The Effects of the Student Teaching Experience on Cooperating Teachers in Secondary Agricultural Education Programs: A Case Study

Stephen Wyatt Edwards

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Donna M. Westfall-Rudd
Thomas W. Broyles
Glenn A. Anderson
Joyce Rothschild

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine the effects of the student teaching experience on secondary agricultural education teachers. Eight of the thirteen participants in this study served as a cooperating teacher during the 2012 spring semester for pre-service teachers in agricultural education from a land-grant institution. Three of the participants had served as a cooperating teacher during either the 2010 or 2011 spring semester but had reported a negative student teaching experience with their last student teacher. Two of the participants had served as pilot interviews for the study, but they were added as participants during the analysis of the study. The participants provided interviews, opportunities for professional observations, and teaching documents for analysis. Four major themes emerged in the study 1) The professional identities of secondary agricultural education teachers are affected by their membership in the pre-service teacher community. 2) Secondary agricultural education teachers volunteer as cooperating teachers to help others and themselves professionally. 3) Secondary agricultural education teachers empower themselves and other members of their communities through their leadership due to their strong sense of political efficacy. 4) The professional practices of agriculture teachers are influenced by their service as a cooperating teacher.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandparents, Abel (Quentin) and Helen Edwards and Tyrus and Wilma Joyce. This dissertation is also dedicated to my parents Larry Edwards and Teresa Hodges. When they stopped farming, they would have never thought that their grandson and son would have made a career out of agriculture.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to my committee chair, Donna Westfall-Rudd, for all of her assistance in making this document come to pass in its final format. I’m very thankful for the opportunity to design a study that was a thorough, in-depth look at a problem and you worked with me to assure that would happen. I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Thomas Broyles, Glenn Anderson and Joyce Rothschild for their guidance through my dissertation process. Each of you has enriched the research that was collected and analyzed in this study. I would like to thank my department head, Rick Rudd, for his willingness to allow me to enter into this graduate school after allowing me to have a year to transition my program at South Granville High School. I have stated very often that I had more impact out of my last year of teaching than the other six combined, thank you for giving me the chance to delay my graduate experience. I’d like to give a special thank you to Andy Seibel, someone that has served as my boss, my friend and a guide throughout this graduate school process. Because of my work with you, I have been introduced to many different teachers and secondary programs throughout Virginia, I am thankful for those experiences. Thank you to all of the staff and the graduate students in the AEE department that have assisted me throughout my tenure at Virginia Tech. I would also like to thank the Kaufman family; Eric, Shevon, Ethan and Sara, for opening up their home to my family as I was finishing this process. I would like to thank my family for all of their help throughout the process especially including my grandmother, Wilma Joyce, my father, Larry Edwards, my mother and her husband Teresa & Wayne Hodges, my brother, Aaron Edwards, my in-laws, James and Diana Caldwell, my sister-in-law, Logan Caldwell and my brother-in-law, Lucas Caldwell. Thank you for the trips to Blacksburg for babysitting while I was collecting
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Secondary agricultural education teachers in the United States have responsibilities as classroom teachers, laboratory managers, Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) supervisors and FFA advisors. These requirements for secondary agriculture teachers came about at different times in American history and have been constructed together as practice in secondary schools around the nation (Croom, 2008). During one aspect of this construction, the Morrill Act of 1862, Congress awarded federal lands for the creation of Land-Grant institutions, colleges in each state that focused on the teaching of agricultural and mechanics skills. The creation of land-grant colleges, along with political clout from leaders at the time of formation, lead to the establishment of secondary agricultural teacher preparation programs at land-grant institutions as opposed to colleges that focused on teacher education (Herren & Hillison, 1996). The creation of these colleges could potentially explain why many secondary agricultural teachers may feel greater ties to professionals in the agriculture profession as opposed other subject matter teachers at the secondary level (Herren & Hillison, 1996).

Code of Virginia, § 22.1-299 states that, “No teacher shall be regularly employed by a school board or paid from public funds unless such teacher holds a license or provisional license issued by the Board of Education or a three-year local eligibility license issued by a local school board pursuant to § 22.1-299.3.” Code of Virginia § 22.1-299.3 further explains that the provisional licenses issued by local school boards can only account for, “no more than 10 percent of classroom teachers employed by the relevant school system.” Because a minimum of 90 percent of all local teaching professionals must have a teaching license, it is necessary for individuals teaching secondary agricultural classes to meet the requirements for licensure. For a
teacher to receive a license in the State of Virginia, potential teacher educators have to meet the requirements as set forth by the Board of Education as outlined by Code of Virginia § 22.1-298.1. To receive a professional license with an agricultural education endorsement, professionals must have earned a baccalaureate degree in agricultural education or a closely related field from a regionally accredited institution (Virginia Department of Education, 2011). To graduate with a degree in education, individuals are expected to complete a student teaching experience (Henry & Beasley, 1989).

The student teaching experience varies by college department but the requirement involves the new professional, referred to as a pre-service teacher, has a teaching experience in a local school over a period of several weeks (Henry & Beasley, 1989). The student teaching experience involves the pre-service teacher working closely with an experienced professional, known as a cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher has consented to provide individualized instruction to the new professional, using their classroom and students as a learning lab in the preparation of the new professional. Current teacher preparation models could not exist without the support of cooperating teachers therefore, it is important to further examine the roles of these professionals in the student teaching experience.

**Problem Statement**

Pre-service teachers are required to complete a student teaching experience to achieve licensure through a teacher preparation program. The pre-service teachers that have positive experiences are more likely to get satisfaction from the teaching profession (Bruinsma & Jansen, 2010; Kyriacou & Coulteahard, 2000; Rots, Aelterman, Vlerick, & Vermeulen, 2007). Pre-service teachers that have negative experiences tend to have poor adaptability to the school culture, poor experiences transferring theory to practice and they are less likely to display an
interest in a teaching career (Cherubini, 2009, Pop & Turner, 2009; Rochkind et. al, 2007). The cooperating teacher is one of the major career influences of the pre-service teacher (Henry & Weber, 2010; Rudney & Guillaume, 2003). The cooperating teacher is also responsible for providing a location for the student teaching experience and a daily guide throughout the process. Research of the impact of student teaching on the pre-service teacher has been well documented. In contrast, this study focused on how does the student teaching experience affect the cooperating teacher.

**Purpose of the Study and Research Questions**

The purpose of the study was to examine effects of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers. The experienced classroom teachers in the study served as a cooperating teacher during the 2012 spring semester for students in agricultural education from a land-grant institution. The participants will provide interviews, opportunities for professional observations, and analysis of teaching documents. The overall research question for this study is: How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education? The sub-research questions include:

1. Why do practicing teachers volunteer to become cooperating teachers?
2. How do cooperating teachers describe their role in the preparation of new teaching professionals?
3. How are the identities of cooperating teachers influenced by their participation in a teacher preparation program?
4. How does participating as a cooperating teacher influence the political efficacy of the teaching professional?
5. What do cooperating teachers expect to personally gain from being a volunteer in the
teacher preparation program?

**Conceptual Framework**

Albert Bandura’s Self Efficacy Component of Social Cognitive Theory will serve one
part of the conceptual framework of this study. Self efficacy is “the belief in one’s abilities to
organize and execute the course of actions required to produce given attainments” (Bandura,
1997, p. 3). These “efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and
act” (Bandura, 1995, p. 2). The theory operates under the assumption that “much human
behavior is developed through modeling” (Bandura, 1977a, p. 192). People are able to learn
abilities through the watching others, thus learning does not have to be directly experienced, as
long as it is observed in other people.

According to Bandura, the creation of “learning environments conducive to development
240). Therefore, a teacher’s self-efficacy can become an important predictor of a successful
teacher. If teachers with higher self-efficacy cause greater learning in the classroom, it can be
assumed that we would want all of our teachers to develop high self-efficacy during their careers.
One way that self-efficacy can be raised is through the observation of peer models. The student
teaching experience can provide peer modeling opportunities, these opportunities are effective
ways to change self efficacy. Peer modeling is effective because there is a “high consensus
among peers in their perceptions” of each other’s abilities (Bandura, 1997, p. 234). Peers are
able to shape the efficacy beliefs of each other through the modeling of academic and cognitive
skills. Peers also influence “interpersonal affiliations,” they directly affect the “potentialities”
that are “cultivated” and the potentialities that are left “undeveloped” (Bandura, 1997, p. 235).
The opportunity for peer modeling to occur in the student teaching experience is potentially important for the professional development of the student teacher and the cooperating teacher. Because self-efficacy is important to the effectiveness of a teacher, the opportunity for peer modeling to increase self-efficacy becomes instrumental in the development a teaching professional.

Situated learning theory is another part of the conceptual framework of this study. Situated learning theory was first described by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in 1991 as an explanation of the learning that was a form of constructivism where learning took place between members of a group. Two terms were developed by Lave and Wenger to help explain their situated learning phenomenon; legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice. Legitimate peripheral participation refers to the process how newcomers in a place of work become experienced workers over a period of time. Within legitimate peripheral participation, the member of the group will move towards a closer area within the community, thus gaining power as they gain further and further knowledge and abilities. A community of practice is defined as a group of people with a common interest who share knowledge with the community through their separate experiences. Communities of practice develop as people engage in pursuits together, interact with each other, and learn together to create learning practices that are adopted by the community over time (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice contain three main dimensions; mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. Because the cooperating teacher is attempting to guide the student teacher to expert level in multiple professional communities, situated learning theory provides an insightful description of what is happening with each separate community.
A final theory that forms a part of the conceptual framework of this study is Leader-Member Exchange Theory. Leader-Member Exchange Theory contains three domains of leadership; leader, follower, and relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leader-Member Exchange Theory places emphasis on the relationship between the leader and the follower (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). The leader can develop different relationships with their followers, supervisory relationships with some group members while establishing leadership relations with other members. The theory suggests that followers that adapt to the leadership style of the leader are more successful within the group. The style can only be established if a bond of trust is established between the leader and the follower.

**Personal Reflexivity**

**Reflexivity**

During my last two years in the secondary school classroom, I had the opportunity to work with two student teachers in my agricultural program. The pay for advising a student teacher is almost non-existent, but the opportunity to work with the new teachers provided me a sense of pride to help a new professional. Considering that I had experienced a less than ideal student teaching experience, it was my personal goal to provide a positive experience for any pre-service teachers with which I worked. What I didn’t realize that I would get from the cooperating teaching experience was professional development in my career. Working with pre-service teachers caused me to reflect upon my on teaching; effectively having an apprentice to whom I wanted to model excellent teaching techniques. Besides modeling techniques, I would also gather new perspectives of how to teach the curriculum. Curriculum became less stale thanks to the ability to watch it being taught by someone else in my classroom with my students.
Although I was directly responsible for the growth of a new teacher, I also experienced growth as a teacher.

When looking to develop a problem for my dissertation, I drew upon my prior experience as a cooperating teacher and my very recent experience of working with my university department as an observer in the field. Working with pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers over a two year time span, I realized that I was not the only cooperating teacher that seemed to have experienced professional growth from the student teaching experience. During most observations, the cooperating teachers informally shared with me the techniques and procedures that they have observed in use by their student teacher that they would incorporate into their own teaching after their student teacher has left at the end of their experience. They also shared that the infusion of student teacher in their program positively impacted their classroom and program. Many of them also attempted new teaching strategies and offered new experiences with their students.

**Epistemology**

Understanding that epistemology and ontology have a direct impact on research, it is important for me as the researcher to divulge how my own personal epistemology has affected my research design. My personal epistemology is heavily embedded in Social Constructivism and influenced heavily by professional practice in Pragmatism. I firmly believe to answer questions, or even to propose questions, we need to “seek understanding of the world” in which we live (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). It is impossible to understand the world without knowing that it is the interaction between people that generates what is known by the individual (Kim, 2001). The interactions between people therefore create and maintain knowledge. Social constructivists believe that all leaning takes place within socially meaningful activities that transform and
enhance learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is based heavily upon social constructivists consider research to be interpretive, meaning that main goal of the research for social constructivists “is to make sense or interpret the meaning others have about the world” (Creswell, 2007, p. 21). Social constructivists also believe that for members of groups must share a common language and practice so knowledge can be transferred to all members of the groups (Kim, 2001). People can belong to numerous groups and it is through our memberships in multiple groups that we develop out own individual identity (Wenger, 1998). The social constructivist approach has defined my research question as I seek to understand the true experiences of the cooperating teacher.

**Significance of the Study**

The question and sub-questions proposed in this study sought to understand the affects of serving as a cooperating teacher on experienced professional teachers. Cooperating teachers provide their time and resources to the preparation of new professionals, so it is insightful to understand their motivations for volunteering in this role. When looking at motivations it is also important to see if the motivation of serving as a cooperating teacher actually corresponds to what the cooperating teacher receives from the experience. If the motivations align, it will provide teacher preparation departments the insight that they need for the future recruitment and preparation of cooperating teachers. If the motivations do not align, the research from this case study can provide potential ways that the student teacher experience can be modified to meet the needs of the cooperating teachers. Figure 1 is an *a priori* table that displays the major research framework that led to the selection of the five sub questions in this study.
**Figure 1.** a priori Table for the selection of the Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Research Question</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Supporting Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do practicing teachers volunteer to become cooperating teachers?</td>
<td>People volunteer because they want to do the right thing, they want to learn new things, they have a desire for social contact with other people, to positively impact their finances, to enable protective causes and to obtain a self identity</td>
<td>(Musick &amp; Wilson, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do cooperating teachers describe their role in the preparation of new teaching professionals?</td>
<td>Agriculture teachers have specific job requirements that help to set themselves aside as professionals. Besides classroom instruction, the agricultural teacher is responsible for applying learning through school laboratories, SAEs and FFA opportunities. Agriculture teachers are also extremely important in utilizing their local community resources, including facilities, organizations, people in the community such as advisory committees and parents. Because of their job requirements, agricultural teachers also operate within a community of teachers that exists beyond their local schools.</td>
<td>(Newcomb, McCracken, Warmbrod &amp; Whittington, 2004, Lave &amp; Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the identities of cooperating teachers influenced by their participation in a teacher preparation program?</td>
<td>The identity of teachers is directly based upon how they view themselves. People have to believe that that they have control over what they can do to have high self-efficacy. The individual’s history has direct impact on the perceived capability to affect future outcomes. Not all experiences impact self-efficacy, only those that align with their world view. It is important for individuals to experience success with their experiences. If the individual experiences success over a period of time, then they are more likely to maintain a high self-efficacy. Occasional failures will not have a negative effect on the self-efficacy of the individual if they have experienced success.</td>
<td>(Bandura, 1977a, 1977b, 1986, 1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does participating as a cooperating teacher influence the political efficacy of the teaching professional?</td>
<td>People that are volunteers are more likely to actively engage in true participation in the workplace. People empower themselves when they are in control of their actions. This empowerment must include the ability to make true decisions. Empowerment also comes through the full sharing of knowledge. The true sharing of knowledge involves the removal of barriers and the demystification of organizational practices.</td>
<td>(Pateman, 1971; Mill, 1965; Rothschild &amp; Whitt, 1986; Lave &amp; Wenger, 1991)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do cooperating teachers give time and resources to lead new</td>
<td>Cooperating teachers give time and resources to lead new</td>
<td>(Rudney &amp;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperating teachers expect to personally gain from being a volunteer in the teacher preparation program?</td>
<td>teachers into the profession. The cooperating teacher serves as a gatekeeper for entry into the teaching profession. The relationship between the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher heavily influences the success of the pre-service teacher. The main reason for people to pursue a volunteering role is for altruistic reasons.</td>
<td>Guillaume, 2003; Musick &amp; Wilson, 2008; Henry &amp; Beasley, 1989</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Definitions

The following terms have been defined for the rest of the dissertation:

- **Cooperating Teacher** – An experienced teacher who is a mentor for “the field-based portion” for a pre-service teacher “as they work towards initial licensure” (Rudney and Guillaume, 2003, p. 2). In agricultural education, the experience occurs in the cooperating teacher’s local agricultural program.

- **FFA** – Short for the National FFA Organization or the Future Farmers of America, the FFA is an inter-curricular organization that is present in local secondary agriculture programs. The agricultural teacher serves as an advisor for the secondary program. These divisions are known as chapters. (National FFA Organization, n.d.)

- **Pre-service Teacher** – Refers to any student in an education program prior to graduation with an education degree. The term is often interchangeably used with student teachers, as all student teachers are technically pre-service teachers. Once teaching graduates have entered the profession, they are referred to as in-service teachers (Rudney and Guillaume, 2003)

- **Self-Efficacy** – Best defined as “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura,
This study focuses on the professional and political efficacies of the participants.

- **Student Teacher** – A pre-service teacher that is currently engaged in the student teaching experience. Student teachers have to complete student teaching in order to receive credentialing in the form of a professional license at the end of the experience (Rudney and Guillaume, 2003).

- **Student Teaching Experience** – The major requirement required by pre-service teachers to receive a degree in education, the student teaching experience is an unpaid internship that lasts usually over the course of a semester in a local secondary agricultural program. The student teaching experience is guided by a cooperating teacher in the local program and a university supervisor who makes occasional visits with the pre-service teacher. Often times, the term is shortened to student teaching (Henry & Beasley, 1989).

- **Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE)** – Students in secondary agricultural education programs are required to maintain an agriculture-related learning experience outside of regular classroom hours. The agriculture teacher is charged with guiding students with their SAE programs (Croom, 2008).

- **Volunteering** – A form of altruistic behavior that provides help to others without the “expectation of material reward” (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 3). The people who perform these behaviors are volunteers. During the aspects of this study, the cooperating teacher is viewed as the volunteer and serving as a cooperating teacher is viewed as volunteering.
Summary

The problem established at the beginning of the study is “How does the student teaching experience affect the cooperating teacher.” The purpose of the study was to examine effects of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers. This chapter established research questions and explained the significance of the study.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of the study was to examine effects of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers. The experienced classroom teachers in the study served as a cooperating teacher during the 2012 spring semester for students in agricultural education from a land-grant institution. The participants will provide interviews, opportunities for professional observations, and analysis of teaching documents. The overall research question for this study is: How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education. The sub-research questions include:

1. Why do practicing teachers volunteer to become cooperating teachers?
2. How do cooperating teachers describe their role in the preparation of new teaching professionals?
3. How are the identities of cooperating teachers influenced by their participation in a teacher preparation program?
4. How does participating as a cooperating teacher influence the political efficacy of the teaching professional?
5. What do cooperating teachers expect to personally gain from being a volunteer in the teacher preparation program?

This chapter will examine the existing literature related to the phenomenon of the student teaching experience, in particular, the experiences of the cooperating teacher. Social Cognitive Theory is summarized because it is the theoretical framework for the research study. Next, I will examine the reasons why people seek volunteering experiences. I will then examine the characteristics of the professional identity of teachers. Because people have multiple identities, I will examine how volunteer experiences and professional identities can impact the political
identity of individuals. Next, I will examine how experiential learning affects the development and change of existing identities. I will then examine the specific experience to be researched in this study, the experience of serving as a cooperating teacher. Because all of the cooperating teachers in this study are in the field of secondary agricultural education, studies in the specific field have been examined to achieve context. Next, I will highlight the functions of a community of practice, because the cooperating teachers serve as a gatekeeper to pre-service teachers to the entering of the agricultural education profession. Finally, I will outline the specific requirements of secondary agricultural education teachers.

Social Cognitive Theory

As an explanation for his Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura (1986) explains that people are not completely “controlled by external stimuli” but they also are not completely “driven by inner forces” (p. 18). Bandura (1986) instead describes his theory as a triad of behavioral, cognitive, and environmental factors that are “interacting determinants of each other” (p. 18). The theory basically states that the behaviors that we display, the knowledge that we know and the environment that we exist within are all connected. The idea of self-efficacy is grounded in Bandura’s (1997) Social Cognitive Theory. In Social Cognitive Theory, the individual’s cognitive learning, their environment and their behaviors are all interrelated and have effects on each other. Self-efficacy is one of the behavioral factors displayed by the person. Self-efficacy is best defined as the “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). People have to believe that they have control over what they can do in order to have high self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is perceived, people often create “courses of action without having the foggiest notion of how their choices” have true effect on their outcomes on the individual (Bandura, 1997, p. 21).
Efficacy is a product of a constructed experience. The individual’s history of experiences has a direct impact on how the individual views their capability to affect future outcomes. Not all experiences have an impact on an individual’s self-efficacy. The “experiences that are inconsistent with one’s self-beliefs tend to be minimized, discounted or forgotten” when the individual views their previous experiences (Bandura, 1997, p. 82). It is important for individuals to experience success with their experiences. If the individual experiences success over a period of time, then they are more likely to maintain a high self-efficacy. The “occasional failure or setback” will not have a negative effect on the self-efficacy of the individual if they have experienced success (Bandura, 1997, p. 82). Because of the characteristics of self-efficacy, it is an excellent predictor of future performance of the individual (Bandura & Adams, 1977).

**Motivation to Volunteer**

The goal of volunteering “is to provide help to others, a group or organization, a cause, or the community at large, without expectation for material award” (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 3). In providing for this help, it is of great interest to understand the motivation for why people choose to be volunteers. Musick & Wilson (2008) in their work *Volunteers: A Social Profile*, categorize six main reasons why people volunteer, including values, enhancement, social, career, protective, and understanding. Values are expressed when people do things for a cause that is important to themselves. Values can also be described as altruism; people volunteer because they want to do the right thing. Enhancement occurs because people want to learn new things. This is provided because the volunteering experience provides the chance to reflect and learn about “different people, places, skills or oneself” (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 58). People are social creatures, they have the “need to fit in and get along with” other people (Musick & Wilson, 2008, p. 59). This is done by people seeking out new groups and by achieving the
approval of other people with whom they already associate. Many people volunteer because they believe volunteering will earn them greater employment opportunities for the future. People will freely give their time if they think that it will help them financially later on down the road. Some people have emotional problems and volunteering allows them to deal with their own perceived shortcomings; these people tend to select protective causes for their volunteering interest. Volunteering in these situations can help someone cope or heal from their personal demons. Finally, people volunteer to gain a self-identity, they use their volunteering to help them understand themselves. The volunteering experience is away for these people to feel important while defining themselves in the same process. Ultimately, Musick & Wilson (2008) determined that motivations are important for volunteering when they compared volunteers to non-volunteers.

Several studies have highlighted the impact of volunteering on individual self-efficacy. A survey of elderly people in the Netherlands determined that people that volunteers are more likely to have higher self-esteem, willingness to initiate behavior and to display persistence in the face of adversity compared to non-volunteers (Timmer & Aartsen, 2003). All three of these factors would assume that the volunteers had a higher self-efficacy than the non-volunteers in this study. Ji-Wei et al. (2010) in a study of health volunteers in Shanghai determined that high self-efficacy is a main reason why people would choose to volunteer over people would not choose to volunteer. In a phenomenological study of environmental volunteers in Australia, Gooch (2004) highlights that the volunteers were able “to develop personal skills and feelings of self-worth” (p. 202). Participants in a survey from the Netherlands highlight that these skills do not have to be present, just the desire to acquire them (Timmer & Aartsen, 2003). Developing
skills is directly related to Bandura’s (1997) views of self-efficacy, where people who experience sustained success are more likely to have higher self-efficacies.

To achieve high self-efficacy, support systems must be in place for the volunteers. In Knoblauch and Woolfolk-Hoy’s (2008) study of cooperating teachers in the American Midwest, they showed the absolute importance of providing training and support for the cooperating teacher volunteers. The importance of training was also detected in a study of voluntary cooperating teachers in Turkey where the volunteers had low self-efficacy in their ability to volunteer in training student teachers because they had not received training in the mentoring process (Yaman & Alkaç, 2010). A key part of Yaman & Alkaç,’s (2010) study is that the volunteers reported high self-efficacy in some areas with low self-efficacy in others. Bandura’s (1997) Social Cognitive Theory agrees with these findings because a variance in self-efficacy varies according to the displayed skill or task. Volunteers in Gooch’s (2004) study saw volunteering as a way to “raise their spirits,” a way to cope with “depression and low self-esteem” (p. 203). That people “try to improve their own competencies during times of unemployment” is also supported by Lindenmeir’s (2008) experimental study of potential advertisements for volunteers in Germany (p. 61). Because self-efficacy is a part of a constructed experience, the individuals could be making an effort to create new opportunities to build self-worth. A survey study people of volunteers in Israel showed that the “quality of interactions with the client” was statically significant in the development of the volunteers’ self-efficacy (Kulik & Megidna, 2011, p. 934). These interactions lead to a higher showing of feeling of empowerment than individuals who did not have quality interactions. Greater quality of the volunteering experience leads to an increase in self-efficacy for the volunteer.
How volunteers perceive their abilities is one way to measure the impact of the volunteering experience. According to Bandura (1997) self-efficacy is placed within the context of the individual’s prior experience and how they believe they will grow over time with new experiences. Studies on volunteers have shown that these experiences can make a positive impact on the individual.

**Teaching Identity**

Coldron and Smith (1999) invoke Shakespeare by stating that teaching identity by, “some of their identity is born with them, some is achieved, and some is thrust upon them” (p. 714). It is important to realize that teacher identities have constant and consistent changes (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Coldron & Smith, 1999). Changes must occur for the teacher identity to be sustainable for the individual (Coldron & Smith, 1999). This is perfectly normal because “part of the experience of teaching is continually constructing a sustainable identity” (p. 714).

Akkerman and Meijer (2011, pp. 317-318) define teacher identity as:

“(A)n ongoing process of negotiating and interrelating multiple-I positions in such a way that a more or less coherent and consistent sense of self is maintained throughout various participations and self-investments in one’s (working) life”

This definition of teacher identity has three distinct areas; multiplicity, discontinuity and social nature. Multiplicity refers to the idea of having several perspectives in their relative career. Sfard and Prusak (2005) believe that how a person defines identity is based entirely upon the narrative, or life story, of the individual. These narratives can be based in the first, second or third person and can be different or contradictory when they are compared. Discontinuity refers to the teacher identity being constructed from experience. People’s identities are heavily shaped by the environment in which they live. Teachers change their identities based upon their
experiences (Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop, 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Dahlgren & Chirac, 2009). People make changes in identity based upon the opportunities that they perceive are available to them to pursue (Coldron & Smith, 1999). Social nature refers to the impact of other people on an individual’s identity. Teacher identity is based in the connection between the individual and the social environment. Perceptions and the interactions with other people cause identities to change or to be reinforced (Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Williams, 2010). Clarke (2009) describes this connection as “the nexus of the social and the individual” (p. 196). Beijaard, Meijer, and Verloop (2004) expand upon the concept of the impact of the group, stating that “a teacher’s identity is not entirely unique;” their identities are shaped by the characteristics of the profession (p. 122).

Learning must happen for a change in identity to occur. The process of changing identity never stops and continually changes based upon new learning (Beijaard, et al., 2004). The change in teacher identity can occur when a connection is made between theory and practice in the profession (Dahlgren & Chirac, 2009). This learning causes a change between a real and a desired teaching identity (Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Learning within the context of teacher identity can be accomplished in several ways. One opportunity to encourage learning is to force a change in the individual that causes them to become uncomfortable with their prior knowledge, forcing them to make changes to account for their new situation. Settlage, Southerland, Smith, and Ceglie (2009) describe a situation with pre-service science teachers where they are entering their student teaching semester with a very high belief in their abilities. By the end of the semester, the teachers have feelings of self-doubt, which have caused them to learn more about their teaching practices and how to work with their students. Professionals learning because they suddenly become uncomfortable with their practices are supported by Festinger (1957) who
outlined his Cognitive Dissonance Theory as individuals losing their balance when they are presented with information that does not meet their world view, causing a major dissonance in their beliefs (Festinger, 1957). Causing conflict with a person’s thoughts about a subject will either cause them to change their preconceived notion or cause them to develop stronger evidence to support their existing knowledge base. Clarke (2009) also supports the concept of discourse, stating that learning happens “through difference and in the context of contingency and ambiguity” (p. 196).

Emotions can also change the teaching identity of professionals (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Emotions can have a positive or a negative effect on the change of a teacher’s identity (Reio, 2005). Many times, change causes a negative emotion, which depresses a person’s identity. When emotions are integrated into teaching practice, they can cause the professional teacher to “develop greater reflexivity, stronger solidarity, and heightened sensitivity toward their colleagues and students” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 620).

