

# **A COMPARISON OF THE OCCURRENCE AND IMPACT OF SELECTED FORMS OF ASSISTANCE AS PROVIDED BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL TO THREE COHORTS OF BEGINNING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

A variety of induction activities are being provided to beginning teachers by school district personnel. Little evidence exists concerning the frequency and impact of delivery of selected forms of assistance. This study involved 64 beginning secondary agricultural education teachers from three consecutive cohorts. Results of this study show that teacher induction programming that was frequently provided for beginning teachers by school personnel did not address the largest share of the forms of assistance that resulted in a major impact upon the experience of the beginning teachers. The initial five forms of assistance that had a major impact upon the experience of beginning teachers were: an adequate supply of instructional materials, parental support for the program, availability of purchasing information, planning time, and an extra planning period. Mean impact scores were not affected by gender, level of stress, origin of preservice education, and size of school. The researcher concluded that school district personnel need to secure input from beginning teachers to inform induction programming efforts.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Assorted forms of beginning teacher assistance are regularly provided by school district personnel through formal teacher orientation and induction programs. Retention of quality teachers is often the initial goal of many induction programs (Gold, 1996; Sweeney, 2001; Joerger & Boettcher, 2000). Improved teacher performance, and personal and professional well-being are additional important reasons for providing quality teacher induction programs (Gold, 1996; Brewster & Railsback, 2001; Sweeney, 2001). Thoughtfully designed induction activities and programs are warranted since the turbulent first years of teaching have a major impact upon the initial experience of beginning teachers. The initial experiences of the beginning teacher with their students, school environment, and roles as a teacher are deeply imprinted and drawn upon as reference points throughout the initial stages of their career (Gold, 1996). Therefore, the practice of school districts providing beginning teachers with support and

assistance during the initial years is needed to ensure that the early imprinted teaching experiences are positive and gratifying.

What is the nature of the initial experiences of beginning teachers such that school district personnel and others need to provide various forms of assistance? Teaching may be one of the most difficult (Schulman, 1987) and challenging (Veenman, 1984; Huling-Austin, Odell, Ishler, Hay, & Edelfelt, 1989) of all professions to master. New teachers often experience difficulty with classroom management, 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). Lack of spare time, burden of clerical work, and heavy teaching loads are additional critical concerns (Ganser, 1999). Most new teachers also start teaching with multiple preparations and classes with some of the most diverse and challenging students (DePaul, 2000; Gordon, 1991; Halford, 1999). High levels of stress and moderate to low job satisfaction are common among beginning teachers (Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert, and Barber, 1992; Joerger & Boettcher, 2000).

Many teachers also have challenges relating to other aspects of program including classroom and student management. The condition of the physical facilities; classroom management; organizational issues; managing the FFA component; a need for more supervision and assistance from the principal; and determining curriculum scope, sequence, and pace were the most notable problems of beginning agricultural education teachers (Mundt, 1991). Talbert, Camp, and Heath-Camp (1994) found the primary teacher concerns included preparing for multiple classes, managing the laboratory, ordering supplies, time management, and lesson planning. Teachers, principals, and agricultural education state supervisors ranked classroom management first in importance for the success of beginning teachers (Nichols and Mundt, 1996).

Heath-Camp et al. (1992) and Joerger and Boettcher (2000) found that the forms of assistance that had a major impact on the beginning teachers were having an adequate supply of materials, textbooks and workbooks; availability of planning time before the start of school; helpful feedback and evaluation from the principal; extra planning period; and parental support. Kirby and LeBude (1998) investigated the nature of concerns and effective induction practices of a group of 84 career and technology education teachers. They found the initial five retention strategies of major importance that have the greatest impact were: an adequate supply of materials, textbooks and workbooks; adequate facilities; provisions for reimbursement for continuing education efforts; a positive work environment; and effective student discipline policies that were endorsed and upheld by school administrators.

Unfortunately, the inability to respond to these concerns in a timely and effective manner often leads many teachers to leave the profession. Twenty to 30 percent of new teachers leave the field within the first three years (DePaul, 2000), and 50 to 60 percent leave before the end of their sixth year of teaching (Curtis, 1985; Jensen, 1986; Kestner, 1994; Marso & Pigge, 1997). The attrition rates for all teachers for 1988-89, 1991-92, and 1994-95 were 15%, 13.25%, and 14.3%, respectively, while the average national turnover for all jobs was 11% (Ingersoll, 1999).

