

FACTORS AFFECTING FIRST-YEAR SCHOOL BASED AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION  
TEACHERS IN GEORGIA

by

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(Under the Direction of Eric Rubenstein)

ABSTRACT

SBAE teacher attrition rates remain high within the teaching profession. Specifically, among agricultural education teachers, attrition rates remain at approximately 11% each year.

Researchers hope to gain better knowledge in the preparation and support of first-year school based agricultural educators in Georgia. Data was collected from current first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia and observed the needs of first-year SBAE teachers, support systems, and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers. Data from this study will help serve as recommendations for pre-service programs, state agricultural education staff, and serve as a resource for first-year SBAE teachers.

INDEX WORDS: SBAE Teachers, Retention, Attrition, Job Satisfaction, Stress

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher describes the significance of this study and why it is important to gather research about first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia. The researcher will also explain the purpose of this study in addition to identifying the objectives that guided this study about first-year SBAE teachers. In addition, definitions of terms will help the reader to better understand the context of this study and its findings. Both the limitations and assumptions of this study will be explained to further set the scope of this research pertaining to first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia.

#### **Significance of Study**

The teaching profession in the United States has a notoriously high attrition rate, with 90% of teachers leaving the profession for a reason other than retirement ( Clark et al., 2014). Many of the teachers who choose to leave the teaching profession leave within the first five years (Keigher, 2010). Reasons for leaving include administration, work-life balance, mental health, as well as student/teacher relationships (Clemons & Linder, 2019; Clark et al., 2014; Su et al., 2011; Shoulders et al., 2021). These statistics have led to concerning attrition rates across the nation. Attrition rates among different subject areas within the education system vary. Within Career and Technical Education (CTE), the majority of states experience shortages in at least one of the encompassed subject areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Subject areas include

pathways that are considered to help students explore career and technical opportunities. For example, business, engineering, culinary arts, and school based agricultural education (SBAE).

SBAE teachers continue to have high attrition rates within the profession and this results in consistently high new hire percentages .Due to the high attrition rates within the profession, there has been a high percentage of new hires within the career field. In 2021, 11.5% of SBAE teachers were considered new hires (Clark et al., 2014). Since the new hire rates of SBAE teachers are over 10%, the needs of first-year SBAE teachers need to be explored to better prepare for the transition into the agriculture classroom.

In the state of Georgia, the number of SBAE teacher job openings has increased over time (S.Mitchell, personal communication, October 12, 2023). The increase in new positions in Georgia is partly due to elementary agricultural education being signed into law through Senate Bill 330 in 2018 and the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. In Figure 1, the number of job openings is sorted by the fiscal year. After the Covid-19 Pandemic and the passing of Senate Bill 330 more job openings were available for SBAE teachers. The below figure also accounts for SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia who moved schools or positions. (S. Mitchell, personal communication, October 12, 2023)

Figure 1  
# of Job Openings in Georgia FY 2018- FY2024



While previous studies have been conducted in other states about early career SBAE teachers leaving the profession, there is little research about the needs of first-year SBAE teachers. This research will identify areas where pre-service programs can enhance the preparation of SBAE teachers to enter a changing classroom environment and explore the needs that first-year SBAE teachers have from state and regional agricultural education staff. Researchers will use the data collected to determine the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers and help determine better methods of support for first-year SBAE teachers.

There is little research about how first-year SBAE teachers can be more easily transitioned into the career of being an SBAE teacher. The importance of researching first-year SBAE teachers and how they can be better transitioned into the career is vital as it could reduce the number of SBAE teachers leaving within the first five years.

This study will provide insight to administrators, pre-service programs, and state agriculture education staff to support needs of first-year SBAE teachers. The data collected will identify current stressors of first-year SBAE teachers to better grasp how these stressors may affect retention and attrition rates. This study could also reduce the number of misconceptions that future SBAE teachers have about the career.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to better understand the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia. Previous research has identified factors affecting SBAE teacher retention and attrition rates, while this qualitative study aims to explore factors that affect specifically first-year SBAE teachers within state of Georgia. This qualitative study will allow for a deeper comprehension of the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia. This study will also serve as a guide and develop recommendations for those who influence first-year SBAE teachers.

## **Objectives of the Study**

With the increased attrition of teachers, researchers hope to gain better knowledge in the preparation and support of first-year school-based agricultural educators within Georgia. Data from this study will help serve as recommendations for pre-service programs, state agricultural education staff, and serve as a resource for first-year SBAE teachers. This study was guided by the following objective:

1. What factors influence a Georgia first-year SBAE teacher's experience in the classroom?

## **Definition of Terms**

To better understand the results of this study frequently used terms were defined to ensure clarity.

*Administration*- Managers of school operations, including but not limited to: CTAE directors, assistant principals, and principals (Clark et al., 2014; Dainty et al., 2011).

*Agriculture Pathway*- A group of three classes that are officially recognized by the Georgia Department of Education to be considered a pathway. Examples of pathways include Plant and

Floral Design Systems (Basic Agricultural Science, General Horticulture and Plant Science, and Floral Design and Management), Forestry/Wildlife Systems (Basic Agriculture Science, Forest Science, Wildlife Management), Veterinary Science (Basic Agricultural Science, Animal Science and Biotechnology, Veterinary Science) etc (“Career Clusters and Pathway Courses”, 2023)

*Attrition*- The departure of teachers from the profession, including but not limited to retirement, resignation, termination, or death (Ingersoll, 2012; Ronfeldt et al., 2012).

*Career Development Event (CDEs)*- Competitions conducted by FFA based off agriculturally related careers to help promote career success (Croom, 2008; Hainline & Smalley, 2021).

*Classroom/Laboratory*- Content that students learn inside the typical class period within an SBAE program (McKim & Velez, 2017; Wolf et al., 2010).

*Classroom Management*- the actions and steps a teacher takes to establish control over a classroom environment that develops a student’s academic, social, and emotional growth. This is typically done by creating rules and regulations, disciplinary actions, and teacher-student interactions (Saucier & Mckim, 2011; Wolf et al., 2010).

*Cooperating Teacher*- The teacher assigned to a pre-service education major while student teaching. Typically, a teacher with three or more years of experience who provides advice and supervises the student teacher (Saucier & McKim, 2011; Wolf et al., 2010).

*Co-Teacher*- Other SBAE teachers who teach in the same school as the participant. A member of the agriculture department at a given school.

*Early Career Teacher* - Teachers who have 5 years of experience or less in the classroom (Roberts et al., 2020; Wenner, 2002)

*Family*- Parents, siblings, spouses, significant others, uncles, or aunts, etc. that SBAE teachers consider to be important parts of their lives (Sorenson et al., 2016; Clark et al., 2014)

*End of Pathway Assessment (EOPA) - Assessment* given when a student completes three classes of a given agricultural pathway. Typically, a student receives a cord at graduation showing their completion (“Career Clusters and Pathway Courses”, 2023).

*Job satisfaction*- The level of fulfillment or pleasure of the job in which one is committed to. Happiness in one’s job (Hasselquist et al., 2017, McIntosh 2019).

*Mentor Teacher*- A teacher typically assigned by the school to serve as a guide for first-year teachers providing guidance, support, motivation, and role modeling to first-year teachers.

Mentor teachers are typically a teacher who has been at the school for a few years and in the same department as the first-year teacher (Lever, 2010; Moir & Gless, 2001).

*Mid-Career Teacher*- Teachers who have more than five years of teaching in the classroom but less than 15 years of teaching (Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Washburn et al., 2001).

*The National FFA Organization (FFA)*- A component of the Three Ring Model of agricultural education. An extracurricular club used to develop leadership skills by offering Career Development Events (CDEs), Leadership Development Events (LDEs), and leadership development opportunities through state and regional events (Croom, 2008; Hainline & Smalley, 2021).

*Pre-Service Program* - College programs focused on preparing educators for entering the classroom. Typically, with SBAE teachers, a BSA in Agriculture Education is the bachelor’s degree obtained (Harzin et al., 2007; Roberts et al. 2006).

*Program of Work*- The minimum requirements an SBAE teacher in the state of Georgia must fulfill. This includes aspects from all three components, SAE, FFA, and Classroom/Laboratory.



Examples of a requirement include the following, “The teacher will ensure that a minimum of 60 percent of students have in place an approved Supervised Agricultural Experience Program, each teacher will have students participate in a minimum of five CDEs. (A minimum of two CDEs must be Leadership CDEs (\*); and a minimum of two CDEs must be team events.), The teacher will be actively involved in the professional teacher organization, Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association (GVATA), which is dedicated specifically to agricultural educators in the state, etc.

*Retention-* The ability to reduce the number of teachers leaving the profession, or the ability to retain the number of teachers who choose to stay in the profession (Moser & McKim 2020; Clemons & Linder, 2019).

*SBAE Teacher-* A person who is typically certified to teach through completing a pre-service program. These teachers teach agriculture classes, serve as an FFA advisor, and an SAE supervisor (Baxter, 2011; Schmidt et al., 2022).

*School Based Agriculture Education (SBAE)-* Agriculture education classes offered to middle and high school students. Classes within SBAE include Forestry, Wildlife, Horticulture, Animal and Dairy Science, Veterinary Science, Agricultural Leadership, and Basic Agriculture. (Baxter, 2011; Schmidt et al., 2022).

*Supervised Agricultural Experiment (SAE)-* One of the three components of the Three-Ring Model. The Supervised Agricultural Experiment is conducted outside of normal class time allowing students to apply what they learn from the classroom into the outside world (Rubensetin et al., 2016; Swenson et al., 2021).

*Self-Efficacy-* Level of confidence an individual has in their abilities. (Sorenson & McKim, 2014; Korte & Simonsen, 2018)

*State Agriculture Education Staff*- Regional and state level employees within the SBAE subject area. A support system available to SBAE teachers across the state of Georgia to help answer questions in addition to supervising regional and state FFA events (S. Mitchell, personal communication, October 12, 2023)

*Stress*- Physical and mental reactions to an individual's response to the environment, conflicts, or pressures (Schmidt et al., 2022; Shoulders et al., 2020)

*Three Ring Model*- A component to guide SBAE teachers in creating an agricultural program, The three components of the Three Ring Model of agriculture education include Classroom and Laboratory, FFA, and SAE (Croom., 2008)

*University Staff*- Former and current professors or faculty that SBAE teachers have previously interacted with at their pre-service program (Harzin et al., 2007; Roberts et al. 2006).

*Veteran Teacher*- Teachers who have more than 15 years of teaching experience (Arnett-Harwick & Cannon, 2019)

## **Limitations**

The first limitation of this study is the nature of qualitative research. The data recorded from this study is also not generalizable to the first-year SBAE teacher population as a small number of participants do not reflect the entire first-year SBAE teacher population. The results of this study may not represent all first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia. In addition, the majority SBAE teachers were located within the North Region of the state of Georgia. Because of the majority first-year SBAE teachers being located in North Region, first-year SBAE teachers in different regions in the state of Georgia may have varying answers compared to the ones interviewed, specifically as it pertains to state agriculture education State Staff.

Not only are the state staff mentors for each first-year SBAE teachers different but so are the principals and school systems different. A challenge that one first-year SBAE teacher may face because of their administration may not be a similar challenge to a different first-year SBAE teacher. School systems also place different values on what a SBAE program should be.

As it pertains to SBAE programs, there are 35 different pathways that are available to be taught by high schools as well as 3 middle school classes and a newly piloted elementary agriculture education program. Because of the variety classes and environments that SBAE teacher can teach, SBAE teachers across Georgia have different challenges as it pertains to content. This could be because of the classes that they have to teach. Furthermore, each high school SBAE teacher also teaches a Basic Agriculture Science class that includes introductory content pertaining to the major areas of agriculture.

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions helped guide this study:

1. This study was concerned with populations who were 18 years or older.
2. All participants fulfilled all duties of an SBAE teacher as required by the Georgia Agriculture Teacher Program of Work.
3. All participants of the study answered the questions honestly and to the best of their abilities.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

Throughout previous research concerning SBAE teachers, many studies observed factors affecting retention and attrition rates. However, little research has been conducted on the needs of first-year SBAE teachers and how first-year SBAE teachers can be supported regarding their transition into their career. Throughout previous research, there are common factors that affect SBAE teachers and their outlook on the career of an SBAE teacher. Common themes affecting SBAE teachers and their outlook of the career include: content knowledge required of SBAE teachers, relationships within the profession, mental and physical factors, work-life balance, commitment, and experience within the profession.

Retention and attrition rates of SBAE teachers across the nation remain concerning (Ingersoll, 2012; Haynes, 2014).. SBAE teachers both struggle and thrive throughout each component of the three-ring model of agricultural education(Jordan, 20018; Blustein 2011).. In addition to struggles and highlights of the three-ring model, administration, students, other teachers, and the community both help and hinder SBAE teachers (Clark et al., 2014; Dainty et al., 2021; Shoulders et al., 2021; Moser & McKim 2020; Clemons & Linder 2019; Delay and Washburn, 2013). SBAE teachers exhibit symptoms of stress which affect their future career choices all while keeping salary in the back of their mind (Shoulders et al., 2021; Shoulders & Retallick, 2010). In addition, work-life balance becomes an important factor among different

demographics which in turn affects occupational commitment (Smalley & Smith 2018; Shoulders et al., 2021; Clemons & Linder 2019, Kitchel et al., 2012; Hasselquist et al., 2017; Sorensen et al., 2016). This commitment becomes affected by job satisfaction, self-efficacy levels, and motivating factors (Clemons & Linder, 2019; Solomonson et al., 2014). Throughout the career stages of an SBAE teacher, different problems arise. These problems influence SBAE teachers to either look for a different career or they overcome them (Tippens et al., 2013). With the previous literature, researchers will be able to gain a better understanding of the challenges and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia.

## **Literature Review**

### **Retention and Attrition of Teachers**

**Retention** Within the United States, teacher retention is vital to the profession as it can cost around \$2.2 billion dollars a year (Haynes, 2014). A factor that greatly increases retention rates, which in turn decrease the financial cost of losing a teacher, is teacher-preparedness (Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Tippens et al., 2013). On the other hand, occupational commitment among teachers correlates with teacher retention, the higher level of commitment a teacher has to the profession, the more likely they are to stay within the profession (Crutchfield et al., 2013). Commitment to the teaching profession can also be influenced by the workforce connections. The more connections one has in their workplace, the more likely they are to remain in the profession (Coldwell, 2017; Hong, 2010; Rinke, 2007). Furthermore, connectivity to the school among SBAE teachers was the strongest predictor of career commitment (Moser & McKim, 2020). Findings in these previous studies pertaining to school connectivity support with the Relational Theory of Working, which suggests that connections in the workplace are vital to satisfaction, overcoming obstacles, and being resilient (Jordan, 20018; Blustein 2011).

**Attrition** Many teachers leave the profession within the first five years of teaching. It is estimated that around 50% of teachers leave within the first five years of entering the teaching profession (Ingersoll, 2012) The impact of teacher attrition is important for school districts as in some cases replacing one teacher can cost over \$20,000 (Carver-Thomas & Darling- Hammond, 2017). Not only does attrition affect the school-districts financial standpoints, but teacher attrition also affects student achievement. When high-performing teachers leave the profession, levels of student-achievement decrease (Carver-Thomas & Darling- Hammond, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2012). These high-performing teachers could be leaving the profession due to teaching being a demanding career and in turn gaining a sense of burnout (Kitchel et al., 2012, Chenevey et al, 2008, Lambert et al., 2006). Burnout can also happen when teachers are unable to create a work-life balance (Sorenson et al., 2016). This work-life balance can be especially difficult for SBAE teachers as they typically work around 55 to 60 hours per week (Sorenson et al., 2016).

These factors play a major role in the retention of teachers. In 2018, 1,594 openings for SBAE teachers were reported across the nation due to teachers retiring, moving schools, and leaving the profession (Smith et al., 2019). Within those openings, a little over one third of the open positions were either filled by alternatively certified individuals, non-licensed hires, or were left vacant (Smith et al., 2019).

**Mobility of SBAE Teachers in Georgia** A study concerning agriculture teacher mobility and attrition in the state of Georgia was conducted by Peake et al (2020). Throughout this study, researchers determined how many Georgia SBAE teachers moved schools (Figure 2) and left the profession (Figure 3). Within the state of Georgia, over the course of ten years (2009-2019), 297 Georgia SBAE teachers left the profession with the main reason being due to retirement (Peake et al., 2020). However, 164 of those SBAE teachers left the profession before reaching

retirement (Peake et al., 2020). Out of those 164 former SBAE teachers, the majority pursued a career in the agriculture industry. Only 153 teachers were hired to fill those positions that were vacant (Peake et al., 2020). Furthermore, there has been an increased level of movement (Figure 4) among Georgia SBAE teachers over the course of the ten years (Peake et al., 2020)

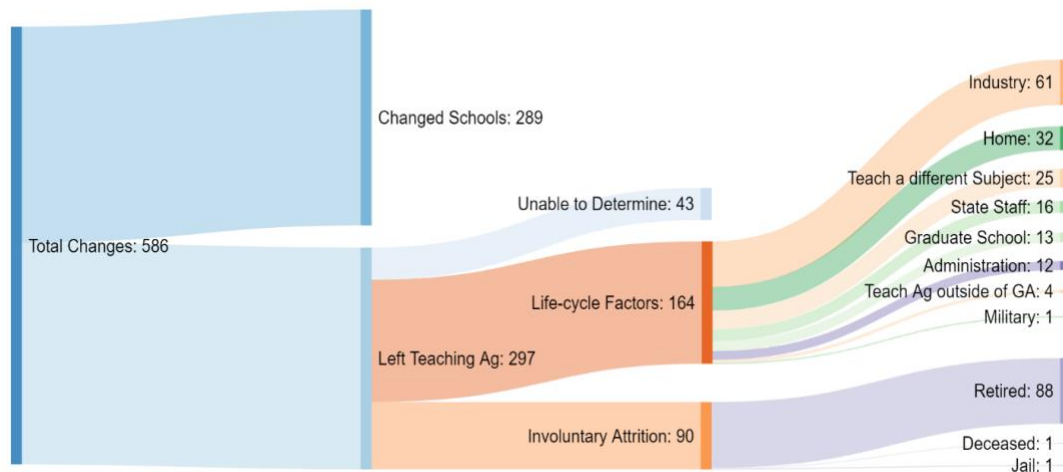
**Figure 2**

***New Agriculture Teachers and Existing Agriculture Teacher Movements between 2009 and 2019***



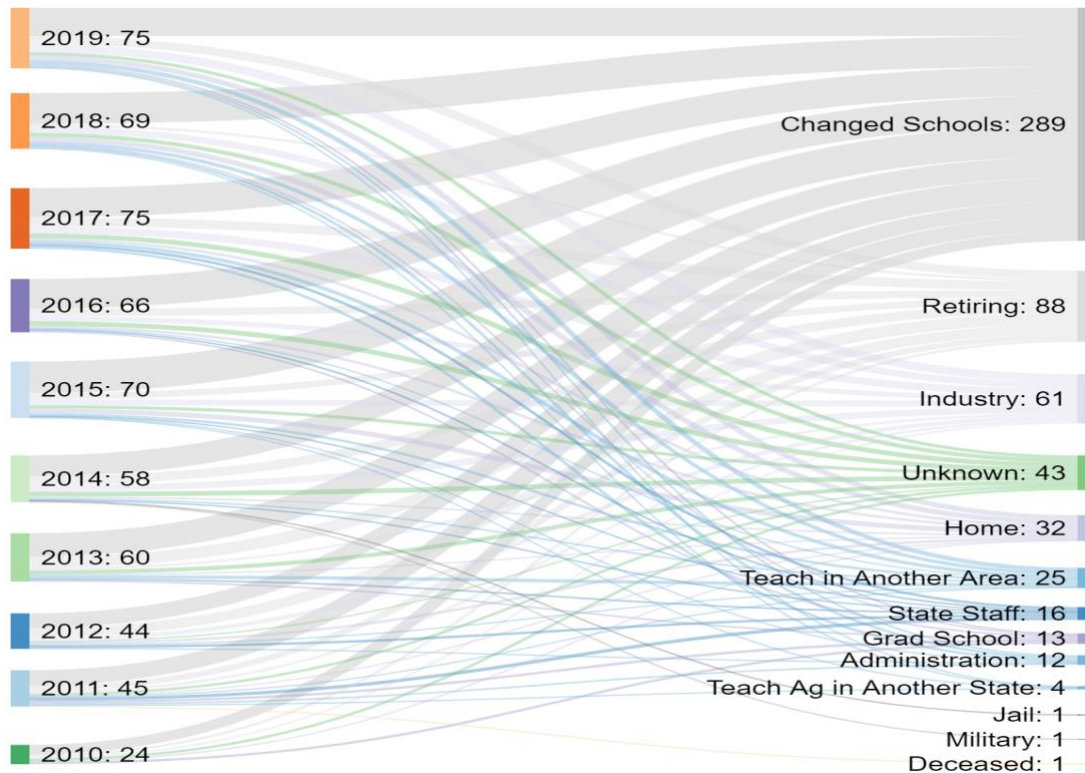
**Figure 3**

***Georgia Agriculture Teacher Movement between 2009 and 2019***



**Figure 4**

***Georgia Agriculture Teacher Movement between 2009 and 2019 Aggrigated by Year***



## **Content of SBAE**

As previously mentioned, agriculture has many different content areas within its domain. The five main areas include Plant Science/Horticulture, Animal Science, Forestry/Natural Resources, Agricultural Mechanics, and Food Science. Specifically in Georgia there are 39 different agriculture pathways offered within the six aforementioned pathways. Because SBAE has 39 different pathways, it can be difficult for SBAE teachers to have a foundation of knowledge in the many different pathways.