University programs can also impact the teacher identity of practicing professionals. Trent and Lim (2010) studied the impact of a university partnership on currently practicing teachers in two separate secondary schools in Hong Kong. The teachers from one of the secondary schools had a very positive experience while the teachers from the other school had a negative experience. The teachers in the positive partnership felt that they could actually shape the program through their participation. The teachers with a perceived positive experience with the university partnership even caused the teacher participants to imagine future opportunities that they could work with the university or to develop themselves further in the profession. The teachers with a perceived negative experience disliked the program because they felt challenged to change their current teaching practices. Trent and Lim (2010) felt that both the positive and
negative experiences were based upon the amount of ownership given to the teachers, the
teachers from the school with a perceived positive experience were engaged in the decision
making process while the teachers with the negative experience felt that they were being
instructed to change their teaching practices. Both subsets of teachers experienced changes in
their teaching identity. The findings about ownership from Trent and Lim (2010) supports
previous research by Sachs (2001) who described the differences in teacher identity for
Australian teachers as those who engaged in one of two discourses, managerial professionalism
and democratic professionalism. Managerial professionalism describes teaching situations where
the teacher is responsible to management to produce measurable outcomes, forcing the teacher to
develop an “entrepreneurial identity” where the teacher is concerned about “accountability,
economy, efficiency, and effectiveness” (Sachs, 2001, p. 159). Democratic professionalism
describes teaching situations where the teachers develop an activist identity where the teachers
collaborate and work within a community of practice. The “respect, mutuality, and
communication” that comes from a democratic professionalism approach can lead to the
professional from developing an identity to pursuing political empowerment in their career
(Sachs, 2001, p. 160).

**Political Empowerment in the Workplace**

Can people that volunteer have an impact on organizations? Pateman (1971) shares
results from a multinational study that people who volunteer have a greater political efficacy than
non-volunteers. Political efficacy is defined by Pateman (1971) as a sense of political
competence. People that have a high political competence are more likely to participate in
politics. Pateman (1971) also shares that people of higher socioeconomic status are more likely
to volunteer than people of lower socioeconomic standing. People in higher socioeconomic
standing tend to working situations that are more autonomous and family models that meet this structure. People that are engaged in politics are not just engaged at the political level, they can also engage in politics in the workplace. Based upon this information, people that volunteer are more likely to actively engage in true participation in the workplace. This is firmly supported by John Stuart Mill (1965) who shared that the true way for people to empower themselves is through being in control of their actions and thoughts. Mill (1965) states that “the individual is sovereign” when it comes to the mind and body of that person (p. 263). It is only natural for an individual that experiences the benefits of volunteerism in their self-efficacy and their experiential learning activities that they would want to bring these ideals to their individual workplaces. Pateman (1971) explains that the true participation involves “participation in something” and she argues that the participation must be “in decision making” (p. 68). Decision making involves true potential input from the individual, not a plan to co-opt the individual with a previously approved idea generated by the workplace. True decision making power must be as Mill (1965) described “is to prevent harm to others (p. 263). In society and in traditional bureaucracies, this is not necessarily the case, often the rights and the desires of the individuals are ignored by those that are in power. It could be argued that in the traditional bureaucratic scenario, knowledge was never transferred to the people that made the decisions. But when the individual is sharing knowledge with other workers, what happens in the workplace? Rothschild & Whitt (1986) shares examples of knowledge sharing of cooperative workplaces in the United States. Many of these cooperatives have implemented the true democratic ideals that were advocated by John Stuart Mill (1965) in his essay On Liberty. The very nature of the cooperative workplace is that the workplace has true democratic operating practices (Rothschild & Whitt, 1986). The democratic workplace is exactly opposite of what Mill (1965) stated about the
undemocratic role of business and the government towards the people. Mill (1965) warned, “There is also in the world at large an increasing inclination to stretch the force of opinion …to strengthen society and diminish power of the individual” (p. 267). Rothschild and Whitt (1986) share several examples of cooperative systems that were modeling at aspects of a true democratic system. For these organizations to operate at their optimum democratic level, knowledge has to be shared with all of the participants within the system. Cooperatives like all other organizations lose their democratic principles when the knowledge is not shared with the members. Sometimes knowledge is not shared because it is technical in nature and difficult to obtain. Sometimes knowledge is not shared, because it can take many years of practice to hone the craft that is being displayed. The sharing of knowledge and the position changes within an organization will lead to some loss of productivity. Regardless of the real or perceived problems of organizations, the attempt to share knowledge is a vital part of the collectivist organization. The process is known as demystification, where knowledge is “simplified, explicated and made available to the membership at large” (p. 114). Demystification would allow for barriers to be removed and for people to take ownership of the organization. Because the true meaning of the word volunteer is “a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or undertake a task,” we have to recognize that people who are freely making choices outside of the workplace probably also want to make those decisions in the workplace as well (Google Search, 2011). Research on volunteers suggests that enhancing true democratic principles can be an outcome of the volunteering experience. In a survey study of volunteers with the Special Olympics, it was shown that the more that volunteers were empowered, the more likely they would remain as a volunteer with the organization (Kim, Trail, Lim, & Kim, 2009). When the volunteers were given greater access to information; they became empowered in their positions.
Empowerment is key to successful volunteering; Kulik & Megidna (2011) researched Israeli women volunteers and they were able to show that women gain and share empowerment with other women in their volunteering experiences. The conclusion is that the empowerment gained through volunteering experience would carry over to other aspects of the volunteers’ lives. Volunteers should not be afraid to use their powers gained from the experience; in a study of cooperating teachers from the American Midwest, the student teachers who were being coached actually wished that their cooperating teachers would initiate more power in the student teacher experience (Anderson, 2007). Volunteers should be careful not to over exert their power, or they will create a “hierarchical rather than collegial relationship” (Anderson, 2007, p. 322). Parker, Myers, Higgins, Oddson, Price, and Gould (2009) determined that student volunteers in Australia “are likely to venture into their new professional arenas armed with a stronger sense of self and an increased confidence in dealing with the reality of the workplace” (p. 591). Two-thirds of the students in the study recognized that the knowledge that they gained through volunteering could assist their future development in the workplace environment. Fraser, Clayton, Sickler and Taylor (2009) determined that volunteers from the Bronx & Central Park Zoos in New York actively sought experiences with other advocacy groups or participated in grass roots efforts including providing donations to conservation groups, signing petitions, or writing letters on behalf of animal rights issues. These actions can easily enter the workplace with one volunteer sharing that they “get into big political discussions with people about, what they are doing to protect the environment” (Fraser, Clayton, Sickler and Taylor, 2009, p. 364). An environmental volunteer from Australia shared that she was not “focusing on power over others in her group” she was instead “developing power with others in the group” (Gooch, 2004, p. 203). The volunteer understood the principle that if you share power with another individual, you can in
turn gain in your own power. In a study of a national database of high school and college students, Marks & Jones (2004) highlight that college campuses should “tap the expertise and experiences” of students with prior volunteering experience (p. 355). Marks and Jones (2004) also believe that the volunteering experiences would influence the students to become more engaged in the larger societal issues. Participating in a volunteer experience increases knowledge, empowerment, self-confidence, and societal awareness for the individual.

Understanding that knowledge can bring true power for the individual, the volunteering experience can encourage participants to seek further opportunities in their professions and their workplaces. The experience of volunteering would only create “active” or “non-servile” characters that truly wanted to achieve self-governance in their place of employment (Pateman, 1971, p. 45). Failure to share knowledge or decision-making abilities in the existing system only disenfranchises the individual in their workplace pursuits.

**Experiential Learning**

An ancient proverb reads “Experience is the father (or mother) of wisdom.” If the proverb is true, then our life experiences are how we truly learn. But do we learn from all of our experiences? John Dewey (1938) articulated in *Experience and Education* that experience and education are not one in the same. Dewey (1938) specifies that we do not learn from all of our experiences. It is possible that poor previous experiences might lead to an inability to maintain educational growth in the individual. Even if the experiences are of themselves worthwhile, their worthiness will not matter if they are disconnected. Disconnected experiences leave the learner unable “to control future experiences” thus, they fail to learn from experience (p. 26). In describing his theory of experience; Dewey (1938) expresses that a continuation of experiences must be present for people to learn. The experiences must happen in a logical progression for
people to learn. A second key component of Dewey’s (1938) theory is that the experience must involve interaction. Interactions refer to the “objective and internal conditions” of an experience, forming the experiences “situation” (Dewey, 1938, p. 42). According to Dewey (1938), all experiences must occur in a continuation and they must have interaction within the situation to induce learning. Continuity and interaction occur at the same time in a situation, it is impossible to divide the two concepts when analyzing true learning because they are codependent in the learning environment. By applying Dewey’s (1938) theory to volunteering, we must recognize that for individuals to learn from the volunteering experience, they must experience a continuity of activities and they must have interaction within the volunteering situation.

Since John Dewey first proposed his Theory of Experience, different perspectives have emerged that describe the phenomenon of experiential learning. Fenwick (2001) critiques experiential learning from five different perspectives, including constructivism, psychoanalytic, situative, critical cultural, and enactivist. Fenwick (2001) describes each perspective as a way that helps explain how knowledge is gained through the human experience. Constructivism views learners as constructing their own knowledge through their previous experiences. These constructions occur through reflection of their individual actions with the outside world. One of the most impactful theorists of experiential learning that exists in the constructivist perspective is David Kolb. Kolb’s (1984) epitome, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*, describes learning as “the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience” (p. 38). To create this definition, Kolb (1984) described learning through several characteristics. The first of these characteristics is “learning is best conceived as a process, not in terms of outcomes” (Kolb, 1984, p. 26). Kolb (1984) constructs learning as always dependent on experience, so “no two thoughts are ever the same”
Kolb (1984) uses this point to define the main difference between experiential learning and behavioral learning, which is entirely based upon outcomes. The next characteristic is “learning is a continuous process grounded in experience” (Kolb, 1984, p. 27). Kolb (1984) states that a key assumption that can be gathered from this point “is all learning is relearning” (p. 28). This means that all learners enter a situation with prior knowledge; it is the changing of prior knowledge that constitutes learning through experience. A third characteristic is “the process of learning requires the resolution of conflicts between dialectically opposed modes of adoption to the world” (Kolb, 1984, p. 29). To achieve true experiential learning, the learner many times has to use conflicting ideas achieve a solution for the situation. Another of Kolb’s (1984) characteristic is “learning is a holistic process of adaptation to the world” (p. 31). It is impossible to divide human thought into simple patterns, because it is difficult to classify learning into a specific setting or situation. Because learning is consistently happening for all people, to truly understand what someone has learned, you would have to evaluate their entire human experience. A fifth characteristic is “learning involves the transactions between the persons and the environment” (Kolb, 1984, p. 34). People learn by interacting with the environment, not by the environment completely changing the person. Kolb’s (1984) final characteristic is “learning is the process of creating knowledge” (p. 36). The knowledge to be gained should determine the method of learning; trying to learn with a different method would lead to a disconnection with the knowledge to be gained. Kolb’s (1984) six characteristics of experiential learning help to serve as a foundation for the constructivism perspective to the field. Constructivism is only one perspective used when synthesizing experiential learning. A second approach is psychoanalytic. Psychoanalytic theory explores the individual’s relationship “between the outside world of culture and objects of knowledge, and the inside world of psychic
energies and dilemmas of relating those objects to knowledge” (Fenwick, 2001, p. 28).
Psychoanalytic theory attempts to explain the difference between the conscious and the unconscious mind. Learning in psychoanalytic theory also believes that our desires are not basic human needs, but instead, they are at the heart of our inner self. These desires serve as our attractions and also as the ideas that we love to hate. These competing desires are constantly competing between the three registers of ourselves; the imaginary, the symbolic and the real. In these registers, the imaginary represents our visuals, the symbolic represents our language and culture, while the real represents our unconscious drive. Therefore, psychoanalytic theorists believe that “social reality” can be changed or destroyed at anytime by the actions of our real register (Fenwick, 2001, p. 30). A third approach is situative, meaning that experiential learning as a part of this perspective is situation specific. The situated learning perspective calls for people to not to learn from experience but to learn within the experience. A common approach to this scenario is Lave & Wenger’s (1991) Situated Learning Theory, which states that all individuals learn as a part of a community of practice, and that these communities are situation specific. An individual can belong to multiple communities and can have multiple levels of expertise in each community, all completely dependent on the experiential learning in the situation. A fourth approach to experiential learning is critical cultural, which is based upon power in a situation (Fenwick, 2001). Critical cultural theorists believe “politics are central to human cognition” (Fenwick, 2001, p. 39). This view of experiential learning looks at ways to alter the power in a situation to affect the experience by the people that reside within the situation. Critical cultural perspectives tend to create “dualistic categories” which define the normal and the abnormal in a society (Fenwick, 2001, p. 40). Freire (1970) describes the critical cultural situation as one where the oppressed learners have been dehumanized, they are treated as
“adaptable, manageable beings” (p. 73). Because humans contain praxis; they are different from other animals. The ability to think and reflect as opposed to just reacting means that all humans should be treated with dignity and respect. The critical cultural theory sees experiential learning as a goal to balance out power between the powerful and the oppressed, so that everyone can learn from experience (Fenwick, 2001). The fifth perspective shared by Fenwick (2001) is the perspective of enactivism. Enactivism is defined as “the co-emergence of learner and setting” (Fenwick, 2001, p. 47). Enactivism explains “that the systems represented by the person and the context are inseparable” and that changes to the systems are affected by the “tinkering” with either the person or the context (Fenwick, 2001, p. 47). Enactivism is very similar to situated perspectives, but enactivism is based within a biological framework, where situated perspectives are based in psychology. This view of experiential learning shares that we are unable to examine the individual, because all individuals are part of a community. Fenwick’s (2001) five perspectives each share a different way that people look at the world. A potential sixth perspective exists with Borkman’s (1999) look at experiential learning using the experiences of volunteers within self-help/mutual aid groups. Self-help is defined as, “an individual taking action to help him- or herself…within the context of his or her lived experience with an issue or a predicament” (Borkman, 1999, p. 4). Mutual aid is defined as, “individuals joining together to assist one another either emotionally, socially, or materially” (Borkman, 1999, p. 4). In Borkman’s (1999) model, all of the participants have a lived experience relating to the phenomenon. All of the participants also volunteer within the respective organization. The volunteer organization that is created is grass roots in origin and is formed with one particular focus issue. Because the groups are formed at the grass roots level, there are many differences in goals and structures of each of the groups. The self-help/mutual aid groups are anti-bureaucratic;
all participants participate democratically in the operation of the local group. A key component of all groups is that the members are volunteers; they may join or leave the group at anytime. People also can “choose the amount and kind of involvement they have with the group” (Borkman, 1999, p. 13). The process of the group works best “through involvement and participation” (Borkman, 1999, p. 14). One way that this involvement occurs is through the sharing of knowledge, because volunteers in grass roots organizations are expected to share their knowledge with the group-at-large. Borkman’s (1999) model of experiential-social learning contains four steps:

1. Gain Information and interpret within one’s worldview
2. Reflect: Is the idea applicable to me
3. Try out new idea in daily life
4. Assess consequences of using new idea (p. 144)

The model is circular in nature and can be applied either to the individual or to the group. Because the model is based upon the individual reaction, it focuses on the development of the self-efficacy of the individual as mentioned in the first section of this paper. The model also allows for the impact of the experience of volunteering through the experiences’ use in daily life and the future consequences of those experiences.

But what are the experiences gained through volunteering? Several empirical studies share the experiences of volunteers through the lens of experiential learning. These experiences include personal impacts and impacts within the community of the volunteering experience. Volunteering allows for participants to learn “about the personal self” (Williams & Reeves, 2004, p. 389). The volunteering experience has allowed for participants to make social gains (Borkman, 1999; Broadbent & Papadopoulos, 2010). The volunteering experience can also lead
to the development of strengths or skills for the volunteer (Lough, 2009; Williams & Reeves, 2004). The gain in these skills and abilities are often voluntary and occur at a rate of speed determined by the volunteer (Borkman, 1999). The gain in skills and abilities can also lead to greater self-esteem for the volunteer (Vernon & Foster, 2002). The experiential engagement is challenging and stimulating for the volunteer (Lui, Warburton, & Bartlett, 2009). The challenges and stimulations lead to future personal growth for the individuals in the volunteering experience (Williams & Reeves, 2004). Volunteering has provided opportunities for people “to engage with and learn in their local communities” (Broadbent & Padapoulos, 2010, p. 250). For many volunteers, the chance to join a community is a key component of the volunteering experience (Borkman, 1999; Vernon & Foster, 2002). The volunteering has allowed for individuals to become aware of the needs of their local communities (Bell, 2007; Broadbent & Padapoulos, 2010; Williams & Reeves, 2004). It is even possible that the act of volunteering with other people even will create a community (Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008). These experiences have encouraged the volunteers to give back to the community through their contribution to society (Lui, Warburton, & Bartlett, 2009; Vernon & Foster, 2002). The volunteer experience can involve further investment of the volunteer within the community in the future (Lough, 2009).

Volunteering is an experience, and experiences lead to learning for the individual. John Dewey (1938) first pioneered the use of experiential education in the modern age and his ideas have been successful in spawning several different theories of experiential education that are based within separate paradigms of learning from diverse fields. Regardless of field, empirical research for volunteers has been shown to increase the individual experiences and to make impacts within the local community.

Leader-Member Exchange Theory
One of the main roles of a leader is the ability to differentiate between their group members that are followers (Dienesch and Liden, 1986). The theory highlights that individuals are arranged according to their level of trust with the leader. Members that have maintained trust with the leader are considered a part of the in-group. The in-group becomes the people whom the leader will provide interaction, support, and formal and informal rewards with the leader. Members that have either not earned the trust of the leader or if they have betrayed that trust are considered to be located in the out group. In the out group, the leader does not provide interaction, support or rewards. Members are placed in the in group or the out group based upon their relationship with the leader. The relationship is defined by the characteristics of the leader and the follower, the initial reaction of the leader to the follower, the delegated tasks of the leader and leader’s responses to the member’s behaviors. The roles in the relationship between the leader and the follower can be negotiated (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975). Sometimes, the roles are assigned or required by the leader; at other times they are required by the follower. Finally, the role between the leader and the follower seem to be at the highest functioning when the leaders and the followers display similar characteristics. (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). Leader-Member Exchanges work best when the leader and the follower have enough commonalities to be able to forge a bond of trust. If the trust is never formed, then the follower will always remain as a part of the out group.

**The Role of the Cooperating Teacher**

The person that works most closely with the pre-service teacher during the student teaching experience is the cooperating teacher. A cooperating teacher is the professional that turns over their classroom and classes for a period of time to pre-service/student teacher. The cooperating teacher is the person who provides “leadership by guiding” the student teaching
experience (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003, p. 1). Rudney & Guillaume’s (2003) guidebook for cooperating teachers examines many traits that should be present in all cooperating teaching experiences. The cooperating teacher provides a safe setting to practice the craft of teaching. The cooperating teacher is charged with directing the growth of the young professional by modeling ethical behaviors, providing freedom in the classroom to try different teaching techniques and by providing appropriate advice and feedback. Areas of communication should involve the pre-service teacher’s lesson plans, classroom management techniques, student learning assessments and student and adult interaction in the education profession. The cooperating teacher must be willing to have honest communication with their pre-service teacher; the communication needs to focus on the strengths and the areas that need improvement with the young professional.

The role of the cooperating teacher must be handled with care; technically the cooperating teacher holds power over the pre-service teacher to allow them to enter the teaching profession. The relationship between the pre-service teacher and the cooperating teacher influences the success of the pre-service teacher. This relationship should not be taken lightly; Rudney & Guillaume suggest that accepting a student teacher “is like accepting a spouse: it is continuous work to ensure that each person’s needs are being expressed, valued and met” (2003, p. 33). But like some marriages, the role of the cooperating teacher is mostly “one-sided” and “will eventually come to an end,” as the experience is focused on the development of a new professional in the education community (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003, p. 33).

**The Cooperating Teacher in Agricultural Education**

The first study in agricultural education that involved input from cooperating teachers was a comparison study between the personality traits of cooperating teachers and their student
teachers in Oklahoma (Islam, 1971). The study used the California Psychological Inventory to determine the personality traits, and the results showed that the cooperating teachers scored at higher rates on the majority of the assessment, yet the student teachers had very similar scores to their mentors. Islam (1971) even projected that the similarity of the traits could predict future functioning as an agriculture teacher. Two other studies in agricultural education have also focused on the personality traits of cooperating teachers including Kitchel and Torres (2006, 2007) and Roberts, Harlin, and Briers (2007). Kitchel and Torres (2006, 2007) issued the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Mentor Relationship Questionnaire (MRQ) to pre-service teachers and their cooperating teachers within Illinois & Missouri. After comparing the MRQ, Kitchel and Torres (2006) showed that cooperating teachers believed that they were providing the functions of the acceptance, counseling and friendship to their student teachers at a very large extent while the student teachers felt that only the acceptance function was provided at a large amount. When looking at the MBTI; cooperating teachers and pre-service teachers displayed similar personality types. Kitchel and Torres (2006) showed that while teachers in the study displayed some personality types more often than others, the MBTI is a personality instrument and personality has little influence on teaching style. The other study from Roberts, Harlin & Briers (2007) attempted to determine the relationship between personality type and teaching efficacy of cooperating teachers in Texas. The cooperating teachers in the study displayed high teacher efficacy totals in student engagement, instructional strategies, classroom management and overall teaching efficacy. When comparing the correlation between personality types and teaching efficacy of the cooperating teachers, the teachers that displayed extroversion instead of introversion tended to give themselves higher teacher efficacy ratings. The three
studies show that the cooperating teachers think highly of their self-efficacy and that the personalities of cooperating teachers and student teachers are similar.

Another common method of research has been the use of cooperating teachers in Delphi test groups. To use the Delphi Method with cooperating teachers makes intuitive sense; the tool is designed “to obtain the most reliable consensus of opinion of a group of experts” (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963). Agricultural educators have taken advantage of the approach numerous times in the literature, but two studies Dobbins & Camp (2003) and Fritz & Mantooth (2005) used cooperating teachers as the experts in a study designed around the student teaching experience. Dobbins & Camp’s (2003) study used teachers from North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia to generate a consensus of thirty-six tasks that should be completed by the pre-service teacher during the student teaching experience. The three main themes to evolve from the participants were time, planning, and cooperation. The experts in the study believed that planning and cooperation were vital and that all major participants in the student teaching process should enter into a contract agreement. Fritz & Mantooth’s (2005) study employed the use of cooperating teachers from Tennessee to develop a list of challenges of working with pre-service teachers during the student teaching experience. The cooperating teachers agreed upon the following challenges; “student teachers’ discipline procedures, work ethic, time management skills, preparing student teachers to take full responsibility of the classroom, and lack of knowledge in some curriculum areas” (Fritz & Mantooth, 2005, p. 54). Fritz & Mantooth (2005) suggest that many of the issues can be addressed with additional opportunities for practice prior to student teaching; however, they were very concerned with work effort deficiencies. The Delphi method allowed for researchers to use cooperating teachers as experts and they were able to share their desires for what is needed during the student teaching semester.
Occasionally, researchers ask cooperating teachers their opinions on the student teaching experience. In agricultural education, we have asked their opinions through surveys (Deeds, Flowers, & Arrington, 1991; Garton & Cano, 1996; Thobega & Miller, 2007; Young & Edwards, 2005, 2006) and focus groups (Edwards & Briers, 2001; Young & Edwards, 2005, 2006). From the surveys and focus groups, we know that cooperating teachers generally agree with the expectations of the student teaching experience set forth by the university (Deeds et. al, 1991). However, we also know that a large number of cooperating teachers either do not understand or choose to ignore university expectations during the student teaching experience (Deeds et. al, 1991; Garton & Cano, 1996). The cooperating teacher recognizes their position is important; therefore they try to maintain a positive attitude and to serve as a good role model (Young & Edwards, 2005). When cooperating teacher models effective teaching methods, the pre-service teacher also displays effective teaching methods (Garton & Cano, 1996) that reflects the entire agricultural education program including “classroom and laboratory instruction, supervised agricultural experience programs (SAEPs), student leadership development (FFA), school and community relationships, and cooperating teacher-student teacher relationships” (Edwards & Briers, 2001, p. 33; Young & Edwards, 2006). The cooperating teacher also chooses their own method of supervision; the range of methods includes non-directive to collaborative to directive (Thobega & Miller, 2007). There also seems to be agreement that the university should provide training for cooperating teachers (Deeds et. al, 1991; Garton & Cano, 1996). Besides training for cooperating teachers, pre-service teachers should also be made aware of the “important elements of the student teaching experience identified by cooperating teachers” (Edwards & Briers, 2001). Cooperating teachers tend to be very cooperative during the student teaching experience, they
understand the importance of their role, but their independence can lead to decisions that may not be in line with university policy.

There is agreement from many sources from Juergeson (1966) through today that highlights the importance of the cooperating teacher in the classroom. Previous literature in agricultural education actually tells us very little about the cooperating teacher. We have researched their personalities, but their personalities are comparable to pre-service teachers. We have used them as experts on panels and have asked them questions through surveys, but these questions have revolved around the student teaching experience. Only once have researchers examined the student teaching classroom through video-taped lessons (Garton & Cano, 1996). The main insight that seems to come out of that study was just a glimpse of the reluctance to use a teaching method that was championed by the university. In actuality, we know very little about our cooperating teachers, including their motivations and the changes that occur with them through the student teaching experience. Juergeson (1966) suggested that researchers test the cooperating teachers to see how they have impacted their pre-service teachers. Thobega & Miller (2007) suggest that cooperating teachers may have reported “what they believed in rather than what they actually do” during the student teaching experience (p. 72). The conversational style of qualitative interviews can provide better insights into teacher statements. If a researcher was to use “observational studies [that] focused on cooperating teacher behaviors,” truer insights into the student teaching experience might develop (Thobega & Miller, 2007, p. 72). Observations of teachers can provide insights into the growth of the professional. Cooperating teachers reported high teacher efficacy scores in previous studies, but “efficacy is not necessarily an indicator of ability” (Roberts et. al, 2007). It is possible that teachers display high efficacy
because they are unaware that if they set higher goals, they can develop even greater teaching efficacy.