Implementation of teacher induction programs or ways of providing assistance that address these factors and beginning teacher concerns and needs are strategies that provide direct benefits to the beginning teacher, students, and schools. Teachers participating in teacher induction

programs improve in self-confidence and classroom management (Conner, 1984). Lesson planning skills and discipline, and specific behaviors such as voice inflection, eye contact, and review techniques are enhanced (Eisner, 1984; Huling-Austin and Murphy, 1987). Teachers involved in induction programs display more positive attitudes toward teaching and plan to continue in the profession longer (Henry, 1988; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Varah, Theune, & Parker, 1986; Weiss & Weiss, 1999). Other benefits for the beginning teachers include expanded and more developed collections of teaching strategies (Schaffer, Stringfield, & Wolfe, 1992), stronger classroom management skills (Educational Resources Information Center, 1986), and the ability to more effectively deal with behavior and discipline problems. Additionally, beginning teacher involved in induction programs experience lowered levels of stress, anxiety, and frustration (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Benefits for students and schools include higher achievement and test scores (Ganser, Marchione & Fleischman, 1999; Goodwin, 1999; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Geringer, 2000)for students; increased teacher effectiveness (Goodwin, 1999; Weiss & Weiss, 1999) and less resources used for recruiting and hiring replacement teachers (Halford, 1999).

Implementation of beginning teacher induction programs has spread rapidly across the United States as program benefits have become known to school district personnel. Sixty-five percent of beginning full-time public school teachers participated in a formal induction program during their first year of teaching in 1998 (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). Despite the presence of large numbers of formal induction programs, research indicating the types and impact of alternate forms of assistance being provided by school district personnel is limited. Little is known about how the impact of selected forms of assistance is influenced by school size, gender, cohorts, or the institutions where beginning teachers completed their preservice teacher education. Knowledge of selected forms of assistance and their corresponding impact upon the beginning teachers is needed if contemporary induction programs offered by local school district personnel are to offer diverse and dynamic programs that meet the needs of the beginning teachers.

Aware of the need and importance to programmatically assist beginning teachers in transition from their student to teacher roles and responsibilities, leaders of agricultural education in a Midwestern state established the Teacher Induction Program (TIP) for beginning teachers in 1999. The induction programming was designed by the TIP staff to address needs unique to beginning agricultural educators which are often unmet by local school district personnel. The evidence regarding how often school district personnel are providing various forms of beginning teacher assistance and the impact of their efforts is inconclusive. This information is needed for planning future induction programming, informing school administrators, and updating the information used by teacher educators.

### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of the study, therefore, was to determine the nature and impact of selected forms of beginning teacher assistance provided by school personnel to three consecutive cohorts of beginning or returning secondary agricultural education teachers. The objectives of the study were to compare the (a) levels of stress and job satisfaction received from their teaching roles; (b) the frequency of occurrence of selected forms of assistance; and (c) the impact of the selected forms of assistance provided by local school district personnel.

## METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This census study of 64 participants in the 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 cohorts of beginning teachers in the Minnesota Agricultural Education Teacher Induction Program (TIP) was descriptive in nature. The respective populations for the cohorts consisted of 29, 23, and 12 beginning Minnesota secondary agricultural education teachers. Characteristics of the cohorts are displayed in Table 1. The mean age of the 64 Caucasian agricultural education teachers

