachers need to be monitored and responded to in an appropriate manner on a systematic and regular basis.

Researchers need to continue to explore how the nature, impact, and occurrence of desired forms of assistance and the events experienced by beginning teachers of agricultural education differ or remain the same with additional cohorts of agricultural education teachers. Researchers also need to explore the relationship between job stress, satisfaction, and the impact and occurrence of selected forms of assistance and the teaching events experienced by the beginning agricultural education teachers. And finally, concurrent with these efforts, researchers need to determine if the nature and scope of the forms of assistance and events change as the beginning agricultural education teachers progress through the steps of various models of the induction process (Furlong and Maynard, 1995; Waters, 1988; Ryan, 1986).

### **References**

Conner, E. L. (1984). Evaluation of the 1983-84 beginning teacher program. Miami, FL: Dade County Public Schools Office of Educational Accountability. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 257 853).

Curtis, S. M. (1985). Profiles of teachers of agriculture in Pennsylvania. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, Department of Agricultural Education.

Defino, M. E., & Hoffman, J. V. (1984). A status report and content analysis of state mandated teacher induction programs. (Report No. 9057). Austin, TX: Texas University Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.

Eisner, K. (1984). First year evaluation results from Oklahoma's entry-year assistance committees. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 242 706).

Fuller, F. F., & Brown, O. H. (1975). Becoming a teacher, In K. Ryan (Ed.) Teacher education: the seventy-fourth year book of the National Society for the Study of Education, part 2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Furlong, J. & Maynard, T. (1995). Mentoring student teachers: The growth of professional knowledge. New York: Routledge.

Gardner, D.P. (1983). A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. (WWW document). URL <http://www.ed.gov/NatAtRisk/title.html>.

Griffen, G. A. (1985). Teacher induction: Research issues. Journal of Teacher Education, 36(1), 42-46.

Heath-Camp, B., Camp, W. G., Adams-Casmus, E., Talbert, B. A., & Barber, J. D. (1992) On becoming a teacher: An examination of the induction of beginning vocational teachers in American public schools. (NCRVE Publication No. MDS – 018). Berkeley, California: National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

Henry, M.A. (1988). Multiple support: A successful model for inducting first-year teachers. Teacher Educator, 74(2), 7-12.

Huling-Austin, L. (1990). Teacher Induction programs and internships. In W. R. Houston (Ed.), Handbook of research in teacher education. New York: Macmillan.

Huling-Austin, L., & Murphy, S. C. (1987). Assessing the impact of teacher induction programs: Implications for program development. Austin, TX: Texas University Research and Development Center for Teacher Education.

Huling-Austin, L., Odell, S. J., Ishler, P., Kay, R., & Edelfelt, R. A. (Eds). (1989) Assisting the beginning teacher. Reston, VA: Association of Teacher Educators.

Jensen, M. C. (1986). Induction programs support new teachers and strengthen their school. Eugene, OR: Oregon School Study Council. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 273 012).

Marso, R. N., & Pigge, F. L. (1987). Differences between self-perceived job expectations and job realities of beginning teachers. Journal of Teacher Education, 38(6), 53-56.

Mundt, J. (1991). The induction year - A naturalistic study of beginning secondary teachers of agriculture in Idaho. Journal of Agricultural Education, 32(1), 18-23.

Mundt, J. P., & Connors, J. J. (1999). Problems and challenges associated with the first years of teaching agriculture: A framework for preservice and inservice education. Journal of Agricultural Education, 40(1), 38-48.

Neuweiler, H. B. (1988). Teacher education policy in the states: A 50 state survey of legislative and administrative actions. AACTE: Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 296 997).

Odell, S. J. (1986). Induction support of new teachers: A functional approach. Journal of Teacher Education, 37(1), 26-29.

Odell, S. J., & Ferraro, D. P. (1992). Teacher mentoring and teacher retention. Journal of Teacher Education, 43(3), 200-204.

Ryan, K. (1986). The induction of new teachers. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa Education Foundation.

Schulman, L. S. (1987). Learning to teach. AAHE Bulletin, pp. 5-9. Washington, DC: American Association of Higher Education.

Talbert, B. A., Camp, W. G., & Heath-Camp, B. (1994). A year in the lives of three beginning agriculture teachers. Journal of Agricultural Education, 35(2), 31-36.

U.S. Department of Education. (1999). Teacher quality: A report on the preparation and qualifications of Public School Teachers. (Publication No. NCES 1999-080). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education. (1999). The condition of education, 1999. (Publication No. NCES 1999-022). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Varah, L. J., Theune, W. S., & Parker, L. (1986). Beginning teachers: Sink or swim? Journal of Teacher Education, 37(1), 30-34.

Veenman, S. (1984). Perceived problems of beginning teachers. Review of Educational Research, 54(2), 143-178.

Waters, R.G. (1988). An overview of the beginning teacher induction process. In W.G. Camp and B. Heath (Eds.), On Becoming a teacher: Vocational education and the induction process. (NCRVE Publication No. MDS-018). Berkeley, CA: The National Center for Research in Vocational Education.

# **A Description of the Nature and Impact of Teaching Events and Alternate Forms of Beginning Teacher Assistance Experienced by Beginning Minnesota Agricultural Education Teachers**

## **A Critique**

Carol A. Conroy  
Cornell University

The recruitment and retention of teachers of agriculture is a national problem. Joerger and Boettcher studied beginning agriculture teachers in Minnesota in an effort to categorize their experiences and support networks. They provided a conceptual framework focused on issues facing beginning teachers as well as notions of teacher development. The Theoretical Framework section was well written, but could have been enhanced with some changes in organization such as a few sub-headings and careful placement of information related to all teachers vs. agriculture teachers. This organization would have helped with the flow of material. The authors also clearly outline the significance of the study and set the stage well for the presentation of the purpose and objectives.

The purpose and procedures of the study were well written. It would have been helpful to know why the authors selected the Heath-Camp and Camp instrument for their study, and whether other similar instruments were reviewed for suitability, if available. It is assumed, though not stated, that a pilot study was not necessary given the prior use and fairly high reliability of the instrument. It is also assumed that all 19 participants completed and returned their surveys as no information about follow-up contacts is provided on those individuals who received surveys via mail. Providing this information would have eliminated the need for making assumptions by the reader.

The Findings section provides detailed information about the survey data analysis. The authors do a good job of summarizing tabular data so that it is not repeated in the narrative text; however, more information of an analysis nature would have enhanced this section. The same can be said for the Conclusions, which adequately list those drawn from the data analysis, but could provide a more in-depth discussion of implications of the results. There is no indication whether the 19 participants represent all of the beginning agriculture teachers in Minnesota and, if they do not, the conclusions and recommendations are possibly generalized too much beyond the study participants. Some questions arise from looking at the items listed in the tables:

- Participants indicated that principals provided helpful evaluation and feedback. What do they view as helpful? Are they all in agreement with this? Do they differ based on any characteristic or school factor?
- What kinds of things were presented in the new teacher workshops? Again, did these items differ by school, region, etc.?

There are more questions that could be asked, and I am doing so to prompt the authors to consider conducting some follow-up interviews to investigate, in detail, some of these factors.

In summary, Joerger and Boettcher conducted a timely study with many implications for the field. It was interesting to read, and was well-written.