**Practicing in the Community of Teachers**

Situated learning theory was first described by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991) as an explanation of the learning where learning took place between members of a group. The theory was constructed through Lave and Wenger’s (1991) earlier observations of craft apprenticeships, intelligent tutoring systems and cultural transparency of technology. Lave and Wenger (1991) realized that they needed to formulate a theory of learning to explain their observations; existing theories were not adequate in the explanation of how people learn in their interaction with other people. Two terms were developed by Lave and Wenger to help explain their situated learning phenomenon; legitimate peripheral participation and communities of practice. Legitimate peripheral participation refers to the process how newcomers in a place of work become experienced workers over a period of time. Within legitimate peripheral participation, the member of the group will move towards a closer area within the community, thus gaining power as they gain further and further knowledge and abilities. A community of practice is defined as a group of people with a common interest who share knowledge with the community through their separate experiences. Communities of practice develop as people engage in pursuits together, interact with each other, and learn together to create learning practices that are adopted by the community over time (Wenger, 1998). Communities of practice contain three main dimensions; mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. To be located in a community of practice, the participants must be mutually engaged in the same actions. All participants in a community of practice are not the same; the diversity of people often allows the community to be more adept at handling a variety of situations. Mutual
engagement does not mean that the interactions in communities of practices are always positive, however, mutual engagement does lead to the strengthening of relationships with members of the group. Communities of practice also engage in joint enterprises; these enterprises are negotiated, indigenous, and require mutual accountability. Because individuals in a community each have different responses to different situations that may happen within a community of practice, their responses must be negotiated within the entire group. By negotiating their differences, the members of the community of practice are able to create a collective project with members and ideas that are not entirely uniform. The joint enterprises are indigenous; although all communities of practice are affected by exterior forces, the community often finds ways of responding to external forces with internal solutions. Joint enterprises happen in communities of practice when the enterprises are allowed to be negotiated, when the enterprises are allowed to be run at the community level (indigenous) and when members of the community of practice are all mutually accountable to each other. Communities of practice finally develop a shared repertoire; the repertoire is the result of resources that have been gathered through negotiating meaning in shared enterprises. The repertoire reflects the history of mutual engagement yet the repertoire also remains ambiguous to allow for negotiation of meaning to take place. Ambiguity is not a negative part of the repertoire; the ambiguity actually allows for the history in the community of practice to “remain both relevant and meaningful” (p. 83). Through interaction in a mutual engagement, operating a joint enterprise and a developing a shared repertoire, communities of practice are allowed to develop. These communities can be found everywhere in society and individuals belong to many different practices within work, school, home and hobbies (Wenger, McDermott & Snyder, 2002). These communities influence our interactions and thoughts within a group of people.
The Role of the Agricultural Teacher

Traditionally, agricultural educators have engaged in three main roles, an instructor in the classroom and laboratory setting, an advisor for the school’s FFA chapter and a supervisor for student SAE projects. These roles have been highlighted as part of the traditional model of agricultural education in the United States (Croom, 2008)

![Diagram](image)

Figure 2. Three Part Model of Secondary Agricultural Education. Adapted from “The Development of the Three-Component Model of Agricultural Education,” by D.B. Croom, 2008, *Journal of Agricultural Education, 49*(1), p. 111. Permission granted via the author

Croom (2008) shared that each part of the three-part model developed simultaneously and that its formation was based off of practice, not mandates or individual legislations. For the model to be successful, there has to be “commitment by all stakeholders to deliver all components” to secondary students (Croom, 2008, p. 118). These principals are currently expected in practice;
they are reflected in the National Standards for Teacher Education in Agriculture; guidelines accepted by the American Association of Agricultural Educators. Standard 5.b.1.1 in the standards states the following:

Apply principles and theories from the conceptual framework to actual practice in classrooms and schools where diverse agricultural education programs have demonstrated success in integrating instruction, Supervised Agricultural Experience and FFA

Based off of the traditional, three-part model, Newcomb, McCracken, Warmbrod & Whittington (2004) provide a framework for the job requirements for a secondary agricultural teacher in their book, *Methods of Teaching Agriculture*. The agricultural teacher should be involved in classroom instruction and the application of learning in the school laboratory, supervised experience and the FFA. The agricultural teacher should also use community resources such as existing facilities and organizations and the people within the community including advisory committees, parents, and teachers and administrators at the school. It is through the lens of the traditional three part model and the specifics outlined by Newcomb et al. (2004) that I will analyze the cooperating teachers’ practices for this study.

**Summary**

This chapter provided literature review of Social Cognitive Theory, volunteering motivations, teacher identities, political identities, experiential learning opportunities the experience of serving as a cooperating teacher, the goal of a community of practice and the requirements of the agricultural education professional. It is through the lens of this theoretical and empirical research that I will outline the methods of my research study in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER 3
METHODS OF RESEARCH

The purpose of the study was to examine effects of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers. The experienced classroom teachers in the study served as a cooperating teacher during the 2012 spring semester for students in agricultural education from a land-grant institution. The participants will provide interviews, opportunities for professional observations, and analysis of teaching documents. The overall research question for this study is: How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education. The sub-research questions include:

1. Why do practicing teachers volunteer to become cooperating teachers?
2. How do cooperating teachers describe their role in the preparation of new teaching professionals?
3. How are the identities of cooperating teachers influenced by their participation in a teacher preparation program?
4. How does participating as a cooperating teacher influence the political efficacy of the teaching professional?
5. What do cooperating teachers expect to personally gain from being a volunteer in the teacher preparation program?

Rationale for Case Study Method

Qualitative research design allows for numerous ways and opportunity to gather research data. To research the effects of the student teaching experience on the professional practices of the cooperating teachers, a case study design was employed. The design of the study is a single case study design, examining the relationship between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher at each site location and the effects of their individual relationships within the
community of practice. This study used 1) A series of two-in-depth interviews with each cooperating teacher 2) Ethnographic field notes from professional observations of cooperating teacher during the student teaching experience and 3) Document analysis of teaching documents from each of the cooperating teachers. A case study allowed for the collection of data, the substantial words and images gathered from multiple sources in the field (Creswell, 2007; Rossman and Rallis, 2003). The qualitative case study is important because using qualitative methods is “the only way to obtain data on many areas of social life” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 17).

A case study approach was used to examine the research questions within the context of the studying within the context of the agricultural education programs facilitated by experienced agricultural teachers in Virginia. Case studies are empirical inquiries that “investigate a contemporary phenomenon in depth within its real life context” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). The case study is effective when coping “with the technically distinctive situation in which there were many more variables of interest than data points” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). A case study also relies on multiple sources to achieve triangulation of data within a study (Yin, 2009). With this case study, the experiences of eleven secondary agricultural teachers were examined during the Spring Semester 2012. Eight of the teachers in the study had at least one student teacher in their program during the spring 2012 academic semester. Three of the teachers in the study had served as a cooperating teacher in either the 2010 or 2011 semesters but had reported a negative student teaching experience.
The Research Design

The overall question for this study is: “How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education?” To address this question, the researcher engaged in a case study method that analyzed secondary agricultural education teachers who served as cooperating teachers during the spring 2012 semester at a land-grant university. The researcher sought to answer the sub-questions of the overall question using interviews, observations, and document analysis. The interviews were of practicing agricultural education teachers who had a student teacher during the semester. Interviews were also conducted with secondary agricultural teachers who had a poor experience in the last two years with their most recent student teacher. The interviews followed a modified version Seidman’s (2006) three-interview model. The model was modified to combine questions about the life history of the teacher and questions about the experience of serving as a cooperating teacher into the first interview. A final interview served as a reflection on the student teaching experience. The first round of interviews occurred from late January through early March. The final interviews occurred at the end of the experience in May. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight into the shared experience of the cooperating teachers.

Observations were conducted of the cooperating teachers in the classroom using an ethnographic model that involved observation of the cooperating teacher in their classes and other professional responsibilities throughout the semester. The purpose of the observations were to establish if the professional practices of the teachers were influenced by the experience of serving as a cooperating teacher.

Finally, professional documents were analyzed from the observed cooperating teachers in the study. The documents were requested via e-mail and letter prior to the first teacher
observation. The two observed teachers provided self-created documents such as lesson plans and teaching calendars along with school and school district generated documents. The teaching calendars and other planning documents were analyzed for demographic data of their programs.

**Participant Selection**

Participants were identified based upon their willingness to serve as a cooperating teacher during the spring 2012 semester for the agricultural education program at a major land grant institution. All potential participants were informed of the requirements in the study, including the interviews, the classroom observations, and the document analysis based upon their teaching documents. Participants were given an explanation of the importance of each part of the study and were allowed to opt out of any portion of the study in which they felt uncomfortable sharing information. The sites selected for the case study were schools and the communities in which they were located. To protect the participants in the study, pseudonyms are used for the school name and location. Names for communities and schools that are similar to other communities or schools within the states of the study are entirely accidental and unintentional. All observations, interviews, lesson plans and reflections were collected from the participant’s secondary school of employment unless otherwise noted. The following participants were selected for the study.

**Selection of the Observation Participants.** The eleven participants in the study are listed in Table 1. Since the observations did not occur until after the initial interview, the process for the selection of the participants is shared in the following.
The two participants for the observations were selected through a blind selection process, by the lead researcher and two current teacher educators in agricultural education. Of the eleven participants, Participants 7, 8 and 11 were eliminated first because they do not currently have a student teacher and the selection committee felt that it was necessary to observe teachers who were serving as cooperating teachers during the time of the study. Of the eight remaining teachers, Participant 2 was eliminated because the committee decided that the number of the times this person served as a cooperating teacher and their years in the teaching profession were much greater than the rest of the participants, thus setting this person up as a unique teacher in this population. Participant 3 was eliminated as a possibility because the school district ended school too soon, for summer break, for the study to be completed. Participant 6 was eliminated from the group based upon responses from the initial interview where he stated that he believed that he would not incorporate any of the strategies from the student teacher into his program due to his lengthy career. It was decided by the selection committee that in order to address the research questions, it would be more beneficial to observe a cooperating teacher who may be
more receptive to changes. Participant 4 was regretfully eliminated due to the extensive distance from the location of the other observation setting. The eliminations left four teachers and the committee agreed that one male and one female cooperating teacher would be the best option for the remaining candidates. Number 1 was selected over Number 9 for two reasons; Number 1 has taught longer than Number 9 and Number 1 indicated they were more receptive to the observation process. Number 10 was selected over Number 7 because Number 10 has taught the least number of years of the teachers in the study. Those cooperating teachers recommended for the observation portion of the study were contacted again by e-mail telephone and a local visit before the field observations began.

**Participant Initial Contact.** Initial contact was made with study participants via an official letter sent to them from the university requesting their permission in the study. When participants agreed to participate in the study, they each filled out an official waiver form that allowed participation in the interviews, participation in the observations, participation in the lesson plan analysis and participation in the teacher reflections. Participants were allowed to resign from the study at anytime according to their plan.

**Preliminary Work**

**Pilot Testing of Data Collection Methods**

The interviews were piloted with two current agriculture teachers who were not a part of the group of cooperating teachers for the institution in this study. Both individuals had prior experience serving as a cooperating teacher. Both of these pilot interviews were located in another state and both agricultural teachers had student teachers from a different teacher preparation college. Both pilot interviewees had a student teacher during the time of the study. During these interviews, the cooperating teachers were asked for feedback about the interview
questions. The interview transcripts were reviewed by the researcher and two other former secondary agricultural educators to establish trustworthiness with the interview process.

Data Collection

Interviews

Seidman (2006) states that, “stories are a way of knowing” (p. 7). Through stories, we can gather meaning through a shared experience (Seidman, 2006). The purpose of interviews “is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses;” instead the purpose is to take interest in other people’s experiences (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). Yin (2009) describes three types of interviews that are present in case studies. The first shared type is an ‘in-depth interview,” where the interviewee becomes “an informant rather than a respondent” (Yin, 2009, p. 107). These informants not only provide interview data, they also provide access to other people and documents that allow for case study research to happen. This type of interview coincides well with Seidman’s (2006) three interview series model for interviewing where the first interview focuses on the life history of the participant, the second interview focuses on the details of the experience and the third interview reflects upon meaning. Seidman (2006) states it is “important to adhere to the three-interview structure” because “each interview serves a purpose both by itself and within the series” (p. 19). However, Seidman (2006) allows for changes to the model ‘as long as a structure is maintained that allows participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experience within the context of their lives” (p. 21). The second shared type is the “focused interview,” where the participants are “interviewed for a short period of time,” where the purpose of the interview is to “collaborate facts” between the different people that are being studied (Yin, 2009, p. 107). To accomplish this style of interviewing, a pre-determined set of questions are usually used, although the interview can be open-ended.
For this study, the interviews were conducted of all eleven participants. The participants agreed to an initial interview that focused on the life history of the teacher educator and the experiences of serving as a cooperating teacher (Appendix B). A final interview included follow-up questions about responses to the previous interviews and the field observations in the student teaching experience (Appendix C).

**Field Note Observations**

People can have the tendency to do tell us one thing while they are truly doing something else (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Furthermore, sometimes people are unaware of “the interactions between themselves and others,” so they are unable to let the researcher know the true connections that exist between people (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 30). In qualitative research, the researcher can take to the field to gather observations. The main type of method used with observations is the creation of field notes. Field notes are not passive; they require the researcher to interpret their environment and to report on what they deem to be important (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). These notes are “written down,” turning an occurrence into “an account” that can be revisited and studied (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 8-9). Gathering data in the field includes four main assumptions; data is inseparable from the process, researchers have to pay attention to what the people’s experiences mean to them, field notes need to be written as events occur and the field notes need to detail the interactions that happen with people’s everyday lives. The process that is used to write the notes depends upon the researcher and the culture that they are representing. The researcher practiced open jotting, where the field notes were openly transcribed while the event took place. The field notes that were gathered were coded, categorized and analyzed with the same procedures as the interview data.
Observations are divided into two main types, participant observer and non-participant observer. The researcher in this study engaged in participant observation. Participant observations involve the researcher as a part of a community where they observed the culture as an insider (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Participant observation required “long-term immersion in the culture;” because the researcher was trying to gather the emic, or insider views of the members of a culture (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 95). This approach required the researcher to “participate in daily routines,” developing “on-going relationships” with the other community members and finally to “observe what is going on” (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995). Participant observations allowed the researcher to gain understanding of a culture, and good ethnographic participant observations allow us to have an insider’s view of the events of the culture.

As a participant observer, the researcher shared their expertise as a secondary agricultural teacher and offered themselves as a person to help the participants while gathering research. This was shared with each of the participants when the plans for the observation portion of the study were shared to the participants. The researcher was engaged in the assistance of chapter fundraisers, as an emergency substitute, and as an extra helper in the laboratory and the classroom. The researcher also served as a resource for the student teachers, providing assistance with lessons and projects.

Document Collection

In this study, the documents were collected to report demographics of the participant cooperating teachers and their local secondary programs. The documents will included lesson plans, teaching calendars, syllabi, planning documents, student teaching assignment rosters. The documents were used to help guide interview questions and observations of the professional
(Appendix D). It is possible that some documents were not given to the researcher however, no inference was made by the researcher for the documents that were not provided.

Document analysis provides another way that a qualitative researcher can study the “practical social contexts of everyday life” (Miller, 1997, p. 77 as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 498). A wide variety of documents can be analyzed; however, Lincoln and Guba (1985) attest that there is a difference between a record and a document. Records are “any written or recorded statement prepared” to either announce an event or to answer a specific question or sets of questions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 277). Examples of records could include schedules, audits, directories, certificates and minutes. Documents are “any written material…that was not prepared specifically in response to a request from the inquirer” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 277). Examples of documents include letters, diaries, speeches, editorials, and photographs. It is important to note that documents “are not always accurate and may not be lacking in bias” (Yin, 2009, p. 103). The documents may have been edited and are not a “verbatim transcript” of a situation (Yin, 2009, p. 103). Even with their problems, documents can provide very valuable information in qualitative research. Documents are typically available, and they can usually be provided at a very low cost to the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The documents can represent a stable situation; they either can accurately reflect historical situations or they can be analyzed and reanalyzed without the data being changed. Documents also are written in the natural language of the setting, meaning that they allow for data to be gathered without removing context. Documents also allow for the collaboration of evidence from multiple sources, therefore, the researcher can attempt to establish an accurate representation of a situation (Yin, 2009). Accuracy can be established by documents by providing “correct spellings and titles or names that might have been mentioned in an interview,” or by providing collaboration of data.
from multiple sources (Yin, 2009, p. 103). In this case study, the documents were used to help the researcher determine clues to develop the follow up interview questions.

**Data Analysis**

The interviews were transcribed by the researcher. These interviews were checked by the researcher for accuracy and sent to the individual participants for a member-check to ensure that the information gained during the study was accurate. During the reviews of the interview transcriptions, field note observations and document analyses, the researcher completed reflexivity memos to assist with analysis during the coding section of the study. During the analysis, the researcher decided to incorporate the data from the pilot interviews into the study since the data from the pilot interviews strengthened the data from the other participants. Each of the interview transcriptions, field note observations and professional documents were loaded into Atlas t.i. version 7.0, where they were prepared for coding. The first method cycle of coding employed that was employed was initial coding. Initial coding was effectively employed for as a starting point for interview transcripts and document analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Initial coding allowed for the interview data to be broken down into discrete parts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Saldaña, 2009). Initial coding involves codes that are tentative and provisional and that may be reworded during the analysis process (Saldaña, 2009). After rewording, initial codes were assigned to each of the transcripts and field note observations. The second method cycle of coding employed was axial coding. Axial coding is a suggested second step to initial coding because once data has been split apart; it has to be put back together through relatable concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Saldaña, 2009). The axial codes led to the development of grouped data that was reported as the main themes to emerge in Chapter 4.

**Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Reliability**
Three key points that need to be addressed with this study include credibility, trustworthiness, and reliability. The researcher obtained credibility by displaying “skills, competence, and rigor” throughout the qualitative study (Patton, 2002, p. 14). To achieve credibility, researchers can engage in three major activities, “prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). To achieve prolonged engagement with this study, the researcher was involved in local secondary agricultural education programs over a period of several months. Several months in a school setting will allowed time for me as the researcher to learn the culture of the individual school. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) the participant observations can be tested by comparing field notes from the beginning to the end of the student teaching experience; when the field notes showed continual predictability, the researcher had spent enough time at the location. Extended time in the location also allowed the researcher the opportunity to build trust with the people who were being observed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The final activity, triangulation, called for “multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories” to lead to the credibility of the data generated in the study (Denzin, 1978, as cited in Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305). Triangulation was established by using multiple sources (the eleven teachers) and through multiple methods (interviews, observations, and document analyses). Practicing engagement, persistence, and triangulation, provided credibility for this study.

Trustworthiness in qualitative research involved the response to two questions. The first question was, “Does the study conform to the standards for acceptable and competent practice?” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 63) The second question was, “Does it (the study) meet standards for ethical conduct with sensitivity to the politics of the topic and setting?” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 63). To answer the questions, this study used research methods that have been used by
many qualitative researchers in the field. The interviewing method followed Seidman’s (2006) three-part interview. The observations, including field notes and analysis followed Emerson, Fritz, and Shaw’s (1995) method for writing and analyzing ethnographic field notes. The document analysis followed Lincoln & Guba’s (1985) qualitative methods of naturalistic inquiry. The data was coded following Saldaña’s (2009) method for coding and categorizing data. The data was analyzed using Yin’s (2009) method for conducting and analyzing case study research.

To answer the specifics about the ethics and politics of each situation, the researcher subscribed to the research policies of Virginia Tech’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). In addition to the IRB policies, as the research instrument, the researcher was able to employ their sense of ethics and only engage in the proper behaviors that should be displayed when collecting and analyzing data in the field.

Reliability was used in terms of qualitative research to define an instrument that was “consistent, dependable, and predictable,” assuming that if the same study was conducted again using the same instruments, then similar data would be produced (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 292). In qualitative studies, researchers are searching for dependability. With dependability, it is important for the researcher to document their thoughts and actions throughout the research experience. This documentation is referred to as an “audit trail” and in this particular case study the evidence includes the following: audio-recorded interviews, interview transcripts, field notes, documents, coding schematics, categorical tables, a priori tables, processing and coding memos, reflexive memos, and most importantly, the final document (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 319).

Protection of Human Subjects

Prior to conducting field research, permission was sought from the university’s Institutional Review Board to conduct research on human subjects. Once the study received
approval, each participant was given a written consent form to agree to the interviews, observations and document analysis (Appendix A). In all cases were identity could be established, the names of people and places were changed to protect the individuals in the study.

**Researcher Bias and Limitations**

As a former agricultural education teacher, I as the researcher have several biases based upon my own teaching experience. One bias is that I think that the most effective lessons in agricultural education classes are those that reinforce the standard curriculum with a tactile or hands-on portion of the lesson. These lessons should be well planned throughout and should include activities that provide for full engagement for the entire class period. Teaching lessons without plans can provide some engagement and can be somewhat effective. The problem is the lack of effective planning keeps the lessons from being outstanding. Another bias of the researcher is that I believe in full use of the complete agricultural education model present in chapter 2 of the dissertation. I feel that all student teachers should practice in programs where this three-part model is in effect. Because of the nature of the student teaching experience, it is possible that the cooperating teacher may be weak in at least one of the areas of the model.

One major limitation with the study was the potential that interviewed participants were trying to please me, meaning that their true teaching methods might not be on display during the teacher observations or their responses to questions might be tweaked to provide a different answer from their true beliefs, thoughts or methods. As a researcher, I hope that I can relate with the community through my previous experiences as a classroom teacher and by working with state staff. Another limitation was that observational field notes for the teaching practices for each cooperating teacher was conducted by a pre-determined schedule, meaning that an accurate picture of teaching practices may not be observed as teachers may choose to have a performance
for my visits. A final limitation is that the participants may assume that the methods are being used to evaluate their actual competence as a teacher, not to evaluate the use of practices from the student teaching experience. To account for this limitation, I will have to reassure my participants that all data shared will only be used for the purposes stated in the study.

Summary

To begin the study, a purpose and overall question were developed. The overall question has five sub questions that were researched through the case study method using interviews, field note observations, and document analysis. Each of the documents, including interview transcripts, field notes of classroom observations, and teacher created professional documents were analyzed using whole text analysis to develop molar codes based upon the text. Once codes were determined, constant comparative analysis was employed to create categories that served as themes to the research. These themes are shared in the following chapter.
CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers. The experienced classroom teachers in the study served as a cooperating teacher during the 2012 spring semester for students in agricultural education from a land-grant institution. The participants provided interviews, opportunities for professional observations, and copies of their teaching documents for analysis. The overall research question for this study is: How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education? The sub-research questions include:

1. Why do practicing teachers volunteer to become cooperating teachers?
2. How do cooperating teachers describe their role in the preparation of new teaching professionals?
3. How are the professional identities of cooperating teachers influenced by their participation in the student teaching experience?
4. How does participating as a cooperating teacher influence the political efficacy of the teaching professional?
5. What do cooperating teachers expect to personally gain from being a volunteer in the teacher preparation program?

Review of the Study Participants

The data for the study comes from the eleven participants described in Chapter 3 plus the two pilot interview participants. The pilot interviews were included because their interviews added to the richness of the study. Both pilot interviewees also had previously submitted their written permission to use their interview data per requirements of the University’s IRB. Table 2 is a description of all thirteen participants in the study.
Table 2. Final Participants in the Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Length of Time Teaching (Years)</th>
<th>Number of opportunities as a Cooperating Teacher (Including this semester)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
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Description of the Observed Secondary School Agricultural Education Programs

Participant 1 and Participant 10 verbally agreed to be observed during the cooperating teacher case study. A description of both school locations is given for each participant. Each school has been given a pseudonym. The names of all people encountered in the study have been removed and they have been replaced with their respective position in the participant’s location. All descriptions of the location are taken from the researcher’s visual accounts of the schools.

**Participant 1 – Gold High School.** Participant 1 teaches in a single teacher department at Gold High School. Participant 1 has spent his entire teaching career at the school. Participant 1 was not originally from the Gold High School community, he lives in a neighboring county where he is also a part-time farmer. Gold High School has a few facilities for the agricultural education department that are either exclusive to Participant 1 or that he shares with other teachers. The main facility for the program is an agricultural mechanics shop that has woodworking, metal working and small engines equipment. The shop currently has two small tool
storage rooms and an overhead storage area used primarily for lumber. One of the original tool rooms has been converted to a small computer lab of four computers. This room also contains a printer, a refrigerator, a microwave and a toaster oven. The program also has a classroom that can seat approximately 20 students. The classroom is an interior classroom with no windows but it has a computer projector with a screen and a teacher’s desk with a computer in the front left corner of the classroom. The students sit in pairs at the tables when they are in the classroom. The Classroom also has a small closet for supplies. Besides the classroom and the shop, Participant 1 also has access to an office that he shares with two other career and technical education teachers and access to an outside storage locker facility that he shares with the other career and technical education teacher and the school’s custodial staff and coaching personnel.

Gold High School is located in a small community that serves as a commuter town for a neighboring city. The school is one of several agricultural education programs in the county, with programs at each of the middle schools and high schools and the county’s technical education center. Participant 1 taught three 90 minute classes during the observed semester and fourth period served as planning. The school day operated from 9:00 to 3:30.
Participant 10 – Blue High School. Participant 10 teaches in a multi-teacher department at Blue High School. Participant 10 has spent her entire teaching career at the school. Participant 10 graduated from Blue High School but currently lives in a neighboring county. Blue High School has sizable facilities for the agricultural education department that are shared by the other agricultural education teachers. The program has a main agricultural mechanics shop that has wood working and metal working equipment. Both the woodworking and metalworking areas are very sizable with a full range of equipment. The shop can safely host two classes at a time and it did as was often observed. The shop has multiple storage rooms, one for lumber and metal, one for tools, one for teaching materials and one for FFA paraphernalia. The shop also has a computer lab that contains 16 computers. Also as a part of the shop, was the office area shared by all of the agricultural teachers. This office had a desk and a computer for each teacher. There was also a desk and a computer used primarily by the student teacher. Attached to the shop was a classroom and head house primarily used for horticulture classes but was also used for finishing wood projects. The horticulture classroom was attached to two attached gable-style greenhouses. Each teacher had a separate classroom in a different part of the Career and Technical Education building. Participant 1 had the smallest of the three classrooms; her classroom could seat approximately 20 students. The classroom is an interior classroom with no windows, a computer projector with a screen and a teacher’s desk with a computer. The arrangement of the desks and chairs changed at least three observed times during the eight weeks at the location, but the teacher’s desk and filing cabinets were always in one corner of the room. The other two agricultural education teachers’ classrooms also doubled as labs for small animal care and for small engines. Blue High School is a large school located in one of two towns in the county. The high school is centrally located as it has the only agricultural education program in
the county. Participant 10 taught three 90 minute classes during the observed semester and
fourth period served as planning. The school day operated from 8:26 to 3:26.

**Development of Themes**

Four major themes emerged from the two rounds of interviews with all thirteen
participants and the field note observations of the Blue and Gold schools. These themes were
derived as answers to the original question, “How does participation as a cooperating teacher
affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education?” The
remainder of Chapter 4 is arranged by each of these themes.

**Theme 1: The professional identities of secondary agricultural education teachers are
affected by their membership in the pre-service teacher community.**

The secondary agricultural education teachers in the study had developed a professional
identity based upon their membership in five distinctive communities; a classroom community, a
school community, a community of agricultural education, and a state educational system
community. The secondary agricultural education teachers became members of the teacher
preparation community once they agreed to serve as a cooperating teacher. The length of time of
membership in the teacher preparation community began early in the Fall 2011 semester when
they received notice of their assigned student teacher. The cooperating teachers completed some
assignments with their student teachers in the Fall Semester, but their most active time in the
community was from mid-January to the end of April 2012 when they were officially hosting a
student teacher.

**Teacher as Member of Pre-Service Teacher Preparation Community.** Each of the
cooperating teachers in the study was a temporary, yet powerful member of the pre-service
teacher preparation community. Most of the cooperating teachers had served as a member of the
community in prior years, although two of the members were serving their first time as a cooperating teacher. The community included the cooperating teacher, the student teacher and the college agricultural education department. The main observations in this community involved the interaction between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. Observations of the interaction between the cooperating teacher and the college along with evidences and reflections of the teacher’s role in the pre-service teacher preparation community were also reported.

The cooperating teachers expected to inform the student teacher about the profession. One of the informative roles was the importance of sharing the good things about the profession while shielding them from some of the bad. Participant 2 stated, “I always try to be positive, give a good impression.” Participant 4 shared with her student teacher that as a teacher “you make an impact whether you know it or not.” Participant 5 shared that she and her student teacher would “talk about different things that are involved in the profession” on a daily basis. Participant 9 shares with his student teachers that “the first year is the hardest” but that he knows that he has prepared and informed them well when he sees them in “the second year and the third year” of the profession.

The cooperating teachers were in close contact with their student teacher from mid-January to the end of April in the student teaching experience. During that time, many of the interviewed participants reported that they engaged in conversation and other personal interactions with their student teachers. Pilot 1 shared that he invited his student teacher to lift weights. Pilot 2 and Participant 3 shared that they had personal conversations during lunch. Participant 5 shared that she engaged in personal conversations after school. Participant 8 and Participant 9 invited their student teachers to their homes for a meal with their families.
Participant 10 shared that she had met her student teachers for coffee. Participant 11 engaged in these conversations before school. Participant 1 shared why he felt that the conversations were important based upon his teaching experience:

I respect them as a person. I try to build up a rapport where it is a friendship basis on that student-teacher probably a little bit more than they with a student. I try to show interest in what they do outside of their student teaching, outside in their general life and actually try to be a part and realize, hey, in the same aspect that students that the student teacher I want to know, interact with them as a friend, so that hey, when they are struggling, when they are having trouble, I want them to know that they can be comfortable coming to me and that if they have an issue that happens at home outside of their student teaching that is going to adversely affect them, I want to know beforehand, before they start, I guess, I have seen teachers and I haven’t had that issue with student teachers but I have had teachers that have really had issues within a classroom and come to find out after the fact that something happened at home, in their family, or something had really shook them up. I want to know that about that student teacher. I want to make sure they are comfortable enough before they go into the classroom.