Table 1

### *Demographic Characteristics of Beginning Agricultural Education Teachers*

Characteristics	1999 (N = 23)		2000 (N = 29)		2001 (N = 12)		Total (N = 64)	
Mean Age (Years)	26		29		26		27	
Gender	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Male	10 43	20 69	7 58	37 58			
	Female	13 57	9 31	5 42	27 42			
Marital Status	Married	13 56	14 48	6 50	33 52			
	Not married	10 44	15 52	6 50	31 48			
Highest Level of Education Completed	B.A./B.S.	21 91	28 96	11 92	60 94			
	M.Ed./MA/MS	2 9	1 3	1 8	4 6			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Teaching Contract (months)	10.2	1.1	9.6	1.5	10.0	1.0	9.9	1.2
Days Required Before Fall Classes	8.6	10.0	10.6	12.8	11.3	11.8	10.2	11.53
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Type of school: <sup>1</sup>								
Middle or Junior High School	4	17	4	4	3	25	11	17
Comprehensive High School	21	91	27	93	7	58	55	85
Vocational High School	1	4	2	7	2	17	5	8
Other	0	0	0	0	1	8	1	1
School Population <sup>2</sup>								
Under 250 students	6	26	7	24	3	25	16	25
250-499 students	8	35	10	34	5	42	22	34
500-999 students	6	26	8	28	4	33	19	30
1,000-1,999 students	2	9	2	7	0	0	4	6
2,000+ students	3	13	2	10	0	0	6	9

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Characteristics	1999		2000		2001		Total	
	(N = 23)		(N = 29)		(N = 12)		(N = 64)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Population of community								
Under 2,500 people	10	43	12	41	5	42	27	42
2,500-9,999 people	7	30	11	38	6	50	24	38
10,000-24,999 people	3	13	3	10	1	8	7	11
25,000-99,999 people	3	13	3	10	0	0	6	9
Mentor/Buddy Teacher Provided In District?								
Yes	20	87	18	62	9	75	47	73
No	3	13	11	38	3	25	17	26
Subject Area of Mentor/Buddy								
Agricultural Education	10	50	6	33.3	2	22	18	38
Other	10	50	12	66.7	7	78	29	62
Participated in school-sponsored induction program?								
Yes	8	35	19	66	6	50	32	50
No	15	65	10	34	6	50	32	50

*Note:*<sup>1</sup>Some beginning teachers taught in a middle school and high school in the same year.

<sup>2</sup>Primary school at which they taught.

participating in three cohorts of the teacher induction program (TIP) was 27 years. The cohorts were made up of 58% (n=37) females. Six percent (n=4) and 94% (n=60) of the teachers had completed their bachelor's and master's degrees, respectively. The average length of contracts for teachers was 9.9 months (SD=1.19). The beginning teachers were provided an average of 10.2 days to attend workshops and prepare for classes before the beginning of the fall term. Ninety three percent (n= 60) and 17% (n=11) of the teachers taught agricultural education course work in high schools and middle schools, respectively. Seventy-three percent (n=47) of the teachers were provided with a mentor teacher. Thirty-eight percent (n=18) reported their mentor was an agricultural teacher. Fifty percent (n=32) of the beginning agricultural education teachers reported they were involved in a formal beginning teacher assistance program sponsored by their local school district.

The research instrument consisted of a reformatted questionnaire developed and tested by Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert, and Barber (1992). This study focused upon the forms of assistance and demographics sections of the three-part questionnaire. The 22 items in the forms of assistance section were derived from the list of common and high priority forms of desired assistance submitted by beginning and practicing career and technical education teachers, and teacher educators. For items in the assistance section, beginning teachers indicated whether the event had occurred (yes/no) and then selected an impact rating (5 = critical to 1 = none) on a five point Likert-type scale. The impact rating reflected the effect the selected form of assistances had upon the experience of the beginning teacher. For respondents who did not receive the form of assistance from school personnel, instructions were to insert the anticipated impact rating had it been experienced (Heath-Camp et al., 1992). The internal consistency

values as measured by the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the impact scale was .90. The Kuder-Richardson 20 coefficient for the dichotomous occurrence scale was .70.

The questionnaire was distributed and administered in-person by the researchers at a seminar for the beginning agricultural education teachers during the last week of September or first week of October. Participants unable to attend the seminar were contacted and provided a questionnaire. Questionnaires were returned through the mail within ten days of the seminar. All participants from the cohorts returned usable instruments.

Data were entered and analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Science (Norusis, 2000). Descriptive parameters were used to summarize the data for each cohort. Spearman Rho rank order correlations were conducted to determine the association between impact and frequency values.

## FINDINGS

### **OBJECTIVE 1: DESCRIBE THE LEVELS OF STRESS AND JOB SATISFACTION RECEIVED FROM THEIR TEACHING ROLES**

The respective mean satisfaction ratings displayed in Table 2 indicate the three cohorts of teachers were moderately satisfied and experiencing a high amount of stress. The data further reveal that the levels of stress and satisfaction differed by cohort.