Within the state of Georgia, SBAE teachers were reported to have a lower level of competence in the forestry/natural resources related topics then the perceived importance of these concepts (Williams et al., 2014; Ray et al., 2022). Other areas that Georgia SBAE teachers

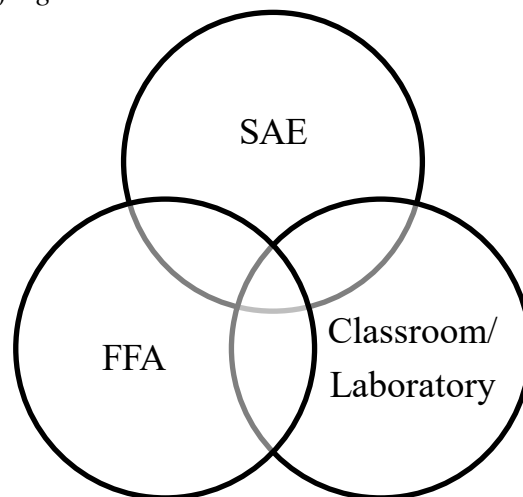


were reported to need more knowledge in the following content areas from pre-service and in-service preparation, agriculture technology, electricity, and small animal care and veterinary technology (Duncan et al., 2006). The content areas that Georgia SBAE teachers felt they had enough preparation in included plant science, soil and soil management, and animal science (Duncan et al., 2006). Foundational trainings within the agricultural mechanics were also needed by SBAE teachers in order to improve the coursework provided to students (Saucier & McKim, 2011). In summary, SBAE has many different content areas making it difficult for SBAE teachers to become experts in any content area.

### 3- Ring Model of Agricultural Education

**Figure 5**

*The Three-Ring Model of Agricultural Education*



(Croom, 2008)

**Classroom/Laboratory** Within the classroom component of the three-ring model for agricultural education, comes the need for classroom management. Experiences helping develop classroom management self-efficacy include pre-service coursework, student teaching, and professional development. McKim & Velez (2017) reported that there was not a significant experience among these three that helped develop classroom management strategies. Classroom

management was the highest rated perception of teacher self-efficacy among SBAE teacher candidates (Wolf et al., 2010). Beginning SBAE teachers were concerned with the appropriate use of classroom management as well as lack of subject matter expertise (Stair et al., 2012).

Other than classroom management, SBAE teachers had challenges with instructional strategies and facilities. Among SBAE teacher candidates, the candidates believed that they had the least confidence in student engagement methods, while the most confidence in preparation and instructional strategies (Wolf et al., 2010). SBAE teachers self-reported that they had low knowledge from their pre-service program about repairing and maintaining laboratory equipment and felt that it was very important to know how to run SBAE program facilities (Hainline & Smalley, 2021). Within the facilities and laboratory management, student teachers had the highest needs in the construct of laboratory and equipment maintenance and safety (Saucier & McKim, 2011). In addition, the modification of facilities to accommodate students with disabilities were one of the topics that student teachers reported to have the highest need for (Saucier & McKim, 2011). Learning how to operate and run facilities and equipment was valued as almost as important to administration and the support of the SBAE program by both beginning and veteran SBAE teachers (Boone & Boone, 2007).

**FFA** FFA is considered the leadership component of the three-circle model, SBAE teachers are also considered to be FFA advisors. Within this leadership component, community service projects can be executed through the FFA chapters (Croom, 2008; National FFA Organization, 2019). Throughout these leadership opportunities, students can apply for various awards and applications. SBAE teachers view preparing these FFA degree applications and proficiency applications as a high priority to gain knowledge about (Sorenson et al., 2014; Sorenson et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 2006).

As it pertains to pre-service program preparedness, the areas of program design in which pre-service SBAE teachers felt they were both knowledgeable in and important to know were planning banquets and organizing fund raising opportunities for the FFA chapter (Hainline & Smalley, 2021). Pre-service SBAE teachers also viewed being able to know how to conduct local FFA chapter activities, preparing for overnight trips, and preparing students for CDE's and LDE's as very important (Hainline and Smalley, 2021). Other needs that pertained to managing the FFA chapter and serving as the advisor were reported to be a high priority in service need of South Carolina SBAE teachers (Sorenson et al., 2010; Sorenson et al., 2014)

**SAE** SAEs create the bridge between what students are learning in class to the outside world. These experiential learning opportunities prove to be important to student learning but can be difficult for SBAE teachers to implement (Rank & Retallick, 2016; Retallick, 2010). SAEs can be difficult to implement due to resources available the communities' perceptions towards agriculture, participation, and the school systems SBAE teachers teach in (Retallick, 2010). Furthermore, SBAE teachers should be flexible as it pertains to SAE programs and the interests of their students (Rubenstein et al., 2016). On the other hand, some SBAE teachers are motivated by the SAE component as it allows students to gain transferable skills that are important to success (Swenson et al., 2021). Other motivations for SBAE teachers include viewing the SAE as important to the three-ring model is that this component is customizable to meet student interests (Swenson et al., 2021).

Even while enrolled in pre-service programs, future SBAE teachers still face challenges. Pre-service programs do not spend as much time on the SAE component of the three-ring model as they do on FFA or classroom and laboratory experience (McLean & Camp, 2000). Because of the lack of time that pre-service programs have spent on the SAE component, pre-service

teachers did not view SAE as an important part of a complete SBAE program (Joerger, 2002). However, another study highlighted that 95% of pre-service teachers view SAE as at least somewhat important to SBAE (Rubenstein et al., 2014).

Among middle school SBAE programs, SAEs were on average the highest rated component of the three-ring model of agriculture education in which improvement was needed (Rayfield & Croom, 2010). Previous researchers recommend that SBAE teachers have access to professional development opportunities to overcome the challenges of adapting SAEs to nontraditional agricultural students (Wilson & Moore, 2007). SAE is a struggle to implement within a classroom and is sometimes put at a lower level of importance compared to the other components of an SBAE program (Robinson & Haynes, 2011).

## **Relations**

**Administrators** Because administrators are the supervisors of SBAE teachers, previous research has noted that administration plays a vital role in the career of SBAE teachers. Overall educators across the United States have noted that administrators are a major factor when considering remaining in the profession (Clark et al. 2014; Dainty et al., 2011). Specifically, within the CTE subject area, the teachers' relationships with administration have been given a high value of influence on career longevity (Su et al., 2011). Because of the high value on relationships with their administration, many SBAE teachers believe that it is as important as health benefits gained from the career (Clemons & Linder, 2019). In addition to the effect the relationships that administration has on retention of SBAE teachers, administration also plays a major role in the influence of overall job satisfaction, especially among novice SBAE teachers (Hasselquist et al., 2017).

Administration can also hinder job satisfaction among SBAE teachers. Lack of support among administration also influences SBAE teachers to leave the occupation before retirement or make SBAE teachers consider leaving the occupation (Mcintosh, 2019; Solomonson 2019). In many novice teachers who leave within the first-year of entering the profession, they reference the reason leaving due to the lack of leadership support (Stansbury & Zimmerman, 2002; Inman & Marlow, 2004) Even the differences in administrative support among veteran and mid-career CTE teachers has also been conducted through case studies by Hasselquist and Graves (2021). Veteran teachers tend to have more support from the administrative team compared to mid-career teachers as veteran teachers tend to advocate for their programs more compared to mid-career teachers (Hasselquist & Graves, 2021). Administration is a major influence on SBAE teachers and their decision to remain in the classroom, however, the specific effects it has on first-year SBAE teachers remains missing.

**Students** SBAE teachers have mixed reviews as it pertains to the relationships they have with students. Students are a motivating factor to stay in the career among SBAE teachers (Clark et al., 2014). In addition to students affecting retention factors among SBAE teachers, SBAE teachers also have increased satisfaction levels in teaching students as well as serving as an FFA advisor for their chapters (Clemons & Linder, 2019). Furthermore, the professional relationship SBAE teachers have with their students can also be an indicator of a successful SBAE teacher (Traini et al., 2019). These motivation levels not only increase desire for student success, but also increase the motivation to show up for work (Shoulders et al., 2021). As it pertains to teacher career life cycle, mid-career SBAE teachers not only value the success of the agriculture program, but they also value the success of their students (Solomonson & Retallick, 2018).

Much like administration, students can also be a challenge that SBAE teachers have to overcome. A hurdle that many SBAE teachers face as it pertains to students is the difficulty to motivate students who have other responsibilities to their social lives, home life, and other extracurricular activities (Clark et al., 2014). Because SBAE teachers are advisors of their FFA chapters and FFA is primarily housed as an after school activity, it can be difficult to boost student motivation when they have commitment to other activities. Not only do SBAE teachers have to be flexible with students' obligations, but SBAE teachers also face the challenge of gaining a students' respect (Su et al., 2011; Dainty et al., 2011). This struggle could be due to the fact that there are generational differences between teachers and students. As technology has become more prevalent among classrooms so has a change in the engagement of students.

**Teachers** As previously stated, having a sense of community within the profession is vital to teacher's job satisfaction and commitment. Noticeably in novice teachers, the need to collaborate with veteran teachers to gain knowledge has increased comfort levels among these novice teachers (Lever, 2010). In addition to increasing comfort and collaboration levels among novice teachers, having mentors in learning environments created shared visions for quality teaching (Moir & Gless, 2001). Stafford et al. (2008) recommend that a weekly mentor visit to novice teachers could bring the needed support and encouragement to stay in the classroom.

Creating a sense of community with other teachers is also vital to a SBAE teacher's success, longevity, and mental health. Being friends with other SBAE teachers creates increased levels of SBAE teacher retention (Moser & McKim, 2020; Clemons & Linder, 2019; DeLay & Washburn, 2013). SBAE teachers have noted that their CTE networks were an influence on them staying in the career (Hasselquist & Graves, 2021). Not only does a network of fellow teachers within one's discipline increase SBAE teacher retention but having a mentor teacher increased

teaching performance as well as career retention among CTE teachers (Mordan, 2012). Areas in which mentor teachers assisted with the development of teaching skills include classroom management, developing lesson plans, and creating discussion within lessons (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011). The connections that SBAE teachers make within their school develop schoolwide support systems which in turn improve school culture and emotional support (Rinke, 2007; Sass et al., 2011). However, some mentor teachers that were assigned by the school district were not helpful for first-year SBAE teachers, so instead first-year SBAE teachers made connections with veteran SBAE teachers to ask questions to (Disberger et al., 2022). Specifically, within Arkansas, if SBAE teachers were satisfied with their fellow teachers, they were influenced to stay in the profession (Shoulders et al., 2021).

**School Systems** Each school system has its own administration, students, and community. With the varying factors of different school systems, SBAE teachers faced challenges that vary among school systems. These challenges that SBAE teachers face were educational policies, student potential, competing with sports programs, and competing against livestock professionals (Clark et al., 2014). In addition to those challenges that primarily dealt with students, SBAE teachers also faced challenges with school facilities. Adequacy of laboratory facilities and pleasant working conditions were two factors that contributed to a positive teaching experience (Su et al., 2011). The conditions that school systems offer influence both teacher retention rates and sources of pressure. Schools that possess more challenging teaching conditions increase the feelings of pressure among SBAE teachers (Shoulders et al., 2021). Overall administration, colleague, district, and financial support all greatly influence novice teacher job satisfaction (Hasselquist et al., 2017; Foor and Cano, 2011; Boone & Boone, 2009).

**Communities** Many SBAE teachers understand that support for their programs is linked to their community (Clark et al., 2014). This understanding that a link between community support and benefits to the program and their students is primarily noticed by veteran teachers (Clark et al., 2014). Another benefit that veteran SBAE teachers have noticed about the community, is the matter of them being able to delegate tasks to the members of the surrounding area (Clark et al., 2014)

With the connection to the community being said, there is no correlation between community connectivity and SBAE teacher retention (Sorenson & Mckim, 2014). The connection to their community does not correlate between SBAE teacher retention, but the reputation of the school in their community is related to the demonstration of their commitment to the SBAE teacher profession (Su et al., 2011). Because of the varying findings, the relationships SBAE teachers have within their community and their commitment to the profession remain uncertain.

### **Mental and Physical Factors**

**Stress** SBAE teachers show signs of stress while working. All participants within one study (n = ?) stated that being an SBAE teacher was a high stress job (Baxter, 2011). This stress the SBAE teachers are shown through a variety of symptoms such as fatigue, frustration, worrying, forgetfulness, and impatience (Shoulders et al., 2021). No matter how many years of experience an SBAE teacher has, moderate stress levels were reported across all generations of SBAE teachers (Schmidt et al., 2022). Within different generational groups, Generation Y (People born between 1980-1994) were averaging higher stress levels, meanwhile SBAE teachers who are considered Baby Boomers (People born between 1946-1964) had the lowest stress level (Schmidt et al., 2022). The differences between these generations is due to the fact



that one has more experience or behavioral differences. The outlier between these generational groups were SBAE teachers who were in their first-year of teaching within their career or at a new school. According to Schmidt et al., (2022), these beginning SBAE teachers were the only group to have reported low stress levels (Schmidt et al., 2022). The beginning SBAE teachers do however feel a sense of pressure from administration, leaders in the SBAE community, and other community members to be “successful” causing them to have stress (Traini et al., 2020). Another area which caused stress for SBAE teachers were experiential learning and program design (Smalley & Smith, 2018). There are areas in which SBAE teachers do not stress about; one of these areas that SBAE teachers do not stress or concern about was professional growth (Smalley & Smith, 2018). The amount that these stressors cause SBAE teachers vary by gender, especially among female SBAE teachers. FFA and SAE responsibilities such as preparing a proficiency application, planning an FFA banquet, and preparing CDE teams were the most stressful tasks for a female SBAE teacher (King et al., 2013). Within the classroom, paperwork and reports along with developing new curriculum were the most stressful tasks for male SBAE teachers (King et al., 2013).

**Teacher Burnout** Burnout can come from emotional, mental, or physical exhaustion. Within the state of Georgia, SBAE teachers have differing opinions on feeling burnt out (Tippens et al., 2013). When it relates to depersonalization, or attitudes towards one’s students, SBAE teachers reported lower levels of burnout (Kitchel et al., 2012; Smalley & Smith, 2018). Another area that was reported to have low levels of burnout was personal accomplishment (Kitchel et al., 2012). These low levels show that SBAE teachers do feel positively towards their students as well as feel accomplished.

Educator burnout is caused by various factors that ultimately leads to burnout. The major causes of burnout include expectations from administration and the community, the above average number of work hours, and FFA duties. The high expectations of SBAE teachers to do well from administration, the community, and students can lead to teacher burnout (Baxter et al., 2011). These expectations not only come from others, but the expectations of themselves come from engaging in social comparison. The more social comparisons between themselves and other SBAE teachers that are engaged in, the more burnout occurred (Kitchel et al., 2012).

Burnout also occurred due to the number of hours worked. FFA events typically take place either after school, on weekends, or during the summer. Because of the times that FFA events take place, time is taken away from family causing a higher burnout rate (Murray et al., 2011). A lot of time was devoted to these responsibilities, because of this, veteran teachers learned how to delegate tasks to students, parents, and community members to reduce the sense of burnout (Clark et al., 2014)

**Salary** SBAE teachers disagreed when it pertains to salary. SBAE teachers reported that workload is out of proportion to the salary provided (Shoulders et al., 2021). Mid-career SBAE teachers reported that they valued their time more than their paycheck (Solomonson & Retallick, 2018). When entering the profession, SBAE teachers were not influenced by the pay when deciding to enter into the profession (Ismail & Miller, 2021). In addition, some SBAE teachers are on extended day extended year contracts. This is to supplement SBAE teachers for their duties like SAE and FFA. SBAE teachers view the extended day and extended year contracts as an important factor when considering to continue their career within the agriculture classroom (Clemons & Linder, 2019). Mid-career and veteran teachers viewed the impacts that they had on

students and the community as an extra benefit to the monetary gains from the occupation (Hasselquist & Graves, 2020).

### **Work Life Balance**

**Demographics** There has been a shift among demographics trends of SBAE teachers. Before this shift, SBAE teachers were typically male; however, recently the SBAE profession has been almost evenly distributed among male and females (Shoulders et al., 2021; Solomonson et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2022). The shift in the demographics can be due to the fact that three fourths of agriculture education graduate were female (Smith et al., 2022). Even when over three fourth of pre-service program completers being female, females SBAE teacher have lower retention rates compared to their male counterparts (King et al., 2013). Females SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia were also to have been reported to be neither satisfied or dissatisfied within their job (Guyett, 2020). Male SBAE teachers who were not married, had children, were on a twelve-month contract, and in a multi teacher program were the most committed to the profession (Solomonson et al., 2022). These commitment levels could be due to the possibility of filling stereotypical gender roles within the United States.

**Occupational Commitments** Not only do SBAE teachers fill classroom duties, but they also serve as FFA advisors to their school's FFA chapter. Because SBAE teachers fulfill multiple roles, they often work well over 40 hours a week (Sorenson et al., 2017). Spouses of SBAE teachers tend to not like the career of the SBAE teacher due to the lack of monetary compensation compared to the amount of work (Hopkins et al., 2020). Not only do SBAE teachers get pressured from administration, but stakeholders often pressure SBAE teachers to take on extra duties within the FFA chapter which in turn creates personal conflict (Solomonson et al., 2019). On the other hand, professional associations that SBAE teachers can take part in

were noted as the least important institutional factor (Su et al., 2011). Because of the many roles agriculture educators

**Work Life Balance** SBAE teachers faced challenges creating clear boundaries between their work and personal lives because their motivation to be the best educator they can be for their students made it difficult to say “no,” (Traini et al., 2020). These boundaries exist since SBAE teachers were reported to work an average of 59.81 hours per week during the school year, which is more than the average work week which consists of 40 hours.(Sorenson et al., 2016). The above average number of hours a week that SBAE teachers. Pressure from stakeholders in the SBAE programs can also pressure SBAE teachers to work more than the usual forty-hour work week (Traini et al., 2019).