Casual conversations were observed between the student teachers and the cooperating teachers at both high schools usually beginning with the cooperating teacher asking the student teacher about the current or previous day. Many times these conversations happened before school, during lunch, during school duties or on field trips.

Daily, the cooperating teachers would reflect on professional practices with their student teachers. Every participant shared in the interviews that at least part of the day, either before
school, during lunch, during planning or after school was used for a time to reflect on practice. The cooperating teachers in the observations listened to the student teachers talk about their practice. Responses, if given, from the cooperating teachers in these situations tended to be of encouragement, praise or gentle advice. Participant 1 provides encouragement to the Gold High School student teacher. The encouragement occurred after the student teacher was having some difficulty with sending out e-mails to the staff. The student teacher had sent four e-mails to the school staff concerning a field trip scheduled for that day, each with errors. A quote from the field notes at Gold High School explains Participant 1’s response:

The student teacher explained her troubles with each of the e-mails. The cooperating teacher said to the student teacher, “You have learned a lesson.” The cooperating teacher asked her how close to accurate the list was. The student teacher mentioned that she left one of the current attendees off of the list and one of the people that were supposed to be going was absent. The cooperating teacher assured the student teacher that he would call the front office as they were leaving. The student teacher went to the bus.

Participant 10 used time on the bus ride to an FFA competition to ask about the student teacher’s adult education class as quoted in the Blue High School field notes:

The student teacher shared with the cooperating teacher the adult class that she had taught the previous night. The student teacher shared how much fun it was for her to teach the adult group. Most of the adults in her class were 55 and order, but the student teacher noted how they all wanted to participate in the candle making activity.

Once a week, the reflections happened while reviewing the required observations. The
cooperating teachers tended to remain upbeat while reviewing the formal observations. This quote from the Blue High School field notes showed Participant 10 sharing the following advice with her student teacher after observing her lesson:

The cooperating teacher said, “With that second block, you sound like a broken record.” She mentioned that if you are going to ask for them to be silent during announcements, they need consequences if that silence is not met. The cooperating teacher noted that the student teacher was showing major signs of stress and the cooperating teacher mentioned, “Don’t let them kick you into that gear.”

Participant 1 shared the following with his student teacher during the review of an official observation in a quote recorded in the Gold High School field notes:

The cooperating teacher also asked why she had not showed a dairy farm video that was in the PowerPoint. The student teacher replied that she wanted to show it tomorrow; when she knew the cooperating teacher would be absent. The cooperating teacher then asked the student teacher about tomorrow’s lesson to see what she had planned for the class.

**Interaction with the College.** In the pre-service teacher preparation community, the cooperating teachers interacted with the college program of the student teacher. The student teacher in both observed locations was assigned one university staff member, in this case, a professor from the department who served as the supervisor of the student teacher. The university staff member visited with the student teacher three times during the semester, spending time each visit conducting an official teaching observation of the student teacher and a meeting with the student teacher and a meeting with the cooperating teacher. During the
semester, the cooperating teachers were observed sending weekly reflections on their student teachers to the university. At the end of the semester, the staff member and the cooperating teacher worked to come up with a grade for the student teacher on the experience. The university supervisor actually spends very little time in the field with the individual teacher when compared to the cooperating teacher although it should be noted that the student teachers in the researched program are required to participate in weekly meetings on Skype with university personnel. When Participant 10 at Blue High School mentioned that she felt that her student teacher was the best student teacher that she had ever had, the university supervisor commented, “That carries a lot of weight with me, you see her every day.” The positives of the relationship between the university and the cooperating teachers was reflected in interviews with Participant 2, Participant 5, and Participant 9 who all shared that because of the consecutive years that they had assisted with student teachers they truly felt like they were truly a part of the pre-service teacher preparation community.

The only observed complaint from the about the university supervisors and that related towards the lack of availability or communication that they seemed to be receiving from the college. A quote from the Gold High School field notes describes one of these breakdowns in communication:

The cooperating teacher mentioned that he was real concerned with the student teacher but that he felt he was not getting support from the college. He stated that the student teacher had only been visited once and although he was promised a meeting three weeks ago, one had still not happened. He said he really wanted some help with the situation.

It is unsure from Participant 1’s description why a meeting had not occurred, but the student
The teacher's performance was causing stress for the cooperating teacher. The other miscommunications during the semester also involved time. A miscommunication between the Blue High School student teacher, Participant 10 and the university supervisor led to a late arrival on an official visit. A miscommunication also occurred with Participant 6 and his student teacher where the university supervisor only had the chance to visit for 20 minutes. From a previous semester, Participant 7 also shared that a breakdown in communication hindered her ability to work with her student teacher. Participant 7 said that she noticed a severe problem with her student teacher “pretty much immediately,” but the student teacher remained until she was removed with two to three weeks left in the student teaching experience. Participant 7 did not elaborate on the specific problems with the student teacher, only that the student teacher was performing poorly and that Participant 7 needed assistance from the college.

Besides time and support, the participants in the study had mixed experiences with the preparation of their student teachers. Participant 3 shared that his student teacher “was certainly well prepared to come in and teach.” Participant 3 shared that “he had a good sound knowledge of lesson planning and utilization of technology.” Participant 6 and Participant 10 both shared that their student teachers had done good jobs but that they needed more experience in agricultural mechanics before entering the field. Participant 5 shared that her student teacher had done a great job, but she felt that the student teachers were starting to think that all of the reflections were becoming a burden as opposed to a help. Participant 7, Participant 8, and Participant 11 did not have student teachers during the time period of the study, but all of them reported that they felt that the college had failed them with their most recent student teachers. Participant 7 shared her beliefs about what happened with her last student teacher:
I really think that the students need to be completely prepared before coming into the student teaching experience. And I have had a lot of student teachers that have been prepared. But I think if there is a question on whether a student teacher is prepared, that maybe the university should do a better job screening before they put them out there and maybe putting in the extra time to really make sure that a student teacher is going to fit with the program.

Participant 8 shared that she felt a lack of support from the college when it came to visits:

I can’t remember how many times they actually came. I feel like sometimes that the help that the observations from [college] weren’t all they should have been. And maybe they were not even often enough. Maybe there needed to be another visit thrown in there.

Participant 11 shared that she felt that preparation of the students for the classroom environment was lacking in the following reflection:

And I know that we look at things differently, our kids don’t ever do anything wrong. Our kids are important and we are going to do whatever we can to work with them, but if, and I know that is how people, like their supervisors are looking at them, too, but they have to be open to the cooperating teacher to say, hey, maybe they do know what they are talking about. That just because they can talk to, teach their peers, that doesn’t mean that they will be able to teach high school students. And if I teach for, one lesson for an hour and a half, it doesn’t mean that I can last for 10 weeks and that is huge. That is what student teaching is all about.

Participant 7 and Participant 11 shared that they had attempted to work with their most recent student teachers, but they reported that the student teacher decided to not make any changes in
their teaching practices. Participant 11’s student teacher finished the experience successfully, and took a job in the agricultural industry. Participant 8’s student teacher finished the experience and is currently employed as a secondary agricultural teacher.

**Effects on Membership in the Classroom Community.** The community most observed throughout the study was that of the teacher as a member of the classroom community. This is not surprising, as each participant in the study was responsible for teaching a full load of classes daily. The community changed multiple times a day depending upon the class schedule. The members of the community included the cooperating teacher, the students and the student teacher. The primary observations in this community included the interactions with the students and the interactions with the student teacher in the classroom community.

**Interactions with Students in the Classroom.** One of the main ways that the cooperating teacher interacted students in the classroom environment was through the asking and answering of questions. Questions were one of the primary ways that students and their teachers shared information. Questions were asked to clarify information and they were used as a teaching strategy. The student teachers were encouraged to ask questions in the classroom and both of them asked questions when they were performing instructor duties. The questions asked by the cooperating teachers also were about the general well-being of the students. The student teacher at Blue High School engaged in this style of questioning with the students before, during and after she was in control of a class. The student teacher at Gold High School rarely engaged in this style of questioning.

The cooperating teachers also engaged in non-content related conversations with their students in the classroom environment. These conversations occurred very frequently between the cooperating teacher and the students while the student teacher was in charge of the class. An
example of this style of conversation is quoted from the Blue High School field notes:

A student asked about the projects, “Will we ever get to make one of these?” The cooperating teacher answered, “You will if you stay in Ag.”

The student said, “That’s pretty cool.”

The cooperating teacher explained that it was an advanced project.

Another student asked, “Do we get to take it home?”

The cooperating teacher answered in the affirmative.

The student teacher at Blue High School would carry on conversations with students in the first and third period class while they were working on shop projects, but she was rarely observed conversing with students in second period. The student teacher at Gold High School rarely interacted in conversation with any of the students except for a small group of students in the second period class. Participant 1 and Participant 10 engaged in conversations in all classes and they attempted to talk with all of their students.

The use of humor was a constant interaction in many of the classes. Participant 1 would initiate the humor in many of his classes, as witnessed in this quote from the Gold High School field notes:

One student, a senior, came into the building through the shop. The student had already missed 15 days in the semester. The cooperating teacher sarcastically walked up to him and introduced himself. The cooperating teacher took it further and introduced the two friends that he walked in with as two good guys that could help show him around the building.

Participant 1 also used humor as a way to correct unsafe practices in the shop environment as reported in a field note from Gold High School:
A student asked before he started grinding on the other side of the shop. “Mr. [Cooperating Teacher], will you be in my way when I start grinding?” The cooperating teacher was working on draining a small engine of gas for tomorrow’s contest. The cooperating teacher sarcastically replied, “I’m sitting in a pool of gas, we will know soon enough.” The student changed the direction of his grinding.

Participant 10 was less likely to initiate humor, but it had a constant presence in her classroom due to her students. The student teacher at Blue High School initiated humor with her students, but like the conversations, it was only observed with two of the classes. The student teacher at the Gold High School was not involved with the humor in the classroom community. The cooperating teachers also interacted with the students by providing praise. Both of the cooperating teachers provided verbal praise, telling them that they were correct or by providing compliments on good behavior or winning contests.

**Interaction with the Student Teachers in the Classroom.** One of the most common ways the cooperating teachers interacted with their student teachers in the classroom community was through answering their questions. Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 10, and Participant 11 all shared that one of their main interactions with current and former student teachers was through answering their questions. The student teacher often would ask questions while teaching a class. This quote from the Gold High School field notes describes one of these situations:

The student teacher came and grabbed the cooperating teacher because she had a question about how to read the plans for the woodworking project. The
woodworking project in this class was the construction of a beehive stand. The cooperating teacher looked at the plan and then gave his reasons for how the plan should be interpreted. The cooperating teacher pointed out on the plans the dimensions that would be needed to complete the project. The student teacher once again asked about the plans. The cooperating teacher explained that the same measurements for each board would not work because you had to account for the joints on the inside of the drawers. The student teacher exclaimed, “You are a genius” and she understood why the joints had to be transformed.

The student teacher at Blue High School asked for help during the middle of teaching many of her lessons. This observation was from a classroom lesson:

The student teacher asked the cooperating teacher if she could print out a file that she had stored on her flash drive. The student teacher had misplaced her copy but she needed it for the lesson.

The cooperating teacher printed the document and handed the student teacher back the flash drive along with her papers.

The Blue High School student teacher also asked questions while in the shop, this quote from the Blue High School field notes was about a small group project:

The student teacher asked the cooperating teacher what happened to the project.

The cooperating teacher showed the student teacher the problem on the shelf and explained that there was, “Too much power on the drill.”

“Oh, Okay,” acknowledged the student teacher.

The cooperating teachers also engaged in the asking of questions of their student teachers. Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 7, and Participant 9 all
specifically shared in the interviews that they frequently asked their student teachers questions about plans for classes, assignments, their opinions and their general well-being. In an observation at Gold High School, Participant 1 used questions to try to help the student teacher. The student teacher was asked “if she needed any help with anything for tomorrow.” The student teacher “mentioned that she needed some help bringing in the tomato plants from outside.”

Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 8, and Participant 11 all spoke about the need to give the student teacher freedom in running and operating the program. Participant 8 summarized why she felt that the freedom was necessary:

I often made sure that I gave them the opportunity to teach by themselves, which means that I wasn’t in the room because I think that gives them more of an opportunity to be themselves and not be scared of having the cooperating teacher there to make sure that they are doing everything so, giving them the chance to fly on their own.

Granting the freedom can be difficult, Participant 1 stated:

So you have to be able, even though you know it is going, no going to work, you have to step back and say, okay, they are your students, you do how you want to do. You do the class how you want to do it.

Although both of the observed cooperating teachers left their student teachers alone for long periods of time, they would interject into the teaching of the student teacher. Participant 1 interjected into the middle of a lesson as quoted from the Gold High School field notes:

The cooperating teacher mentioned to me, “I’ve got to take over a little bit.” The cooperating teacher jumped in with the class and shared with them how to plant
the potatoes. After a couple of minutes, the cooperating teacher walked away, at least knowing that the potatoes were being planted the way that he wanted them planted.

Participant 10 also interrupted the student teacher describing a project as quoted in the Blue High School field notes:

The cooperating teacher chimed in, explaining that for a smooth finish, “You need to go over it with steel wool.” The cooperating teacher explained that the wool was similar to fine grit sandpaper. Because the steel wool behaves like sandpaper, the cooperating teacher reminded the class to, “Make sure you go with the grain” when they are sanding.

The cooperating teachers explained in the follow-up interviews the reasoning for the interruptions. Participant 1 stated:

Unfortunately because my student teacher this semester was not as prepared as they should have been for some situations and I would have to step in because they would get confused or lost.

Participant 9 provided a similar response, sharing that if “the quality of content that they have goes down, the more that I speak up.” Participant 2 shared that he stayed in many of the lessons on pesticides and fertilizers and that he “interjected a lot in teaching as she went through those lessons.” Participant 2 mentioned that he did this because the student teacher “felt so uncomfortable” with the subject matter. Participant 3 interjects by asking questions that he feels contributes to the discussion. Participant 5 said that she will “step in and talk to a class just because kids just love to test student teachers.” Participant 6 and Participant 7 interjected whenever he had a story from his personal experiences that was related to the topic.
Cooperating teachers also interacted with the student teachers through observations. As cooperating teachers, the secondary agricultural education teachers were required to provide official weekly observations. The cooperating teachers at Blue High School and Gold High School performed this duty. Participant 10 at Blue High School was very diligent about verifying information on the lessons and lesson plans as was witnessed from this quote in the Blue High School field notes:

The cooperating teacher wrote a few notes on the observation form. The cooperating teacher looked at the lesson plan and then pulled up the website for the state’s career and technical education website. On the website, the cooperating teacher went to the section that listed classes under agricultural education. The classes had a competency listing, to which the teacher looked at the website, compared it to the lesson plan and then made some more marks on the observation form.

Besides the official observations, the cooperating teachers would perform many, small unofficial observations. This observation of Participant 1 from Gold High School was fairly typical of the interactions that happened once or twice per period:

The cooperating teacher walked up into the hallway and watched his class from the classroom door for a few minutes to see what the student teacher was working on. The cooperating teacher was not too happy with what was going on in the class. From the door, he noted that the student teacher was using the wrong review activity for tomorrow’s test unless she had added a new section on genetics to the dairy unit.

The cooperating teachers would assign particular tasks to their student teachers in the
classroom environment. Participant 2 asked the student teacher to pick up supplies from the greenhouse, bringing them back into the classroom. Participant 3 assigned his student teacher many of the paperwork requirements of the job. Participant 5 assigned her student teachers to make use of all of the classroom technology including “the Elmo, to the laptops, the Smart Board.” Participant 6 shared that he sometimes would “send her up to run papers off for me.”

Observed assignments in the field included having the cooperating teachers to ask their student teachers to run copies and to come up with new classroom activities.

**Effects on Membership in the School Community.** The members of the school community included the cooperating teacher, school administration, other teachers, and school staff. The student teachers were often seen as an extension of the cooperating teacher as both the cooperating teacher and the student teacher were expected to perform their community functions together. Many of the observations observed in this community did not directly involve the student teacher as the interactions occurred while the student teacher was leading class. The main observations in this community were the interactions with other employees in the school and the reflections and evidences of the teacher’s role in the school community.

Participant 4 shared an experience in the first interview about her fellow elective teachers as they would also always “eat lunch together in the same room” many times “sharing ideas” and “talking about the day.” The experience described by Participant 4 apparent in the observations as the observed cooperating teachers engaged most often with other Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers in their school community. The cooperating teacher at Gold High School was observed engaging often with two other members of the school community; one was the technology teacher located in the shop and classroom next door and the other was a retired marketing teacher that served often as his and other people’s substitute teachers in the building.
The student teacher at Gold High School was introduced to and interacted closely with these two teachers as she completed many of her required observations with the technology teacher and she worked in the classroom with the retired Marketing teacher serving as a substitute for Participant 1 two days that he served on jury duty and again as a substitute for a day they had an FFA Field Trip. Because most of the CTE teachers had the same lunch period, Participant 10 and her student teacher spent most of their lunches with the other CTE teachers. The Blue High School student teacher did not spend two observed lunches with the CTE group; one was when she was visiting with the university supervisor and the other was when she was eating lunch with her third period class. The CTE group at Blue High School appeared tight-knit as they even shared lunch together at a Mexican restaurant on their teacher workday.

Participant 10 interacted most often with one of the other agricultural education teachers at the school. The frequencies of these interactions made sense as they shared an office, a shop, and an FFA chapter. Because the Participant 10 had been in the teaching profession longer, she served as a mentor for her teaching partner. Many times, the inexperience of her teaching partner caused frustration as quoted from the Blue High School Field Notes:

The cooperating teacher was visibly and verbally frustrated with the final preparations before the field trip. The cooperating teacher made a comment about the teaching partner, “If people would just do their job,” she would not have to try to prepare things at the last minute.

Most of these observations were made to the researcher, but some of the observations were shared between Participant 10 and the Blue High School Student teacher. The student teacher once asked why the agricultural mechanics team only had two members. Participant 10 bluntly replied, “Because they didn’t practice.” Besides the cooperating teacher’s frustrations, she also
had many positive interactions with her teaching partner as he was a part of the CTE lunch community, they shared an agricultural mechanics shop and they shared advising duties for the FFA chapter. One of the main areas that Participant 10, the teaching partner and the student teacher worked the closest was in sharing the preparations for the FFA chapter banquet. Participant 10 also showed willingness to protect the teaching partner as taken from this quote in the Blue High School field notes:

Once I got to the office, I was able to ascertain that there was a dustup between the teaching partner and the principal over the discipline of a student. The cooperating teacher was giving advice to the teaching partner, mentioning that he needed to type the principal an e-mail and to print a copy of the e-mail for his own records. The cooperating teacher mentioned that e-mails like this had a way of conveniently disappearing when they are needed. The cooperating teacher let the teaching partner know that she would back him with administration, because the teaching partner had followed all of the proper procedures. The cooperating teacher mentioned to me that she has a lovely principal that “does not have a clue” when it concerns students and the classroom.

The previous observation occurred while Participant 10 was conducting an observation of the Blue High School student teacher. Participant 10 also interrupted another observation of the Blue High School student teacher to assist a colleague as recorded in the Blue High School Field notes:

A coworker came in and interrupted the observation. The coworker asked the cooperating teacher if she could help his student to select a finish for his woodworking project. The cooperating teacher briskly walked them around the
shop looking at some of the different finishes on the projects. The cooperating
teacher mentioned “I have to go, I am observing her” speaking about the student
teacher. The cooperating teacher went back to the classroom.

In her follow-up interview, Participant 10 shared that having a student teacher has affected her
bond this semester with the other CTE teachers:

I think some teachers in CTE specifically, have tried to watch a little bit more
what they say around me and the student teacher together because they don’t want
to, they don’t want to ruin it for the student teacher. They don’t want to say, oh,
your first year is going to be the worst year of your life. Or, you better hang on
tight because it is going to be a really long time until you feel confident and
accomplished as a teacher. I think that changes a little bit about how people react
around me or how they, I guess speak or what they say.

The secondary agriculture teachers also interacted with school staff, other teachers and
administration as members of the local school community. Participant 10 shared a situation
where she received a spot observation while she was performing an official observation of the
student teacher. The discussion between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher was
observed after the earlier encounter with the principal:

The student teacher shared with the cooperating teacher that she was nervous
about being “double observed.” The cooperating teacher explained that the
principal liked to do this, to make sure her teachers were doing something
constructive on Fridays. The cooperating teacher went on to explain that many
teachers commonly use Fridays as a no work day or to show a video. These visits
by the principal were designed to make a cut into this free time.
Interactions between the Gold High School cooperating teacher and the principal were much less often, but when they happened, it usually involved securing a signature for an FFA application or a Purchase Order.

The cooperating teachers interacted with other members of the school community for the direct benefit of their students. The actions of Participant 1 and his student teacher are quoted from the Gold High School field notes:

We walked around the school and the cooperating teacher asked the teacher what his students needed to do to raise their grade in their respective classes. For one of the teachers, she only needed a student to complete one assignment; he had made up all of his missing work. For another teacher, he was fine with the student going as long as they continued making up some missing assignments. A third teacher even let one of the students leave to make up the assignment for another class because all they were doing was watching a movie that day. The student teacher was present for the entire trip around the school, but she did not talk directly to any of the other teachers.

Participant 1 was observed going to the Gold High School guidance office on behalf of one of his students that needed help with a college application. This exchange happened a few minutes before classes began, but the student teacher was still in charge of the first period class. This exchange is quoted from the Gold High School field notes:

The cooperating teacher continued to work with the student on the college application for the John Deere Technical Program. After finishing the application, the cooperating teacher went to guidance with the student. He asked the counselor if he could get a transcript to send to the John Deere community
college program. The counselor agreed to print the transcript. While the student was there, the cooperating teacher also had her to fill out her signature for the student’s State FFA Degree. The cooperating teacher shared later in the day that he went on the student’s behalf because the guidance office at his school only really worked with the 4-year college bound students.

Participant 10 also went to track down another member of the school community for the benefit of her students. This observation was made while the student teacher was teaching the third period class:

The cooperating teacher then went to one of the science classrooms in the main building. The cooperating teacher gave a field trip form to the science teacher and asked her to give the form to one of the cooperating teacher’s students.

The cooperating teachers served as a member of their local school community, interacting with school administration, teachers, and school staff. The observations showed that the teachers interacted with other community members on behalf of their current students. In this community, the student teacher was seen as an extension of the cooperating teacher. Many of the interactions that happened during the school day would not have happened except for the presence of the student teacher.
**Effect on the Agricultural Education Community.** The cooperating teachers in the study were all members of the Agricultural Education community. The main members of this community are agricultural education teachers, but the community also includes support staff that work with the FFA organization. In this community, the student teacher was viewed as a near equal and usually performed the exact same skills as the cooperating teacher.

The addition of a student teacher can have a direct impact on the cooperating teacher. Participant 1 shared how his first student teacher was directly responsible for his increased involvement in the agricultural education community:

> I think my first student teacher probably got me more involved in regional and state activities than any other because I tried to go to like area meetings and state meetings and stuff like that beforehand, but I don’t think it was as much of a priority until I had that first student teacher and I realized the value of needing to get that student teacher to that and I think by the time that I got the student teacher to it, I think I realized I was getting more out of it than I thought I would and it has made more of an emphasis in my life or my professional activity to make sure that I am more active in state and regional activities than I was before.

Participant 9 also shared a similar story about the importance of becoming active in the agricultural education community, although he did not attribute his increased involvement directly to a student teacher:

> There are people that you have never heard of and I used to be one of those people that, they’re ag teachers but you have never heard of them. And, I am not saying that is all together or horribly wrong, but I am saying that you don’t, I mean, it is just like what we tell the kids out at the FFA. You get out of FFA what
you put into it. If you want to get a lot out of Ag, being an Ag teacher, you have to put a lot into it. Some of those people that don’t put a lot into it, they have other lives, they have other things that are going on, but it is, I don’t know how much of a rewarding career they will have in ag end if they don’t stay involved on the state level.

Participant 2 shared his thoughts from the interaction of his student teacher with other agricultural education professionals:

This week, we had a small engines contest and the student teacher got a kick out visiting with in-service teachers and I think that is something that we have, of course I am going to editorialize here, but, if you can catch my drift, I think it is something that we have went away from a lot where, we don’t have as many activities throwing these groups together. With FFA and CDE we can still throw the pre-service and the in-service teachers together. I think, I know my (student) teacher this week saw how much teachers enjoyed just visiting each other, swapping ideas and gossiping and whatever you want to say. They enjoyed seeing teachers enjoying the profession.

The secondary agricultural teachers at Gold High School and Blue High School were active members of the agricultural education community. The Gold High School student teacher was involved in the agricultural education community through her interactions with a State FFA Officer on a chapter visit and with another agricultural teacher at a federation contest. The Gold High School student teacher assisted with a federation contest and an area FFA rally. The student teacher at Blue High School was also very engaged with the agricultural education community as she trained an Extemporaneous Public Speaker who won the federation contest
and went on to finish second in the area. The Blue High School student teacher also was the Master of Ceremonies for the Area Talent Competition. At both events, the Blue High School student teacher also interacted with other secondary agricultural teachers. The interactions with members of the agricultural education community were collegial and generally involved one or more members sharing, professional knowledge or advice with the student teacher.

The majority of the cooperating teachers in the study shared their participation in the state and national level organizations. Most of the teachers shared how they participated in the National Association of Agricultural Educators and the National FFA Organization. Pilot 2, Participant 2, Participant 6, Participant 8, and Participant 10 had all served as officers as a professional in an organization at the state or national level. As a dues-paying member, Participant 1 shared:

It is my responsibility to stay up-to-date with what is going on at the national level. I keep up-to-date on what the website is putting out. What any newsletters are putting out, with the Ag education, the national educator associations are putting out as far as what is going on across the nation.

Besides involvement in FFA through the chapter level, it was not observed how much professional knowledge was shared about the professional organizations. Participant 8 did share that she had shared a lot about the national organization as her most recent student teacher was at the school the year she was a national officer. Participant 4 and Participant 7 were the only participants that mentioned that they were not really involved at the state level. Participant 7 shared that she was active at one time, but felt burned by back-to-back poor student teaching experiences which pushed her to withdraw from the community. Participant 7 did share that she had remained “pretty active on websites where you can upload information” and contributed her
generated materials to other agricultural teachers.

The cooperating teachers in the study shared their experiences as members of the agricultural education community and they involved the student teachers in the community as peers as they were performing the same tasks as the secondary agricultural education teachers. This section also showed evidence of two of the participants sharing how their participation in the community was impacted by a former student teacher, one teacher shared that he has greater involvement in the community and the other shared that she has withdrawn from the community.

**Effects on Membership in the Local Community.** The members of the community included the cooperating teacher, parents, volunteers, local organizations, and the local school district. The student teacher was viewed as an observer or as an apprentice in this scenario; all interactions with the local community occurred with or on behalf of the cooperating teacher.

In the interviews, Participant 1, Participant 8, Participant 9, Participant 10, and Participant 11 all shared the importance of serving as a role model in the local community. While all of the teachers shared in the interviews that they were very involved in their local communities, the interaction between the student teachers and the community was minimally observed. Both student teachers were observed taking local field trips with their classes; the Gold High School student teacher went on a field trip to a dairy farm and the Blue High School student teacher went to the meat department of a grocery store. Participant 6 also mentioned that their student teacher planned a local field trip to a dairy farm. The student teacher at Blue High School taught an adult education horticulture class, but this class took place while the student teacher was working with one of Participant 10’s teaching partners. The student teacher at Gold High School had attended some of the FFA Alumni meetings, but she was not present at the observed meeting; instead she was participating in a Skype session with the university.
Participant 2 and Participant 5 mentioned that their student teachers helped out with the plant sale and Participant 3 and Participant 9 shared that their student teachers helped out with a local service project.