Table 2  
*Levels Of Stress And Job Satisfaction Of The 1999, 2000, And 2001 Cohorts Of Beginning Agricultural Education Teachers*

Items	1999 (N = 23)		2000 (N = 29)		2001 (N = 12)		Total (N = 64)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Satisfaction Level <sup>1</sup>	4.30	1.66	4.60	1.77	4.58	1.08	4.50	1.50
Stress Level <sup>2</sup>	5.20	1.17	4.50	1.50	5.08	0.79	4.90	1.15

*Note:* <sup>1</sup>Satisfaction Scale: 0=Very unsatisfied to 7=Very Satisfied. <sup>2</sup>Stress Scale: 0= Very low stress to 7=very high stress.

### **OBJECTIVE 2: DESCRIBE HOW FREQUENTLY AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS EXPERIENCED SELECTED FORMS OF ASSISTANCE AS PROVIDED BY LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL**

Participants in this study were initially asked to respond to the occurrence or non-occurrence of selected forms of beginning teacher assistance. The data in column 2 of Table 3 indicate the six forms of assistance most frequently provided to the beginning teachers by school personnel during the three years of the study were: (a) an orientation on school, (b) planning time before school started in the fall (c) workshop for new teachers, (d) parental support for the program, (e) an

orientation tour of school facilities, and (f) a mentor or buddy teacher. A beginning teacher handbook was provided more often (83%) to the 2001 cohort than other cohorts. School district personnel provided only 40 – 54% (9 to 12) selected forms of assistance to 50% or more of the beginning teachers. Though viewed to be important for beginning teachers,

Table 3

*Occurrence (%) of Selected Forms of Assistance Provided by School Personnel to Beginning Minnesota Agricultural Education Teachers*

Form of Assistance	Occurrence (%) <sup>1</sup>			
	1999-01 N=64	1999 N=23	2000 N=29	2001 N=12
An orientation on school policies	91	91	86	100
Planning time was available before school	91	87	93	92
A workshop for new teachers	84	78	86	92
Parental support for the program.	81	78	86	75
An orientation tour of school facilities	67	61	69	75
A mentor or buddy teacher	64	57	66	75
The principal provided helpful evaluation and feedback	58	52	66	50
A beginning teachers' handbook	58	43	59	83
Information on purchasing supplies/equipment	53	52	52	58
Adequate materials, textbooks, and workbooks	52	65	45	42
Clerical support was provided for beginning teachers	41	35	38	58
Curriculum guides available	38	43	38	25
Extra duties (bus, etc.) reduced for beginning teachers.	38	26	38	58
A list of available resources and vendors	33	30	28	51
Time was available to observe other teachers	31	22	28	58
An in-service on classroom management was provided	27	17	28	42
Extra planning period is provided for beginning teachers	17	9	10	50
An in-service on time and stress management	14	9	17	17
A teacher's aide is provided to beginning teachers.	14	9	7	42
An in-service on counseling students	11	4	7	33
An in-service to explain the curriculum	8	4	10	8
A FFA orientation was held	5	0	7	8
	M 44.4	39.6	43.8	54.2
	SD 27.6	29	28.9	26.4

Note:<sup>1</sup>Percent Occurrence= (number of teachers/total number of teachers \* 100).

the data reveal that the 1999, 2000, and 2001 cohorts only experienced an average of 40%, 44%, and 54% of the forms of assistance.

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were calculated for the mean occurrence values for the years in Table 3 to determine if the beginning teachers from each cohort received the forms of assistance in a similar manner. The occurrence values from the three cohorts were positively and very highly correlated (Bartz, 1994),  $r = .807$ ,  $p < .05$ . The very high relationship values suggest the cohorts received the forms of assistance in very similar frequencies from school district personnel.