Although SBAE teachers do work more hours than the average work week, Sorenson et al. (2016) noted that SBAE teachers agreed that they could balance family and work responsibilities. Family is an important value to SBAE teachers. In fact, family affected retention rates of teachers (Clark et al., 2014). When it pertained to marital status, the factors of work-life balance, job satisfaction, and professional commitment did not vary between single and married SBAE teachers (Sorenson & McKim, 2014).

As it pertains to determining which career stage within the SBAE teacher profession has the highest ability to achieve a work-life balance, previous literature has a disagreement on that. One study concluded that mid-career-teachers had the highest work life balance ability, and late career teachers had the lowest ability to achieve a work-life balance (Solomonson et al., 2022). But in a different study conducted by Sorenson and McKim (2014), early career teachers were reported to have the highest ability to achieve a work-life balance and mid-career teachers had the lowest ability. However, overall, veteran teachers were more consistent in seeing a bigger

picture, specifically in work-life balance and roles within their family (Hasselquist & Graves, 2020).

## **Commitment**

**Job Satisfaction** The majority of SBAE teachers were satisfied with their job (Smalley & Smith 2018; Shoulders et al., 2021; Clemons & Linder 2019, Kitchel et al., 2012; Hasselquist et al., 2017; Sorensen et al., 2016). In addition to the SBAE teachers reporting that they were satisfied with their job, spouses of the SBAE teachers were satisfied with the career of being an SAE teacher (Hopkins et al., 2020). Not only did the influence of the satisfaction of their spouse increase overall job satisfaction, but other variable such as the variety of lessons, activities, and events all increase to overall job satisfaction and retention of SBAE teacher (Clemons & Linder, 2019). In addition to those factors, the outlook the viewpoint that SBAE teachers find their job to be interesting as well as believing they are making a difference in student's lives also increase job satisfaction (Clemons & Linder, 2019).

Much like how there are variable that increase job satisfaction among SBAE teachers, there are also variables that decrease levels of job satisfaction. One of those factors that decrease job satisfaction is the average amount of hours that SBAE teachers work, which well exceeds over 40 hours (Hopkins et al., 2022). The number of hours worked in conjunction with the lack of room for promotion (Shoulders et al., 2021). Factors that don't pertain to the job, like the Covid-19 Pandemic also decreased overall job satisfaction significantly (McKim & Sorenson, 2020)

**Self-Efficacy** The higher the rate of self-efficacy among teacher led to both higher retention rates and overall performance of teachers (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Sorensen & McKim, 2014). Self-efficacy levels also vary among different aspects

of the job as well as career stage. Specifically, among novice teachers, student-engagement had the lowest rating of self-efficacy, but instructional practices had the highest level of self-efficacy (Korte & Simonsen, 2018). Furthermore, the greater the classroom management self-efficacy level a teacher has, job satisfaction levels increase (Klassen & Chi, 2010). Overall, if SBAE teachers were more confident in an area, they were more likely to have increased job satisfaction and desire to continue in the profession.

**Motivations** SBAE teachers were motivated to enter the classroom. Those motivations could either be mentoring youth, a former SBAE teacher, encouragement from others, or the experiences that they took part in while in the National FFA Organization (Solomonson et al., 2019; Clemons & Linder, 2019; Ismail & Miller 2021). Not only do SBAE teachers have encouragement from others that motivate them to enter the career, but many SBAE teachers want to be able to give the same experiences that they took part in to future generations (Ismail & Miller, 2021).

### **Stages of SBAE Teachers**

Stages of SBAE teachers were included to better understand the differences between early career teachers and veteran teachers as each stage of a teacher faces unique challenges. Because this study focuses on first-year SBAE teachers, previous research about veteran teachers and mid-career teachers were used to develop a better understanding of the challenges early career SBAE teachers face.

**Pre-Service** Self-efficacy among SBAE student teachers decreases about half-way through their student teaching experience (Harlin et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2007). These self-efficacy levels of SBAE student teachers do not remain at this point, as levels increase to their highest point at the end of their experience (McKim & Velez, 2016). The

student teaching experience for SBAE teachers was vital to develop teacher-self-efficacy (Wolf et al., 2010; Roberts et al., 2007). In addition to the experiential learning component of an SBAE teachers pre-service program courses also increase self-efficacy levels for SBAE teachers as they were able to obtain a better understanding of agricultural content (McKim & Velez, 2016).

**Veteran/Late-Career** Even with years of experience in the profession, veteran SBAE teachers still face challenges within the profession. Within CTE (Career Technical Education), both novice and veteran teachers face problems with equipment, funding, and outside perceptions of technical education (Arnett-Hartwick & Cannon, 2019). Compared to early career CTE teachers, veteran teachers did not have problems with a reputation from a previous teacher and undergrad preparation but faced challenges such a community support and lab management (Arnett-Hartwick & Cannon, 2019). The shifts in needs of veteran SBAE teachers change from their earlier stages as they have a foundation of knowledge in both the FFA and agricultural content areas, which made the shift focus more on the program they oversee.

**Mid-Career** After gaining experience, mid-career teachers' needs start to shift from surviving to a more programmatic and technology-based viewpoint (Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Washburn et al., 2001). These programmatic views that mid-career teachers need assistance on include FFA applications, record keeping, and using computers in classrooms (Layfield & Dobbins, 2002; Washburn et al., 2001). Mid-career teachers are also overall more confident in their abilities but still want professional development to gain more stability within the profession (Roberts et al., 2020). These in-service professional development opportunities are preferred to be in a workshop environment by SBAE teachers (Sorenson et al., 2010). Experience within the profession shifts the needs of SBAE teachers as they are better able to focus on refining their skills related to content.

**Novice/Early-Career** Beginning teachers are to have said to go through six stages. The six stages that first-year teachers include anticipation, survival, disillusionment, rejuvenation, reflection, and anticipation (Moir 1990, 2011). Moving through the six stages, the attitudes of teachers change throughout the year (Moir 1990, 2011). These six stages correlate heavily with SBAE teacher self-efficacy. Overall self-efficacy was reported to be the highest at the end of student teaching, while the lowest level of self-efficacy among SBAE teachers was reported to be at the end of the first-year of teaching (Wenner, 2001). Within specific cross-curriculum areas, novice SBAE teachers had higher reported levels of self-efficacy compared to science and math teaching within agriculture (McKim & Velez, 2017).

Early career SBAE teachers also reported that they struggled with communicating with administration (Roberts et al., 2020). Not only was communication a difficulty for early career SBAE teachers but so was the lack of knowledge on how to restore and manage facilities and laboratories (Roberts et al., 2020). Beginning CTE (Career Technical Education) teachers also cited challenges such as reputations from a previous teacher, undergraduate preparation, and mentorships as problems when entering the profession (Arnett-Hartwick & Cannon, 2019).

## **The Career**

**Supply and Demand** In the 2021 National Agricultural Education Supply and Demand Study, it was reported that even though there was program growth within the United States, 29 states still lost programs or positions (Smith et al., 2022). A little less than one third of the SBAE teachers who left the profession left due to retirement, retirement was the most common reason reported to leaving the profession (Smith et al., 2022). The second highest reason SBAE teachers left the profession, was to go work in the business industry, with around 17% of SBAE teachers leaving due to this reason (Smith et al., 2022). Other reasons for leaving the profession that



accounted for less than 7% each of the total population include employed in school administration, becoming a stay-at-home caregiver, being employed in production agriculture, and not being offered a contract renewal (Smith et al., 2022). Within the state of Georgia, there has been an increased growth in the number of SBAE teachers (Foster et al., 2022). The majority of SBAE teachers who left the profession within the state of Georgia left due to retirement or due to teaching another subject area (Foster et al., 2022).

**Career Plans** An overwhelming majority of SBAE teachers plan on continuing to teach at the secondary level for the next five years (Tippens et al., 2013; Solomonson et al., 2022). Within the state of Georgia, most SBAE teachers did not plan on leaving the professions early for a reason other than retirement (Tippens et al., 2013) The SBAE teachers who did plan on leaving the profession early due to a reason other than retirement are primarily pursuing a job within the agricultural industry (Tippens et al., 2013). Out of the 36 Georgia SBAE teachers who left the profession in 2021 to pursue another career option, 3 left to pursue an agriculture business position, 3 left for production agriculture, 1 left to pursue administration, 2 moved to State Agriculture Education positions, and 2 left to become a stay-at-home parent/caregiver (Foster et al., 2022).

**First-year SBAE Teachers** Although there is little research pertaining to first-year SBAE teachers, the related literature varies among studies. As it pertains to the where first-year SBAE teachers felt more confident in, developing relationships with students was the area in which first-year SBAE teachers felt most comfortable in (Disberger et al., 2022). The level of comfort and confidence in developing relationships with their students could be due to the extra duty of serving as the FFA advisor. Not only did developing relationships with students increase

job satisfaction of first-year SBAE teachers, but so did having a welcoming and collaborative school environment (Disberger et al., 2022).

Much like how there are areas in which first-year SBAE teachers have confidence in, there are areas that first-year SBAE teachers struggle in. One of these struggles is the matter of fact that first-year SBAE teachers desired to have feedback (Disberger et al., 2022). Feedback among administrators of beginner SBAE teachers varied as well as support of SBAE programs varied between administrators (Disberger et al., 2022). However, during SBAE teacher's student teaching experiences, feedback from cooperating teachers benefited SBAE teachers as they were able to have reflections after the lesson (Meder et al., 2018). Feedback and reflection were two vital points that beginning SBAE teachers felt were important to overall job satisfaction.

### **Summary of Related Literature**

Retention among teachers helps financial costs of school districts (Haynes, 2014; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Factors such as a teacher's connectivity to the school, commitment to the profession, and connections within the workplace increase job satisfaction which in turn increase teacher retention rates (Jordan, 20018; Blustein 2011; Moser & McKim, 2020; Coldwell, 2017; Hong, 2010; Rinke, 2007; Crutchfield et al., 201; Darling-Hammond et al., 2002; Tippens et al., 2013). Unfortunately, many teachers decided to leave the profession in the early stage of their career (Ingersoll, 2012). Teachers leave due to burnout, difficulty achieving a work-life balance causing over 1500 openings of SBAE teachers with many going unfilled (Kitchel et al., 2012, Chenevey et al, 2008, Lambert et al., 2006; Sorenson et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2019). Teachers leaving not only affected the schools, but it affected the students (Carver-Thomas & Darling- Hammond, 2017; Ronfeldt et al., 2012).

Within the state of Georgia, many of the SBAE teachers who left the profession, left due to retirement (Peake et al., 2020). However, many of the SBAE teachers who left the profession early left due to pursuing a career in agriculture industry (Peake et al., 2020). Overall, 297 SBAE teachers left the profession throughout the span of ten years (Peake et al., 2020)

SBAE has a variety of pathways and classes offered to the students enrolled. SBAE teachers had difficulties gaining a sense of mastery among the many different subject areas (Williams et al., 2014; Ray et al., 2022; Duncan et al., 2006; Saucier & McKim, 2011). In addition to the classes offered to students across the nation, a total SBAE program encompasses three components. These components are classroom and laboratory, SAE, and FFA. Classroom management is an important part of managing this domain (McKim & Velez, 2017; Wolf et al., 2010; Stair et al., 2012). In addition to classroom management being important to the classroom component, confidence and knowledge of the facilities was vital to SBAE teachers (Wolf et al., 2010; Hainline & Smalley, 2011; Saucier & McKim, 2011; Boone & Boone, 2007). The leadership component, FFA, created challenges to SBAE teachers through filing out award and degree applications (Sorenson et al., 2014; Sorenson et al., 2010; Duncan et al., 2006). Areas pertaining to FFA that SBAE teachers felt that were important to gain more knowledge about includes planning banquets, preparing overnight trips, and preparing for CDE's (Hainline & Smalley, 2021; Sorenson et al., 2010; Sorenson et al., 2014). The third component, SAE, was the component SBAE teachers felt was the most challenging due to the perceptions of lack of importance as well difficulties such as accommodating non-traditional agricultural students (McLean & Camp, 2000; Joerger, 2002; Rubenstein et al., 2014; Rayfield & Croom, 2010; Wilson & Moore, 200; Robinson & Haynes, 2011).

Much like any career, SBAE teachers face many challenges within their professions. Challenges that SBAE teachers frequently face in their profession include relationships with students and administration, school systems, the ability to achieve a work-life balance, and occupational commitments. Students of the SBAE teachers increase the motivation levels to continue to stay within the profession (Clemons & Linder, 2019; Clark et al., 2014; Shoulders et al., 2021; Traini et al., 2019, Su et al., 2011; Dainty et al., 2011; Solomonson & Retallick, 2018). Another integral part of an SBAE teacher's job satisfaction is the administration team that they possess (Clemons & Linder, 2019; Clark et al., 2014; Shoulders et al., 2021; Traini et al., 2019, Su et al., 2011; Dainty et al., 2011; Solomonson & Retallick, 2018). Furthermore, other CTAE teachers, fellow SBAE teachers, and mentor teachers played a vital role in helping SBAE teachers find their foundation within the educational profession (Moser & McKim, 2020; Clemons & Linder, 2019; DeLay & Washburn, 2013, Hasselquist & Graves, 2021, Mordan, 2012, Disberger et al., 2022, Shoulders et al., 2021). In addition, researchers have noted that the school district and, more specifically, coworkers effect SBAE teachers overall job satisfaction (Clark et al., 2014, Su et al., 2011, Shoulders et al., 2021).

Any profession brings stress; SBAE teachers exhibit symptoms like fatigue and frustration that vary among generations (Shoulders et al., 2021; Schmidt et al., 2022). Stress caused can come from a variety of sources like administration, the community, and program design (Traini et al., 2020; Smalley & Smith, 2018; King et al., 2013). Many SBAE teachers work well over 40 hours a week, this is a challenge that many SBAE teachers face is the ability to achieve a work-life balance (Shoulders et al., 2021; Solomonson et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2022; King et al., 2013; Guyett, 2020; Baxter et al., 2011). These above average work weeks come from the occupational duties that SBAE teachers fulfill, ranging from supervising SAE

projects to FFA duties such as CDE's, meetings, and conferences (Sorensen et al., 2017; Hopkins et al., 2020; Solomonson et al., 2019; Su et al, 2011). A key factor that makes achieving work-life balance different for each SBAE teacher is the matter of family (Traini et al., 2019; Sorensen et al., 2016; Traini et al., 2020; Tippens et al., 2013; Solomonson et al., 2019; Sorensen & McKim, 2014; Clark et al., 2014; Solomonson et al., 2022; Hasselquist & Graves, 2020).

Overall SBAE teachers are committed to continuing in the profession (Smalley & Smith 2018; Shoulders et al., 2021; Clemons & Linder 2019, Kitchel et al., 2012; Hasselquist et al., 2017; Sorensen et al., 2016; Hopkins et al., 2020; Hopkins et al., 2022; McKim & Sorensen, 2020). In addition to the commitment, SBAE teachers are satisfied with their job through a variety of factors (Smalley & Smith 2018; Shoulders et al., 2021; Clemons & Linder 2019, Kitchel et al., 2012; Hasselquist et al., 2017; Sorensen et al., 2016, Hopkins et al., 2020).

SBAE teachers become more dissatisfied with factors such as the number of hours worked, lack of room for promotion, and external factors like the Covid-19 Pandemic

(Hopkins et al., 2022, Shoulders et al., 2021, McKim & Sorensen, 2020). A specific factor that increases overall job satisfaction among SBAE teachers is self-efficacy (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Sorensen & McKim, 2014; McKim & Velez, 2015; Swan et al., 2011; Korte & Simonsen, 2018; Klassen & Chi, 2010). Motivations to continue in the SBAE teacher career include the impacts students have on SBAE teachers, encouragement from others, or their own personal experiences within SBAE. (Tippens et al., 2013; Solomonson et al., 2022; McIntosh et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2022).

Each stage of the SBAE teaching profession had their own challenges. With pre-service SBAE teachers, their self-efficacy levels decline around the halfway point of conducting their student teaching experience and reach the highest level of self-efficacy at the end of the

placement (Harlin et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2006; Roberts et al., 2007; McKim and Velez, 2016). Novice teachers have been found to be in survival mode, as low-self efficacy levels have been reported throughout the school year due to lack of knowledge and experience (Moir 1990, 2011; Wenner, 2001; McKim & Velez, 2017; Roberts et al., 2020; Arnett-Hartwick & Cannon, 2019)

The majority of current SBAE teachers plan on continuing in the profession (Tippens et al., 2013; Solomonson et al., 2022). First-year SBAE teachers felt confident in developing relationships with students, which in turn increased satisfaction (Disberger et al., 2022). Many first-year SBAE teachers desire feedback from administration, much like they had when they were in their pre-service program (Disberger et al., 2022; Meder et al., 2018). There have been numerous studies researching retention and attrition factors among SBAE teachers (Peake et al., 2020); however, there is little research on the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers and the factors that affect their job satisfaction.

### **Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Framework**

The theoretical framework that guided this study was Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 6). Researchers utilized this theoretical framework because simply put, if SBAE teachers are not having their needs met, their job satisfaction and retention levels will decrease. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs served as a guide for the researcher to create the interview guide, framing the objectives, and determine themes. Questions and the determination of the aspects in which to frame this study were grouped by tier. The qualitative questions were developed from the bottom up, focusing on the first tier then developing more questions to observe the needs of first-year SBAE teachers. Physiological needs are typically the basic human needs for survival. It is assumed that all participants of this study have met those needs which are air, food, water,

and shelter. These needs allow the participants to feel fulfilled. For this study, there is no research needed to be conducted to examine the physiological tier of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs..

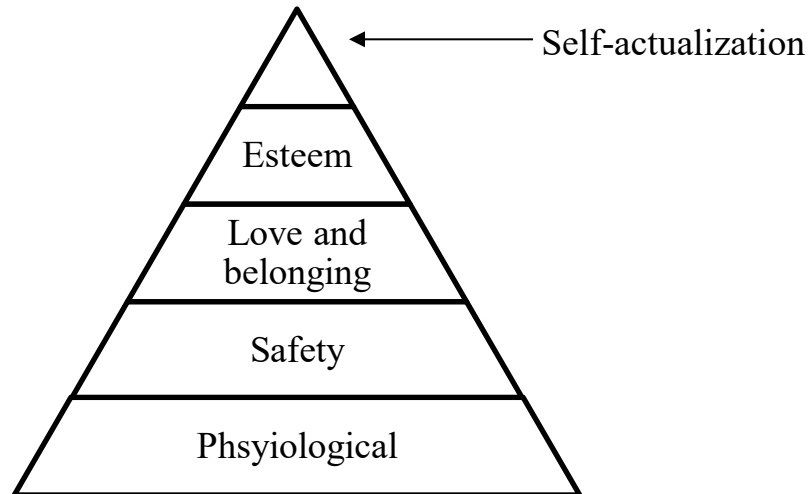
The safety tier of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs encompasses employment and health. Researchers developed questions regarding the top five stressors of being a first-year SBAE teachers as well as motivations to continue teaching agriculture. Since all participants were employed as an agricultural teacher, this tier of Maslow's Hierarchy is further fulfilled.

Researchers developed questions regarding the love and belonging tier that focused on the school environment and professional relationships that first-year SBAE teachers develop. Questions about mentor teachers, support systems both inside and outside the school, and pre-service programs were created to gather a deeper understanding of the bases of support first-year SBAE teachers have and may need to continue their career.