The cooperating teachers interacted with community members, local organizations and their school district as a part of their local community. The cooperating teachers reported a minor amount of interaction between the student teachers and the local community. Because of the small amount of interaction, there were no observable affects on the local community.

**Effects on Membership in the State Education Community.** The largest and least observed of the communities was the teacher as a member of the state educational system. The members of the community included the cooperating teacher and all other people who were a part of the state educational system community. The student teacher actually had more direct interaction with this community than the secondary agricultural education teachers as they were in the process of meeting the requirements for professional licensure. This interaction was primarily through the student teacher’s role as a college student. The observations in this community from this study were the interactions with state curriculum, state legislators and with the teacher’s role of producing future productive citizens in the state. The secondary agricultural education teachers shared that they were called upon to write secondary agricultural education curriculum at the state level, that they had contacted state-level legislators on behalf of the agricultural education community and that they shared a belief that they were preparing future citizens and not just teaching students. No interactions of the cooperating teachers or the student teachers were observed in this community.

**Exiting the Community.** Unlike the other five communities in the study, the agricultural education teachers actually leave this one shortly after the student teacher leaves the program.
The community is designed to prepare the student teachers to enter the other five communities as a new professional. The transition out of the community started about halfway through the semester for Participant 1 at Gold High School while it was a week before the end of the semester for Participant 10 at Blue High School. The transition happens as the cooperating teacher begins to resume control of their classes from the student teacher. The transition from student teacher to cooperating teacher was very smooth for both high schools. The main observation at both locations was that the cooperating teacher was running behind schedule with at least one of their classes. Participant 1 explained it as being “two weeks behind with two weeks left of school.” Participant 1 went on to share “usually when a student teacher leaves, I am usually a little behind on the teaching calendar.” Participant 5, Participant 6, and Participant 7 all agreed with this statement and they all shared that they felt it was just a product of needing experience.

The secondary agricultural education teachers in the study served as a member of six distinctive professional communities. Each of these communities has a direct impact on the professional identity of the agricultural teacher. The cooperating teachers demonstrated engagement with their student teachers in the classroom community, the school community, the agricultural education community and the pre-service teacher preparation community. Little to no engagement of the student teacher was observed in the local community and in the state education community.
Theme 2: Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers Volunteer as Cooperating Teachers to Help Others and Themselves Professionally.

Secondary agricultural education teachers are motivated to serve as cooperating teachers to help other people while also professionally helping themselves. The following shares how the secondary agricultural education teacher used both of these major motivations in their decision to volunteer as a cooperating teacher.

Motivation to Help Others.

The secondary agricultural education teachers shared their motivations for helping other people. These motivations are classified as altruism and protective.

Altruism. Cooperating teachers in the study stated that they chose to participate as a cooperating teacher for altruistic reasons; they wanted to do the right thing. Doing the right thing involved caring for the needs of future professionals. Participant 6 spoke to the future of profession, saying that “by serving as a cooperating teacher, I think we are really investing in the future of our profession by bringing on the next generation of agriculture teachers.” Participant 1 shared that he cares for the needs of future professionals by, “finding out where their expertise are so I can kind of get the class setup or get to the segment of the class where they can fall in a comfort zone at least to start out.” Participant 2 also shared the importance of preparation by saying:

I need to prepare my kids. I need to have a good bunch of kids that when they walk in, the students will cooperate with them and at the same time, challenge them enough to make it worthwhile where they can learn.

Participant 8 shared, “I guess because I have been around so long that I feel like that I have got something to give back and can help these youngsters become good teachers and then become
great teachers and they can’t do it the first year.” Participant 10 also shared the importance of caring for the needs of future professionals by stating:

If there is no one there to teach these future teachers, then we are not going to have them. We are not going to have them coming out into the field because no one wants to come out into a field where they don’t know anything about it, or they have no absolutely no experience. And even if they do come out in the profession, the likelihood of them staying would be much shorter, much less than those who have had a good experience.

Participant 11 also agreed with the idea stating “Well, there has to be somebody to be willing to share those ideas and open up their umbrella and really help out someone who is struggling or someone who is just getting started to keep them from struggling.”

Altruism also involved providing opportunities for future professionals to learn the craft. The main opportunity shared by the cooperating teachers was an actual location for the student teacher to have in their experience. The teacher from the first pilot interview described his altruism by stating, “I had to have a cooperating teacher when I was a student teacher, and I appreciate them doing that, and so, I don’t mind doing it because it is something we need to do to get Ag teachers.” The teacher went on to say “you have to give those beginning teachers an opportunity. Somebody gave me one, one day, you know, I think it is something that I have to do.” Participant 2 agreed, saying that his passion for serving as a cooperating teacher comes from the simple fact, “that, had I not student taught, I would have probably lost my license and I may have never taught again.” Participant 10 shared that without cooperating centers the preservice teachers “would not be ready to actually go out into the workforce and find a job.” Participant 11 explained, “It is what we are supposed to be doing, what we are supposed to be
giving back to give people that opportunity because somebody gave it to me.” One of the provided opportunities was the importance of the simulated experience. Participant 9 shared about student teaching that, “It is a taste of the real world before they go out into the employment sector and I don’t mind playing that role.” Participant 1 agreed, stating that student teaching was something that “the student teachers just could never experience in a college environment.” Participant 1 continued by stating that it “is very important that as many teachers as possible give them those opportunities to come out to their schools and get the experience.” Participant 5 shared “if you don’t give them the opportunity to be able to experience what it is like to be a real teacher; then you are cutting them short in their student teaching experience.” Participant 7 agreed with the others, stating:

I think the better the experience that a student teacher has and if it is more reflective of a true teaching experience, than that person is going to come out of the teacher prep program and be very successful.

Another opportunity was the location of the agriculture program in relation to the university. Participant 10 shared, “It is just something that I feel like that I can do to help, to continue to help the Ag Ed program, especially with a lot to do with proximity.” Participant 10 continued by speculating, “Many college students like to stay somewhat close to where they live and not have to travel or figure out lodging for ten, twelve weeks at a time.” Participant 3 agreed by stating, “as close as I am to [the college], I need to be offering it.” Participant 9 was also in agreement, saying “Our department as a whole is integral because of its geographical location to [college] and its openness to the student teachers.” Participants 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 also alluded to the importance of their location to either the college or to the home of the student teacher as their selection as cooperating teaching locations.
Secondary Agricultural Education teachers volunteer to serve as a cooperating teacher for altruistic reasons. The teachers shared ways that they cared for future professionals by providing them accessible locations to practice the craft of becoming an agricultural education professional. Many of the participants shared that they needed an agricultural education teacher to provide them a teaching location when they began their teaching career. Providing a student teacher the same opportunity was one way that the cooperating teachers were able to give back to the profession.

*Protective.* Secondary agricultural education teachers also choose to volunteer as a cooperating teacher for protective reasons. The teachers were very concerned about the continuation and quality of the agricultural education community. The secondary agricultural teachers also were very protective of their prior contacts that came to them as their gatekeeper to the community.

Secondary agricultural education teachers shared several reasons why they wanted to continue the community. Pilot 1 and Participant 6 both shared that they were both at retirement age and that they wanted to make sure that the community would remain strong when they left the profession. Pilot 2, Participant 1, Participant 4, Participant 5, Participant 8 and Participant 10 all shared the need of cooperating teachers to provide well prepared agricultural education teachers for the workforce. Participant 1 described about secondary agricultural education programs that “we need to keep them strong all over the state.” Participant 5 agreed, sharing:

> There is, the way the economy is right now, there are always cuts being made everywhere and we have got to sell our own programs so that the Ag programs aren’t cut in a lot of schools, in school systems. I think having a successful teacher in the program prevents, those Ag programs from being cut and I think in
order for them to be successful Ag teachers, they need go through a successful
teacher prep program. And part of that is being with a good cooperating teacher.

Participant 5 also shared having a student teacher can help convince their own students to pursue
a career in agricultural education:

I have one lady that, one young lady this year who is a senior who thinks she
wants to be an Ag teacher. So she has spent time with my student teacher, asking
her about the teacher prep program and talking about different programs, not only
at [college], which is obviously the closest school to us with a teacher prep
program but other schools as well and what routes can you take to being an Ag
teacher. So, I think, not only are we hopefully setting good examples for the
student teachers that we have in being a cooperating teacher, but we set examples
for our students, to want them to come into the profession.

The cooperating teachers also spoke of the desire to protect the quality of the agricultural
education community. Pilot 2 shared, “If they are not cut out to be a teacher I don’t believe they
should go into the field because they will end up hurting the field as a whole.” Participant 1 also
shared the importance of protecting the agricultural education community by stating:

The stronger that we can keep agriculture education, the more viable that we can
keep it, the more vocal that we can keep the strength of it across the state, then the
more positive all of it, it’s going to be for all of our programs. It’s going to be
easier to justify, easier keeping these programs in place.

Participant 7 shared how the cooperating teacher protects the community by stating:

But there is definitely that role of recognizing that some people have what it takes
and that some people it is going to be a struggle to walk into a classroom and
teach seven or eight classes in a day. And so I guess there is that role that
sometimes you have to have that sit down conversation with; is this what you
really want to do and do you really think that you can handle it.

Participant 8 also explained the importance of having quality cooperating teachers by sharing:

Well, there are good teachers and there are bad teachers out there and if we want
to continue having good agricultural education programs, I think there has got to
be, they have got to learn from better teachers.

Participant 4, Participant 5, and Participant 6 also spoke of the need to protect a previous contact
that chose to student teach with them based on their prior relationship before student teaching.

Participant 4 shared that it allows them “to work closer together” because they “can speak
honestly” without “tension.” Participant 5 and Participant 6 shared that they knew the student
teacher when they were a student and that this relationship helped them to develop their
relationship teaching in the classroom.

Secondary agricultural education teachers volunteered as cooperating teachers to protect
the continuation and quality of the agricultural education community. The secondary
agricultural teachers also volunteered to protect a previous contact while they were entering the
agricultural education profession. Protecting the profession was the major way that the
secondary agricultural teacher attempted to maintain their values of the agricultural education
community.

**Motivation to Help Self.**

The secondary agricultural education teachers shared their motivations for helping other
people. These motivations are classified as career, enhancement, social, and understanding.
Career. The agricultural teachers in the study also gave reasons for how participating as a cooperating teacher helped them with their career. One career effect was the cooperating teacher was provided a chance for reflection on their teaching. The second career effect was that the student teacher provided the cooperating teacher direct assistance in their teaching positions.

Serving as a cooperating teacher gave the agricultural teachers a chance to reflect on their profession. The Pilot 1 shared:

One of the strong suits about being a cooperating teacher is if you have a really strong student teacher it lets you view things from a different perspective. You see how the way they are doing. You pick up new ideas from them. It does allow you to kind of take a step back just to view from the other standpoint because it is hard to evaluate yourself as a teacher when you never get to see yourself. You know, you never get to see other people and you say, “Wow; that is a really good way of looking at that.” Or you know that is not a good way of doing that.

Participant 4 reflected by adding, “It is nice to sit back and look and watch your students interact with somebody and it gives you a way to kind of observe what is actually going on in the classroom when you are not busy directing everything.” Participant 1 also reflected “that it has given me some insight of different situations that I have never seen come up in my class before.”

Participant 1 went on to share that they were “things that I really needed to have thought about and ways that maybe I can handle situations with students and handle different things better.”

Participant 6 described this opportunity as giving him “a new perspective on how students act with, interact with younger people.” Participant 6 shared that the student teacher was able to enhance “things that I never would have thought about.” Participant 6 also said that his student teacher “brought a more vivid or more vivacious approach to her lessons and I liked that.” He
believed that by working with a student teacher “maybe it gave me a sense of renewed enthusiasm for the profession more-so than anything else.” Participant 10 shared that by observing the student teacher, they were more willing to try a new method, saying, “When you saw someone right before your eyes do it and it worked and you are more willing to try it.” Participant 10 also shared that it gave her time to “sit back and reflect on my own teaching; reflect on what I would do differently if I were in that situation. Overall, several of the cooperating teachers shared that they benefited from the chance to reflect on their teaching.

The agriculture teachers in the study benefited from the student teacher’s assistance to them in their local agricultural programs. At Gold High School, the following exchange took place between the Student Teacher and the Chapter FFA President involving an upcoming FFA Fundraiser:

The student teacher walked into the computer lab and the chapter president asked her, “Ms. [Student Teacher], do you want a chicken BBQ ticket?” The student teacher didn’t want a ticket, but she agreed to take 20 tickets to sell.

The Gold High School student teacher was also observed assisting the cooperating teacher throughout the semester by collecting field trip permission forms, helping with FFA Chapter meetings, and grading exams during an FFA contest, and updating the Chapter FFA website. The Blue High School student teacher also helped the cooperating teacher by grading midterm exams, assisting with regional FFA contests and by working directly with planning and running the FFA Chapter Banquet.

In the interviews, the cooperating teachers shared other ways that the student teacher assisted them throughout the semester. Participant 2 was very reliant on his student teacher, stating that “If it wasn’t for a student teacher this spring, I don’t know if I could do it anymore.”
He shared that his need for a student teacher included “having to run the greenhouse” and that he feels that his advanced age hinders his ability to do this function of his program. Participant 2 also shared that one of his classes was only offered “unless I had a student teacher.” He shared that he “could not have taught that class” without the student teacher. Participant 2 also referred to his student teacher assisting with organization. He shares the following:

I find myself being much more organized as far as some of the paper work. I find myself getting grades done more on time than I used to, because, before as an old teacher, that is the least thing that you like to do and this girl likes to. Of course to me, to her, recording grades is new and exciting, and for me it is drudgery.

Participant 3, Participant 7 and Participant 11 shared that having the student teacher in the room allows them to have someone to “bounce ideas” off of in the classroom. Participant 4 finds that having the student teacher assists in monitoring the class, she shares, “I think it will help me in the long run as well as her because there is, you know, four eyes in a room rather than two.” Participant 5 shares one benefit of having a student teacher is having someone who can “run with it” when they need someone to cover a class. Participant 5 also shared that good student teachers are like “having an extension of yourself.” Participant 5 also shared that because of the student teacher’s help with the greenhouse and the spring contests, she “sometimes wonders how” she “would ever get through the spring without one.” Participant 7 stated “there were a lot of contests that I probably would have never tried” without a student teacher’s influence.

Participant 10 really appreciates the drive and motivation of student teachers as she shares:

I usually always enjoy the most and get the most out of a student teacher when they get here because they are usually very motivated. They want to get things done. They want to have structure. I tend to be a very structured person, anyway,
but that usually kind of gets me back on track. So, that is kind of, I guess, something helpful to kind of reform my methods that may have laxed over a certain period of time.

Participant 10 also shared that having a student teacher helps her to build professional contacts by “building relationships outside” of her network of people that she uses “for field trips and guest speakers.” Participant 10 went on to explain that “you form a relationship that you still have after that student teacher is gone.” Participant 10 also believes that student teaching should be “very beneficial for both involved.” Having a student teacher allowed for secondary agricultural education teachers to benefit with a second professional in their classrooms, laboratories, and FFA chapters.

Secondary agricultural education teachers can benefit their career from the student teaching experience by having the student teacher to provide for a chance for professional reflection. Secondary agricultural education teachers also benefit by having another professional in the classroom, the laboratory and the FFA Chapter. The additional professional in the classroom can provide an immediate improvement on the quality and/or quantity of formal and non-formal instruction that can be provided by the secondary agricultural instructor.

Enhancement. Secondary agricultural education teachers shared that serving as a cooperating teacher provided a chance for enhancement. Three main areas of enhancement were reported or observed; enhancement by sharing materials and knowledge, enhancement by providing opportunities to improve non-formal learning opportunities for students and enhancement by providing the teacher time to complete other tasks.

Student teachers were able to enhance the cooperating teachers’ experiences through the sharing of materials and knowledge. In the field, the student teacher at Blue High School
worked directly to share materials and knowledge with her cooperating teacher. In the first shared scenario, the student teacher was working with her cooperating teacher on a computer based form:

The cooperating teacher was having difficulty keeping the entire form on the computer screen, so she was scrolling through the list on the website. While Scrolling through the list, the student teacher shared; “Hit Ctrl -, it will shrink the page.” The cooperating teacher did the function mentioned by the student teacher and stated, “Very cool, I never knew that.” The student teacher shared further, “Ctrl + makes the page bigger.”

In the second scenario, the student teacher at Blue High School was debriefing with the cooperating teacher during a planning period after the end of a lesson:

The student teacher had brought seed samples from the local feed and seed store. The student teacher offered the seed to the cooperating teacher so that she could use them for her class in the fall. The cooperating teacher said, “I know what I can put them in” as she put the seed in a clear, sealable plastic container.

The interviews also reported numerous ways that current and former student teachers had shared ideas to improve the local programs. One of the main ways that was reported was enhancement through their knowledge of new technology. Participant 1 shared that his previous student teachers had really given him “a better understanding of Movie Maker, PowerPoint, Publisher, printing up fliers.” Participant 1 also shared that his current student teacher was going to enhance tool identification by printing “out a handout of the slides” while taking the class and dividing “them up” into “different groups” letting “them identify them and as they go through.”

Participant 2 shared a story from a previous student teaching experience where he reported:
One time I had a student teacher, this has been three or four years back, she set
down with a jump drive, stuck it in her computer here at school and I go, “What’s
that?” She goes, “Oh, that’s a jump drive.” And I go, “How do you use it?”
Participant 3 shared that he relied upon the student teacher to update some of his curriculum.
Participant 3 reported that during the fall semester he “used mostly their tests.” Participant 3
also reported how the student teacher was able to find him some other teaching resources
because “she was really good at PowerPoint and embedding video.” Participant 3 had already
reused many of the student teacher’s materials. Participant 4 shared that her student teacher had
provided “a lot more internet sites.” Participant 5 said that her most recent student teacher was
good at “using video clips and stuff instead of using whole videos.” Participant 5 believed that
this method made the use of video “more relevant in the classroom.” Participant 6 shared that his
student teacher had inspired him to maybe “begin using that thing” in talking about the projector,
especially if “he had some new material to introduce.” Participant 9 shared that his student
teacher assisted him with a new way to store files in the following scenario:

Don’t get me wrong, our school system has opportunities for us to learn some of
this stuff in professional development, but my student teacher could show me how
to use cloud technology in a very personal way, one-on-one, where I wasn’t very
proficient at that, I am now.

Participant 10 also benefited from technology showed to her by the student teacher, including
“learning how to navigate a new browser, Mozilla Firefox, and how to utilize the mp4s and how
to utilize PowerPoint a little better.” Overall, many of the cooperating teachers reported the
sharing of technology from their experiences as a cooperating teacher.

The student teachers have also been beneficial when it has come to teaching new
classroom practices. Participant 1 shared that his most recent student teacher “helped to strengthen me in what I can do to give me some new ideas of what I can do as far as working with some horticulture projects.” Participant 1 shared that he hopes to “actually carry through with next year and to actually build on” the small garden that was started by his most recent student teacher. Participant 3 shared that his most recent student teacher “developed 2 or 3 labs” that involved creating a check sheet for students to look over a lawn mower if they were going to purchase one from a yard sale. Participant 3 said that the labs will really help give him “three more opportunities I can take my class into the shop in the first eight weeks” of class with his beginning level small engines class. Participant 7 shared that she had a student teacher to share with her how to make one of her woodworking projects easier. In Participant 7’s projects, they had been putting “little wood plugs in the top of the picnic table to cover over the wood screws.” Participant 7 went on to explain how the student teacher helped her with the project in the following excerpt:

And we had a wood plug cutter that we were using and it was very difficult piece of equipment where you cut the plugs out of scrap wood and then you would have to pop them out with a screwdriver and I had a student teacher that suggested that we use dowel rods and so I have been doing that ever since instead of cutting 3/8 plugs with a plug cutter, we just get a 3/8 dowel rod and just cut it up into little pieces and used those. So, that was a direct result of a student teacher that is just something that I do all of the time now.

Participant 9 shared that he really appreciated “the younger generation coming in and showing me things that I haven’t seen before” and explained that he had a student teacher who “was really good in the shop.” Participant 9 stated that “they taught me things that I have never seen in the
shop and the practices that they taught me I continue to use today.” Participant 10 also shared that she had “gotten some really, really awesome ideas from the student teachers.” One of the ideas was a resource created by the student teacher who created a resource for a field trip location at a horse farm. Participant 10 reported the following:

I had a student teacher that developed a scavenger hunt for that specific site because she happened to teach the equine class that year and I still use that scavenger hunt as far as letting the students bring their cameras and take the pictures then bring the pictures back and go over them in class and use it as a teaching tool.

Participant 11 shared that her student teachers have really helped with “working more in small groups.” Participant 11 shared that one student teacher really introduced many new food science projects into their curriculum. One project in particular was when they were “making plastic out of corn.” The plastic was made by taking “corn oil and then you mix some flour with it and then you cook it in the microwave and then it becomes elastic.”

Student teachers also assisted the cooperating teachers through providing enhancement to their non-formal learning opportunities. The teacher from the second pilot interview shared that picture taking was a major non-formal learning practice started by a couple of former student teachers. Pilot 2 went on to explain that the advantage of their projects was that the teacher could take “lots of pictures of different events and using that in your instruction.” Another non-formal enhancement shared by Pilot 2 was the helping the FFA chapter by “being strong with SAE and proficiency applications.” Participant 1 also shared that the way that he worked with applications was also started by a student teacher. Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 6 and Participant 7 all shared ways in which a student teacher enhanced their FFA chapter by starting a
new event. Participant 3 shared that with this year’s student teacher, he wanted to run an
Agricultural Mechanics CDE team. Participant 3 reported:

I told him that I would let him coach an Ag mechanics team if he would, he just
needed to get one, and FFA Ag mechanics team. And recently, I haven’t been
getting a whole team. I have been getting maybe one or two people and I just
work with those one or two people but he had four people that were willing to do
it and he really worked hard with them.

Participant 6 also shared that this year’s student teacher wanted to participate in the Veterinary
Science CDE. Participant 6 reported that:

We had a group of girls that were interested in participating and not having a
Small Animal Care or a Vet Science program, I had never really…it had [never]
crossed my mind to allow or to expose students to that aspect of the, of our CDE
program. So I think that is one of the great successes that in one of the things that
she brought to the experience for those kids and I will always remember that. I
mean they were above average in success at that level, and the area level but they
gained a lot of knowledge and backgrounds. My comment to them was, well,
come on and we will try this and see whether, see what we learn from it, see what
it is like and, you know, I would rather see students participate and do average
than not to participate at all. And I think these girls really enjoyed the
participation and it was the first time that these four individuals had ever been to a
contest or done anything outside of the classroom with the FFA. And it was a
great success for them as well as for her. And I think we will continue on with
that aspect of the program and they will be going to the state convention this year
and participate in it as well.

Participant 8 shared that “You can teach an old dog new tricks” and explained a scenario where a student teacher assisted her with creating a new way to hold a FFA chapter banquet. Participant 8 reports the following:

It started from a student teacher. And it actually, and I might have to say that it started before he came to be a student teacher with me. It probably was that summer when maybe he was doing some visitations or something. But I do, there is a box up there that is a bank and inside that box are cards that each student, each FFA member has when they participate in an FFA activity, they get play money, FFA bucks, and that play money will be totaled up in May and they get to spend that money at an auction. Now, the young man that was my student teacher actually was an auctioneer. And so, somehow we came up with this idea to reward our students for participating by giving them bucks that they could spend and so, I have to credit him with the idea and I have been using that FFA bucks auction or FFA bucks; it has been a national award winner for NAAE for Ideas Unlimited. It has certainly been very successful here and is the highlight of our year. So that was, that’s a definite thing that was started that is still being used and I can’t tell you how long it has been since he was here.

Participant 8 explained further how the auction actually worked in her program:

We solicit the community. I buy a lot of stuff with our FFA money from the FFA catalog. Hats, t-shirts, all kinds of stuff. But then the kids go out and they solicit in the community and whatever they bring in, if they go to First Bank and they get a $50 Gift Certificate or Savings Bond, they will get 25 bucks added on to their
card. So, the goal is, the more stuff that you bring in to sell, and it is all new stuff, we don’t do used stuff, um, the more bucks that they get to spend that night. And so it really is a pretty amazing activity. It is definitely the highlight of our year. We have an awards ceremony. Last year, we had [National FFA Staff Member] come and he is part of the auction and I mean he stayed for the auction. Adults can’t bid. Actually I take that back, we have an adult auction, they have to pay with money and then we give that to Relay for Life or [Local] Mission or someplace like that. The kids, if they over bid, they spend all of their money, then they have to make it, they either have to say resale or make it up with money but if they overbid, you know, $5 on an item that is worth twenty, their parents will usually give them the cash. It is a great, great, activity.

Through input from the student teachers, they were able to enhance the non-formal learning opportunities for their cooperating teachers.

The final enhancement reported through observations and interviews was the time that was provided to the cooperating teacher to pursue other tasks while the student teacher was with the students in the classroom. The two observed teachers used their class periods as extended planning periods and spent much of their time doing computer work such as word processing or answering e-mails, or on working on projects in the shop environment, or on tasks for their FFA chapters. In an observation at Gold High School, the cooperating teacher shared “One advantage of her being here is I can go do things like this” while he was creating a worksheet for another class. Participant 1 also shared that his student teacher allowed him to “have some time to work with some things while she was taking care of the students.” Participant 5 concurred, mentioning that the
student teacher frees her up to “take care of stuff in the greenhouse or deal with customers or get paperwork done.” Participant 5 shared that this “makes things easier.” Student teachers therefore can give their cooperating teachers extra time to perform tasks throughout the school day.

Serving as a cooperating teacher allows for agricultural education teachers a chance for enhancement through sharing materials and knowledge. Student teachers are also able to improve non-formal learning opportunities for students. The student teachers were also able to provide the teacher time to complete other tasks during the instructional day.

Social. The secondary agricultural teachers also volunteered to serve as a cooperating teacher for social reasons. The social reasons were reported as preparing future colleagues and engaging in a friendly relationship with the student teacher. Many of the cooperating teachers shared that they were proud that they were helping to prepare their future colleagues in the agricultural education profession. Participant 9 shared the following about his student teachers:

Every student teacher that I have had, I have stayed in touch with. We are friends and colleagues and work well together and I would say that based on those things that it was I would say that all of my relationships with them have been successful and positive.

Participant 5 shared a specific story about one of her formal student teachers that had happened right before the initial interview:

We still share things. In fact, one of my student teachers a week ago called me frantically, “Can you send me such-and-such lesson plan that I got off of your computer?” I needed something back from her shortly after that, so I think that is still pretty cool that we are not only, we are no longer student teacher -

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cooperating teacher but we are now colleagues. Participant 3 shared the desire “just to meet my future colleagues.” Participant 1 and Participant 2 shared that they remain in close contact with their previous student teachers. Participant 6 shared that he looked “forward to seeing his student teacher in the profession. The cooperating teachers also shared that they had engaged in a friendly relationship with their student teachers. Participant 4 stated about her experience, “Yes, I am a mentor, but I also look at her as a friend.” Participant 5 shared that she treats her student teacher “as a co-worker.” Participant 8 and Participant 9 both shared that they invite their student teachers to their homes for dinner and conversation. Participant 10 shared how her relationship with her student teacher developed a friendship over the student teaching semester:

I would say that we have probably; this student teacher and I have had the best personal relationship that I have had of any of my student teachers. I think a lot of it was because our personalities were very similar in being specific, wanting to do a good job, wanting the other one’s opinion, welcoming the opinion, being receptive to it, and that kind of starts to make you be able to discuss more of your personal life as well, opening up to what goes on, on your weekend, what goes on in your evening, just because you are able to converse with that person a little bit easier. You know that they are listening. You know that they are going to relate to you, not just kind of be a brick wall that you bounce ideas off of and never get feedback from.

The cooperating teachers shared that they were motivated to volunteer as cooperating teachers by preparing future colleagues and developing friendly relationships with their student teachers.