**OBJECTIVE 3: COMPARE THE IMPACT OF THE SELECTED FORMS OF ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO BEGINNING AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION TEACHERS BY LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PERSONNEL BY YEAR.**

The combined data from the 1999, 2000, and 2001 cohorts in Table 4 reveal that eight of the 22 forms of assistance provided by local school districts were perceived to have a major impact on the experience of the beginning teachers. In descending order they were: (a) an adequate materials, textbooks, and workbooks; (b) parental support for the program; (c) availability of information for purchasing supplies/equipment; (d) the existence of planning time before school started; (e) an extra planning period provided for beginning teachers; (f) curriculum guides made available; (g) the principal provided helpful evaluation and feedback; and, (h) a list of available resources and vendors. The number of forms of assistance that had a major or critical impact for the 1999, 2000 and 2001 cohorts were 13, 6, and 10, respectively. The impact ratings for the remaining forms of assistance indicate the beginning teachers experienced a moderate impact upon their initial teaching experience.

A Spearman rank-order correlation analysis procedure was conducted to determine the level of association of the impact rankings between the three cohorts of beginning teachers. The rank order coefficient values ( $r_s$ ) in Table 5 reflect significant and moderate (.40-.60) to strong (.60-.80) associations between the three cohort groups (Bartz, 1994, p. 184). Forty-two percent, 31%, and 40% of the variance was accounted for in the correlations between the 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 cohorts.

Table 6 contains combined data relating to the reported frequency of occurrence and the impact of selected forms of assistance. Forms of assistance that were experienced *often* (67-100%) and had a major impact were the availability of planning time before school started in the fall and parental support. Forms of assistance provided by school district *sometimes* (33-66%) were: (a) the principal provided helpful evaluation and feedback; (b) information was provided regarding purchasing supplies and equipment; (c) an adequate amount of materials, textbooks, and workbooks; (d) curriculum guides; and (e) a list of available resources and vendors. The form of assistance *seldom* provided that had a major impact was having an extra planning period available for beginning teachers. Further analysis reveals the top eight forms of assistance that had a major impact were experienced an average of 53% of the time. The remaining forms of assistance that had a moderate impact were experienced an average of 40% of the time.



Table 4

*Impact and Rankings of Alternate Forms of Assistance Provided by School Personnel to Beginning Minnesota Agricultural Education Teachers*

Form of Assistance	Impact <sup>1</sup> By Year							
	1999-02		1999-00		2000-01		2001-02	
	N=64		N=23		N=29		N=12	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Adequate materials, textbooks, and workbooks	4.17 <sup>1</sup>	0.78	4.14	0.81	4.07	0.77	4.45	0.69
Parental support for the program	3.92	1.01	4.22	0.66	3.62	1.03	4.10	1.37
Information on purchasing supplies/equipment	3.83	0.94	3.87	1.03	3.76	0.93	3.92	0.67
Planning time was available before school started	3.80	1.0	4.13	0.95	3.59	1.16	3.67	0.89
Extra planning period is provided	3.67	1.23	3.86	1.14	3.43	1.32	3.91	1.04
Curriculum guides	3.63	1.19	3.86	1.14	3.56	1.17	3.36	1.29
Principal provided helpful evaluation & feedback	3.62	1.13	3.73	1.14	3.66	1.12	3.33	1.07
A list of available resources & vendors	3.55	1.06	3.71	1.08	3.46	1.05	3.45	1.04
A workshop for new teachers	3.48	1.00	3.55	0.94	3.32	1.07	3.75	0.87
Clerical support provided for beginning teachers	3.48	0.92	3.73	0.96	3.32	0.85	3.36	0.92
An orientation tour of school facilities	3.46	1.01	3.61	1.17	3.20	0.90	3.75	0.75
An orientation on school policies	3.43	1.01	3.48	0.97	3.34	1.06	3.55	0.93
A beginning teacher handbook	3.39	1.08	3.32	1.18	3.40	0.98	3.33	1.07
An in-service on time & stress management	3.34	1.12	3.41	1.07	3.18	1.20	3.64	0.92
A mentor or buddy teacher	3.30	1.21	3.65	1.00	3.00	1.31	3.33	1.15
An in-service on classroom management	3.28	1.13	3.59	1.07	3.00	1.16	3.36	0.92
Extra duties reduced for beginning teachers.	3.27	1.20	3.13	1.30	3.43	1.24	3.18	0.75
An in-service to explain the curriculum	3.26	1.15	2.95	1.33	3.39	1.08	3.55	0.69
Time was available to observe other teachers	3.23	1.11	3.48	1.05	3.00	1.10	3.36	1.12
A teachers aide	3.18	1.19	3.45	1.34	2.96	1.15	3.18	0.75
An in-service on counseling students	3.07	1.00	3.14	1.01	3.00	1.04	3.09	0.83
FFA/vocational student organization orientation	2.73	1.27	3.09	1.38	2.62	1.18	2.27	1.01
Mean Impact	3.46		3.60		3.34		3.50	