Esteem focused on the memories that first-year SBAE teachers have at their job. Questions pertaining to surprise and memorable moments that first-year SBAE teachers had fulfill the esteem tier of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. As these questions pertain to recognition, self-esteem, and respect. The respect isn't about the first-year SBAE teachers but rather the career itself.

The perception questions that were developed to observe the self-actualization tier of Maslow's Hierarchy. These questions focus on what the first-year SBAE teachers would do differently or what they would tell their past self. These reflection questions were focused on how they can be better versions of themselves. As all of their other needs were met to become more effective SBAE teachers, these questions observe the lessons learned throughout the course of their first year of their career.

**Figure 6**  
*Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*



(Maslow, 1970)



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

As previously stated, retention and attrition rates among SBAE teachers remain concerning, with many of the former SBAE teachers leaving early within their career. The purpose of this study was to obtain a better understanding the needs of first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia. The data will serve as a guide for pre-service programs, state agriculture education staff, and a resource for first-year SBAE teachers. To ensure a quality and rigorous study is conducted, the researcher will uphold the trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability of the methods section. In addition to the rigor, the researcher will address their data collection methods, data analysis, and the bias of the researcher. The research question that guided this study was:

1. What factors influence a Georgia first-year SBAE teacher's experience in the classroom?

#### **Trustworthiness and Ethics**

Trustworthiness is criteria that qualitative researchers need to include when conducting a qualitative research study (Guba, 1981). Merriam & Tisdell (2016) noted that regardless of the type of research, both validity and reliability should help guide a researcher in data collection, data analyzation, interpretation, and presentation of the findings (p.238). Researchers were guided to the four criteria that Guba (1981) recommends qualitative researchers utilize to assess

trustworthiness. These four criteria are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To ensure credibility within this study, researchers used member checks and noted the researcher's position/reflexivity. In addition, to ensure the primary researcher's bias was not affecting the study, faculty members that teach agricultural education as well as a faculty member who does not teach agricultural education were asked to ensure findings were credible given the data presented. To ensure transferability, purposeful selection and thick descriptions of the population were used by the researcher. All participants were identified to be first-year SBAE teachers in varying school systems and grade levels. Once the data was initially coded, peer examination took place to ensure codes were accurate. Audit trails were utilized to ensure confirmability and dependability of the study.

Federal regulation and University of Georgia's policy require that all human research is reviewed and approved by the Internal Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) Board. This study was reviewed and approved by the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board (IRB) under the research protocol# PROJECT00007082 (Appendix A). In compliance with IRB, all identifying characteristics of participants were removed to provide confidentiality, including assigning participants a pseudonym. Study information was only able to be accessed by the research team.

### **Subjectivity Statement**

The primary researcher has been involved in SBAE as both a student in their high school and college career. The primary researcher grew up taking agriculture classes at the high school and college levels. In addition to taking agriculture classes, the researcher was involved in FFA

and partook in SAE projects. Growing up in an SBAE program, the researcher acknowledges their own biases.

The primary researcher received an undergraduate degree in Agriculture Education at the University of Georgia and is currently pursuing a master's degree in agriculture and environmental education from the University of Georgia. The primary researcher attended the same pre-service program with many of the participants and has participated in the same classes as the participants. Within the coursework completed at both the undergraduate and graduate level, the researcher has been enrolled in classes with some of the participants included in this study. The researcher acknowledges that they have similar educational backgrounds as some of the participants. Because of the similar educational backgrounds, the researcher has had with some of the participants within my study, the researcher has taken special care to think about the how's and why's their thinking came to be, the messages the participants were trying to relay, and how pre-conceived notions would come into play during this research.

The researcher will be pursuing a career as an SBAE teacher for the following school year (2023-2024) and will begin teaching a middle school SBAE program in August of 2023. Previous teaching experience includes conducting the student teaching experience at a high school SBAE program and conducting clinical field observations at middle school programs. The researcher acknowledges that they may have thoughts and opinions on what an SBAE program could look like and will keep their personal thoughts and opinions free of this study.

### **Design of the Study**

Researchers utilized a constructivist epistemological approach in conjunction with Maslow's Hierarchy to guide this study. A basic qualitative study was utilized as the type of qualitative research. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), a basic qualitative study is

focused on finding the meaning, understanding, and process. With many basic qualitative studies using interviews to have findings that are richly described (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The goal of qualitative research is to develop an “understanding of how people make sense out of their lives, delineate the process of meaning-making, and describe how people interpret what they experience,” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Qualitative methodology allowed the researcher to get more detailed responses about the needs and challenges first-year SBAE teachers face, allowing interpretations on what first-year SBAE teachers make out of their experience. The researcher was able to determine factors that affect job satisfaction and retention factors among SBAE teachers. After previous literature was analyzed, the researcher then developed recurring themes that affect SBAE teacher attrition and retention factors. To better determine the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia, a basic qualitative design through the utilization of interviews was conducted.

A structured interview guide was developed by the researcher to collect data pertaining to the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia (Appendix C). This moderator’s guide was utilized to gather data within the interviews. The questions on the moderator’s guide were developed around three central topics, surprises of first-year SBAE teachers, needs of first-year SBAE teachers, and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers. These four central topics are based on previous literature pertaining to retention and attrition factors of SBAE teachers. Within each of the four topics, a primary question was developed with probing questions to follow to ensure the participant responded to all aspects of the question. In addition to those four topics, a concluding question pertaining to the motivation to keep teaching SBAE was also included. After the interview questions were answered by the participants, the primary researcher gave the participant a synopsis of their answers to ensure accurate interpretations.

The researcher conducted these interviews with most of interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes. All identifying characteristics of participants were removed in conjunction with Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements. Before the interview began, participants signed and returned the consent form (Appendix B) Participants were given a participant identifier to ensure confidentiality and identifying characteristics. All audio was destroyed immediately following the transcription of the interview.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of this qualitative study consisted of first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia during the 2022-2023 school year. Eight first-year SBAE teachers participated in this study. The following criteria was determined 1) Participant must be within their first-year of teaching and 2) The participant must be teaching agriculture at the middle school or high school level. The researcher identified first-year SBAE teachers by contacting Georgia Agricultural Education State Staff to obtain a list of first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia. Pseudonyms were given to all participants to ensure confidentiality.

To gather background information of the participants, a survey through the utilization of Qualtrics was sent out to all participants (Appendix F). The researcher included questions about the participants demographics as well as questions regarding the school environment that the first-year SBAE teachers were located at. School environment questions included school setting (urban, suburban, rural) as well as number of SBAE teachers located at the school they teach at. This allowed the researcher to develop a better understanding of each participant and gather any differences among key demographics.

All participants who were involved in this study obtained certification through a college or university program. Participants involved in this study either graduated from the University of

Georgia (UGA) or Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC). Other agricultural education preparatory programs in the state of Georgia, Fort Valley State University (FVSU) and Emmanuel College did not have any students who became first-year SBAE teachers during the 2022-2023 school year.

### **Background Demographics of Participants**

To ensure more transferable results, the researcher desired to invite participants that taught in different school communities across the state of Georgia. In addition, the researcher included both middle and high school first-year SBAE teachers to make this study more generalizable to other SBAE teachers. No elementary school SBAE teachers were invited to participate in this study as elementary SBAE teachers do not complete the program of work like middle and high school SBAE teachers. First-year SBAE teachers came from varying pre-service programs to ensure recommendations for pre-service programs were not just specific to one program.

A survey through the utilization of Qualtrics was utilized to collect demographics information of the participants (Appendix F). Questions were framed around ethnicity, age, degree level, and other questions regarding demographics of the participants. In addition, a question regarding stressors of the occupation was included in this survey to identify the top five stressors that might cause them to leave the occupation each participant had within their first-year.

Participants ranged from 22 to 24 years of age, and eight of the eleven participants identified as female. Participants were not segregated in this study as the questions that guided this study did not pertain to gender and how it influenced the SBAE teaching profession. All participants earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural education from either the University of

Georgia (UGA) or Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College (ABAC). The majority of participants have some graduate level coursework as well or have already obtained their master's degree. Four of the participants taught at the middle school level which serves grades 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The remaining participants taught at the high school level which is 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Four participants taught in an urban school setting, four taught in a suburban school setting, and three taught in a rural setting.

11 first-year SBAE teachers in this study were married, nine were single, and no participants in this study have been divorced. Five teachers taught in a single teacher SBAE program with only six of the participants teaching in a multi-teacher SBAE program. All participants in this study were white or Caucasian. In addition to being representative of the current trends in SBAE, the majority of the participants were female. Table 1 provides the pseudonym and descriptive information for each of the participants.

**Table 1**  
*Background Demographics of Participants*

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<b>Gender</b>	
Male	3
Female	8
<b>Age</b>	
22	9
23	1
26	1
<b>Ethnicity/Race</b>	
White/Caucasian	10
African-American	1
<b>Marital Status</b>	
Single	9
Married	2
Divorced	0
<b>Degree Level</b>	

Bachelor's Degree	4
Currently Enrolled in a Graduate Program	5
Master's Degree	2
<b>Grade Level Teaching</b>	
Middle School (6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	4
High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> Grade)	6
Middle and High School Combination (6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	1
<b>School Setting</b>	
Urban	4
Suburban	4
Rural	3
<b>Number of SBAE Teachers in School</b>	
One	5
Two	6
Three	0

**Table 2**

*Demographics by Participants (n=11)*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Grade Levels Teaching</b>	<b>School Setting</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Highest Degree Earned</b>
Bella	Female	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Urban	Single	Some Masters
Andrew	Male	Middle School (6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	Urban	Single	Bachelors
Grace	Female	Middle School (6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	Urban	Single	Bachelors
Shannon	Female	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Urban	Single	Masters
Dannielle	Female	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Rural	Married	Some Masters
Avery	Male	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Suburban	Single	Some Masters
Keri	Female	Middle School (6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	Suburban	Single	Some Masters
Hannah	Female	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Suburban	Married	Masters
James	Male	High School (9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Rural	Single	Bachelors
Maegan	Female	Middle School & High School combination (6 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> )	Suburban	Single	Bachelors
Rylee	Female	Middle School (6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> )	Rural	Single	Some Masters



## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The original research questions that guided the start of this study were:

1. What factors affect job satisfaction among first-year Georgia SBAE teachers?
2. What factors affect retention rates among first-year SBAE teachers?
3. What challenges do first-year SBAE teachers face?

After a review of the literature, the researcher created a structured qualitative interview protocol guide (Appendix C). This protocol was designed to guide the researcher in collecting the needs and perceptions for first-year SBAE teachers within the Georgia. The protocol contained 10 questions which were framed by three constructs: (a) Surprises of first-year SBAE teachers, (b) pre-service program needs of first-year SBAE teachers, and (c) perceptions of the first-year SBAE teachers. Within each of the four topics, a primary question was developed with potential probing questions to follow. A concluding question pertaining to the motivation to keep teaching SBAE was also included. The protocol was reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure content validity. At the conclusion of the interview, the primary researcher gave the participant a synopsis of their answers to ensure accurate interpretations as a form of member checking. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes.

After the structured interview guide was developed, Georgia Agriculture Education State Staff were contacted to obtain a list of first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia. Contact was sent to first-year SBAE teachers' emails listed in the Georgia Agricultural Education Teacher Directory.

Data collection was conducted over ZOOM, an online meeting system. Interviews were recorded and the audio files were downloaded to a protected folder on the researcher's computer. After data collection was complete, audio recordings were then transcribed using

transcribeme.com's artificial intelligence transcription program. After transcription was finished, the researcher corrected any grammatical mistakes to the transcription through listening to the audio recordings and reading at the transcription files at the same time.

To ensure confidentiality of the participants, the audio recordings were destroyed after the transcription was completed. In addition to audio recordings, the researcher kept a journal of findings to record observations and to make notes of findings. These notes allowed the researcher to note important findings and record emotions of the participants. The data was then entered into and coded using Atlas.Ti8. (ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH. (2023). The researcher initially coded data into broad themes and then determine the themes that can be combined. The researcher then manually checked the data for accuracy. Once completed, the primary researcher met with their committee to conduct a peer examination of the themes.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

Through the initial round of coding, 16 concepts were discovered which developed into six themes across the objectives of the study. These concepts encompassed first-year SBAE teachers' day to day lives. These 16 concepts were then refined into 13 concepts with some of the similar concepts being combined into themes. The 16 concepts that were discovered include administration, university staff, family, mentors, state agricultural education staff, classroom management, content area gaps, motivations, hinderances, advice to future SBAE teachers, SAE, FFA, and classroom/laboratory experiences. Five themes emerged from this study: Barriers, Needs, Lessons Learned, Students, and the Three-Ring Model of Agricultural Education. The concepts in Table 3 are broken down by theme.

**Table 3**  
*Concepts Broken Down by Theme*

<b>Barriers</b>	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Lessons Learned</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Three-Ring Model</b>
Communication	Administrative Support	Advice	Motivations	SAE
Content Knowledge	University Staff	Lessons Learned	Challenges	FFA
Mental & Physical Factors	Family			Classroom/ Laboratory
Lack of Support Systems	Other Teacher			
Stressors				

The research question that guided this study is,

1. What factors influence a Georgia first-year SBAE teacher's experience in the classroom?

### **Theme-1 Barriers**

The first theme identified within this research study primarily focuses on barriers first-year SBAE teachers face. Identified barriers of the first-year SBAE teachers within the state of Georgia include communication, content knowledge, mental and physical factors, and the lack of support systems.

**1.1 Communication** The first sub-theme pertaining to barriers that first-year SBAE teachers face relates to communication and procedures between the school system and the SBAE program. Many of the first-year SBAE teachers found it difficult to communicate to administration. The lack of knowledge on both sides provided barriers for first-year SBAE teachers, as the participants did not know who to go to or when to go to administration for questions. On the other hand, the lack of knowledge about agriculture made it difficult for administrators to understand what was going on in the SBAE programs of the participants.

The lack of knowledge on who to go to about certain topics was difficult for Dannielle. "Just knowing when to go to the superintendent, knowing when to go to the principal about things," were barriers that Dannielle faced within her first year. At other school systems like Bella's, she struggled with being able to take 5 minutes to talk to the principal about an upcoming FFA event,

I was trying to talk to my principal last week about a trip that I'm going on. And I got an email back from her secretary that said that she wouldn't have an available 5 minutes to talk to me about a trip for two and a half weeks. So that's not very plausible when you're looking at like FFA trips. That means that I'm going to have to start planning my FFA trips even further.

The barrier of communication is also due to the lack of knowledge that administration has about SBAE . Bella shared her concern about her administration not knowing what all is required of SBAE teachers, “They don’t have like a huge understanding about what FFA is and the importance of it when it comes to like us. Because I mean if one thing is missing [on our POW] then we don't get our actual money.” These barriers are created when administration also doesn’t show up to important events that the SBAE programs host. Without administration’s presence SBAE teachers feel like administration doesn’t understand what their program tries to accomplish. Hannah shared how her county hosted a cattle show and that , “Admins, superintendents, CTAE director did not come. And so to me, it's important for them to show up to things like that for them to better understand our program and what we're trying to do.” Administration not fully understanding what agriculture is and the tasks that SBAE teachers accomplish creates barriers and frustrations among first-year SBAE teachers.

Even among schools who have had an established SBAE program still continue to have struggles among administration understanding why agriculture is important. James, who is currently housed in a school with an established SBAE program shares,

Even though you are at a school that’s had AGED for years, you still get people who don’t truly understand it. That’s on administration. So that’s the biggest [surprise]. You got to take it with a grain of salt, and you also just got to explain it and make sure everything is crystal clear.

James’ experience just goes to show even established SBAE programs continue to struggle with communication barriers with administration, parents, and students. The lack of knowledge on why agriculture is important continues to make first-year SBAE teachers struggle more as they do not have the experience of showing how SBAE programs are important.

**1.2 Content Knowledge** The second theme focused in on content knowledge. Content knowledge can be difficult for SBAE teachers as there are over 30 agricultural pathways offered within Georgia. In addition to the 30 different pathways offered in Georgia, each high school SBAE teacher teaches an introduction or “Basic Agriculture Science.” Each middle school SBAE teacher is obligated to teach exploratory agriculture classes to each grade level. Within each of these introductory classes, state standards include topics over horticulture, animal and dairy science, forestry and wildlife, food safety and preservation, agricultural mechanics, and agriscience. Because of the many different topics within these introductory agriculture classes and only so much time to take classes in pre-service programs, first-year SBAE teachers found content knowledge to be a barrier in the profession.

Shannon, an equine science teacher who has little experience with equine, mentioned that “When you go into teaching agriculture, there’s no way you can get at least one class on every single thing that you could possibly teach in college. You’d be in school for 20 years.” With very little possibility of being able to be well educated in every area of agriculture, the lack of expertise in content knowledge makes it difficult for first-year SBAE teachers to become more confident in their teaching ability. Because Shannon is having to teach herself about equine since she became candid with her students stating,

We're going to figure out this year together. It's going to be great. We're going to have so much fun. But we're going to figure it out together. I know things. You guys know things. Because I have a lot of horse people in that class. And so they helped me. They bring in horses. We bring in guest speakers. And we kind of get to learn together, which I think is a really cool teaching moment where it's flipping it on the students to kind of figure things out.

Not only does teaching with a lack of content knowledge make it difficult for first-year SBAE teachers but managing the facilities of the schools without the background knowledge in the management of those facilities creates a barrier for first-year SBAE teachers. This is even more difficult for those first-year SBAE teachers who chose to double major within their pre-service program. Bella mentioned how she graduated with a degree in agriculture education and another major and how it has impacted her first year,

So I actually ended up graduating with an (Agriculture Education) degree without taking a single animal science class, which has been kind of difficult. As well as I lack experience in forestry, as well as just overall managing the facilities that I was given. I have an aquaponics system in my greenhouse, and I also have a greenhouse that I have no idea how to run. And the aquaponics system I'm literally having to learn based on YouTube and just guessing, which has resulted in a lot of dead fish.

Without the mastery of content knowledge, first-year SBAE teachers face barriers pertaining to running the classroom and the facilities at their school. Not having the content knowledge offered in their pre-service program creates more work on the first-year SBAE teacher having to educate themselves on agricultural topics.

***1.3 Mental and Physical Factors*** The second theme relates to mental and physical factors that were struggles to first-year SBAE teachers. These mental barriers are the challenges that one cannot see but feel. When it pertains to physical barriers, this includes time. One of the mental barriers that first-year SBAE teachers face is the sense of feeling alone. “Before you had your cooperating teacher and your professors, but now you have to be the one to make sure that you're taking care of yourself mentally and physically because it's so easy to just push things to the back burner because you have so much to do that you don't take care of yourself,” is a concern that Bella shared about the major difference between the pre-service program and the first year of teaching. Taking care of yourself is an important lesson that she has learned within

the first-year. The transition into the first-year of teaching is difficult because before, first-year SBAE teachers had their cooperating teachers and their university supervisors to assist them when needed. First-year teachers do not have that kind of support anymore, which can be a difficult adjustment into the career.

Much like how Bella provided her mental barrier, other SBAE teachers shared how the numerous tasks SBAE teachers have to accomplish can be overwhelming. Andrew shared how his perception has changed since he started teaching, “But it didn't really sink in until I started teaching in this job. It's that it's too many things. I mean, it's a trillion things every day. And its things, I mean, there's too many things for you to do in each day.” With balancing many roles and responsibilities like being an FFA advisor, SAE supervisor, teacher, and mentor, first-year SBAE teachers gain sense of feeling overwhelmed. “You just have to do what you're good at and. You know just get away with the other things that you can't do.” Andrew shared. .