*Understanding.* The secondary agricultural education teachers volunteered to serve as
cooperating teachers because of an understanding of the student teaching experience. The teachers shared that they enjoyed the experience and that they liked sharing their professional experiences as an agricultural teacher with a new professional. Most of the participants in the study shared that they “enjoyed the experience.” Participant 2 shared that most of his student teachers had “a good, positive experience.” Participant 9 shares his experiences in the following:

I enjoy helping out. I enjoy contributing and there are two different classes of student that graduate for me, one of them is the student teachers, the other is the students and I get to watch them go off and blossom and this direction, it’s like, its gratification. It’s gratification.

Participant 5 shared the following story about her most recent student teacher:

That makes you want to keep doing this knowing that you are changing somebody else’s lives. And she, my most recent student teacher wrote me a really nice letter that, you know, saying just how much she appreciated it, how much she learned and how she could not have asked for a better experience and that makes you feel good.

The secondary agricultural education teachers also shared how much they wanted to share their experiences with future professionals. Pilot 2 shared the following story outlining his motivation to serve as a cooperating teacher:

The thing that has motivated me is try to pass on the things that I have learned. I’ve got a lot; I think I have acquired a lot of good information and tactics to use. I have successes and failures. I have been at schools that were complete rebuilding jobs, so I can tell them how that is and I have gone to a school that was a very successful chapter when I moved into it and the pressures that come from
that. So, I can, you know, I can help them out a great deal with that. How to look at things from different perspectives and to tell them, “You are not always going to go into the best job.” A lot of times, there is a reason that that job is open, so you have to be prepared for that and also to tell them you know, don’t always jump at the first job that comes open, cause, you know, every, you might be a very good teacher, but you might not be a very good teacher at this school or that school. You know, you might not be a very good fit for that area, for that community, for that school, for one reason or the other. Somebody that might be a very good teacher in [region of state] might not do as well in downtown [city]

Participant 5 shared how influential her cooperating teacher was and how she wants “to share that with the upcoming teachers.” Participant 3 wants “to help out the profession” through the process of “mentoring student teachers.” Participant 11 stated, “And I guess that is the teacher in me, too, that you want to teach somebody else.” The agricultural education teachers shared that they enjoyed student teaching and that they wanted to share their experiences with new professionals.

Secondary agricultural education teachers volunteer to help new professionals and the agricultural education community at-large. Secondary agricultural education teachers also volunteer to help themselves professionally. The balance of the mixture of motivations explains why secondary agricultural education teachers volunteer to serve as cooperating teachers.

**Theme 3: Secondary Agricultural Education Teachers Empower Themselves and Other Members of Their Communities Through Their Leadership Due to Their Strong Sense of Political Efficacy**

Secondary agricultural education teachers seek and maintain power within their
positions. This power is reflected through their choices to participate in tasks related to their job. This power is also reflected in the ability to make decisions as secondary agricultural teachers. The secondary agricultural teachers also empower people through teacher-led projects in their local communities.

**Power of Choice.** Most of the participants in the study mentioned that they had the choice to participate in at least one of the presented areas. Pilot 1 shared that he was a mentor teacher by choice, that he “could have gotten out of it” if he chose not to participate. Pilot 2 shared that he had a lot of say-so at the local level because of his personal relationship with the principal. Participant 1 reported that “it is going to sound backwards but fortunately, I have a lot.” Participant 2 stated “I’ve had the say-so where, hey, I didn’t want to do it, no one really cared whether I did it or not, so I didn’t.” Participant 3 stated, “There is really nothing expected of me at the district level. Everything I do is voluntary.” Participant 4 reported that “Well, for the most part, other that the assigned duties, most of them are voluntary.” Participant 6 used his son as an example at the local level saying, “He has volunteered for lots of these committees. He’ll learn.” Participant 7 stated “I’d like to say that I have had a 100% say-so in my participation.” Participant 8 shared that the county was very willing to let her participate in state and national level events. Participant 8 reported, “There has never been a time when I have asked to go to a national level meeting, conference, task force, whatever, that I have not been able to.” Participant 9 also mentioned that the only area that he did not have a choice was with assigned duties. He reported the following:

Beyond that, I choose the rest of them. I don’t have to do career development events to keep my job. I don’t have to do, uh, I don’t have to, you know, go to convention to keep me job. I don’t have to do any of those things as far as to keep
Participant 10 also shared that many of her job requirements as an agricultural teacher were also by choice:

I guess, as an Ag teacher, you have the say-so over how much you participate in fundraisers. You decide what you want to do. You decide how much money you need to raise and how hard you are going to work to get it. You also determine how many practices you want to have after school. The higher the level, fortunately, I guess, for an Ag teacher, or most any teacher, you can choose your involvement at the higher levels such as your state and national level. You determine whether or not you want to become involved with your state associations and you can do the bare minimum and just do enough to get you by or you can do more to benefit your program and to benefit you as a teacher.

Participant 11 also stated for many of the tasks, “I could do whatever I wanted to do.” All participants shared that they had say-so to participate on the state and national level. Participant 1, Participant 5, Participant 8, Participant 9, and Participant 10 all described that they were required to do tasks at the local level and were given no choice in their participation. Participant 1 shared that he was required to serve on a committee. Participant 5 was required to complete duties such as homeroom, bus duty and covering classes. Participant 9 and Participant 10 also mentioned that they had school assigned duties. Participant 8 summarized her choice in participation at the school level as “None. We do what we are told.”

Pilot 2, Participant 2, Participant 4, Participant 8, and Participant 9 all reported that they had a great amount of choice in the decision making process. Participant 9 described his ability for making a choice as “It is all up to me. I get out of it what I put into it.” Participant 8
acknowledged that at all levels she is “certainly allowed” to share her opinion. Participant 4 stated that school level administration “pretty much let me do what I need to do.” Participant 2 shared that he was allowed “A lot of say-so.” Pilot 1, Pilot 2, Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 7, Participant 10 and Participant 11 shared that they had some choice, but it was dependent on either their position or their level of participation. Pilot 1 did share that because he agreed to be a mentor teacher that he had to do “certain things for our county as far as documentation” but he was given freedom in the observations. Pilot 2 shared that he had more say-so in the state AAAE organization when he was a member of the state board. Participant 1 shared that he would have more say-so if he volunteered “to be the chairmen” of a committee. Participant 3 described his relationship with other members of a group as “collegial” and that he had say-so because “somebody else is helping me.” Participant 7 shared that she was given free range when she developed school staff development workshops, but not so much choice with the assigned duties. Participant 10 shared that many of the decisions she made as an advisor were dependent on her teaching partners. She stated this occurrence as:

It just depends on the capacity, I guess, in which specific decision that you are talking about as to whether you can make it yourself or have to be told what you have to do.

Participant 11 shared that on her position as a member of the advisory council for the county fair, she was glad that she was in an advisory but not a decision making role. Participant 11 defined this advantage as:

So, I don’t have a vote on that committee, but I can voice any opinion that I want to have, which is good, I didn’t want a vote when we changed all of the rules, and that kind of thing. The bylaws, I chose not to have the Ag teacher to have a vote
so that you can play the devil’s advocate. You can be on both sides. You can be for the kid or against the kid or whatever or the group, so that you can say what you needed to keep it fair for everybody.

Pilot 2 beyond the school level, Participant 5, Participant 6, and at the school level, Participant 10, all shared that they had no choice in the decision making process. Participant 6 offered this description over his perceived lack of choice:

Sometimes you wonder if you have any. If it is not a gathering of individuals together to make a decision or think that they make a decision, and then it’s either a bounce back decision that is made higher above or it is jumped over by those higher above and to say we had a committee that met and in this area, I have seen that happen, so, you don’t know what your say-so over the decisions are. You make your best, the school level tasks, you make your best vote, and you live with the rest. I have learned over the years that in education, lots of things are going to come down and lots of things are going to come around. And I have seen them come around and come down and then ten years from now, they will be the same thing coming down. So, you wonder what ability you do have to make what decisions you know, if they truly are made at that, at your level.

Participant 10 also offered a similar appraisal of administration in her school district:

I mean on a school level, most everything comes to you as, has already been before administration and comes to you in the form of a booklet or handbook or a memo that says you will do this and you will adhere to these policies and you will fill out this sheet and turn this in by this date.

A summary of the choices shows that many of the participants felt that they had a choice
to participate in many tasks above the school level. The participants were split on their choice to participate in school level tasks. The participants were also split on their ability to make decisions at any level.

**Empowerment of Others.**

*Impact of Teacher-Led Projects.* The secondary agricultural education teachers worked very closely with creating impactful projects in their local communities. These projects were designed to bring about desired changes in the community, to involve other community members and to assist existing community organizations. The teacher-led projects were a tangible outcome of the secondary agricultural teachers’ political efficacy.

Participant 1 strived to create a functioning FFA Alumni chapter for his local county. The immediate effect of the Alumni chapter was to provide support for the local secondary agricultural education programs. Participant 1 noted that the alumni began, it “was almost like a lot of our issues kind of started to dissolve away.” Participant 3 shared that with his project, his Small Engines class was able to provide a maintenance service for the local community. Participant 5 was amazed at the speed in which her school farm project progressed. Participant 5 shared the following impact:

I left for National Convention, not knowing that anything was going to happen and when I came back, 20 plus acres was totally cleared and graded and ready for seeding. And so, I was pretty impressed and amazed that took place as quickly as it did. So I think it became very obvious to us that the players involved in this were now very serious about making it happen.

Reflecting on the speed of the project, Participant 5 seemed pleased that she would now have a school farm to enhance her local curriculum opportunities for her students. Participant 6
mentioned that “people in the community look forward to the opening of our greenhouse because we sell at such a low cost.” Participant 6 shared that his only goal with the plant sale is to recover costs for teaching horticulture. Participant 7 shared that one outcome of her project was that “a lot of the presentations where then shown to our county CTE director because our county is in the process of building two new schools that will have greenhouses.” Participant 8 shared that with her patriotic flag retirement ceremony, her program was able to collect “90 flags from June to January of this year.” Many of the flags were retired during the initial ceremony, with many other people asking for another ceremony to occur in the near future. Participant 9 shared the impacts of two separate projects, one involving the construction of wood chests for the women’s shelter; the other was the construction of a deer blind for a wheelchair-confined hunter. For the trunks, Participant 9 shared that “they just try to help them start a new life and once they leave out of there, they can take the trunk with them.” For the deer blind, Participant 9 shared that the blind was constructed out of a donated horse trailer and was given to a local hunter. Participant 11 shared that they were able to provide multiple meals for a family of four that was then donated to Social Services. The teacher led projects provided many local impacts, some for future students in the program, others for targeted members of the local community.

Community members were involved in these projects. Participant 1 was able secure “people that, in the community that would be involved in and coming in and helping me with activities.” Participant 2 explained that his plant sale actually “gets people to the school.” Participant 5 suggested that her project had “been a failed attempt for several years.” Participant 5 commented further by saying, “I guess what I have found, we have just needed to wait until it became the right person’s idea to do it.” Participant 8 reported that her project involved the Woodmen of the World, the Ruritans, the VFW and people from her church. Participant 9
shared that the horse trailer was donated by a Board of Supervisors member. Participant 11 shared that random community members would donate to the cause. She shared that one of them made the comment in the grocery store, “Hey, you are back again this year; here’s $20 to add to your cause.” The cooperating teachers shared numerous ways that the local community provided support to their projects. The projects were also designed to assist existing organizations.

Participant 1 outlined that he intended to help all of the agricultural education programs in his county when he stated:

> The other reason that I wanted this is because of, I didn’t design this to be a help to [school] as you know, it is the [name] County FFA Alumni, so, it is trying to support and put some work to get the other FFA programs and the other ag programs in the county more involved into doing things.

Participant 2 shared that with his ongoing projects, he was assisting the local college and the US Department of Agriculture. Participant 3 said that he donates completed picnic tables to the town’s local parks and recreation service. Participant 9 shared that he works closely with the Sheriff’s Office, because the women’s shelter is in “a private location that nobody knows where it is.” Participant 11 also shared that in working with Social Services, they could not deliver the meals directly to the family. The cooperating teachers were able to support other community groups with their projects.

The secondary agricultural education teachers created impact projects for their local community. The projects provided desired changes in the community while involving other community members and assisting existing community organizations. These projects demonstrated the political efficacy of the secondary agricultural teacher at the local level.
Empowerment of Other People. Teachers used projects as a way to empower other people as a part of their communities. The people empowered by the communities included students, student teachers, coworkers, and the parents of the students. Empowerment of other community members demonstrated that the secondary agricultural teachers showed willingness to share the operation and outcomes of their projects with any of the community members that were willing to work with them on the projects.

Students were the group that was the most impacted by the individual projects. Participant 1 shared that “The students have been at every alumni meeting. They have helped with all of the mailings. The students, especially my FFA officers have literally been the secretary for the alumni association.” Participant 2 shared that his students assisted with the school plant sale and that they had the chance to interact with the customer base, the majority of who are senior citizens. Participant 3, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 9 and Participant 11 had all of their students to interact with the project as the project during class time so that a large percentage of their students were involved in the project. Participant 5 shared the impact that was made by her students in the following:

And it was quite impressive to have about 20 FFA members there in their official dress at all of the zoning meetings and they made quite an impression because, one, the zoning committee and the town council knew we were serious and knew that the kids had a sincere interest, otherwise, they would not have been there at the meeting. None of them really got to talk with the exception of my president, just got to address them and say thank you for your consideration and your help with this and, other than that, they were just there as a presence and it definitely worked.
Participant 6 shared a scenario where he and a few of his students were able to create material for a birdhouse project led by the county extension agent:

I took two or three students and we got that job accomplished as well as the students were working as well. And I tried to get the students who were more advanced in both their project work and their skill level in using the radial arm saw. And it didn’t take us no time at all to knock out ten birdhouses

Participant 7 shared that her students took the main role in the project, describing how they participated in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) project:

I had students learn about different greenhouses and then they went through a PowerPoint on different greenhouses and learned the different kinds of structures. After that, they were given a real world scenario of having to design a greenhouse within a certain amount of cost and students used Google SketchUp to design greenhouses and then, after about a week to a week and a half of the Google SketchUp, they built models and they had to build them to scale and they had to create shopping lists using Internet sites. They had to create shopping lists of equipment and supplies that they would use to furnish the greenhouse and they had to create presentations with that equipment and what their design would be and their models and prepare them for a mock school board meeting.

Participant 8 shared how her students were directly involved in the flag ceremony:

They had speaking parts. They actually helped me come up with, the officers stayed after and had, I didn’t know where to find a flag retirement ceremony and if you look on the internet, there are about 50 out there, so they helped me piece together the ceremony and then they were the speakers. They were the ones who
did the presentations. They were, they were in charge

Overall, the teachers empowered their students through projects that were designed to help other people.

Student teachers were actively involved in projects if they were present, often as an extension of the agricultural teacher. Participant 1 and Participant 9 shared that their student teachers were active in the creation of the projects and both used their student teachers to fill roles in the project that they would normally fill. Participant 2, Participant 5 and Participant 6 used their student teachers to assist in preparing for and operating the school plant sale. Their plant role included working the sale after classroom hours and by caring for and preparing the plants before the sale. Participant 3 shared that his student teacher was responsible for writing “the grant back in the fall, because it was something that he could do.” Student teachers fulfilled the role of the teacher in each of the projects on which they were involved.

Coworkers were sometimes involved when the cooperating teacher operated the project in the local school. Participant 1 involved “the other agriculture teachers in the county.” Participant 1 shared, “One of the middle school teachers has become really helpful as far as trying to, at least trying to involve the alumni in activities that they do there at their school.” Participant 1 worked closely with the other agricultural teachers and had “given them all the opportunity to make presentations on what they do at their different schools and their different programs.” Participant 1 wanted each of the teachers “to promote what they are doing and show, giving an awareness of how they need help.” Participant 2 involved his teaching partner and his students in filming for safety videos. Participant 8 relied heavily upon the chorus teacher and the Family and Consumer Science Teacher but she also involved the school nurse, who was “a veteran helping the students work with the flags.” Participant 8 also “got the civics teachers or
social studies teachers to come down as we were preparing the flags, from 3 to 4, they were overseeing the students who were cutting the flags.” Each of these teachers involved their co-workers in their teacher led projects.

Parents were also used to assist with the projects. Participant 1 had some off his students’ parents to join the new FFA Alumni Chapter. Participant 2 shared that parents were very involved in serving as customers for his plant sale. Participant 8 shared that parents “actually submitted photos of what they felt like America looks like” for a slide presentation titled “Our Flag, Our America.” Participant 11 shared that parents helped raise funds for their class-led project, often cleaning “their change drawers at home or containers or whatever in the car, clean out their car or get money out from underneath the seats.” Involved parents in each of the projects were used as a means of support for a project where their children played a more prominent role of participation.

Teachers empowered students, student teachers, coworkers, and student parents as a part of their teacher-led projects. The empowerment of these people showed that the teacher was able to impact other community members besides the targeted audience of their project. The empowerment of other people was a direct reflection on the political efficacy of the secondary agricultural education teachers.

Sharing Knowledge. The cooperating teachers shared knowledge through personal contacts, conversations with their student teachers, conference presentations, group meetings, and publications and other mass media. The most commonly mentioned form of knowledge sharing was through personal contacts. The personal contacts were often informal or through e-mail or telephone. Participant 2 shared that he is often called by other teachers “just about once or twice a week.” Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 6, Participant 8 and
Participant 11 all shared information via “word of mouth.” Participant 10 shared that she commonly uses e-mail to share knowledge about any events in her program. Teachers also participate in conference presentations. Participant 1, Participant 2, and Participant 7 all shared information from their ongoing projects as conference presentations. Participant 1 described his presentation in the following:

I have talked about it at area meeting to other teachers that do not have an alumni program. I have talked about the importance of trying to get this group, for them started and I have been used by I know [State AAAE contact person] to talk about successful program and how it can get started and can get going.

Participant 7 shared that she uses group STEM meetings to share the outcomes of her classroom project:

A lot of it was within the school, sharing it with other teachers that were involved in the STEM activity. I shared it with our principal and next month, I will be presenting it at [college] when our STEM group meets up again. So, there is, I think 15 of us throughout the county working with [college] on developing good STEM activities.

The cooperating teachers also shared their projects through mass media. Participant 2 and Participant 7 shared their projects in publications. Participant 8, Participant 9, Participant 10, and Participant 11 shared that the newspaper was a common outlet that was used to share knowledge about their programs. Participant 8 shared that her flag retirement ceremony was shared on the local TV station. Participant 7 shared that the college that she was working with on the STEM project videotaped the project so they could “upload them to ITunes University.” Although they were heavily reliant on
personal contacts, the secondary agricultural education teachers shared knowledge through conference presentations, group meetings, publications, and other mass media.

Secondary agricultural education teachers have power in their teaching positions. This power has been obtained overtime and is reflected by the decisions that are allowed to them as professionals from superiors or through their leadership in empowering other people. The power displayed through their choices and their actions is a direct reflection of the individual political efficacy of secondary agricultural teachers.

Theme 4: The Professional Practices of Agriculture Teachers are Influenced by their Service as a Cooperating Teacher.

Secondary agricultural education teachers engage in numerous professional practices as either required or self-selected by their positions. All of these practices are classified as formal-instructional, non-formal instructional or non-instructional. Each of these practices has been influenced by the decision of the agricultural education teacher to serve as a cooperating teacher.

**Formal Instructional Practices.** At the heart of formal instructional practices is the different instructional methods engaged in by the teacher. In field note observations, the cooperating teachers and the student teachers were observed assisting student teachers with projects, providing demonstrations, individualizing their instruction, lecturing on content, preparing class materials, preparing for the substitute, previewing assignments, relating material to students, teaching with stories, showing videos and sometimes verifying the accuracy of classroom materials. The following section is a report of the influence of the student teacher on instruction.

*Assisting with Projects.* Both of the observed secondary agricultural education teachers engaged in assisting with projects while the student teacher was technically in charge of the
class. The secondary agricultural education teachers at Blue High School and Gold High School were engaged with their classes in assisting students with projects. Assisting with projects was also observed after the student teacher had left, but assisting with projects was one way that the cooperating teacher chose to remain involved with their classes while they were in the care of the student teacher. Participant 10 at Blue High School and Participant 1 at Gold High School were observed doing this every time the student teacher was teaching in the shop environment.

_Demonstrations._ The cooperating teachers explained that they used demonstrations as a teaching technique, especially when they are in the laboratory environment. The secondary agricultural education teachers also shared that they had engaged in demonstrations with their student teachers. Participant 1 shared how he worked with a previous student teacher to demonstrate how to rebuild a carburetor:

I have in the past worked with student teachers where we co-taught lessons and a good example was one built on my experience. They actually tried to work on rebuilding a carburetor. And they fought that carburetor for two afternoons until 6:00 and it was just not their forte. So, what we did as a co-teaching is actually set here in this classroom and I set up at the front table. I took a carburetor as the student teacher explained. They could explain what to do; they just couldn’t do it to get everything to go together. So, as they explained it, I was kind of their visual aide as they went through it.

Participant 3 also shared an experience where he was working with his student teacher to work with demonstrating the parts of a carburetor using a video camera:

Well, I went to a workshop that Briggs and Stratton taught and that is what they did. And the video camera simply puts it on the TV screen where everybody can
see it because the carburetor is small, smaller than your hand. And then, if the student teacher and I were working together, it was because it takes a lot of time to stand up and point and to actually. Or, we would use the TV screen, and if you could have somebody else holding the carburetor pointing and showing, then you are much more effective.

Demonstrations were seldom observed of the student teachers at Blue High School and Gold High School. The student teacher at Gold High School was observed performing a demonstration of planting potatoes while the student teacher at Blue High School was observed demonstrating the proper use of a jig saw. Participant 1 at Gold High School actually stepped in and interrupted the demonstration during an informal observation; he showed the student teacher a different way to plant the potatoes. The Blue High School student teacher was performing her demonstration for an official university supervisor visit, but she still asked Participant 10 if she was teaching the correct content with the saw. After the cooperating teachers resumed their classes, they used demonstrations as a major part of their instructional strategies. Participant 1 was observed showing techniques with the different welders and with the small engines in the shop. Participant 10 was observed teaching her freshmen class how to use the arc welders in the shop.

*Individualized Instruction.* The cooperating teachers engaged in individualized instruction, especially when in the laboratory environment. At the Gold High School, Participant 10 often moved through the laboratory environment and used individualized instruction as his method of choice in the shop. When his classes were technically under the care of the Gold High School student teacher, the student teacher placed herself towards the front of the shop and rarely engaged with any groups that did not bring work for her to inspect. At the Blue High School,
Participant 10 also frequently engaged in individualized instruction in the shop. While she was in the class, the Blue High School student teacher engaged in individualized instruction, although many times the student teacher would ask Participant 10 for assistance with some of the projects.

*Lecture.* Lecture was a favored teaching method for both of the observed student teachers. Both student teachers used PowerPoint often while they were providing instruction in the classroom. Many times, the PowerPoint was the main part of their lesson for the day. After taking classes back over, Participant 10 was observed giving a lecture using PowerPoint, but she kept stressing to the class that it was just to get the knowledge before they began an electrical unit in the shop environment. Participant 1 at Gold High School was not directly observed lecturing content to his students, but he admitted that the student teacher used many of his PowerPoint files. Participant 2 also shared that his student teacher preferred lecture and that during her fall experience at the school prior to student teaching that, “she would not leave from in front of the classroom.” Participant 3 shared that his student teacher used a lot of PowerPoint, but they were conversions of his existing overheads that he used in classes. Participant 6 shared during the final interview that his student teacher also liked using PowerPoint but when asked how he helped expand his student teacher’s teaching methods, he replied, “I kind of assumed that she had that in her methods class.”

As for the other methods, both student teachers were involved in preparing assignments. The student teacher at the Blue High School consistently asked Participant 10 and the researcher for opinions on her assignments. The student teacher at Gold High School was not observed asking for help except during the class period. Both student teachers were required to provide substitute lesson plans for the classes which they were absent. In leaving the plans, both student teachers conferred with the cooperating teacher to make sure they were leaving a proper set of
plans. Both student teachers also attempted to relate material to their students. The student teacher at the Gold High School shared her opinion about Jersey Dairy Cattle stating, “They are real pretty. They have long eyelashes. They are cute.” The student teacher at Blue High School attempted to share a story about nutrition, and “the student teacher shared a side story about her brother using a Slim Jim as a fire started because of their flammability.” Reviewing previous material, teaching with stories and verifying accuracy of materials were not observed of the student teachers. Both student teachers did use videos in their lessons. Overall, the student teachers and the cooperating teachers used the same methods, but the cooperating teachers used a wider variety of methods in teaching the classes.

Classroom Management. Classroom management is another area that is a major part of the formal instruction requirement of secondary agricultural education teachers. Each of the observed teachers in the study dealt with discipline situations in their classroom due to the presence of their student teachers. Participant 1 was called in to act upon the lack of behavior shown by the students in his first period class in this quote from the Gold High School field notes:

After a couple of minutes, the Resource Teacher came down and grabbed the cooperating teacher. She mentioned that the guys in the class were making lots of inappropriate comments and told the cooperating teacher, “You have got to do something about what is going on up there.” The cooperating teacher went to get the offending students. The cooperating teacher proceeded to chew them out about how they should not be engaging in poor behavior. The cooperating teacher asked, “Do you know how miserable your life is going to be in three weeks when I take this class back over? 90% of this mess that you are getting away with will
stop.” The cooperating teacher went further, saying that he expected them to eliminate the inappropriate comments. The cooperating teacher let them go as the bell was ringing.

Participant 10 had to work with a student who had a run in over his project with the student teacher in this quote from the at Blue High School field notes:

One of the students from first period came into the office and asked for the wood glue. The cooperating teacher asked him, “Why are you not in the classroom?” The student replied, “I about snapped on Ms. [Student Teacher.]” The student was angered that he had applied pressure to his wood, but that the student teacher insisted that it should be another way. In the students mind, he had fixed the problem and he mentioned that his project was ruined because the glue came off when the project was moved. The student was having difficulty earlier because he had used the steel wool for sanding, giving his project a slick finish. The student sarcastically said, “My way wasn’t the best way.”

In both scenarios, the cooperating teacher stepped in to diffuse the situation by pointing out to the students that they were aware of the situation between them and the student teacher.
Time Management. The student teachers also affected time management in the classroom. Cooperating teachers shared different ways that they worked with student teachers on time management. Participant 1 shared how he worked with previous student teachers with planning:

One thing I always did work with all of my student teachers, I have them make their lesson plans and try to plan for; we have an hour and a half block. I always had them plan for about two hours, and I always made them, every lesson had an emergency lesson plan. Whether they finished up early and they needed something to give to the students.

Participant 6 shared that he believed that the problem could be with the class length. He shared “an hour and a half is a long time to interact with the kids.” Participant 6 went on to share that “until you have been in the field a little while, you don’t understand how many pages it takes for you to get through that hour and a half.” Participant 6 shared that his student teacher got better as the semester went on to prepare for the entire class length. Participant 8 shared that even she struggles with time management, she shared that she has “gotten better, but look how long it has taken for time management skills.” Participant 10 shared that she actively monitored how long planned activities lasted compared to what the student teacher had written on her lesson plan. Participant 11 shared that she tried to show the student teacher through modeling how long certain activities would last so they would have a guide for when they took over the class.

Participant 5 reported the opposite problem, her student teacher was always over-planning and she had difficulty actually closing out a lesson. Overall, the interviewed teachers shared that time management was a problem that would be best improved through experience.

Struggles with time management was witnessed in the field at both high schools. The student teacher at Gold High School always struggled to provide a lesson that lasted the entire class
period. One day, for her weekly official observation, the student teacher was “asked several times about the rest of the class. She finally responded ‘I ain’t got anything else planned today.’ This comment was made over 20 minutes before the bell to end class.” On a different day, the student teacher “mentioned, ‘There ain’t nothing else to do the rest of the day.’” She said this with about 15 minutes left in the period.” As the student teaching experience got closer to the end at Gold High School, the student teacher would just turn the class over to Participant 1, best illustrated by one time when a student came into the shop and told Participant 1, “She said we don’t have anything planned.” Ending class early was very atypical for Participant 1 at Gold High School; the only time that he had a class to end early was when he overestimated the amount of time that was required for a school improvement project. After a couple of minutes, Participant 1 remembered that he could conduct a test review for the class. The observed class went to the classroom for the review. Time management at Blue High School was better, but the student teacher was often finishing classes five to seven minutes early. Although her overall time management was better, the Blue High School student teacher sometimes had difficulty in managing different groups in the shop, as some of the groups would be finished while others were still working on a project. Once again, the time management issues were not noticed with Participant 10. Participant 10 did share with her student teacher that time management skills would come with time.