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

Table 5

*Rank Order Coefficient Values ( $r_s$ ) Among Rankings of Impact of Forms of Assistance For the 1999, 2000, and 2001 Cohorts of Beginning Agricultural Education Teachers*

Cohorts	Cohorts		
	1999-2000 (N=23)	2000 -2001 (N=29)	2001-2002 (N=12)
1999-2000		-	
2000-2001	.65*	-	
2001-2002	.64*	.56*	-

Note: df = 2. \* p £ .05.

A Spearman rank-order correlation analysis procedure was conducted to determine the level of association between the rankings of the frequency of occurrence and the impact of the forms of assistance in Table 6 for the 64 teachers. A rank-order correlation of  $r_{s(20)} = .59$  ( $p < .05$ ) accounted for 35% of the variance between the occurrence and impact of the forms of assistance provided by the school district personnel.

## CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study were used to arrive at six conclusions.

1. Not unlike most beginning teachers, the beginning agricultural education teachers were experiencing above average amounts of stress and low amounts of satisfaction from their teaching positions after the first five to six weeks of teaching. This is common as most teachers experience elevated levels of stress and anxiety during the period of reality shock that meets them during the initial stages of teaching (Veenman, 1984; Letven, 1992; Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993). The findings of this study support earlier findings reported by Joerger and Boettcher (2000), however, the scores in this study were higher than findings from the Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert and Barber (1992) study. The lower stress scores from the Heath-Camp et al. study may reflect the fact that the study was conducted during the spring semester of the academic year when the teachers had experienced more teaching events.
2. An increasing number of the school districts are providing beginning agricultural education teachers with an induction program and/or time with a mentor. Fifty percent of the teachers in this three year study were provided with induction programs and 73% with mentors. The percentage of teachers participating in induction programs is higher than the 37% reported by Joerger and Boettcher (2000) and the 25% reported by Heath-Camp and Camp (1992), but lower than the 65% reported by the U.S. Department of Education (1999).

Table 6

*Occurrence and Impact of Selected Forms of Assistance Provided by School Personnel to 64 Beginning Minnesota Agricultural Education Teachers from 1999 - 2002*

Form of Assistance	Occurrence		Impact		
	(%)	Rank	M	SD	Rank
Planning time available before school started	91 <sup>1</sup>	1	3.80 <sup>2</sup>	1.07	4
An orientation on school policies	91	1	3.43	1.01	12
A workshop for new teachers	84	3	3.48	1.00	9
Parental support for the program	81	4	3.92	1.01	2
An orientation tour of school facilities	67	5	3.46	1.01	11
A mentor or buddy teacher	64	6	3.30	1.21	15
The principal provided helpful evaluation & feedback	58	7	3.62	1.13	7
A beginning teachers' handbook	58	7	3.39	1.08	13
Information on purchasing supplies/equipment	53	9	3.83	0.94	3
Adequate materials, textbooks, and workbooks	52	10	4.17	0.78	1
Clerical support was provided for beginning teachers	41	11	3.48	0.92	9
Curriculum guides	38	12	3.63	1.19	6
Extra duties (bus, etc.) reduced	38	12	3.27	1.20	17
A list of available resources and vendors	33	14	3.55	1.06	8
Time was available to observe other teachers teaching	31	15	3.23	1.11	19
An in-service on classroom management	27	16	3.28	1.13	16
Extra planning period	17	17	3.67	1.23	5
An in-service on time and stress management	14	18	3.34	1.12	14
A teacher's aide	14	18	3.18	1.19	20
An in-service on counseling students	11	20	3.07	1.00	21
An in-service to explain the curriculum	8	21	3.26	1.15	18
An orientation to the FFA	5	22	2.73	1.27	22

Note:<sup>1</sup>Percent Occurrence= (number of teachers/total number of teachers\* 100).