***1.4 Lack of Support Systems*** The lack of support of first-year SBAE teachers creates barriers between the two parts of this relationship.. This lack of support can come from various sources. Without the support of State Agriculture Education Staff, administration, and other teachers, first-year SBAE teachers have come to desire more support. Without this support, first-year SBAE teachers are not confident that they know they are doing well.

“So really having someone with knowledge of the content area come and observe me more .” is a need that Grace wants to happen to help build confidence within herself. Without the support of that region staff coming to visit first-year SBAE teachers like Grace, first-year SBAE teachers do not feel the support desired from State Agriculture Education Staff. In addition to the lack of observations desired by first-year SBAE teachers, communication from State Agriculture Education Staff typically happens around or after a deadline, causing first-year SBAE teachers to



feel frustrated and lacking support. Andrew showed his frustrations with these last minute reminders explain how a simple change in information delivery can boost support, “That's fine, I guess, that's a great to have the reminder. But in that reminder, the day before, they give all this extra information. In these emails, and I'm like, oh, I wish I would have known that information like a month ago.” Meanwhile, Hannah, a first-year SBAE teacher in a different school district shares the same frustrations about communication with state staff, “So instead of communicating before all the events happen or expectations, it's more of after the fact. Like, hey, you weren't supposed to do this. Okay, well, I didn't know I wasn't supposed to do that. So if communication would be better, that would be fantastic.” Rylee also shared her similar experiences to Hannah as it pertains to lack of support. Rylee shared that,

It was kind of surprising not having as much support because I thought that and you know there's not always reminders of, “Oh, you need to do this.” It was just a lot of things like you needed to already know your first year. Kind of like you didn't have guidance.

On the other hand, experiences with state staff like James's does go to show that state staff can help first-year SBAE teachers. James shared how his biggest need was fulfilled by state staff,

But my biggest need in which {District] Region AGED office really helped and came through was getting stuff to do because my knowledge of forestry was there. I knew how to use the Biltmore stick. I knew how to set up the forestry contest and everything, but I needed help leaning how to teach the class.

These built in support systems can cause more stress with the lack of communication to SBAE teachers. Furthermore, first-year SBAE teachers are still learning everything from advising an FFA chapter. Without the support of earlier and clearer communication from state staff, this creates more difficulties with understanding expectations from FFA among first-year SBAE teachers.

Other support systems that are lacking also occur within first-year SBAE teachers' schools. Some mentor teachers that are assigned by the schools are not helpful in supporting first-year SBAE teachers. First-year SBAE teachers can be assigned a mentor teacher within their school to assist them with adjusting to a new school. However, these mentor teachers are not always helpful to the first-year SBAE teacher they are assigned to. "My mentor teacher has offered to be a reference for me. When I asked, but other than that, I haven't had tons of contact with my mentor teacher." is what Bella described her experience with her mentor teacher .

Perceptions of other teachers and administration within school system also has changed since entering the profession.

**1.5 Stressors of the Occupation** The fifth theme identified the top stressors affecting first-year SBAE teachers to consider leaving the profession (Table 3). These stressors range anywhere from their co-teacher to having a spouse who is also a first-year SBAE teacher.. With any job, comes stress; however, first-year SBAE teachers have different stressors compared to other jobs. These stressors also come with lack of experience, school settings, and potentially students. These stressors may not be applicable to veteran SBAE teachers as in time, SBAE teachers learn. Stress can come from many different sources for a first-year SBAE teacher. This stress could eventually lead to burnout of the participants and in turn lead to attrition. Causes of stress were then coded into simpler terms for Table 4. Rankings of stressors were ranked by the first-year SBAE teachers from highest to lowest cause of stress. These causes of stress relate to the profession and not their personal lives, unless the stress causes front the profession relates to their personal lives.

**Table 4***Stressors Mentioned by Participant According Ranking*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>#1 Cause</b>	<b>#2 Cause</b>	<b>#3 Cause</b>	<b>#4 Cause</b>	<b>#5 Cause</b>
Bella	Co-Teacher	Administration	Lack of School Support	Being a New Program	POW
Avery	Classroom Management	Parents	Administration	Lesson Planning	POW/Monthly Reports
Andrew	POW Requirements	Field Trip Planning	Maintaining FFA Chapter	Lesson Planning	Money/Fundraising
Dannielle	Student Involvement	POW	Work-Life Balance	Classroom Management	Parents
Grace	Classroom Management	Lesson Planning	Student Buy In	Student Behavior	Grading
Keri	Administrative Support	FFA Event Planning	Organization	Classroom Management	Lesson Planning
Hannah	Work-Life Balance	EOPA (End of Pathway Assessments)	Administration	POW	Number of Events to Keep up with
Shannon	Work Life Balance	Content Knowledge	Parents	Lesson Planning	Work-Life Balance
James	Administration	Family of students	Work load	Mental/physical health	Lack of Community support
Maegan	Time Management	Curriculum Building	Student Connections/Boundaries	Could not think of a fourth	Could not think of a fifth
Rylee	Work-Life Balance	Having a spouse who is also an SBAE teacher	Lack of county support	Competition within the profession/favoritism	Classroom Management

In addition, the majority of the participants agreed that time management was a top stressor. This time management includes that both work-life balance and managing time between advising an FFA chapter to the Program of Work required by Georgia SBAE teachers. Lack of administrative support was also consistent with previous literature as a top stressor for the participants within this study. The majority of the stressors are related to the FFA component of

the job rather than the classroom/laboratory and SAE component of the three-ring model of agricultural education.

## **Theme 2- Needs**

The second major theme emphasizes the needs of first-year SBAE teachers.. Four sub-themes were revealed to describe the needs of first-year SBAE teachers to encourage teacher retention rates. The second theme addresses support systems and how it is vital to a first-year SBAE teacher. Support of first-year SBAE teachers not only increased job satisfaction and but outlooks on remaining in the career.

***2.1 Administrative Support*** The first sub-theme analyzes the impact administration has on first-year SBAE teachers and how supportive administration can influence job satisfaction among first-year SBAE teachers. Support from administration is not necessarily where administration says yes to everything, but rather communicating and merely just being present for the first-year SBAE teachers.

Administrative support is vital to first-year teachers, from planning field trips, classroom management, money, first-year SBAE teachers notice the impact that support from administration has on them. “So I mean, I get good amount of support, but that's like I wouldn't survive without that,” is how Andrew explained his administration’s support of him within his first year of teaching. Other first-year SBAE teachers discussed how even though their administration may not have much knowledge about SBAE programs, the support that they give through allowing them to “Do my own thing,” as Shannon shares how her administration is supportive at her school. Allowing first-year SBAE teachers to explore what works allows first-year SBAE teachers to feel more excitement and increase self-efficacy.

Allowing first-year SBAE teachers to do their own thing goes hand in hand with administration understanding SBAE teachers are not the typical teacher. They have many different responsibilities with their Program of Work in addition to their “typical teacher duties.” With administration understanding their POW first year SBAE teachers would feel more supported. Rylee wishes that,

I think just keeping up with you know our POW and knowing what our job is and the fact that it's different is a big part of it because they can't expect us to you know be the same as everybody else because we're not. We're very different. And I know one of mine was like my first FFA meeting last year, I had like 100 students show up, and it was just it was awful because there's one of me. And my admin did admit that they were like, "We should have checked on you. This is your first year of teaching. It was your first meeting. We should have checked in to make sure you had it handled and didn't need help.

Support of first-year SBAE teachers also comes from observations of the teacher during the school day. With those observations it can show first-year SBAE teachers that administration is there for you and wants to make sure you are doing the right thing. “So I've just been kind of shocked at how often I'll be teaching and somebody will walk in and sit down for ten minutes you know. That didn't happen during student teaching,” Danielle reflected on how administration shows that they are willing to support her.. Administrative support has also been a surprise to first-year SBAE teachers as they have heard how other SBAE teachers in different school systems do not get administrative support of the program. Avery shared how he has heard how administration can be at other schools compared to his school,

A lot of things that I've heard from other teachers is like the stereotypical ways that administration typically acts like. They're very strict people. They don't really care about your morale. I can't really say that about my school. You know, we follow everything to the book, but at the same time, they build up teacher morale. And that, to me, that's very important.

Maegan is at one of these schools where administration can be difficult to work with., Maegan reflected on how the relationship between being a first-year SBAE teacher and administration is a difficult relationship at times.

So my admin could definitely keep in mind that I am the first-year teacher, and I do need that extra help, and I need to know the policies because the big issue right now is policies, "Oh, how do I get the fundraising approved? How do I get this approved?" And they're like, "They'll tell me one thing, they'll turn around and tell me another thing, and then kind of have to guide in the back end and find it." So just remembering that a first-year teacher as a first-year teacher, they know nothing, even though they know. The baseline is not everything.

**2.2 University Staff** The second sub-theme provides input in how pre-service program university staff helped first-year SBAE teacher transition into their career and serve as a resource. Primarily, first-year SBAE teachers discussed how their pre-service programs university staff have helped them in the initial transition into the classroom. First-year SBAE teachers can be better eased into the career with the help of their university staff.

Bella mentioned how her initial transition was rough at first, but her university supervisor has always been supportive of her even after she has graduated," So I would say that I had kind of a rough transition at first... and I know that I can call him anytime that I'm not doing well or I am doing well and he'll help me." This support that felt reassuring and helpful to first-SBAE teachers came from checking in with each other during conferences and reaching out throughout their first year. Shannon shared how her pre-service program professors talked to her at conferences," I've had a few professors that had to reach out just checking in or swung by at [Conference] and said, everything going okay. Do you need anything? Things like that are just, I don't know, reassuring and helpful." First-year SBAE teachers remember what was discussed in class and ask for help with those components of undergraduate classes. Keri needed help with SAEs and asked her

former professor,” I was like, hey, can you send me some of this just to kind of like break it (SAE) down?”

Support from university staff does not always have to be necessarily active, but it is reassuring to first-year SBAE teachers to know that they are there if they were to ever need support. One first-year SBAE teacher, Grace, shared that “,I do know that they're always a phone call or a text away,” Another first-year SBAE teacher talked fondly of her university staff if she ever reached out to them, “You know, I haven't really reached out to them for help. But I'm sure if I did, they would definitely answer me back. Because they were always very, very good about answering emails or my text messages or my phone calls.” This goes to show that support of first-year SBAE teachers can just be a resource for them if they ever were to need it.

**2.3 Family** The third theme discovers how family supports first-year SBAE teachers. Support given to first-year teachers can be given through actions such as listening about their day, asking for advice, or encouraging them with their future career goals. Support given by family allows first-year SBAE teachers to enter the career with a foundation of support outside of the typical school system. This can come from various members of the family and is shown to be someone that listens to when they talk about the profession.

Significant others often give support and serve as someone to talk to about their day to first-year SBAE teachers. When asked about support systems outside of the school system, many of the participants referenced their significant others. For those first-year SBAE teachers who are married, their significant other knows about their day. “So definitely my husband. He's just been an ear like. I can just go home and vent to him,” is how Dannielle feels that she is supported within her career while at home. Support from significant other also can step beyond the home and go into the career itself. “So obviously, my boyfriend, he helps me a lot because he listens to

me, rant, and rave about my kids when they make me mad. But he also helped me coach my dairy judging team,” Keri shared how her significant other supports her career. Meanwhile, Avery shares how his significant other, who is also an SBAE teacher helps him stay motivated within the career, “My biggest motivating factor is obviously going to be like my fiancé...She also teaches and she just motivates me every day and do the job right the first time and we're changing lives on a daily basis.” Significant others can help keep first-year SBAE teachers motivated and satisfied with their job.

Other family members besides significant others also play a vital role in the support of first-year SBAE teachers. Dannielle also mentioned how her uncle, a fellow SBAE teacher, is someone she, “Can call anytime she has a question”. Parents also support first-year SBAE teachers through various ways like helping with panic attacks. “There have been many evenings where I'm in a panic... They will come by and help me in the greenhouse to let me know. All is okay. We're here to help. Don't freak out. So definitely my parents, for sure.” This further supports that support of first-year SBAE teachers can come from many places. Avery mentioned family support and how originally, he had different career plans as a child and that those plans changed as teachers stood up for him,

I think it's funny because growing up, I would always love the weather channel as my favorite channel. And they always thought it was going to be like a meteorologist, but it was around I was like 11 or 12 years old when I was like, I had teachers that stood up for me and backed me up as a student. I was like, I want to be a teacher. But that's when I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. And my parents, they were like, okay, if that's what you want to do, like we fully support you.

**2.4 Other Teacher Support** The fourth theme examines how other teachers help support first-year SBAE teachers. These other teachers can be fellow SBAE teachers within the county



and outside of the county the first-year SBAE teachers serve. Non-SBAE teachers also can provide support to the participants. These relationships that first-year SBAE teachers have with other teachers is crucial part that influences job satisfaction. Many of the participants referenced a mentor teacher as a key player in their school support system.

Mentor teachers within their school systems offer support through being able to answer questions that first-year SBAE teachers may feel are dumb. “If I have any what I feel is like dumb questions, I guess. I can walk in there and be like, ‘Hey, before I go ask someone and look stupid, what is this?’” is how Keri described her relationship with her mentor teacher. Grace described how she feels that she is not alone in her profession because of her mentor teacher, “So I never feel like I’m alone in that sense with my school, which I’m really appreciative of..., it’s just I can always have someone to talk to.” These mentor teachers can also be in the form of a co-teacher within the SBAE program at their school. “She showed me every single thing that I needed to know about the school and gave me some tips of like, okay, this is how you need to talk to this administration” is the description given by Avery from his co-teacher.

Other SBAE teachers across the state also offer support and guidance needed for first-year SBAE teachers. Without this support across their districts and the state, first-year SBAE teachers might feel like how Andrew described how he would feel, “I mean, God, if I was alone in a lot of getting a bus, planning trips, getting certain things submitted, advisory meetings like... If I was alone on that, I don’t think, I don’t think I could have done it.” The support from other SBAE teachers at different schools creates a community of support within the profession like Danielle shared, “And I guess also you build a community with other ag teachers like going into GVATA (Georgia Vocational Agricultural Teacher’s Association).

### **Theme 3- Lessons Learned**

The third theme examines the lessons learned within the participants first-year of teaching SBAE in Georgia. Lessons that first-year SBAE teachers have learned range from creating the classroom environment, time management, and setting up clear classroom procedures. In addition to the lessons that first-year SBAE teachers have learned, participants also offered advice to future SBAE teachers and anyone in the profession. The first-year SBAE teachers provided advice to themselves and SBAE teachers about struggling, preparations, and being flexible.

**3.1 Advice** The first sub-theme identifies advice that first-year SBAE teachers have for future SBAE teachers in addition to advice that they have for themselves as they continue throughout their career. First-year teachers, like Grace believe that struggling is okay, and that in fact wishes that she, “struggled more” during student teaching to better prepare her for her current struggles as a first-year SBAE teacher.. Other first-year SBAE teachers, like Hannah, also preached heavily being prepared but do not over stress about your “Lessons being perfect.” Perceptions also changed from student teaching to actually being in the career like it did for Danielle. Danielle shared how she thought she, “Couldn’t do this forever,” when she was student teaching but now she believes it is “Easier than I thought it was going to be” now that she has her own classroom.

Other teachers like Maegan harp on time management and staying on top of things. A piece of advice that Maegan learned that she shared is.

And I heard that once before, and I didn't really think about it, but it's nailed in my head now. Stay on top of it. If you can get ahead even, that's even better. Stay ahead or stay on time because it's hard to play catch-up. Especially, like I said, when you have all this other stuff and you're worried about this thing, playing catch-up can be very hard. So I think staying there and staying on that path

**3.2 Lessons Learned** The second theme identifies the lessons learned from teaching within their first-year. These lessons were learned through facing challenges within their first-year. One lesson that Andrew learned in managing difficult classes and classroom environments was,

This sounds stupid, but I am the teacher. I'm the adult. Sort of like my classroom vibe and culture is decided by me... I like to complain about classes being like crazy for whatever reason, just behavior issues, but taking more responsibility and at the same time, not letting it affect you too much. Like just being like, you know what? That's the sucky class I'm just going to get through it.

In addition to creating and managing the classroom environment that first-year SBAE teachers desire, the mistakes that first-year SBAE teachers make will guide them throughout their career. A lesson that Keri learned throughout her first-year was, "Not everything has to be graded. Because that one's I guess last semester I've spent more time trying to grade stuff. And this semester, I'm like, I'm grading the big projects, that's all" Being able to designate time for grading allows first-year SBAE teachers to allocate their time wisely among their numerous responsibilities. Using time wisely doesn't only pertain to grading but Avery also explained that, "You have to be timely with that (and) intentional. Because at the end of the day, my duty is to teach these kids about students about agriculture." The goal of SBAE teacher is to teach about agriculture, and one cannot do that without being timely and intentional. Furthermore, being intentional also means being intentional with classroom rules to set up students for success within the classroom. Grace mentioned how being intentional with her classroom procedures helped create a foundation for teaching agriculture to her students, "So I don't make those same

mistakes because I'm like an 80% there with my routines and procedures because I've practiced them a couple of times.”

#### **Theme 4- Students**

The fourth theme determines the impact that students have on first-year SBAE teachers. Students create motivations for the first-year SBAE teachers to continue in the profession. The impact students have on first-year SBAE teachers is overall positive; however, students can also negatively affect first-year SBAE teachers’ perceptions about the profession.

**4.1 Motivations** Students impact and motivate first-year SBAE teachers in the classroom, during FFA events, and through their SAE projects. These motivations and teaching impacts make first-year SBAE teacher motivated to remain in the profession created the first theme pertaining to students. These motivations come through gaining a sense of pride, showing you care, and developing connections with their students.

Shannon believes that she is enjoying it because she is, “Having a great time with her students”. Much like Shannon, Bella enjoys her students and developed such strong connections with her students that she finds it difficult to think about, “Her freshmen graduating.” These connections that first-year SBAE teachers have developed with their students also create the sense of pride when their students accomplish a task. Within the classroom, Keri gained pride in her students when her 7<sup>th</sup> grade students, “Were given a task and exceeded expectations”. Avery also mentioned how he believes that “student success and FFA is another big motivating factor.”

Much like student success, seeing students gain agricultural knowledge and develop connections increase motivations to continue in the profession. When students seem to be “Into lesson,” it makes first-year SBAE teachers like Hannah feel good. In addition to interest in lessons making first-year SBAE teachers feel good, the connections that they develop have a

positive effect on both students and the first-year SBAE teachers. Avery shared his experience on the development of this symbiotic relationship,

I remember coming back from the national FFA convention back in at the end of October and our team made it to the state softball championship. I rode with my assistant principal from the airport all the way to Columbus. And our flight left at like 5 a.m., and I'd been up since 2 a.m., but I was willing to watch my student play for a state title. Unfortunately, they lost, but that student at the end of the game came up to me and was like, how did you make it? That just shows like you care. And that just means the world to me.

These student experiences not only keep motivating the first-year SBAE teachers, but they also motivate their students to continue their passion for agriculture. Rylee noted a special memory with one of her students that keeps her continuing in the profession.

I've had a lot of memorable moments with students. There's one in particular. I had my first semester teaching. I had a special needs student, and he ended up falling in love with FFA and AG. And it ended up just the most exciting thing in his whole passion. And so his mom ended up being a big supporter of us, and he attends everything. And I actually gave him an award at our banquet, but he shows up every day at school still. And he has a brand new FFA t-shirt every day from the website. Like He is fully dedicated. And I've heard all the other teachers talking, and they just say like he is a different kid since he joined FFA. And so that made me so happy. And just seeing him now. And he took care of our bearded dragon over summer, and he did so good that his mom got him his own. But just overall, that was a really good memory, and it still is. And then just other students you know how grateful they were for me and writing notes and things like that.