Laboratory Management. Both of the observed secondary agricultural education teachers spent a good amount of their instructional day engaged in the laboratory environment. Working in the lab involved following safety procedures, maintaining, managing and searching for tools and supplies, managing projects and cleanup of the shop environment. The management of the lab in both observed locations often became a joint venture between the student teacher and the
cooperating teacher.

Safety was of utmost stated importance in the shop. Students at both schools were required to pass multiple safety exams and procedures were constantly being reinforced by the cooperating teachers and the student teachers. The cooperating teachers and the student teachers always reminded the students to get safety glasses on their way to working in the shop. The student teacher at Blue High School was better about following safety procedures than the student teacher at Gold High School. This quote from the Blue High School field notes demonstrated that the student teacher was following proper safety procedures:

The student teacher came back in briefly and shared that one of the teaching partner’s students was bitten by a gerbil while the substitute was in the room. The substitute had called the nurse. The cooperating teacher typed an e-mail to the principal explaining what had happened. While typing the e-mail, the cooperating teacher said “Thanks for telling me.”

In contrast, the quote from the Gold High School field notes showed the student teacher not following proper procedures with an oxyacetylene torch:

I walked inside the shop to find the cooperating teacher. The cooperating teacher was angry, to which I asked, “What happened?” The cooperating teacher explained that the student teacher did not get the students to turn off the welding regulators correctly. The cooperating teacher explained that someone could have gotten hurt due to her negligence of checking behind the students who were in the shop before school. The cooperating teacher properly turned off the regulator.

Even when diligent about safety, the cooperating teachers were sometimes faced with the negligence of their students. This quote from the Gold High School field notes was a perfect
example of this negligence being observed in the class:

The cooperating teacher went back to check on the group welding the cattle gate. I noticed that three of the students looked over and glanced at the welding arc. I asked the cooperating teacher if he did anything about that. He mentioned that it gets very hard to get things across to seniors. The cooperating teacher pointed out that the three students that I saw glancing at the arc had all taken dual enrollment welding classes at the community college. I asked him if they realize that looking at the arc can cause permanent damage. He mentioned that they just don’t think.

The cooperating teachers were committed to safety in their shops but accidents were still prone to happen due to human error.

The cooperating teachers sometimes provided maintenance, searching for equipment and managing of supplies while the student teacher was in the shop. One particular example from Blue High School shared an example of equipment maintenance in the middle of the student teacher’s lesson:

A student managed to get a piece of wood jammed into the jigsaw. The cooperating teacher struggled getting the piece of wood off, having to unplug the jigsaw, remove the blade and then knock the piece out with a hammer. The cooperating teacher commented, “The first time that ever happened; a first time for everything.” The cooperating teacher replaced the blade and gave the saw back to the student.

The cooperating teachers were observed working on compasses, hammers, oxyacetylene torches, palm sanders, routers, sledgehammers and welders while the student teacher was in the lab environment. The student teacher at the Blue High School did help Participant 10 with loading
the palm sanders with sandpaper but it was the only maintenance work observed of the student teachers in the classroom.

When the cooperating teachers and the student teachers were in the shop, they were usually engaged in the management of student projects. The student teachers were usually working with projects already pre-established by the cooperating teacher, however both student teachers were observed introducing new projects in the laboratory environment. In this quote from the Blue High School field notes, the student teacher was observed introducing a new laboratory project used for the meat science unit:

The student teacher had set up a four part activity where the students had to grade a class of four rib eye steaks, they had to analyze a nutritional label and they had to do a yield grade on two separate rib eye steaks. The activity was setup in a side room to the shop that had several cleaned off tables.

The student teacher at Gold High School also had started a project; her project was a school garden plot. The preparation for the project was questionable as was taken from a quote in Gold High School field notes:

The student teacher returned with the first period class and walked through the shop to a newly established school garden area. The cooperating teacher said that he was surprised that she was taking them today, since the area was muddy from the previous evening’s rainstorm. The cooperating teacher mentioned that he had suggested to the student teacher she should have taken them yesterday, but she seemed very hesitant to stray from her previously recorded calendar.

The cooperating teachers and the student teachers often shared the responsibility for cleanup in the laboratory setting. Each of the classes had set procedures, but mostly it involved
securing projects, putting away tools and materials and cleaning up trash and debris. This quote from the Gold High School field notes serves as an example of how clean-up was typically handled in the shop:

At around six minutes to go before the end of the period, the cooperating teacher called for cleanup. The students were following pre-established procedures. Loose engine parts were stored into storage crates and cans. The cans and crates were then placed in preset locations. Any small engine manuals that were used during the period were placed on a shelf in the classroom. Each group had a toolbox which they put away the tools and placed them in a safe location. Any oil that was spilt had sawdust applied to it and it was swept into the trash along with any other dirt, dust or debris. All of the students washed their hands in the shop sink and put away their safety glasses in the safety glasses case. Any mowers that were left outside were pushed into the shop.

The student teachers seemed to do okay with cleanup, but this quote from Blue High School field notes shows that the student teacher sometimes was not as precise in the shop cleanup as the cooperating teacher:

I looked down and found a couple of out of place things on the floor, including a speed bore drill bit, one of the pieces to a clock mechanism and two different bolts. I asked the cooperating teacher where they went. The cooperating teacher went into a story about how she wished the student teacher would have the classes to sweep and clean the shop better. The cooperating teacher pointed out the area where I found the drill bit should have been cleaned two days ago. The cooperating teacher mentioned that the shop was fairly clean but wished that
greater attention to detail was being paid in cleanup.

After interacting with the students, Participant 10 continued her description of clean-up in the laboratory and how they were trying to prepare their student teacher for the future:

The cooperating teacher continued her story from first block about the cleaning. The cooperating teacher said that she did not become particular on cleaning until after a few years in the profession. She said she was trying to subtly mention that things needed to be cleaned in the shop to see if the student teacher would engage in taking care of the problem. The cooperating teacher explained that the student teacher may have a principal that does the same thing, that a principal will not come out and say, “You need to sweep up this saw dust.” The cooperating teacher so far had not noticed any change in the student teacher when it came to these subtle hints.

The cooperating teachers and student teachers engaged in the laboratory environment, following safety procedures, maintaining, managing and searching for tools and supplies, managing projects and cleanup of the shop environment. The student teachers engaged in the environment, but only with oversight and management from the cooperating teacher. The management of the laboratory environment was a joint operation when the student teachers were in the local programs.

Non-Formal Instructional Practices. Non-formal instruction practices were those observed practices that involved teaching students but not during the school day or at a location other than the classroom or laboratory environment. The major practices were observed of the secondary agricultural education teachers, including advising the FFA Chapter, managing field
trips and supervising SAE projects for students. The student teachers were able to enhance non-formal practices when they had direct involvement in an area.

*Advising the FFA Chapter.* Both of the observed cooperating teachers served as the FFA Advisor for their local chapters. Many practices of the FFA Advisor were observed in the field including acquiring and managing supplies, working with applications, banquets, coaching, providing directions, facilitating activities, preparing food, fundraising, informing chapter members and providing photographs and public relations. The student teachers were not involved in all of the situations, but each of the observed student teachers had an impact on two different areas of the secondary school FFA chapters in the study.

One FFA advising area that was affected by the student teacher was the coaching of certain teams. Many times, this effect could be positive. Participant 1, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 6, and Participant 10 shared that this year’s student teacher trained FFA teams in the chapter. Participant 2 did not share in the interviews if his student teacher coached a team, but the student teacher was present at the two contests attended by Blue High School, as Participant 2 taught in the same federation as Participant 10. Participant 5 shared an experience about the impact of her “very first student teacher coached a poultry team.” Participant 5 stated “I never thought I would have a poultry team, here, because it is just not something in my comfort zone.” Participant 5 also shared that her most recent student teacher coached a Poultry Team. Participant 5 reported:

Like I said, she coached the poultry team, which is something that I am very weak at myself and so, you know, I gave her some materials that I had and she looked up her own and the poultry team was very successful. They ended up [doing very well] in the junior contest and we had a top three individual and that is something
that I kind of didn’t directly assist with, I just kind of said, here is some material and here are some kids who want to do it. And she ran with it.

Sometimes, the effect of the student teacher on Career Development Events is not positive. In the final interview, Participant 1 shared the following scenario from his most recent student teacher:

I think the biggest setback in this one was the student teacher just didn’t want to see the need to get involved with the FFA activities. (She) didn’t see the need to really be that personably with the students and to get that involved with the students. I felt like that my students suffered some from this because by turning some things over to the student teacher to give them a 100% control, there were some things that these students did not get to experience that they should.

Overall, the student teacher can have a positive impact on coaching teams, but only if they decide to become involved with the students.

Another area that was observed where the student teacher had an impact on FFA Advising was when Participant 10 at Blue High School asked her student teacher to assist with a newspaper article. The following change between Participant 10 and the student teacher came from a quote in the Blue High School field notes:

Discussion between the student teacher and the cooperating teacher then switched to a newspaper article for the area rally held the previous week. The cooperating teacher shared with the article as currently written by the Chapter Reporter and the group picture from the area rally. The cooperating teacher commented that the other teacher from whom she borrowed the camera had a really good camera based on the way that the photograph turned out. The cooperating teacher asked
the student teacher to help construct the article a little bit better; the Reporter was at a disadvantage because she did not attend the event.

Although the student teachers were observed interacting with the cooperating teacher in the FFA chapters, few student teacher driven FFA activities were reported in this study.

*Managing Field Trips.* Another non-formal instructional area that was observed through field notes and interviews was the practice of attending a Field Trip. The student teachers at both schools ran or operated field trips this semester. The field trips involved preparation, following certain procedures, securing transportation and securing the hosts and events for the trip.

The student teachers at both schools were responsible for preparing for a field trip. The preparation at Blue High School was led by the student teacher with assistance from Participant 10. The Blue High School student teacher wanted to create a field trip opportunity for her students that would serve as a capstone for the meats unity in her Agriculture IV class. The following exchange between the student teacher and Participant 10 was quoted from the Blue High School field notes:

The student teacher talked with the cooperating teacher about the field trip that she wanted to take to a meat processing facility. The student teacher called one meat processor in phone book that was suggested by the cooperating teacher. The phone number would not work; there was no answer on the other end. The student teacher went with the second processor in the phone book. The cooperating teacher reminded her to ask, “Do you still process meat?” The student teacher called the second processor. The student teacher reported that the phone number was “Not in service.” The student teacher suggested, “Do you want me to call [local grocery store]?” The cooperating teacher responded, “Ask
for the meat department.” Once the student teacher contacted the grocery store, she asked, “Can you transfer me to the meat department?” The student teacher replied “Thank you” to the grocery store receptionist on the other end. The student teacher asked if she could bring the class by to look at the meat processing equipment. The student teacher remained on hold. The student teacher explained that the trip would only be from 12:30 - 1:30, but not for the whole hour. The student teacher set up for the trip over the telephone. After hanging up the phone, the cooperating teacher suggested that the student teacher could stop in there instead of coming to morning duty the next day.

After the initial phone call, the Blue High School student teacher remained in touch throughout the field trip process. Participant 10 highlighted the field trip preparation of the student teacher in the follow-up interview:

We took a few field trips that she set up herself. So, she had to make those contacts. She had to keep in communication with those people, making sure that she was fulfilling both of her duties here at school, so that the kids were informed with what was going on and where they were going and then within the county, what their expectations were, what our expectation was here for them to fulfill what they needed to talk about and what they needed to show the kids and that kind of thing.

Participant 6, Participant 7 and Participant 11 also highlighted that they had student teachers that had created and planned field trips with their classes.

Once the field trips were set up, certain procedures were followed leading up to and including the day of the field trip. At Gold High School, Participant 1 was responsible for
The paperwork including permission forms, a request for transportation and a request for a substitute. The Gold High School student teacher typed the permission slips and sent out e-mails to the faculty explaining absences for the day of the field trip. Besides creating permission forms, the student teacher at Blue High School took an active role in completing the paperwork required by the county school district for the field trip. The following exchange is an observation of Participant 10 guiding the student teacher through the field trip paperwork as quoted from the Blue High School field notes:

The cooperating teacher went over with the student teacher how to fill out a bus request for a field trip with the county office. With this school district, the forms were managed online. The cooperating teacher shared the name of the system and showed the student teacher the opening screen. “It looks like this,” said the cooperating teacher to the student teacher and then pointed to a clickable box and said, “I log in.” The cooperating teacher explained that it was difficult to see everything in one screen, and that you need to “Go to request a vehicle.” The cooperating teacher shared that they have a certain number of pre-approved activities from the Board of Education. These activities have to be turned in at the beginning of the year. They always select one of these activities for every trip as they have all been approved. The cooperating teacher pointed out that class trips is number two on the list, so they choose that option. The trip then must be labeled. The cooperating teacher asked the student teacher what she chose to title the trip. After a mention from the student teacher, the cooperating teacher said, “Trip name will be Meats lab” and typed it in the form. The cooperating teacher typed in the date for the 23rd. The cooperating teacher then mentioned that the
trip had to have a one-line reason for going. The cooperating teacher asked the student teacher what she wanted to type. The student teacher replied, “Students will be able to observe meat processing, discussed in class.” The cooperating teacher and the student teacher talked out the final name. The student teacher slightly changed her answer, and the finalized form was entered into the form.

The cooperating teacher asked the student teacher, “We are going to eat first lunch, right?” The student teacher confirmed that the class would eat first lunch. The cooperating teacher then stated, “We will leave at 12:15 and return by 1:45.” This was typed into the form. The cooperating teacher then adjusted the times a little before and a little after, “Just so it is reserved for that time.” The cooperating teacher said that the minibus is what they were going to request. The cooperating teacher explained that if they were going to request a full size school bus, they would have to make sure that a driver was available. Although the cooperating teacher acknowledged it was a class trip, she spoke of the bus garage, “They like for FFA to be on there, it helps with the sorting.” The cooperating teacher entered the form and it said it was successfully submitted. The cooperating teacher mentioned that the form should come across an e-mail, so the cooperating teacher quickly checked her e-mail and the cooperating teacher acknowledged, “It is right there.” The cooperating teacher said the approval is not a big deal; the board has already approved the trip once. Once the form was submitted to the bus garage, the cooperating teacher shared, “Now we need to send a sheet to the nurse.” The cooperating teacher opened up her e-mail and began typing an e-mail to the school nurse. “Ideally, you want to put the field
trip” in the subject line, as the cooperating teacher was pointing at the computer screen. The cooperating teacher then pulled up a class list on the computer. The cooperating teacher also pulled up a form from last year as an example. The cooperating teacher shared, “It’s easiest if you’ll need to look, because this was last year.” With the list that she had pulled up on the computer, the cooperating teacher mentioned it was the most current. The student teacher asked, “Who do I need to send this to?” The cooperating teacher replied, “Send it to me or type it on this computer.” The cooperating teacher asked the student teacher to save the form, “So it is all in the same folder.” The student teacher sat down and began work on the form to e-mail the school nurse.

On the day of the field trip, certain procedures were also shared. At Gold High School, Participant 1 was responsible for all of the directions given to the students; the student teacher was present but was not engaged with any directions. At Blue High School, the student teacher gave the students explicit directions the day of the field trip, including an explanation of “the activity for today and how they would pick up a cut of meat for tomorrow’s activity.” The student teacher gave them specific requirements; the main one was limiting them to $7.00 for a purchase of a steak. On the way to the school from the field trip, the Blue High School student teacher even stated that she would have “a thank you note written” for them to sign tomorrow. Participant 2, Participant 3, Participant 5, Participant 8 and Participant 9 all indicated that their student teachers had participated in the procedures of a field trip although they had not directly planned the experiences.

Once at the site, both field trips relied heavily upon the experts in both locations. For the Gold High School field trip to the dairy farm, the two dairy farmers took the students around
their operation, explaining the operations on the farm, including calf and milk production. For the Blue High School field trip, the manager of the meat department at the grocery store took the students through their processing rooms, explaining how meat came from them at the packing house to how they processed the meat for sale for the local consumers. Both hosts were contacted before the trips by the student teacher and they were asked to explain their operations.

Overall, the student teachers were very active in engaging with field trips with the secondary agricultural education teachers’ programs. Many of the trips that were operated were trips that the advisor had not participated previously. The trips were designed by the student teacher and the cooperating teacher to engage their students in agriculture in the local community.

*Supervising SAE Projects.* A final non-formal practice was the role of SAE Supervisor. SAE specific tasks were only observed once in the field when the cooperating teacher at Blue High School shared to one of her classes “I want you to get back in the habit of filling in your SAE logs.” The cooperating teacher at both locations did complete an unofficial SAE visit with their students when they went to their place of work on a class field trip. The cooperating teacher at Gold High School also ran into one of his students while he was working at a farm supply store. Besides the unofficial visits, both cooperating teachers worked directly with students on FFA Applications. Neither student teacher was observed working with the student teacher on SAE projects. Participant 5, Participant 6, Participant 8 and Participant 9 all shared that they required their student teachers to complete SAE visits. Participant 3 shared that he had his student teacher to check SAE records of students, but that they did not perform any home visits. Participant 10 shared her regrets for not providing a better SAE experience for her student teacher in the following:
The SAE programs, this is something that I feel that the student teacher probably struggled the most with. I think it is very common, because at the college level, it is not always a huge emphasis put on SAE because so many different chapters and programs are so different in the type of student that they have and what is expected. So this was something that we eased into about the third week that she was here, where I showed her the type of records that I keep here and allow students to keep the paperwork in their notebook. She covered a unit on SAE with the freshmen. The seniors kind of jumped right in because they had done SAE for three years prior. The freshmen struggled with it, so we kind of troubleshooted on how to get them more involved and motivated about that and I just explained to her the important role of keeping up with those records and checking in with the student and trying to learn a little more about them to help them make the decision on what their SAE should be about.

The role of the SAE Supervisor was present but understated in some of the student teaching experiences. For many of the cooperating teachers, SAE was not discussed or mentioned as an option in their local programs.

The student teachers were observed engaging in the non-formal learning activities of FFA Advising, Field Trips and SAE Supervising. The student teachers impacted these practices by coaching FFA teams and by planning Field Trips. No impacts were observed with SAE supervision practices.
Non-Instructional Practices. One non-instructional practice observed in the field was the cooperating teachers’ use of the computer. The computer was used for many functions including attendance, e-mail, grades, internet, managing files, PowerPoint, printing, spreadsheets, test generators, and word processors. Many times, the functions were shared between the cooperating teacher and the student teacher. Because both observed schools had multiple computers, the student teacher and the cooperating teacher rarely had to share a computer.

Another non-instructional practice that was observed was the following of school procedures. Observed school procedures included acquiring and requesting supplies, announcements, attendance and tardies, grades, safety, school-related documents, school assigned duties and special occurrences. The following reports the impact and interaction of the student teachers with school procedures.

Attendance, tardies, and grades were an important professional function shared by the cooperating teachers in the interviews. Participant 3 shared a story where his student teacher potentially got him in hot water with his administration:

It was probably two weeks after the midterm exam, grades weren’t on the computer yet and I didn’t realize that and a student came and told him, told me that a principal came and told him that his grade was an F, and I said, well, that doesn’t seem right and I went and looked at his grades and the reason, part of the reason was because those midterm exam grades weren’t posted. So I just, I told him, that should have been done at least a week ago and then the principal was aware that there are not posted now, so, the principal is thinking why, what are they doing down there where they are not posting their grades. Which I don’t
know whether that principal thinks that is a bad thing or not, but, I just let him
know that.

The observed student teachers at Blue High School and Gold High School were very
involved with attendance and tardies. At both schools, the student teacher had access to the
online system where they were expected to enter attendance for each of their classes. Participant
1 at Gold High School was disappointed by the laissez faire attitude that his student teacher
developed towards attendance, causing him to mutter under his breath on more than one occasion
about her unwillingness to perform the simple function. Participant 10 at Blue High School
would ask the student teacher during class many times if she had done attendance. The typical
answer from the student teacher was “I already have.” The student teacher also worked with
Participant 10 at Blue High School to keep the classroom tardy log accurate.

The student teacher at Blue High School was very active in assigning grades for
Participant 10’s students. Grades were recorded in a grade book and on an online program. The
following exchange was observed between the Participant 10 and the student teacher was quoted
from the Blue High School field notes on a teacher workday prior to report cards being sent to
students the following week:

The cooperating teacher reminded the student teacher that “You need to make
sure that the due dates are yesterday and prior.” The cooperating teacher
explained that the software will not let us add assignments on Monday. The
student teacher had a question about the safety test grades and whether they
should count as all of the students were not finished with taking them. The
cooperating teacher mentioned that the grade that they currently have on the test
should count. The student teacher confirmed that 78 were the current low score
for any of the students. The student teacher was entering a grade, when the cooperating teacher exclaimed, “Oh wait, wait, you’ll have to go into a 4th 9 weeks.” The cooperating teacher looked over student teacher’s shoulder to help her with the computer and they made the proper changes to the grade book.

While entering the grades, the student teacher pointed out that one of her students had only taken the safety test once. The cooperating teacher shared that she could wait until Monday to put in grades for that assignment. The cooperating teacher asked “How many test grades do they have?” The student teacher counted and gave her the number. The student teacher then asked about a student with eight absences. The cooperating teacher stated “We can give her an incomplete. I’ll show you how to do that.” The student teacher and the cooperating teacher talked for a few moments about students who missed days. The cooperating teacher said, “You really don’t want to give an incomplete unless you have to.” She went on to explain that the only way changes can be made is to go through the school. The cooperating teacher said about the student, “If it is not made up on Monday, it will be a zero.” The cooperating teacher offered, “And I can facilitate these things while you are teaching.” The student teacher replied, “Thank you.” The student teacher started constructing a list of missing assignments. The cooperating teacher shared “If I can get a group and pull them,” that she would complete those assignments on Monday.

Entering grades was never observed at Gold High School by the researcher but through conversation, grading was never a problem.

Teachers at both Blue High School and Gold High School were responsible for
performing school assigned duties. The main duty required of the cooperating teacher at Gold High School was after school parking lot duty. The student teacher was never observed working with the cooperating teacher in that duty. The main duty required of the cooperating teacher at Blue High School was before school cafeteria duty. The student teacher was observed working with the cooperating teacher on multiple occasions. Usually they took advantage of the time to converse about numerous topics. Participant 5 shared that she took her student teacher to all of the faculty meetings. Participant 6 shared that he and his student teacher “had lunch duty on Mondays during third lunch” and that they would “monitor the halls at that time.” Participant 7 shared that when she had student teachers, the duty was always a time for reflection:

For example, if I was standing on hall duty with a student teacher and students were running, I may try to either demonstrate to the student teacher the proper way to interact with those students. It may just be a discussion between the student teacher and myself and later in the student teaching experience; I may sit back and encourage the student teacher to be the one to interact with the students.

Participant 9 used the duties as a way to expose his students to the profession:

Sometimes, my student teacher will do the duty that I have such as bus duty or hall duty or things of this nature. The first couple of times, I will do it with them, let them understand what is expected, and then after that, I will let them take over, that way, they get the full teacher experience.

Secondary agricultural education teachers engage in instructional and non-instructional professional practices as a part of their positions. Many of these practices have been either directly or indirectly influenced by their role as a cooperating teacher in the student teacher experience.
Summary

The results from the analysis of interviews and participant observations have been shared in this chapter. Analyzing interview transcripts and field notes lead to four overall reported themes in the case study. 1) The professional identities of secondary agricultural education teachers are affected by their membership in the pre-service teacher community. 2) Secondary agricultural education teachers volunteer as cooperating teachers to help others and to help themselves professionally. 3) Secondary agricultural education teachers empower themselves and other members of their communities through their leadership. 4) Professional practices of agriculture teachers are influenced by their service as a cooperating teacher.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of the study is to examine effects of the student teaching experience on the cooperating teachers. The experienced classroom teachers in the study served as a cooperating teacher during the 2012 spring semester for students in agricultural education from a land-grant institution. The participants provided interviews, opportunities for professional observations, and analysis of teaching documents. The overall research question for this study is: How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education. The sub-research questions include:

1. Why do practicing teachers volunteer to become cooperating teachers?
2. How do cooperating teachers describe their role in the preparation of new teaching professionals?
3. How are the professional identities of cooperating teachers influenced by their participation in the student teaching experience?
4. How does participating as a cooperating teacher influence the political efficacy of the teaching professional?
5. What do cooperating teachers expect to personally gain from being a volunteer in the teacher preparation program?

Summary of the Study

This qualitative case study sought to answer the question “How does participation as a cooperating teacher affect the professional practices of experienced teachers in agricultural education?” The study analyzed eleven current and former experienced secondary agricultural teachers who have served as a cooperating teacher for a pre-service teacher in agricultural education. Eight of the participants were current cooperating teachers while the other three were
immediately former cooperating teachers who had reported a poor previous student teaching experience. The case study was conducted through a process of initial interviews of all eleven of the participants, the transcripts from the two pilot interviews, field observations of two of the participants based upon the initial interviews and a round of follow-up interviews with ten of the participants. One participant was unable to participate in the follow-up interview. Document analysis was used to form demographic data for the two observed programs. The interviews followed a modified version of Seidman’s (2006) three-interview model, where in the first interview the participants were asked about their life history as a teacher and questions about the experience of serving as a cooperating teacher and in the final interview, the participants were asked for a reflection on the student teaching experience. After the first round of interviews, observations were conducted of two of the cooperating teachers chosen through a blind reviewed selective process. These observations were of the secondary agricultural teacher in the classroom, the laboratory and in other professional functions. These findings are reflective of the thirteen total participants in the study and should not be used to represent all cooperating teachers in agricultural education.

From the data analysis, four major themes emerged to address the overall research question:

1. The professional identities of secondary agricultural education teachers are affected by their membership in the pre-service teacher community.
2. Secondary agricultural education teachers volunteer as cooperating teachers to help others and themselves professionally.
3. Secondary agricultural education teachers empower themselves and other members of their communities through their leadership.
4. The professional practices of experienced agriculture teachers are influenced by their service as a cooperating teacher.

Discussion

The secondary agricultural education teachers in the study had all taught a minimum of eight years and several of the participants have taught long enough to be currently eligible for retirement. Eight of the participants allowed a student teacher to come into their program for a period of time from mid-January to the end of April, 2012. The other three participants last served as a cooperating teacher in either Spring 2010 or Spring 2011 and reported a poor experience with their last student teacher. This study examined the student teaching experience to determine the effect of the experience on the secondary agricultural education teachers serving as cooperating teachers.

The professional identities of secondary agricultural education teachers are affected by their membership in the pre-service teacher community.

From the interviews and the observations, the secondary agricultural teachers in the study belonged to five distinctive professional communities; the classroom community, the school community, the community of agricultural education, the local community, and the statewide education community and the pre-service teacher preparation community. Membership in the pre-service teacher preparation community had a direct affect on the teachers’ involvement in three of their professional communities; the classroom community, the school community, and the community of agricultural education.

In the classroom community, the student teacher in a successful scenario was elevated to the role of a near equal to the experienced secondary agricultural teacher. Lave and Wenger (1991) explain that a member of the group will gain power within a group as they gain
knowledge and skills, so it is an expected effect that the student teacher should become more powerful and recognized in the community as they gained knowledge. The knowledge of most importance in this community was not academic content, but knowledge of the students and how to tailor the classroom experience for them to be successful. Both of the observed secondary agricultural teachers modeled several successful ways to verbally interact with the students, but only the Blue High School student teacher chose to engage with the classroom community. For the experienced secondary agricultural teachers, having the student teachers allowed them further engage in small groups with their students.