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

3. School districts usually supplied beginning teachers with a common group of activities, materials, and support strategies more than 60% of the time. Common forms of assistance included: (a) an orientation to school policies and school facilities; (b) a workshop for beginning teachers; (c) parental support; planning time before school started; and (d) a mentor teacher. Though viewed (Heath-Camp et al., 1992; Joerger & Boettcher, 2000) to be highly desired by beginning teachers, only 17 % and 27%, respectively, of all beginning teachers were provided with an extra planning period or access to a classroom management workshop or seminar.

4. A core group of activities, materials, or other forms of assistance that school district personnel provided that resulted in a major impact upon the teaching experience of the beginning teachers. They included an adequate supply of materials, textbooks and workbooks; parental support for the program; information for purchasing supplies and equipment; planning time before school starts; an extra teaching period for planning; curriculum and instructional guides; accessible principal who provides helpful evaluations and feedback; and a list of resources and vendors for supply and equipment purchases. The priority for these forms of assistance was very similar to the sequence preferred by the vocational education teachers who participated in the Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert, and Barber (1992) and Joerger and Boettcher (2000) studies. Mundt and Connors (1999) and Talbert, Camp, and Heath-Camp (1994) also found that beginning teachers often experienced challenges in obtaining, organizing, and maintaining facilities and supplies.
5. The impact of the forms of assistance needed by beginning teachers was different for each cohort of beginning agricultural education teachers. However, it was beyond the scope of this study to investigate the factors that may have influenced the differences.
6. The beginning teachers experienced the forms of assistance that really impacted their teaching experience slightly over 50% of the time. If this is accurate, school district personnel need to ensure they deliver forms of assistance that really make a difference in the experience of beginning teachers.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings and conclusions of this study provided the data for five primary implications for school district personnel.

1. School district individuals providing various forms of assistance need to provide programming that will address and help minimize the stress of teachers and enhance satisfaction with their teaching roles (Moir, 1992; Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert, & Barber, 1992; Joerger & Boettcher, 2000).
2. Since in-service programming provided by school district personnel in this three-year study primarily addressed forms of assistance that only have a moderate impact, school district personnel need to initially secure input from beginning teachers regarding these and additional forms of assistance perceived to have a major or critical impact before planning timely and delivering effective inservice activities (Heath-Camp, Camp, Adams-Casmus, Talbert, & Barber, 1992; Joerger & Boettcher, 2000).
3. Once determined, programming for high and moderate impact forms of assistance should be integrated into established orientation and formal induction programs in a prioritized manner. For schools without formal induction programs, high ranking forms of assistance maybe ddrressed through special in-service programs.

4. Faculty and staff involved in teacher education programs need to be made aware of the needs, experiences, and desired forms of assistance of beginning teachers. Pre-service teachers can be taught specifically how to properly enlist the support of parents; select and obtain instructional materials, books, supplies and equipment; use planning time available before the start of school, and; interact with and receive timely feedback and evaluation from their principals. In addition, preservice teachers need to be taught problem-solving skills, reflection activities, and strategies that can be used to minimize the effects of stressful experiences.
5. Other partners involved in induction programs can use the information regarding specialized programming related to each of the forms of assistance for securing resources, offering support, and offering guidance to program-providers, funders, and policy makers.

Recommendations for additional scholarship include modifying the design of the instrument and current list of forms of assistance to include new activities being used in practice. Investigators need to continue to compare the impact, and occurrence of desired forms of assistance experienced by all beginning career and technical education teachers. Views of teachers, principals, mentors, professional organization leaders, and state staff regarding effective forms of assistance should be compared with the views of the beginning teachers. Additional research needs to be conducted to further explore the relationship between job stress, satisfaction, and the impact and occurrence of selected forms of assistance. The influences of the level of education of the teacher, school and community population, location of school system, and features of the induction program upon the impact of the forms of assistance need to be investigated. And finally, researchers need to determine how the nature and scope of the desired forms of assistance change as the beginning teachers progress through the induction phase of their career (Ryan, 1986; Letven, 1992; Huberman, Grounauer, & Marti, 1993; Furlong & Maynard, 1995).

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