Just like Rylee, Maegan also shares how students have encouraged her to stay motivated through challenging situations.

Surprisingly, the students. Like I said, it can be rough with my admin, but I am making those good student connections, and I'm really enjoying them. And they seem to be enjoying the class. And the previous teacher didn't really teach, apparently. That's what they keep saying. But then they can literally look at me and say, "I actually learned this thing today." And I was like, "Good." So just having that connection and having that ability to actually teach them and have them learn in a good way, I guess so hands-on that I like being able to go, "Okay, we're going to do this activity. Go get in the dirt." And they actually enjoy it. Like They kind of want to do it. So I think that's cool for that.

**4.2 Challenges** Much like how students continue to motivate first-year SBAE teachers in the profession, students can also impact first-year SBAE teachers negatively. Negative impacts that students make first-year teachers face include classroom management, setting up routines, and setting up boundaries. The second sub-theme focuses on the challenges that students can create for first-year SBAE teachers.

Hannah mentioned how hard it is to get to know her students but, “Setting up boundaries on day one,” is vital because if you don’t, “They will take advantage of you.” Grace also mentioned something she pertaining to setting up herself for success. Grace believes that, “Setting up routines and being consistent with the routines was the biggest surprise that was difficult.” With routines also comes classroom management. Avery compares his preservice program and his current position managing high school students. With his preservice program, Thomas felt it was easy to manage the classroom of his peers because they, “Know how to be respectful and take it seriously,” while his current students are variables an, “You never know what’s going to come out of their mouth.”

### **Theme 5- Three Ring Model of Agriculture Education**

The three-ring model and its impact on developing a complete SBAE program among first-year SBAE teachers guided the fifth theme. For a complete SBAE program to be considered complete, SBAE teachers must provide opportunities pertaining to SAE, FFA, and the classroom. The fifth theme was determined to examine the relationships between first-year SBAE teachers and the implementation of three ring model of school based agricultural education.

**5.1 SAE** The SAE project allows students to take what they learn from their teacher and apply it to an experience outside of the classroom. The first sub-theme pertains to how first-year

SBAE teachers manage being a supervisor to SAEs. The SAE projects that the first-year SBAE teachers supervised created a sense of pride as well as challenges.

Keri felt that seeing her students take the SAE project and “run with it” was one of her favorite moments within her first-year of teaching. Bella noted that because they were in an urban setting, SAE projects were, “Difficult to find SAEs that are applicable to the students and that actually made a lot of sense for them to be doing.” Other challenges that Bella faced when implementing the SAE component of the three-ring model, include having students that live in “Apartments or developmental housing.” Other challenges that Grace faced included having a new group of students enter her class in October. Most of her students conducted lawn care or horticulture-based SAEs, and October through December is not the ideal time to conduct these SAEs making it, “Very hard in the times where there are only specific things to grow or no grass or leaves is really hard to find.”

**5.2 FFA** FFA provides leadership opportunities for students in an SBAE program. The second sub-theme encompasses how first-year SBAE teachers provided opportunities for these students to develop leadership skills. Other than encompassing the opportunities first-year SBAE teachers provide for their students, this theme also encompasses the difficulties the first-year SBAE teachers faced as it pertained to FFA.

One of the FFA opportunities provided to students that Keri refers to one of her, “Favorite meetings [they’ve] done,” was at a chapter FFA meeting where kids developed team building skills while stacking cups. Avery believes that the FFA component is his favorite part of the three-ring model and desires to provide the opportunities to his students like he had when he was in FFA. Avery believes that, “FFA is my favorite component of the three-ring model,” because of the experiences he had when he was in FFA. Other highlights of being an FFA

advisor that Andrew noted was, “Developing deeper connections with the students because of the outside of the classroom opportunities.”

On the other hand, the challenges that the first-year SBAE teachers, like Keri and Avery faced as it pertains to FFA mainly pertain to the, “Financial side of advising an FFA chapter.” Other struggles that pertain to FFA that Andrew had difficulties with include being, “Intimidated about the program of work.” Not only does the program of work cause stress for first-year SBAE teachers, but Andrew also the lack of updated resources that the Georgia FFA website makes it hard to access information. Andrew feels that the, “Website needs to be updated. The website sucks. It's not new. It's hard to access information. I'll be honest. I'll find something and then I'll look for it again and it's like, it's just totally not there.” FFA advising creates challenges and a sense of wellbeing when developing relationships with students.

**5.3 Classroom/Laboratory** The classroom component of the three-ring model allows students to gain knowledge about agriculture through the guidance of their SBAE teacher. The classroom or laboratory component of the model takes place in the classroom. This is where SBAE teachers are teaching about agriculture using lectures, laboratory experiments, and experiential learning. Part of developing the classroom and laboratory component of the three-ring model is creating a safe and welcoming environment. An example of safe and welcoming environment that Bella was able to create was conducted through creating a “Stress-free environment while working on community service projects.” These safe and welcoming environments can go hand in hand with experiential learning. Hands-on learning is part of the profession that allows first-year SBAE teachers to create memorable moments. Danielle mentions how, “All of the more hands-on things were the most impactful. And most memorable rather than the days that I just talked and taught them about something. Hands on is definitely



what keeps them engaged.” Students in Andrew’s class were able to cultivate and harvest food grown in their school garden and take it home to their parents, which was one of Andrew’s, “Most memorable, positive teaching experience.” Danielle noted her favorite teaching experience, “Has been in the welding shop because students took that course excited to weld.” Overall, the first-year SBAE teachers seemed to enjoy the teaching aspect of the profession because of the hands-on learning and working with youth.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions are organized by addressing the research objectives that guided this qualitative research study. Implications of this study will follow the research objectives, then a synopsis of the findings will be presented. Results will refer to previous literature when appropriate and be reiterated connecting to the primary research objectives. Implications will be utilized to draw conclusions and recommendations for future research will be suggested.

The question that guided this study was:

1. What factors influence a Georgia first-year SBAE teacher's experience in the classroom?

#### **Limitations**

Limitations of this study include the fact this study only included SBAE teachers within Georgia. This study is not applicable to SBAE teachers to other states because different states have other standards as well as different day to day operations of the state FFA organization. Other limitations include this study primarily interviewing SBAE teachers who taught in urban or suburban areas. Because of this, first-year SBAE teaches who teach in rural areas may have varying answers compared to the participants who were interviewed.

#### **Summary of Findings in Relation to Research Question**

**Theme 1-Barriers** First-year SBAE teachers face many barriers when it comes to the profession. Communication with administration, state agriculture education staff, and other

teachers were major barriers that many of the participants faced. In addition to communication, the many pathways that Georgia has for students makes it difficult for first-year SBAE teachers to feel confident in, specifically pathways like equine science. Not only does the lack of confidence in content areas create barrier for first-year SBAE teachers, but mental and physical factors such as time and taking care of yourself. Another mental factor that first-year SBAE teachers felt they faced was the feeling of being alone, and the lack of support systems that are needed in the profession made first-year SBAE teachers not confident in their ability. Those barriers, in addition to the stressors that first-year SBAE teachers face every day make create many difficulties in the profession.

**Theme 2- Support Systems** Just like how the lack of support systems creates barriers, the support given to first-year SBAE teachers creates job satisfaction within the profession. Administration creates vital support for first-year SBAE teachers even through simple gestures like observing classrooms. Pre-service programs also help transition first-year SBAE teachers into the classroom, even after they leave the program. Other support systems include family such as spouses, parents, and fiancés. Teachers both in the SBAE community and within the first-year SBAE teachers school systems provide the much-needed support of having someone to talk to.

**Theme 3- Lessons** SBAE teachers gave thoughtful advice to future SBAE teachers and themselves. Many times, this advice came from making mistakes. Many of the first year SBAE teachers encourage future SBAE teachers to take a wide variety of classes, especially the topics one is not comfortable in teaching. Many of the lessons that they have learned that they will continue to grow from mainly deal with classroom management and time management. These lessons that were learned will continue to grow as they enter new stages of teaching.

**Theme 4- Student Impact** Students can either make or break a teacher at times.

However, many of the first-year SBAE teachers continue to believe that students are the main motivation for them to remain in the profession. The memories that they create with the students either through FFA events, classrooms, or SAEs continue to motivate the first-year SBAE teachers to remain in the profession. There are challenges that first-year SBAE teachers do face when it comes to students though. Many times, it was the challenges of adapting the SAE to fit the student's needs.

**Theme 5- 3RM** The three-ring model of agriculture education provided opportunities and challenges to the first-year SBAE teachers. As previously mentioned, many of the SBAE teachers faced challenges when it came to adapting the SAE project to fit the students' needs, especially those in urban areas. The other out of classroom experience that first-year SBAE teachers enjoyed was FFA. This allowed the first-year SBAE teachers to develop deeper connections to their students while building their leadership skills. Challenges that the first-year SBAE teachers faced as it pertains to FFA mainly related to the financial side of advising an FFA chapter at their schools. The classroom component also developed a sense of connection between first-year SBAE teachers and their students. These deeper connections were able to be developed through conducting hands-on learning as well as creating connections between agriculture and the real world.

### **Relations to Previous Literature**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia. The needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers are vital as retention rates of SBAE teachers remain concerning (Clark et al., 2014). Within the first five years many of the teacher's leave within the first five years (Keigher, 2020). The research

objectives sought to examine the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia. Overall, the data support previous literature. The support that school systems and administration play a vital role in job satisfaction of first-year SBAE teachers. In addition, students both motivate first-year SBAE teachers to remain in the profession but also pose their own challenges. Struggling is natural, first-year SBAE teachers learned from their mistakes to increase job performance. Lack of content knowledge and support are barriers to first-year SBAE teachers.

The first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia were consistent with previous literature as it relates to classroom management (Burris et al., 2010). As it pertained to content areas, participants were not confident in a particular subject area which was not consistent with previous literature (Burris et al., 2010). Within this study, first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia felt low confidence in agricultural content as there are over 30 pathways in the state. In addition, first-year SBAE teachers were critical about their teaching ability thus making the researchers believe that their self-efficacy levels were low (Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Sorenson & McKim, 2014). The participants learned valuable lessons to continue for the following years in the career.

The most consistent findings from previous literature that this study supports pertains to job satisfaction. School administration played a major role in job satisfaction among SBAE teachers and the participants within this study (Hasselquist et al., 2017; Solomonson et al., 2019; Mordan., 2012). The more support that the first-year SBAE teachers had from their administration the happier the participants reported. The support of the administration in affecting job satisfaction of SBAE teachers is consistent with previous literature. If

administration is not supportive or communicative to first-year SBAE teachers, then first-year SBAE teachers faced challenges within the career.

In addition, with administration, the support of other teachers is vital to the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers. Other teacher support is consistent with increasing comfort levels of first-year SBAE teachers (Moser & McKim, 2020; Clemons & Linder, 2019; DeLay & Washburn, 2013; Mordan, 2012). These other teachers that supported first-year SBAE teachers include mentor teachers and other SBAE teachers in the county and across the state. These mentor teachers were able to improve the performance by being a source of support for first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia (Mordan, 2012). Other findings that were not included in previous literature pertained to state agriculture education staff. Communication proves to be a major barrier to first-year SBAE teachers and their relationships with state agriculture education staff.

First-year SBAE teachers did learn lessons throughout their first-year of the profession. Many times, the lessons pertained to struggling. Throughout the struggles the first-year SBAE teachers had within their first-year, they were able to learn from their lessons to continue throughout their profession. Lessons do not have to be perfect, and first-year teachers advise future SBAE teachers to be flexible.

## **Implications**

**Administration** Some of the administration of first year SBAE teachers showed lacking support of the SBAE program causing stress and decreased job satisfaction among the participants of this study. Because of the lack of support, the participants could decide to leave that school or the profession entirely causing an increase in SBAE teacher attrition rates. Without

the support of administration both from the school and county level, it causes first-year SBAE teacher's jobs to become even more difficult and time consuming than it already is.

**State Staff** From the data collected, State Agriculture Education Staff can be intimidating to interact with for first-year SBAE teachers. This intimidation can be caused by the view that state staff are one of the superiors the SBAE teachers have. Because of the number of members on state staff, it can be confusing for first-year SBAE teachers regarding who to ask as it pertains to certain topics.

**Pre-Service Programs** First-year SBAE teachers need more exposure to a wide variety of SBAE programs. Throughout their pre-service program experience, more exposure leads to more ideas on what SBAE programs can look like. In addition, more exposure will allow first-year SBAE teachers to become more confident in their content knowledge as well.

## **Recommendations**

**Future Research** Recommendations for future research include conducting this study over the span of multiple years as it can further explain the factors affecting first-year SBAE teachers in the state of Georgia. In addition, the researcher recommends conducting this study in other states to develop a better understanding of the needs and perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within other states. Further research is also recommended to better understand how communication between the support systems can better fulfill the needs of first-year SBAE teachers for administration, state agriculture state staff, and family.

Another area of agricultural education that need to be researched is extension. Although they are not school based, they do influence agricultural education among community members. Typically, Cooperative Extension staff have similar educational backgrounds and have similar goals of increasing agricultural knowledge of the public. Extension staff is a counterpart of

SBAE teachers and focus primarily on 4-H instead of FFA. Since extension and becoming SBAE teachers typically have the same educational viewpoints and produce similar job responsibilities, further research is recommended to explore first-year extension professionals.

**Administration** Recommendations for administration is to continue supporting first-year SBAE teachers through observations and open communication. Administration should strive to continue to become more knowledgeable about SBAE pathways and knowledge about the FFA organization. In addition to gaining more knowledge about the FFA and SBAE programs, attend FFA events such as banquets, livestock shows, FFA meetings, and more, even if that visit may be for 5 minutes. These recommendations will allow first-year SBAE teachers to feel supported within their first-year of the profession.

**Future SBAE Teachers** Future SBAE teachers should become more well-rounded in agricultural content by taking one class in each of the five major agricultural content areas. Involvement in extra curriculars such as horticultural student organizations, outdoor student organizations and animal science student organizations are recommended to increase content knowledge in agricultural areas with low risks being associated with joining these clubs. Researchers also encourage future SBAE teachers to ask to observe current SBAE teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the profession. It is also recommended to future SBAE teachers to ask more questions to their university staff, cooperating teachers, and other SBAE teachers.

**First-Year SBAE Teachers** First-year SBAE teachers should continue to reach out to keep administration informed about what is happening in classes and chapter and state level FFA events. Improvements in communication are recommended at each level for first-year SBAE teachers and support systems to develop a better relationship between state agriculture education



staff, other teachers, and administration. Other recommendations include taking professional development opportunities in content areas other than their content strengths. It is also recommended that first-year SBAE teachers ask state staff members to observe them in order to develop relationships with their state staff members.

**University Staff and Pre-Service Programs** Recommendations for pre-service programs include requiring future SBAE teachers to take at least one class in the five major agricultural areas. The researcher recommends that future SBAE teachers take a class in animal and dairy science, horticulture, forestry, wildlife, and agricultural mechanics. This will allow future SBAE teachers to have a base knowledge of the five major areas of agriculture. It is also encouraged to provide as many experiential learning opportunities as it is appropriate to show pre-service teachers potential lessons they may conduct with their students. As it pertains to the three-ring model, more opportunities for future SBAE teachers to explore the implementation of SAE in urban settings are recommended.

The researcher recommends to university staff to communicate periodically to first-year SBAE teachers. Reaching out can be as simple as a text message or phone call to show the support of first-year SBAE teachers. In addition, the researcher recommends that pre-service programs and university staff reach out to current first-year SBAE teachers to be guest speakers to their cohorts to create a more realistic perception of the profession. In another communication training aspect, it is recommended that pre-service staff provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to work on their communication skills by creating mock emails and templates for the future SBAE teachers to use when they enter the classroom. Other recommendations include asking current SBAE teachers to respond to a survey about their most difficult classroom

management situation and allow the current agricultural education students to utilize these examples for their classroom management strategies.

**State Agriculture Education Staff** Both state agriculture education staff and other teachers within school districts need to continue to support first-year SBAE teachers by providing resources such as lessons and labs. In addition to providing resources to first-year SBAE teachers, researchers recommend state staff observe their first-year teachers they oversee at least twice in the school year. Phone calls or text messages from state staff are recommended to develop the relationships first-year SBAE teachers desire. Other recommendations include sending out information in a timely manner regarding CDEs, conferences, and documentation processes. The state FFA website is also recommended to be updated for a more accessible and more informational resource for first-year SBAE teachers.

**National Agriculture Education Supply and Demand Study** Recommendations for the National Agriculture Education Supply and Demand Study include determining the years of service SBAE teachers are at when they leave. This will allow both state agriculture education staff, administration, and the United States Department of Education to notice when SBAE teachers are leaving, and hopefully target those groups to help reduce attrition rates among the profession.

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## Appendix A

### IRB Approval for Study



# Institutional Review Board

## UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

23%

Date: Sunday, November 19, 2023 11:15:12 AM

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PROJECT00007082

[Project Basics](#)

## Project Basics

1. \* Title of Study:  
First Year Ag Teacher Qual Study
2. \* Principal Investigator:  
[Eric Rubenstein](#)
3. \* Does the Principal Investigator have a financial interest related to this research? [?](#)  
☐ Yes ☒ No
4. The Principal Investigator will receive all communications related to this project. Select one or more persons to receive the same communications or to have read access to the project even if they are not study team members (e.g., a project coordinator):

Name	Organization
Trevor Queen	<a href="#">CAES-Ag Leadership, Ed &amp; Comm</a>
5. \* Are you requesting determination if your project meets the definition of human subjects research? [?](#)  
☐ Yes ☒ No
- \* Are you requesting determination if your project meets the criteria for developmental review? [?](#)  
☐ Yes ☒ No
- \* Will an external IRB act as the IRB of record for this study? [?](#)  
☐ Yes ☒ No

## Project Funding

1. \* Is the work described in this protocol, or the work described in the overarching project, funded by an external source:

☐ Yes ☒ No

2. Compare the scope of the Human Subjects Activities included in the overall project to the activities described in this protocol submission:

*They are the SAME:*

All human subjects activities in the overall project are included in this protocol submission:

☒ Yes ☐ No

*They are DIFFERENT:*

Human subjects activities included in the overall project but not part of this protocol submission have already been included in a separate pending or approved protocol submission:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Human Subjects Activities included in the overall project but not in this IRB Submission are intended to be included in a future UGA IRB Submission:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Human Subjects Activities included in the overall project but not in this IRB Submission have already been included in a separate pending or approved IRB Submission to an external institution/entity:

☐ Yes ☐ No

Human Subjects Activities included in the overall project but not in this IRB Submission are intended to be included in a future IRB Submission to an external institution/entity:

☐ Yes ☐ No

## Research Design, Methods and Procedures

1. \* Brief Description:

We will be interviewing school-based agricultural educators who are currently serving in their first year of teaching. The study is guided by four research objectives

1. Describe the needs of first year agricultural educators in the state of Georgia.
  2. Investigate how pre-service teacher programs have prepared first year agriculture education teachers for their first year of teaching.
  3. Examine the suggestions of first year agricultural educators have to pre-service agricultural education programs.
  4. Identify the struggles of first year agricultural teachers.
2. \* Describe the overall research design and method(s) of data collection. Also, identify specific factors or variables and, if applicable, treatment and control conditions or groups.  
Data will be collected through individual interviews with teachers. Individual interviews will occur during planning and open blocks, through the use of a semi-structured interview guide.
3. \* Describe the time commitment per activity per individual subject and provide the estimated total duration of participation. If known, also describe the anticipated duration to enroll all study subjects and the estimated time until completion of primary analyses.  
Researchers will utilize an interview guide that will contain approximately 10 questions, and interviews will take place in a single session. The session will last approximately 30 minutes. First year agriculture teachers will be interviewed during planning periods.
4. \* Describe in detail, and in sequence, all study procedures from the perspective of the participant. Begin with any procedure that involves interaction or collection of data to determine eligibility, if applicable. Separate any procedures that are part of regular practice from procedures that are specific to this research study. If procedures are long and complicated, use a table, flowchart or diagram to outline the study procedures.
1. Recruitment email will be sent.
  2. Consent will be obtained.
  3. Date for the interview will be scheduled.
  3. In-person interview will be conducted and any additional consent obtained.
  4. Data will be analyzed.
  5. Data will be written into research manuscript.
5. \* Describe the data analysis plan, including any statistical procedures. For qualitative studies, specify the proposed analytic approaches.  
After the interviews are concluded, recordings will be transcribed and analyzed through ATLAS.ti8 qualitative research software. Lincoln and Guba's (1985) constant comparative method will be used to analyze the data in order to seek similarities among data, and forming codes, prior to refining for more distinct themes. Researchers will also cross-reference and perform member checking of the data, prior to forming conclusions of the data.