All of the participants in the study were either currently or formerly very active with their student teachers in the pre-service teacher preparation community. The responses from the interviews and the observations indicated that the participants provided a safe setting to practice the craft of teaching, a chance to model classroom behaviors, freedom to pursue different teaching techniques and appropriate feedback to their experiences, all of which were highlighted by Rudney & Guillaume (2003) as the most important tasks of the cooperating teacher. These interactions did affect the experienced secondary agricultural teachers, as the teachers interjected into classroom lessons on selective basis. Participant 1 shared how difficult it was to give the student teacher the chance to “do the class how (they) want to do it.” During the interviews, the participants shared that they interjected when the quality of the lesson was diminishing or if there was a discipline problem or if there was a personal story from their experience to share. It appears that the participants acted on their own behalf and the behalf of their programs to ensure that their classroom community remained strong. The interjection into a class could take away authority from the student teacher, but the participants felt that it was more important to maintain the quality of their programs. Interjections took place very often in the laboratory environment
as demonstrated by Participant 1 stopping the Gold High School student teacher in the middle of a lesson on potatoes or Participant 10 stopping the student teacher in the middle of a description to provide more detailed instructions. Rudney & Guillaume (2003) warns that the role of the cooperating teacher must be handled with care because the cooperating teacher has power over the student teacher. If the experienced secondary agricultural teachers continually interrupt the student teacher in the classroom setting, it would be impossible for the student teacher to gain full acceptance into the classroom community. The participants in the study indicated that interjection happened as needed and that they had some regrets for interjecting, so it could be assumed that the experienced secondary agricultural teachers weighed the option of providing for their students verses providing for their student teacher. The effect that this has on the teacher preparation community was that the student teacher had to operate under the assumption that the experienced secondary agricultural teacher could take over a class at anytime; helping the student teacher by providing a safety net but hurting them by taking away from their classroom authority. If a student teacher becomes too reliant on a cooperating teacher to provide interjections into the class, it could presumably stunt their growth as a professional. The experienced secondary agricultural teacher could experience an increase in their workload and stress resulting from the increased expectations from the student teacher.

In the school community, the student teacher was viewed as an extension of the cooperating teacher. The student teacher was expected to perform the same functions as the cooperating teacher including classroom instruction, attendance, grades and assigned duties. Because the student teachers had established themselves as near-peers, the secondary agricultural education teachers had more time to engage with the school community. Participant 1 and Participant 10 took advantage of the extra time to answer school e-mails, to meet with other
teachers and to interact with school staff and personnel. Engagement with the school community also happened outside of the normal class time; Blue High School student teacher was very often seen performing the same functions as Participant 10; they always shared morning duty and they always ate lunch with another group of teachers in the building. The Gold High School student teacher was not observed as engaged with the school community, her only engagements happened during the planning period. The experienced secondary agricultural teachers had more time because of the student teachers and some of that time was devoted to developing their role in the school community.

In the community of agricultural education, the two observed student teachers were treated as near-peers and they were expected to perform many of the same functions as the experienced secondary agricultural teachers. The student teachers were assigned career development event teams to train and they had the expectation to help the experienced secondary agricultural teacher to run an event. When the student teachers were actively running the events, they were engaging in the adopted practices of the community (Wenger, 1998). There were no noticeable immediate effects for the observed experienced secondary agricultural teachers but responses from Participant 9 stating “I don’t know how much of a rewarding career they will have in ag ed if they don’t stay involved on the state level,” and Participant 2 stating that his student teacher “enjoyed seeing teachers enjoying the profession” indicate that the cooperating teachers believed that just by engaging in the community, they are more effective teachers.

Having the chance to reflect upon practice while also developing a personal relationship with the student teacher provides the cooperating teacher someone that they can talk to and with about the profession is also a benefit of working within the pre-service teacher preparation community. Rudney & Guillaume (2003) shared the importance of the cooperating teacher’s
effort to have honest communication with their pre-service teacher. The observed communication of the participants with their student teachers focused on both the student teachers strengths and the areas that they needed to improve; communications that should happen in the student teaching experience (Rudney & Guillaume, 2003). This communication is very important for the student teacher, but the benefit of having a fellow professional to share conversations is also a benefit that is described as a motivation for professionals to become a cooperating teacher.

The interactions of the college department with the experienced secondary agricultural teacher lead to mixed effects during the student teaching experience. One of the negative effects involved the lack of communication between the cooperating teacher and the university personnel when the teacher ran into an issue with the student teacher. Participant 1 shared that the university supervisor failed to help him in an adequate amount of time with his student teacher at Gold High School and he felt that was part of the reason that she was not successful in the classroom. Participant 7 and Participant 8 both indicated that they believed that the failure of the college interacting with them in their most recent experiences was the main reason that they had struggles for as long as they did in the classroom. Participant 6 gave an example of the small amount of time being provided for his student teacher on a visit and he was unsure how much help he provided as he had received no feedback on his efforts of his first time volunteering as a cooperating teacher. Another area noted by the student teacher was the lack of preparation that the student teachers had in some areas. Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 6, Participant 7, Participant 10, and Participant 11 all shared that their student teachers were deficient in at least one major area of content. Only Participant 3 and Participant 5 actually shared that they thought that their student teachers were well prepared for the classes that they were teaching.
Several things could be happening here may be that the student teachers were not matched well with their programs or their undergraduate work did not provide proper training in certain content areas. Because Participant 2, Participant 6, and Participant 10 all reported that their student teachers had successful experiences, it could be concluded that the student teacher in each scenario chose to improve in the field with their content deficiencies, while the student teacher in Participant 1, Participant 7 and Participant 11’s scenario chose not to improve. This choice was not made by the college or by the cooperating teacher but when the student teacher chose not to improve and as a result caused a negative rift between the secondary agricultural teacher and the college department.

**Secondary agricultural education teachers volunteer as cooperating teachers to help others and themselves professionally.**

The secondary agricultural education teachers volunteered as cooperating teachers for six stated reasons; altruism, protective, career, enhancement, social and understanding. These reasons were very similar to the reasons shared by Musick and Wilson (2008) for the motivations for volunteering. In this study these reasons were grouped further into two main reasons, the willingness to help others and the willingness to help self.

With the willingness to help others, the secondary agricultural teachers indicated that the cooperating teaching experience was all about providing opportunities for the pre-service teachers to practice the craft of teaching and to enter the profession. The interviews revealed that the secondary agricultural teachers wanted to do the right thing for their future professional colleagues. Participant 2 highlighted this importance best by sharing that he had to “prepare” for his student teachers to be a success and that if they had a poor experience it was his fault. Participant 11 shared that someone had given the experience to her, so she had to give it back to
someone else. Participant 1 and Participant 9 shared that it was their goal to provide a simulated experience so the student teacher could prepare and learn their craft. Altruism became a duty for the secondary teachers as they felt like they had an obligation to provide a chance for a new professional to enter the community.

The secondary agricultural teachers also had a willingness to help the community of agricultural education. Participant 5’s response, “I think having a successful teacher in the program prevents those Ag programs from being cut” demonstrates the interest of the secondary agricultural education teachers in the community to keep the programs strong. Participant 5 also shared “for them to be successful Ag teachers, they need go through a successful teacher prep program. And part of that is being with a good cooperating teacher.” Participant 5’s response was typical of the other respondents for this question acknowledging that their role as a cooperating teacher was influential on the success of the agricultural education community.

The secondary agricultural teachers volunteered to help themselves. While Musick and Wilson (2008) shared that volunteers were reluctant to answer that they volunteer for selfish reasons, the participants in this study were very open about how volunteering as a cooperating teacher helped them with their professional duties as secondary agricultural teachers. The secondary agricultural teachers shared that the student teachers have allowed the participants the chance to reflect on their professional practice. The student teachers have assisted with classroom duties, shared professional knowledge and ideas and have provided time for the secondary agricultural teachers for completing other tasks besides teaching. The secondary agricultural teachers have also been able to meet their new colleagues and they have enjoyed sharing their professional experiences with their student teachers.
Secondary agricultural education teachers empower themselves and other members of their communities through their leadership due to their strong sense of political efficacy.

One major finding of this study is that experienced secondary agricultural teachers enjoy powerful positions in their schools and local communities. While none of the participants shared that they had complete control over choice in the participation or decision making aspects of their jobs, the secondary agricultural education teachers shared that they had a great deal of control over some of their degrees of participation and areas of decision making in their profession. This finding is supported by Pateman (1971) who explained that people who volunteer are more likely to have autonomy in their workplaces. Most of the individuals reported examples of making choices and decisions where they have true potential input from the individual, a finding that is supportive of Mill’s (1965) true findings about the workplace. Because the secondary agricultural education teacher has certain amount of power in their position, the act of agreeing to serve as a cooperating teacher shows that they are willing to share this power with a new entrant to the profession, a process that aligns with the process of demystification defined by Rothschild and Whitt (1986) where professionals willingly share their professional practices with other people.

Another major finding is that the secondary agricultural education teachers empowered the people around them through activities that they coordinated either with or for others in their local communities. The secondary agricultural teachers spoke of doing projects for a disabled hunter, battered and abused women, and a poverty-stricken family. The secondary agricultural education teachers also spoke of providing services for their local communities through the construction of picnic tables and operating plant sales and maintenance for small engine equipment. The teachers also talked about how they either worked with the local university,
existing community groups, or in one case, the chartering of a group to fill a local need. In every scenario, the teacher empowered either students, their student’s parents, their co-workers, their student teachers and other community members to engage in the task for the benefit of the participants and the recipients of the projects.

The teachers mentioned that they shared the knowledge of their tasks mostly through word of mouth although their projects were sometimes reported by mass media sources such as newspapers, publications and in one instance a local TV station. It can be concluded that the teachers were more concerned about doing actual good rather than promoting their programs. It can also be concluded that the teachers had failed to recognize just how much their programs were truly impacting the local community.

The professional practices of experienced agriculture teachers are influenced by their service as a cooperating teacher.

The professional practices of secondary agricultural education teachers were affected in numerous ways because of their choice to volunteer as a cooperating teacher. Dewey (1938) explained that for individuals to learn from an experience, they must experience a continuity of activities along with interaction in the volunteering situation. The participants in the study engaged with a minimum of one student teacher daily over a three and a half month period, so they easily met Dewey’s definition of experience. The fact that the secondary agricultural teachers could show a change in growth also agrees with Fenwick (2001) and Kolb’s (1984) descriptions of experiential learning. The teachers reported negative changes on their formal teaching practices as their student teachers negatively affected their time management, their discipline and the more limited use of some teaching methods. The practices described were also observed by the researcher, and many of the practices changed for the better when the
experienced secondary agricultural teacher resumed control of the classroom. Student teachers did provide some positives for the formal instructional practices of the teachers. This effect happened with the individual instruction techniques at Blue High School. The Blue High School student teacher had established herself as a near-peer to Participant 10 and because of this establishment; the two of them could provide a greater amount of individual instruction techniques for students in the lab setting. This effect almost doubled what Participant 10 could provide alone as a classroom teacher. This effect was not witnessed at Gold High School as the student teacher chose not to engage in the laboratory environment. The participants reported mostly positive changes in non-formal instructional practices as many of the student teachers chose to perform FFA activities in the local chapters or they chose to manage a field trip opportunity. Several of the teachers mentioned that their student teacher was engaging in a new CDE or a field trip to a new location. One finding of concern in non-formal instructional practices was the lack of a presence of SAE in the student teaching experience for most of the participants. Because SAE is traditionally viewed as one of the three main parts of the agricultural education model (Croom, 2008), it should be a concern to teacher educators and members of the agricultural education profession that student teachers are only getting exposure to the classroom, laboratory and the FFA chapter in many student teaching placements. The student teachers had a mostly positive effect on the non-instructional professional practices of the secondary agricultural teachers. The student teacher was able to perform many of the same functions as the experienced secondary agricultural teachers, so they were able to enter attendance and grades and they were able to perform assigned school duties.

Conclusions
The student teacher has an obvious impact on the secondary agricultural teacher in their professional communities of engagement. The student teacher becomes an attachment of the experienced secondary agricultural teacher in their communities of practice. Usually, the benefit is positive because the student teacher can provide a near-peer who can perform many of the functions of the secondary agricultural teacher. A problem can occur when a student teacher does not provide the functions that are needed by the secondary agricultural teacher in the community. If the student teacher chooses not to engage in the community, they can cause a rift between the experienced secondary agricultural teacher and certain community members. This rift was very apparent between the secondary agricultural teachers with poor previous experiences and the pre-service teacher preparation community.

The secondary agricultural teachers shared many motivations for agreeing to volunteer as cooperating teachers, but these reasons can be categorized as helping others and helping self. These motivations can sometimes work in conflict when the secondary agricultural teacher decides to act upon one motivation over another. The fact that the teachers were willing to share their selfish reasons for wanting a student teacher shows that the secondary agricultural teachers are professionals making a sacrifice that are hoping to receive something tangible out of the experience too.

Secondary agricultural teachers are powerful individuals within their communities. They are able to participate in many of the choices and decisions that they make as a part of their profession. The secondary agricultural teachers seek to assist and empower other people through their projects and actions. Sometimes these actions involved the student teacher, but very often they involved the students and other community members. Usually, the teachers only shared their projects through word-of-mouth instead of a few times when mass media became involved.
in the publication of these deeds. It is unsure whether the teachers decided not to share their tasks with other people because they did not find importance in the task or if they were too humble to share the task or if they did not have time to make a report.

The teachers’ professional practices were impacted by the student teachers. Often the formal instructional practices caused a negative effect. The student teachers relied heavily upon lecture and they showed less willingness to engage in demonstrations or projects. The projects that they engaged in were usually heavily influenced by their cooperating teachers. The student teachers were capable of creating engaging projects as observed with the Blue High School student teacher’s meat laboratory, but most projects were those that had already existed in the school. The student teachers had a much more positive effect on non-formal instruction by adding field trips and FFA opportunities. The student teachers had no input with SAE, which should be a cause of concern for the profession.

**Implications for Practice**

The success or failure of the student teacher seems to rest mainly on the student teacher. It is impossible for teacher preparation departments to make sure that their pre-service teachers are one hundred percent ready for the field, but the departments need to find a way to determine the readiness of these individuals before they enter student teaching locations. If a student teacher is not ready or is never going to be ready for the classroom, teacher preparation departments need to have an option where the pre-service teacher can enter another degree option where they can graduate without licensure so they can protect the secondary agricultural teaching profession. A non-licensure option where the student was placed into another situation could save much anguish between the secondary agricultural teacher and the department. It should not be considered a failure of the department if it is determined that an individual is a
poor fit as a secondary agricultural teacher. This removal should happen quickly after a problem is noticed, if not it is possible to alienate secondary agricultural teachers from engagement with some of their professional communities.

The secondary agricultural teachers shared that they had difficulty staying in contact with their university personnel throughout the semester. A suggestion to help with this practice would probably be to employ a member or members of the department whose sole responsibility is to work with student teachers when they are in the field. This needs to be a person that can provide reliable feedback and contact between the student teachers, the cooperating teachers, and the departmental personnel in charge of student teachers. Tenure-track faculty members are bombarded with teaching, research, advising and extension duties so it is understandable if they are unable to provide immediate feedback to their student teachers or cooperating teachers in the field. The addition of this person can eliminate many of the perceived problems of the secondary agricultural teachers.

Several of the secondary agricultural teachers in the study shared that they kept in close contact with their previous student teachers as they entered and stayed in the teaching profession. An implication for practice for state staff is to design a mentoring program based upon the cooperating teacher and student teacher relationship to develop into a mentoring teacher and new teacher relationship. This will allow for the cooperating teacher to continue their formal mentoring of the student teacher into the profession.

The secondary agricultural teachers in the study were able to gain many benefits from their service as a cooperating teacher. However, one of the participants shared that although the student teaching experience was beneficial, he probably would not add more practices in his teaching because he is nearing retirement. It is suggested for practice that secondary agricultural
teachers are invited to become cooperating teachers early in their careers. If the teachers become a cooperating teacher early in their career, they are more likely to adapt new professional practices gained from their experience.

Experienced secondary agricultural teachers are powerful members of their local community, but very little engagement occurs between the student teacher and the local community. An implication for practice would be for the experienced secondary agricultural teacher and the student teacher to engage in a project designed to benefit the local community. If these projects began before the student teaching semester, they could also help the student teacher to become further engaged with the classroom community and the school community before the official beginning of their student teacher experience.

Student teachers appear to be very reliant on PowerPoint and are much less willing to engage in other instructional methodologies. An effective method that was observed and reported from many of the programs was the student teacher and the cooperating teacher team teaching in the laboratory environment. An implication for practice would be to restructure the student teaching experience to where the beginning of the experience involves the student teacher and the cooperating teacher involved in many team teaching situations, especially in the laboratory environment. The suggestion would be for the student teacher to start out team teaching for one, two, or three of the laboratory assignments then eventually taking on the classroom instruction until they have full control of the classes. The teacher preparation colleges and the secondary agricultural teachers have to ask themselves what is most beneficial, throwing the student teachers to the fire and having them completely taking over a class up until they get a full load then eventually having them release their duties or gradually coaching the student teachers into running and maintaining a full load.
Implications for Research

The data from the interviews and the observations from this study alluded to five separate communities of practice for secondary agricultural education teachers. Strong evidence was provided for four of these communities but few evidences were collected from the state educational community. It is suggested that a study should be designed that demonstrates how the secondary agricultural education teachers engage in this community.

The participants in the study seem to have different standards of expectations for their student teachers. An implication for research is a study designed to find out the expectations of the cooperating teacher in the student teaching experience. At the beginning of the experience, it is suggested that the cooperating teachers to be asked what are their expectations of the pre-service teacher when they arrive to the student teaching center. It is also suggested that they are asked what their expectations of the student teacher are when they leave the experience. Insight could be gained about how much preparation the cooperating teachers feel they should provide for the student teachers. Knowing what motivates experienced secondary agricultural teachers to become cooperating teachers can be beneficial in the recruitment of new professionals. The secondary agricultural teachers shared many professional benefits of having a student teacher, so it is suggested to provide those benefits to other teachers in the profession. An implication for research would be to determine the motivations of first time cooperating teachers prior to a student teaching experience and compare them to the motivations after the experience has concluded. Only two of the participants in this particular study were first time cooperating teachers and only one of them participated in both interviews. Determining if there is any change in motivation for the first time cooperating teachers could also lead to the
determining of other effects of the student teaching experience on secondary agricultural teachers.

The secondary agricultural education teachers in this study displayed strong political efficacy with their decisions and with their empowerment of other people. One research question that this study raises is do all secondary agricultural teachers have free will in their choices and their decisions? Because all of the secondary agricultural teachers in this study were experienced teachers that had volunteered to serve as cooperating teachers, what is the political efficacy of experienced teachers who decline to volunteer as a cooperating teacher? A related question is what is the political efficacy of new secondary agricultural teachers?

An alarming observation from this study was the lack of participation in supervised agricultural experiences in the student teaching locations by the student teacher. Supervised agricultural experiences were present in their programs because both teachers were assisting their FFA members in filling out State and American FFA Degree applications. Both cooperating teachers also had unofficial visits with their students, but supervision was not observed except for the management of applications and it definitely was not shared with the student teachers. If SAE is to remain one of the three main parts of the Agricultural Education model, the practices of successful programs should be researched and shared with agricultural education departments.
Summary

A discussion of the four major themes was held in this chapter. The discussion led to the conclusions that the student teacher has an impact on the secondary agricultural teacher in their professional communities of engagement, that secondary agricultural teachers volunteer to help others as well as themselves professionally, that the secondary agricultural teachers are powerful individuals within their communities, and that the student teachers have an impact on the professional practices of the teachers. Implications for practice and implications for research were shared based upon these conclusions.
APPENDIX A
CONSENT FORM

The Effects of the Student Teaching Experience on Cooperating Teachers in Secondary Agricultural Education Programs: A Case Study

Investigators:
Stephen W. Edwards
Donna M. Westfall-Rudd
Thomas W. Broyles

You are invited to take part in a study of cooperating teachers in Agricultural Education. We are asking you to take part because of your current and/or prior experience in serving as a cooperating teacher in agricultural education. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Procedures
This case study is designed to document and analyze the student teaching experience from the perspective of the cooperating teacher.

If you agree to be in this study, we ask that you allow us to interview you regarding your participation in the student teaching experience. Based upon initial interviews, the research team will seek to conduct focused professional observations with two of the participants in the study. These observations will be of the cooperating teacher in the professional setting. After observations and analysis from initial interviews, the team will conduct a second round of interviews at the end of the experience. We also would like to ask teachers to share documents relating to their teaching experience including planning calendars, lesson plans, classroom materials and award applications.

Risks and benefits: We do not anticipate any risks for you participating in this study, other than those encountered in day-to-day life. The study will not have any direct benefits for you, but your participation will help us learn more about the cooperating teacher in the student teacher experience.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

Confidentiality: An alias will be used during the interviews rather than your real name. In any written publications the researcher will not include any information that could make it possible to identify you. The audio recordings of the interview will be kept in a secure computer. Only the researchers will have access to these recordings. The written transcript of the interview will also be kept secure. The consent forms will be stored in a locked file separately from the digital recording and transcript. It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view this study’s collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

Compensation: There will be no compensation for your participation in this study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Subject’s Responsibilities
I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities:
Respond to the researcher’s interview questions as I feel comfortable.
Agree to Observations in a professional environment

Subject’s Permission
I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

_________________________________________________________________________ Date__________
Subject signature
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS FOR INITIAL INTERVIEW

Cooperating Teacher Case Study

The purpose for this interview is to examine the initial effects of the student teaching experience on cooperating teachers.

I. The first round of questions will focus on how participation in a teacher preparation program influences the teaching identity of cooperating teachers.

   a. How would you describe your role as a teacher?
   b. How would you describe your role as a cooperating teacher?
   c. What have been some of your greatest personal successes as an agricultural teacher?
      i. Were any of these successes from your previous experiences as a cooperating teacher?
   d. Have you had any failures that have shaped how you view yourself as a teacher?
      i. Were any of these failures from your previous experiences as a cooperating teacher?
   e. Can you please describe for me the amount of influence that you feel that you have in the student teacher experience?

II. The second round of questions will focus on the motivation for becoming a cooperating teacher.

   a. Did you attend a traditional teacher preparation program? (Pilot Interview)
      i. If so, how would you describe your experience as a student teacher?
      ii. If not, can you describe the beginning of your teaching experience? (Pilot Interview)
   b. Please share with me your previous experiences working with student teachers.
   c. What has motivated you to become a cooperating teacher this school year?
   d. How do you perceive that your service as a cooperating teacher impacts the agricultural education community?
   e. As a cooperating teacher, how would you define your role as a potential gatekeeper to the profession?

III. The third round of questions will focus on the political efficacy of the teaching professional.

   a. Besides your specific job requirements as an agricultural teacher, what are some other tasks that you perform in your role as a professional?
      i. at the school level
      ii. at the district level
      iii. at the state level
      iv. at the national level
b. What say-so do you have over your participation in these tasks?

c. What say-so do you have over the decision making ability in these individual tasks?

d. How do you share knowledge with others relating to each of these tasks?

e. How have you shared knowledge with your student teacher about the profession?

IV. The fourth round of questions will focus on professional teaching practices and any potential influence from the teacher preparation program

a. How do you interact with your student teacher beyond the classroom observations and scheduled meetings?

b. What teaching skills, methods or materials have you gained from working with student teachers?

c. Can you describe any practices in your local program that were started during a previous student teaching experience?

d. How have you changed any professional practices due to your most recent student teaching experience?

e. How have you changed any professional practices due to any of your prior student teacher experiences?

Is there anything else that you would like to share with me regarding serving as a cooperating teacher during the student teacher experience?

Thank you for your time for this interview.
APPENDIX C
QUESTIONS FOR FINAL INTERVIEW

Cooperating Teacher Case Study

The purpose for this interview is to examine the subsequent effects of the student teaching experience on cooperating teachers. The questions from this interview have been generated from literature review, the initial participant interviews, and classroom observations.

I. The first round of questions will focus on how participation in a teacher preparation program influences the teaching identity of cooperating teachers.

   a. In the initial interview, I asked “How would you describe your role as a teacher?” The following questions are a follow up to that initial question.
      i. How would you describe your role as a member of the classroom community?
      ii. How would you view your role as a member of the FFA chapter?
      iii. How would you view your role as an SAE supervisor?
      iv. How would you view your role as a member of the school community?
      v. How would you view your role as a member of the local school district community?
      vi. How would you view your role as an agricultural teacher in the local town and/or county of your program?
      vii. How do you view your role as a member of the agricultural education community within the federation, area, and state?

   b. In the initial interview, I asked “How would you describe your role as a cooperating teacher?” How did you strive to integrate your student teacher in each of the following?
      i. Classroom
      ii. FFA Chapter
      iii. SAE Programs
      iv. School
      v. School District
      vi. Local Town or County
      vii. Community of Agricultural Education Teachers

II. The second round of questions will focus on the motivation for becoming a cooperating teacher.

   a. How do you feel that your role as a cooperating teacher is important for the continuation of the agricultural education profession?
   b. Have you developed any new skills or ideas from your most recent experience as a cooperating teacher?
   c. How would you describe the personal and/or professional relationship with your most recent student teacher?
d. How has serving as a cooperating teacher affected your job as an agricultural teacher this semester?
e. How did you try to prepare the experience for your student teacher(s) to be successful?
f. How has having a student teacher this semester affecting your standing in the school and the community?

III. The third round of questions will focus on the political efficacy of the teaching professional.

a. Can you describe a scenario from this semester where you chose to engage in a project or activity that benefited your school community?
b. Can you describe a scenario from this semester where you chose to engage in a project or activity that benefited your local town or county?
c. Can you describe a scenario from this semester where you chose to engage in a project or activity that benefited agricultural education at the regional, state or national level?
d. How do you share the outcomes of these projects and activities with other people?
e. How did you involve the following people in any of these tasks?
   i. Student Teacher
   ii. Coworkers
   iii. Students
   iv. Parents
   v. Other Community Members

IV. The fourth round of questions will focus on professional teaching practices and any potential influence from the teacher preparation program

a. In the first interview, I asked you the following question “How do you interact with your student teacher beyond the classroom observations and scheduled meetings?” How did you interact with your student teacher in the following situations.
   i. While you were teaching a class
   ii. While the student teacher was teaching your class
   iii. Before the school day began
   iv. During class breaks and lunch
   v. During your planning period
   vi. After the school day ended
   vii. During school assigned teacher duties
   viii. During field trips and FFA events
b. How did you work with your student teacher to develop varying teaching methods over the semester?
c. How did you work with your student teacher to develop time management skills in teaching a lesson?
d. How did you work with your student teacher in developing skills in the laboratory environment?
e. Can you describe a situation where you and the student teacher co-taught a lesson?
f. Can you describe a situation where you assisted the student teacher with running a FFA or Field Trip opportunity?
g. Can you describe any new skills or ideas you learned from your most recent student teacher?
h. Can you describe any routines started by the student teacher that you maintained after they left the classroom?
i. What effect did having a student teacher have on your teaching calendar?

V. The final round of questions will reflect upon the entire student teaching experience.

a. What was the greatest success from the most recent student teaching experience?
b. What was the greatest setback from the most recent student teaching experience?
c. What could you have done differently to improve the student teaching experience?
d. How could the college assist you in improving the student teaching experience?
e. Would you consider serving as a cooperating teacher again? Can you please share why or why not?

Is there anything else that you would like to share with me regarding serving as a cooperating teacher during the student teacher experience?

Thank you for your time for this interview.
APPENDIX D
DOCUMENTS FOR DEMOGRAPHICS

Blue High School

2011-2012 Blue High School Schedule
2011-2012 Blue High School’s School District Calendar
Blue High School Website
2012 National Chapter Award Application – Blue High School FFA
Syllabus – Agriscience I
Syllabus – Agriscience II
Syllabus – Agriscience IV
Teacher Planning Calendar – Participant 10
Various Lesson Plans – Participant 10

Gold High School

2012 Gold High School FFA – Banquet Program
2012 Gold High School FFA – Field Trip Agenda
2011-2012 Gold High School’s School District Calendar
Gold High School Website
Syllabus – Advanced Agriculture Production III and IV
Syllabus – Foundations of Agriculture
2012 National Chapter Award Application – Gold High School FFA
Teacher Handbook – Gold High School 2011-2012
Teacher Evaluation Book – Gold High School’s School District
Teacher Planning Calendar – Participant 1
Various Lesson Plans – Participant 1
REFERENCES


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