## APPENIDX B

### CONSENT FORM

#### **UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONSENT FORM First-year Agriculture Educator Qual Study**

##### **Researcher's Statement**

You are being asked to take part in a research study. The information in this form will help you decide if you want to be in the study. Please ask the researcher(s) below if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

**Principal Investigator:** *Eric Rubenstein*  
*Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication*  
[erubenstein@uga.edu](mailto:erubenstein@uga.edu)

**Co-Investigators:** *Trevor Queen*  
*Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication*  
[trevor.queen@uga.edu](mailto:trevor.queen@uga.edu)

You are being invited to be in this research study because you have been identified as an agricultural education teacher who is currently in their first-year of teaching. The purpose of this study is to examine how current first-year agricultural educators are adjusting to their career. The research objectives that guide this study are as follows:

1. Describe the needs of first-year agricultural educators in the state of Georgia.
2. Investigate how pre-service teacher programs have prepared first-year agriculture education teachers for their first-year of teaching.
3. Examine the suggestions of first-year agricultural educators have to pre-service agricultural education programs.
4. Identify the struggles of first-year agricultural teachers.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you agree to take part in this study, you allow the researchers to interview you regarding your first-year of teaching agriculture and the preparedness that you have from your pre-service teacher program. Researchers will use an interview guide consisting of approximately 10 questions but may ask follow-up questions as needed. The researcher may ask you for clarification on answers to confirm the interpretation of your responses. There will be one

session that will be approximately 30 minutes and will be held in person. This interview will be audio-recorded to allow the researchers to transcribe your comments. Audio files of participants will be kept in a locked drawer in the principal investigator's office with the principal investigator being the only individual with a key to the drawer. Audio will be deleted after transcription.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

There is no direct benefit for anyone who participates in this study. There are also minimum risks associated with this study. Your responses may help us understand the needs of first-year agricultural education teachers. There are no alternative procedures or course of treatment for this study.

### **Confidentiality of records**

*We will only keep information that could identify you long enough to match your responses with interview. The interview recording will be deleted within 60 days of the interview. We do not plan to share this information with anyone who is not connected to this research study. Your information will not be used or distributed for future research. Researchers will not release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent unless required by law.*

### **Participant rights**

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or [irb@uga.edu](mailto:irb@uga.edu).

**If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to reach out to Dr. Eric Rubenstein. He can be reached at:**

*Eric Rubenstein:* [erubenstein@uga.edu](mailto:erubenstein@uga.edu)

If you agree to participate in this research study, please sign below:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Please keep one copy and return the signed copy to the researcher.**

**Please keep a copy for your reference.**

## APPENDIX C

### **First-year Agriculture Educator Qual Study**

**Interviewer reads:** Hello and welcome to this session today. Thank you for taking the time to join this discussion about the needs and observations of first-year agricultural educators within the state of Georgia, and how pre-service programs can better prepare first-year teachers for entering the classroom. My name is Trevor Queen and I am a graduate student at the University of Georgia.

Before we begin, let me share some things that will make our discussion easier. I will be addressing how first-year agricultural educators can be better prepared for entering the classroom as well as identifying needs and struggles of first-year teachers. In addition to that, I will be addressing how pre-service programs have prepared first-year teachers for entering the classroom and examine the suggestions of first-year agricultural educators have to pre-service agricultural education programs. Please feel free to share your point of view as you see fit. Please speak up and clearly, as we are audio recording the session because we do not want to miss any of your comments. The recordings will only be heard by myself and the other researchers. Once the recordings have been transcribed, the audio will be destroyed. We will be on a first-name basis, and if you would like to be assigned a pseudonym for the duration of this interview, we will gladly use it. We assure you of confidentiality and will remove all information attached to you in reported comments.

My role here is to ask questions and listen. We will be asking approximately 10 questions. The session will last approximately 30 minutes, but we will be respectful of your time. Please turn off your cell phone, unless you may be needed for an emergency. If you are ready, let's begin.

**Interviewer reads:** To get started, let's get to know you a little more. Please share your name, what subject areas you teach, and what grade level you teach

### **Surprises First-year Agricultural Educators**

**Interviewer reads:** These questions are helping assess the surprises of first-year agricultural educators.

What has surprised you the most during your first-year of teaching?

1. What are some of the memorable moments you have had with a student?
2. What is your best teaching experience?

**Interviewer reads:** These questions are going to describe how pre-service programs have prepared you for entering the classroom.

### **Needs**

**Interviewer reads:** These questions are going to explore the needs of first-year SBAE teachers

1. What would you say was your biggest need as a first-year teacher?
  - a. How can administration and a school system better prepare you for your first-year teaching?
  - b. How can state staff better prepare you for your first-year of teaching?
  - c. How do mentor teachers help you in your first-year of teaching?
  - d. How has university staff helped you in your transition and within your first-year?
  - e. Is there anyone outside of your school system that has supported you or helped you in your first-year?

### **Perceptions**

**Interviewer reads:** These questions are going to help determine perceptions of a first-year SBAE teacher and how they have changed

If you had one thing to tell your past self to better prepare yourself before entering the classroom, what would to be and why?

1. How have your perceptions changed from your college career now that you are the teacher?
  - a. What would be the biggest change you would make to your pre-service program to better prepare you for your first-year?
  - b. What are the top 5 stressors in the career ranked from highest to lowest?

**Concluding Question**

What would you say is your biggest motivating factor to continue teaching agriculture?

**Is there anything we didn't ask today you wish we would have, or would like to share?**

**Interviewer reads:** Thank you so much for your time today. We greatly appreciate all of the information you shared with us. We look forward to using the information you have provided us with, to learn more about the needs of first-year agriculture educators within the state of Georgia. If you would like to see the results from the study upon completion, please let us know and I will share them with you.

## APPENDIX D

### Contact Email

#### UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

#### EMAIL TEMPLATE

#### **First-year Georgia Agriculture Educator Research Study**

Good morning/afternoon sir/madam,

I am Dr. Eric Rubenstein in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communication at the University of Georgia. I am inviting you to participate in a research study entitled “First-year Teacher Study.”

I am conducting a research study to examine current first-year agricultural educators needs and struggles after becoming a full-time teacher. I am asking you to be in this study because you are a current first-year agricultural educator in the state of Georgia.

I will be sending several documents along with this email, including consent forms for participants.

1. **Consent Form (IRB FY Consent Form)** – this document needs to be thoroughly read, teacher consents to participate in the study.

Involvement in the study is voluntary, and participants may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

A brief description of the research is as follows:

If you agree to take part in this study, you allow the researchers to interview you regarding your first-year of teaching agriculture. Researchers will use an interview guide consisting of approximately 10 questions but may ask follow-up questions as needed. The researcher may ask

you for clarification on answers to confirm the interpretation of your responses. If you do not feel as though you have an answer to a question, you will not be forced to answer. There will be one session that will be approximately 30 minutes and will be held in person. This interview will be audio-recorded to allow the researchers to transcribe your comments. Audio will be deleted after transcription.

Your involvement in the study is voluntary, and you may choose not to participate or to stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

1. Please thoroughly read, print, and sign the attached IRB First-year Teacher Consent Form. Return this form to researchers to be included in the study.

There is no direct benefit for anyone who participates in this study. There are also minimal risks associated with this study. Your responses may help us understand how first-year agricultural teachers are operating in the state of Georgia, in addition to the needs first-year agricultural teachers have. There are no alternative procedures or course of treatment for this study.

Please review the attached copy of the consent form. I will bring the hard copy and I will go over it with you during our in-person meeting for the interview. I will answer any questions you may have before signing it and I will also give you a copy of the signed form.

If you have additional questions or concerns about the study, please contact the researchers at [erubenstein@uga.edu](mailto:erubenstein@uga.edu). Additionally, if you have any questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant in this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chairperson at 706.542.3199 or [irb@uga.edu](mailto:irb@uga.edu).

## APPENDIX E

### Audit Trail

<b>Examining the Needs and Perceptions of first-year SBAE teachers within Georgia</b>	
<b>Objective/Themes</b>	<b>Respondent Code</b>
Objective 1	
Communication	Dannielle, Bella, Hannah, James
Content Knowledge	Shannon, Bella
Mental and Physical Factors	Bella, Andrew
Lack of Support Systems	Hannah, Grace, Bella, Andrew, James, Rylee
Stressors	Andrew, Avery, Hannah, Grace, Danielle, James, Maegan, Rylee, Keri, Shannon, Hannah
Objective 2	
Administrative Support	Andrew, Shannon, Dannielle, Avery, Rylee, Maegan
University Staff	Hannah, Keri, Bella, Grace, Shannon
Family	Dannielle, Hannah, Avery, Keri
Other Teacher Support	Grace, Hannah, Avery, Keri, Andrew, Grace, Dannielle
Objective 3	
Advice	Grace, Hannah, Dannielle, Avery, Maegan
Lessons Learned	Andrew, Avery, Keri, Grace
Objective 4	
Motivations	Shannon, Bella, Keri, Avery, Hannah, Rylee, Maegan
Challenges	Hannah, Bella, Avery , Grace
Objective 5	
SAE	Bella, Keri, Grace
FFA	Keri, Avery, Andrew
Classroom/Laboratory	Bella, Dannielle, Andrew



<b>Data Statements Arranged by Objective and Theme</b>	
<b>Objective 1</b>	
<b>1.1 Communication</b>	
Dannielle	But I think some of the actual even things like having relationships with the superintendent and the higher up of administration, just knowing when to go to the superintendent, knowing when to go to the principal about things. That kind of thing. Knowing the relationship between your CTAE director and your principal and who to talk to about certain things.
Bella	Also, just the lack of knowledge about FFA, I'm in a very big school system where you can't just go and talk to your principal. I was trying to talk to my principal last week about a trip that I'm going on. And I got an email back from her secretary that said that she wouldn't have an available 5 minutes to talk to me about a trip for two and a half weeks. So that's not very plausible when you're looking at like FFA trips. That means that I'm going to have to start planning my FFA trips even further. Before I even know if I have kids that are going to get registered or before I even know any of the details from Georgia FFA, I'm supposed to go and talk to my admin. They don't have like a huge understanding about what FFA is and the importance of it when it comes to like us. Because I mean if one thing is missing [on our POW] then we don't get our actual money. So I feel like maybe if admin had just been kind of like educated a little bit better on their requirements to fulfill the POW
Hannah	Sometimes admin is not as open as I would like about situations. Admin in my school, I love my admin. But I just wish I had known more information like with my animal science vet science classes. As well as our county has a county farm. And things have just not been communicated very clearly at all with expectations for that. Another thing this isn't I don't know if it really relates to the question. But [Georgia] county had a beef and dairy show. And admins, superintendents, CTAE director did not come. And so to me, it's important for them to show up to things like that for them to better understand our program and what we're trying to do.
James	Even though you are at a school that's had AGED for years, you still get people who don't truly understand it. That's on administration. So that's the biggest [surprise]. You got to take it with a grain of salt, and you also just got to explain it and make sure everything is crystal clear.
<b>1.2 Content Knowledge</b>	

Shannon	<p>And so in agriculture, when you go into teach agriculture, there's no way that you can get at least one class on every single thing that you could possibly teach in college. You'd be in school for 20 years. I ride horses, but don't know anything about the physiology history or mechanics of a horse. I came into equine science being like, I'm learning with you guys. We're going to figure out this year together. It's going to be great. We're going to have so much fun. But we're going to figure it out together. I know things. You guys know things. Because I have a lot of horse people in that class. And so they helped me. They bring in horses. We bring in guest speakers. And we kind of get to learn together, which I think is a really cool teaching moment where it's flipping it on the students to kind of figure things out.</p>
Bella	<p>So I actually ended up graduating with an (Agriculture Education) degree without taking a single animal science class, which has been kind of difficult. As well as I lack experience in forestry, as well as just overall managing the facilities that I was given. I have an aquaponics system in my greenhouse, and I also have a greenhouse that I have no idea how to run. And the aquaponics system I'm literally having to learn based on YouTube and just guessing, which has resulted in a lot of dead fish.</p>
Shannon	<p>So I'm teaching equine science this semester. And so in agriculture, when you go into teach agriculture, there's no way that you can get at least one class on every single thing that you could possibly teach in college. You'd be in school for 20 years. So my kids, I never took an equine science class. And so I ride horses, but don't know anything about the physiology history or mechanics of a horse. And so my kids and my upper-level equine class, they had had a pretty awesome teacher who was very good at rigor and doing really awesome things with these kids beforehand. But I came into equine science being like, I'm learning with you guys. We're going to figure out this year together. It's going to be great. We're going to have so much fun. But we're going to figure it out together. I know things. You guys know things because I have a lot of horse people in that class. And so they know they've been writing since they were two. Triple the amount of time that I've been writing. And so they helped me. They bring in horses. We bring in guest speakers. And we kind of get to learn together, which I think is a really cool teaching moment where it's flipping it on the students to kind of figure things out. We're doing a project right now where we're judging horses, but the students have to pick they draw a discipline out of a hat and they have to figure out like a 30 minute lesson on how to teach people to judge these horses. And so I'm doing it with a group and we're practicing and we're learning things together and we're figuring it out. And so I think just</p>

	being honest with the students makes it have we just have a lot more fun with things. And so that's been a really cool teaching moment.
<b>1.3 Mental and Physical Factors</b>	
Bella	I would say I don't know if this is how I don't know if this fits the question, but I mean, just like kind of taking care of yourself because nobody's really looking out for you anymore. Before you had your cooperating teacher and your professors, but now you have to be the one to make sure that you're taking care of yourself mentally and physically because it's so easy to just push things to the back burner because you have so much to do that you don't take care of yourself.
Andrew	But it didn't really sink in until I started teaching in this job. It's that it's too many things. I mean, it's a trillion things every day. And its things, I mean, there's too many things for you to do in each day and to be prepared to do in each day and I think you know maybe being told, listen, you know, you're going to have a million things. You just have to do what you're good at and. You know just get away with the other things that you can't do.
<b>1.4 Lack of Support Systems</b>	
Hannah	Because with at least with my state staff, the communication has not been what I would like it to be. So instead of communicating before all the events happen or expectations, it's more of after the fact. Like, hey, you weren't supposed to do this. Okay, well, I didn't know I wasn't supposed to do that. So if communication would be better, that would be fantastic.
Andrew	I feel like they remind us that it's due like the day before. You know? That's fine, I guess, that's a great to have the reminder. But in that reminder, the day before, they give all this extra information. In these emails, and I'm like, oh, I wish I would have known that information like a month ago. I was working on it. I don't know. I feel like almost waiting until they send that last email to be like, oh, that's how you do that. It's just better to have that information out.
Grace	So really having someone with knowledge of the content area come and observe me more. I know we're supposed to have one for our new teachers, he hasn't come yet. But more observations from the region in the area would help out a lot.
Bella	So I know that some mentor teachers have been very helpful to some of theirs. My mentor teacher has offered to be a reference for me. When I asked, but other than that, I haven't had tons of contact with my mentor teacher.
James	But my biggest need in which {District] Region AGED office really helped and came through was getting stuff to do because my knowledge of forestry was there. I knew how to use the Biltmore

	stick. I knew how to set up the forestry contest and everything, but I needed help leaning how to teach the class.
Rylee	It was kind of surprising not having as much support because I thought that and you know there's not always reminders of, "Oh, you need to do this." It was just a lot of things like you needed to already know your first year. Kind of like you didn't have guidance.
<b>Objective 2</b>	
<b>2.1 Administrative Support</b>	
Andrew	In terms of classroom management, everything like planning field trips...money stuff. So I mean, I get good amount of support, but that's like I wouldn't survive without that.
Shannon	They pretty much just kind of let me do my own thing, but are very excited when I send them things that we do and whatever I need or I ask for, they pretty much give to us. But in general, a lot of a lot of times admin don't really have much knowledge about what we're doing down here in the ag program, which we'd send them everything that we do in things, but they're like, cool, great job. But don't have much of a pre-knowledge to what we're doing... They're really supportive and just like even in my interview, they were like, "What's your biggest weakness?" I'm like, I'm a first-year teacher. Everything. And they just like, they were like, we got you. And they are really, really supportive in that way. And they want to learn.
Avery	And I really enjoyed that aspect of my job is that I get to meet with my administrators because they're just like normal people like me. And I can talk to them about anything if I need advice or anything. They're always there. So I really genuinely appreciate that. Aspect of it, that's something that I definitely heading into my first-year that I was really worried about was my administration, but it's just turned out being a really good experience for me so far
Avery	Personally, just at my school, the administrative support that I've gotten, that's really surprised me a lot. A lot of things that I've heard from other teachers is like the stereotypical ways that administration typically acts like. They're very strict people. They don't really care about your morale. I can't really say that about my school. You know, we follow everything to the book, but at the same time, they build up teacher morale. And that, to me, that's very important.
Dannielle	I think that the amount of times they come in to observe or and it might just be my school system, but it seems like probably once every two weeks, sometimes once a week, somebody will pop in, even if it's

	like an assistant principal or the principal. They just pop in, I guess, to make sure we're working on stuff, but I guess the tradeoff is we don't have to turn in lesson plans. So I've just been kind of shocked at how often I'll be teaching and somebody will walk in and sit down for ten minutes you know. That didn't happen during student teaching
Rylee	I think just keeping up with you know our POW and knowing what our job is and the fact that it's different is a big part of it because they can't expect us to you know be the same as everybody else because we're not. We're very different. And I know one of mine was like my first FFA meeting last year, I had like 100 students show up, and it was just it was awful because there's one of me. And my admin did admit that they were like, "We should have checked on you. This is your first year of teaching. It was your first meeting. We should have checked in to make sure you had it handled and didn't need help."
Maegan	So my admin could definitely keep in mind that I am the first-year teacher, and I do need that extra help, and I need to know the policies because the big issue right now is policies, "Oh, how do I get the fundraising approved? How do I get this approved?" And they're like, "They'll tell me one thing, they'll turn around and tell me another thing, and then kind of have to guide in the back end and find it." So just remembering that a first-year teacher as a first-year teacher, they know nothing, even though they know. The baseline is not everything.
<b>2.2 University Staff</b>	
Shannon	I've had a few professors that had to reach out just checking in or swung by at [Conference] and said, everything going okay. Do you need anything? Things like that are just, I don't know, reassuring and helpful. So that's always been nice. And [University] is always really good about that too, though.
Grace	It was just kind of like, okay, you graduated, free bird. I do know that they're always a phone call or a text away, but it's just like. Another place.
Hannah	You know, I haven't really reached out to them for help. But I'm sure if I did, they would definitely answer me back. Because they were always very, very good about answering emails or my text messages or my phone calls. But this year I have not reached out.
Keri	Any time I reach out to [Him], he'll be like, hey, here, and he'll like send me something back. Because I reached out to him with some of the SAE stuff like when he was kind of explaining SAEs to our class.

	I was like, hey, can you send me some of this just to kind of like break it down? So I have some examples. And everything. So he's definitely, they both been awesome with helping me if I needed anything and I reached out with any questions like. They got back to me in a timely manner, I guess, and enough time for me to not have a panic attack about it.
Bella	So I would say that I had kind of a rough transition at first. Maybe still. But my university supervisor, [he] has been great and has always been very supportive of me and very helpful. He still says he'll be a reference on my resume, and I know that I can call him anytime that I'm not doing well or I am doing well and he'll help me... I know [he] was the only reason I graduated.
<b>2.3 Family</b>	
Dannielle	So definitely my husband. He's just been an ear like. I can just go home and vent to him. But besides that, my uncle is the teacher at [school] and he will call me every now and then and just check up on me and see how things are going. I can call him anytime and just say, hey, how do you do this you know? So I probably say I mean, definitely family, but my [Uncle] has really been French. I'm very fortunate to have him.
Keri	So obviously, my boyfriend, he helps me a lot because he listens to me, rant, and rave about my kids when they make me mad. But he also helped me coach my dairy judging team.
Hannah	I would definitely say my parents. So there have been times because I don't know a lot about horticulture and I have a greenhouse. I forgot to mention that as well. There have been many evenings where I'm in a panic. And so they will come by the school because my dad is now retired and my mom gets all forgetful. They will come by and help me in the greenhouse to let me know. All is okay. We're here to help. Don't freak out. So definitely my parents, for sure.
Avery	My biggest motivating factor is obviously going to be like my fiancé...She also teaches and she just motivates me every day and do the job right the first time and we're changing lives on a daily basis. That's what keeps me going. That's what's going to keep me pushing forward. That's my biggest motivation factor. It But at the same time, they know how hard I'm working. And then they show that appreciation of how hard I'm working every time I go home. That to me is very rewarding.
Avery	I think it's funny because growing up, I would always love the weather channel as my favorite channel. And they always thought it was going to be like a meteorologist, but it was around I was like 11

	<p>or 12 years old when I was like, I had teachers that stood up for me and backed me up as a student. I was like, I want to be a teacher. But that's when I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. And my parents, they were like, okay, if that's what you want to do, like we fully support you.</p>
<b>2.4 Other Teacher Support</b>	
Keri	<p>So she's awesome. She really honestly checks in on me pretty like pretty often. And at the beginning, she's like soft now, but like towards the beginning of the year, she would come by and be like, "Hey, are you okay? Like, are you good?" But she kind of just like broke everything down to me. If I have any what I feel is like dumb questions, I guess. I can walk in there and be like, "Hey, before I go ask someone and look stupid, what is this?" And she can pretty much break it down because she's been here for like 15 years.</p>
Grace	<p>So I really feel like between our monthly new teacher meetings, we're assigned a mentor and then we're also we work together as content areas. So our I guess content is the best word. So for connections, we have foreign languages, fine arts, which is music, and art. We have CTAE. So this is business. Family and consumer sciences and ag. And then we have PE. And we work together once a week on something to really build relationships with other people in our school. So I never feel like I'm alone in that sense with my school, which I'm really appreciative of. Is because I know that I have my new teachers. I know I have my mentor. I know my content area. And then it's just also like being friends with people, different grades, it's just I can always have someone to talk to.</p>
Hannah	<p>So I got an assigned mentor teacher at my school, but she's also the work based learning coordinator. So she hasn't really been mentoring me per se. So I kind of designated two of my own. The previous ag teacher that I replaced. I have her number and I've been texting her questions. And then the other ag teacher within my county at north Hall high school. I've been texting her, calling her, she's been very helpful with answering questions and sharing some of her classroom material, FFA, prep material, so they've just been there to answer any and all questions I have, no matter if they are really small or may seem really stupid.</p>
Avery	<p>Well, my mentor teachers, my co teacher in my program, she she's just been for the most part phenomenal. She's a very type a personality. She likes things done her way, but she was the one who stepped up and showed me this is how you do purchase order. This is how you fill out a permission form. She showed me every single thing that I needed to know about the school and gave me some tips of like,</p>

	okay, this is how you need to talk to this administration. This is how our administrator this is how we need to probably do things. And I value her opinion a lot when it comes to most things. She's just greatly helped me a lot my first-year. I think right now because she's on maternity leave. I think my head's going to explode because I have to do state convention by myself. Chapter banquet and SLC all completely by myself, but she's like, I know you can handle it. I know you can do it. She gave me like a little list of like, these are just little reminders of things that we need to get done, but I know whatever you do. It's going to be good. So she's really helped me a lot my first-year. I've survived because of her. If she probably wasn't probably be drowning right now.
Dannielle	And I guess also you build a community with other ag teachers like, going into GVATA, I've gotten to know other ag teachers and just thinking like, if I wasn't an ag teacher, I wouldn't get to come to this. I would miss that part. And see another ag teachers at CDES I would miss that
Keri	So she's awesome. She really honestly checks in on me pretty like pretty often. And at the beginning, she's like soft now, but like towards the beginning of the year, she would come by and be like, hey, are you okay? Like, are you good? She was stopped by my like before she had to go obviously coach of sport. She would kind of stop by poker head in and be like, hey, are you good? We're all good. She showed me how to use infinite campus because I never used that. We always use power school. But she's kind of just like broken everything down to me if I have any what I seem is like dumb questions, I guess. I can walk in there and be like, hey, before I go ask someone and look stupid, what is this? And she can pretty much break it down because she's been here for like 15 years. So she's pretty like, well wrapped in the school. And she can give me like a breakdown of stuff.
Andrew	Well, outside of my school, I think. Other ag teachers in the district really have been extremely helpful. I mean, God, if I was alone in a lot of getting a bus, planning trips, getting certain things submitted, advisory meetings like... If I was alone on that, I don't think, I don't think I could have done it. They helped with a lot of that stuff a lot. So other ag teachers in the county. Probably have helped the most.
<b>Objective 3 Themes</b>	
<b>3.1 Advice</b>	
Grace	And there are some things that I just relied on support for during student teaching. I really wish I struggled more during student



	teaching than I did. But I felt like student teaching, I had a couple of bumps, but I felt like I really coasted through student teaching. I wish I struggled more. To prepare myself for me struggling now.
Dannielle	I would say be more prepared, like plan ahead, don't wait till the last minute. Kids take longer than my brain does. So, I mean, if a field trip is weeks out, tell the kids weeks out because it's probably going to take them a couple of times of going home to remember to tell their parents about it. So using a calendar plan ahead. That's the biggest thing. Don't procrastinate. Your perceptions change from your college career about the career itself about being a teacher, to now that you are in the classroom. I would say that I would I think that the career I wouldn't say that it's easier than I thought it was going to be. When I was student teaching, it seemed like so much work, which sounds crazy because I've always thought that I was kind of a hard worker, but I was really thinking like, I don't know if I can do this forever you know. I'm stressed out all the time. I have to go home and write lesson plans after working a ten hour day. But I would say that when you actually in your own classroom and plan in your own lessons. I would say that it's easier than I thought it was going to be. It's more doable than I thought I was going to be
Hannah	I would say don't worry about your lessons being perfect. Not every single minute has to be detailed. Because every class is going to be different, they're going to interact with you differently. They're going to understand different things. Some classes need more time than others to complete assignments. So you really just need to be prepared to be flexible.
Maegan	And I heard that once before, and I didn't really think about it, but it's nailed in my head now. Stay on top of it. If you can get ahead even, that's even better. Stay ahead or stay on time because it's hard to play catch-up. Especially, like I said, when you have all this other stuff and you're worried about this thing, playing catch-up can be very hard. So I think staying there and staying on that path
<b>3.2 Lessons Learned</b>	
Andrew	This sounds stupid, but I am the teacher. I'm the adult. Sort of like my classroom vibe and culture is decided by me. And I think I sort of lose sight of that sometimes. And give the students a little bit too much power over how we all feel and how the day is going to go. So I think I'll carry into the future like...it's kind of about responsibility. I like to complain about classes being like crazy for whatever reason, just behavior issues, but taking more responsibility and at the same

	time, not letting it affect you too much. Like just being like, you know what? That's the sucky class I'm just going to get through it
Grace	That. I guess umm mistakes like is going to be what I'm going to remember. So I don't make those same mistakes because I'm like an 80% there with my routines and procedures because I've practiced them a couple of times
Keri	Not everything has to be graded. Because that one's I guess last semester I've spent more time trying to grade stuff. And this semester, I'm like, I'm grading the big projects, that's all. But they like for us to have daily grades. So I do like warmups or openers. And I'm like, look, if you do it, you're making a hundred. Right. I don't care what you wrote. You're making a hundred. You sat there and you look like you were paying attention. But everything doesn't have to be graded. That's my main thing.
Avery	You have to be timely with that (and) intentional. Because at the end of the day, my duty is to teach these kids about students about agriculture. And make sure that they're gaining this knowledge. Does that mean I have to go back and review the topic after just explaining it for ten minutes? Probably. But that's the biggest thing I took away from this experience
<b>Objective 4 Themes</b>	
<b>4.1 Motivations</b>	
Shannon	But honestly, I'm enjoying it. I'm having a great time with my students, my students are great, my admin is great, teaching classes is fun. I'm learning a lot, things like that. I'm having a good time with it. And I think that just knowing it's going to be okay. And I don't be stressed because that's going to motivate you to do what you're going to be fine. And it's going to go okay. It's not a nightmare. It's okay.
Bella	Probably the most generic would be just the kids I love and you just develop such a strong connection to them that you I can't even think about seeing the freshmen that have now graduating or so on. You just become such a big part of their lives that you want to see them succeed and go out and do great things.
Keri	I would say so this semester has been ten times better than the last semester. But my favorite teacher moment was probably like right before grades were doing last 9 weeks. And my 7th a day is like awesome. And they're all like they're all more of like advanced kids like I can give them a task and they take it and they run with it and they do above and beyond what I ever expected a middle schooler to do. So we made origami flowers doing like the flower parts and everything after we did a flower dissection lab and they took like the flowers to like the next level more than I like expected them to and I was like wow like it just honestly like astonish me and so we hung them in the hall and made like a big like flower garden out of them.

Avery	And then the second thing I would have to say is the student's success and FFA, that's another big motivating factor. I remember one of my first days, in like, my actual major classes, like we got asked why we wanted to be in ag educator. And I talked about student success, but I didn't say in FFA or AGED. And I'm a room so I was like, if you said you want to be an ag teacher because you want to do something with FFA, and then that that's not the right reason. Something along those lines. But that's one of the reasons why I wanted to be a teacher
Hannah	I would say probably it's more likely going to be in my basic ag class, but when the kids just seem really into the lesson, they're really attentive, and then of course when my activity or my lab goes well, that's always awesome too
Avery	I remember coming back from the national FFA convention back in at the end of October and our team made it to the state softball championship. I rode with my assistant principal from the airport all the way to Columbus. And our flight left at like 5 a.m., and I'd been up since 2 a.m., but I was willing to watch my student play for a state title. Unfortunately, they lost, but that student at the end of the game came up to me and was like, how did you make it? That just shows like you care. And that just means the world to me.
Rylee	I've had a lot of memorable moments with students. There's one in particular. I had my first semester teaching. I had a special needs student, and he ended up falling in love with FFA and AG. And it ended up just the most exciting thing in his whole passion. And so his mom ended up being a big supporter of us, and he attends everything. And I actually gave him an award at our banquet, but he shows up every day at school still. And he has a brand new FFA t-shirt every day from the website. Like He is fully dedicated. And I've heard all the other teachers talking, and they just say like he is a different kid since he joined FFA. And so that made me so happy. And just seeing him now. And he took care of our bearded dragon over summer, and he did so good that his mom got him his own. But just overall, that was a really good memory, and it still is. And then just other students you know how grateful they were for me and writing notes and things like that
Maegan	Surprisingly, the students. Like I said, it can be rough with my admin, but I am making those good student connections, and I'm really enjoying them. And they seem to be enjoying the class. And the previous teacher didn't really teach, apparently. That's what they keep saying. But then they can literally look at me and say, "I actually learned this thing today." And I was like, "Good." So just having that connection and having that ability to actually teach them and have them learn in a good way, I guess so hands-on that I like being able to go, "Okay, we're going to do this activity. Go get in the dirt." And

	they actually enjoy it. Like They kind of want to do it. So I think that's cool for that.
<b>4.2 Challenges</b>	
Hannah	What I have been learning and it's hard as a first-year teacher because you're wanting to get to know the kids, but setting up boundaries on day one. Because if you do not, they will take advantage of you. So next year, I'm definitely going to be making some changes with that
Grace	No. There's a lot. Surprised me the most has been. How hard it has been to set up classroom routines. Like from the start to continuing and being consistent with it, to the follow through. And that has been the biggest surprise as far as difficulty
Avery	And it's the semester leading up to student teaching, but it's classroom management. It's very hard to do classroom management with a bunch of 22 [or] 21 year old fixing to graduate college students because they know how to be respectful, like they're taking on a class seriously. That's easy to manage. One thing heading into this year was that the students that I teach, they're just a very interesting group and you never know what's going to come out of their mouth and you don't really prepare for that unless you get the real experience
<b>Objective 5 Themes</b>	
<b>5.1 SAE</b>	
Keri	Probably doing like SAEs and stuff. One of my kids made he's in the process of building a raised bed type thing for his house. So he's been like really excited to like bring me pictures and stuff. I'm like, show me where he's at in it. Kind of getting them seeing because it's not an agriculture community. So a lot of kids haven't been exposed to a lot of stuff. So I guess like seeing them take it past my room and like what we do here and they're like excited to do it. It's probably been one of my favorite moments.
Bella	I would say the lack of students that have an SAE or the desire to have an SAE being in a more urban school system, it is really difficult to find SAEs that are applicable to the students and that actually make a lot of sense for them to be doing.
Bella	And also in the difference, me growing up in a rural setting. Most kids already had an SAE, and now this I smore like developing SAEs. And I kind of thought that it would be a little bit easier making sure that each student was having the full three ring model.
Grace	SAEs that fit the kids needs and be able to still be agriculturally related. I think another difficulty is that we are in the city. And the teacher before me had a very loose view of SAE. So I'm trying to balance the fact of meeting the needs with what they have, but also staying firm to agriculturally related.

Grace	When it came to SAEs and we're talking about what they have time for, what they have resources for and what is actually achievable at that time of year. Because when I got students in October, it was harder for kids to find things because most of my kids were doing grass and lawn care. With plants and plants and landscape. Because those were the easiest, accessible to them. So it's been very hard in the times where there are only specific things to grow or no grass or leaves is really hard to find.
<b>5.2 FFA</b>	
Keri	And then obviously like FFA and stuff, all those moments are great. I'm trying to think of what my favorite FFA one is. Obviously like our meetings, we did a minute to win it meeting. And the kids loved it. They really enjoyed cup stacking with rubber bands and they had to work in like a team. So that one was cool like seeing them having to talk to each other and like actually figure out, oh, like, we actually have to work together for this to work. So that one was a fun memory too. That was probably one of my favorite meetings we've done.
Avery	And then the second thing I would have to say is the student's success and FFA, that's another big motivating factor. I know a lot of people, I remember one of my first days, I'm like, my actual major classes, like we got asked why we wanted to be in ag educator. And I talked about student success, but I didn't say in FFA or AGED. And I'm a room so I was like, if you said you want to be an actor, because you want to do something with FFA, and then that that's not the right reason. Something along those lines. But that's one of the reasons why I wanted to be a teacher. That's my favorite component of the three-ring model. I'm a very competitive person. I used to be athletic and needs to win things all the time. And then once you know I decided like, I want to put my knowledge to the test. I want things. I would say high individual in the CDE and one with my team. I would say I got to showcase my knowledge about the FFA and agriculture. I was very proud of that. And so I tried to instill that in my students
Andrew	You know going on any sort of field trip tends to be the most memorable times, you know, CDEs or just field trips and conferences you know? There are some students who end up going on those trips who I don't know super well, um, or just don't know outside of like sitting in my classroom. So some of the most memorable times have been hanging out with those kids talking to them on the bus. Eating, you know, fast food with them and being able to learn a little bit more about them.
Keri	Honestly, how to deal with the financial side of FFA and like trips and everything like that. Like everything that I have to fill out, which I know every school system does things slightly different. But like

	purchase orders and requisitions and kind of doing like a broad overview of, okay, this is you might have to fill it out like this. It was kind of like that and maybe like more of financial stuff like. The financial side of being an Ag teacher because we deal with a lot. We have to have a lot of money for a lot of different things. And if you don't have it, it's kind of like, well, figure it out.
Avery	How to fill out purchase orders and requisition forms. I know every county is going to be different, but I wish there was like a generalized way of like, this is what you're going to have to fill out and do. Student teaching, I really didn't have any exposure to that because my cooperating teacher pretty much just did all the stuff. And didn't really show me those things, but so where I'm at now like, we have an FFA account at the school. We have an alumni account that's ran by our FFA alumni. And then we also have funds from the county that we have to operate. Anything that the teacher registers for, we have to go through the county and anything that student related, we have to go through the school. And then sometimes we have to go through the alumni. I wish that was something that I was taught ahead of time. It's like, all right, this is what a purchase order means. I had no idea what a purchase order meant heading into July 1. I was completely confused. I was like, oh, I have to order this stuff. What do I need to do?
Andrew	I am intimidated by the program of work. And you know throughout this year, it's been very stressful, but I think looking back into being a teacher, teaching is so hard on its own.
Andrew	And also the website, the website needs to be updated. The website sucks. It's not new. It's hard to access information. I'll be honest. I'll find something and then I'll look for it again and it's like, it's just totally not there.
<b>5.3 Classroom/Laboratory</b>	
Bella	We worked on our communication skills and also kind of a community service project by creating valentines for the residents at a nursing home in Athens. And it was just like a very positive environment and everyone was working on their valentines and having a good time and that was happy music playing and I just like remember thinking this is exactly how I want my classroom to feel like. I wanted it to feel like a home where people were having a good time and just an overall positive stress-free environment.
Dannielle	So I would say all of the more hands-on things were the most impactful. And most memorable rather than the days that I just talked and taught them about something. Hands on is definitely what keeps them engaged.
Andrew	Um, but some of the best teaching experiences throughout this year have been. Actually probably like growing food, planting food in the

	garden with kids and, you know, they take it home and they, you know, cook whatever we grew and their families, you know, I talked to families like, oh yeah, we cook those greens and they're just so like amazed sometimes by that whole process seed to a meal. So that's been probably, that usually ended up being the most memorable, positive teaching experience.
Dannielle	I guess that my favorite teaching experience has been in the welding shop because students took that course excited to weld.

## APPENDIX F

### Demographics Survey

#### Q1 - Name

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

#### Q2 - Age

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

#### Q3 - Gender

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

#### Q13 - Marital Status

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!



Q3 - What population level is your school located in?

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

Q5 - Approximate number of students enrolled at your school

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

Q6 - Number of SBAE teachers in your school

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

Q7 - Highest Degree Earned

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!

Q10 - What are your top 5 causes of stress that relate to the profession? Please rank them 1-5. With 1 being the top cause and 5 being the least cause of stress. Elaborate as you feel fit.

No data found - your filters may be too exclusive!