A Longitudinal Study on the Impact of Time Spent Student Teaching on the Decision to Enter the Field

William Doss
Texas Tech University
Box 42131
Lubbock, TX 79409-2131
(806) 834-7097
william.doss@ttu.edu

John Rayfield
Texas Tech University
Box 42131
Lubbock, TX 79409-2131
(806) 834-1956
john.rayfield@ttu.edu

A Longitudinal Study on the Impact of Time Spent Student Teaching on the Decision to Enter the Field

Introduction/Theoretical Framework

The shortage of qualified teachers to fill secondary agricultural education vacancies has been identified as one of the most pressing issues in our field (Myers, Dyer, and Washburn, 2005). According to Camp, Broyles, and Skelton (2002), the shortage of teachers in the field is caused by teachers leaving the early in their career and programs at colleges and universities failing to graduate a sufficient number of qualified individuals to fill the open positions. However, Parmley, Bowen, and Warmbrod (1979) concluded the teacher shortage was not caused by universities failing to graduate enough qualified students, but rather by a low percentage of graduates who enter the field.

Fives, Hamman, and Oliverez (2007) suggested high workloads placed on student teachers may be impacting their decision to enter the profession by creating early burnout. However, others have reported teachers with higher perceived self-efficacy levels had reduced intention to leave the classroom and a higher level of commitment to the profession (Blackburn & Robinson, 2008; Walker, Garten, & Kitchel, 2004). Student teaching is a real-world, high impact experience where prospective teachers begin to develop self-efficacy in teaching (Smith & Rayfield, 2017). The impact time investment has on the decision to leave or remain in the field of agricultural education and the impact the student teaching experience has on self-efficacy can be examined through a lens of Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1986). Using Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, the experiences student teachers have during student teaching influence their level of self-efficacy and lead to a behavior or the decision to enter the field. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between time spent during student teaching and the decision to enter the field of agricultural education as a secondary agricultural education teacher.

Methods

This study was conducted as a longitudinal study over three years using data from the spring 2017 (n = 15), spring 2018 (n = 21), and spring 2019 (n = 22) student teaching cohorts at [University]. Weekly reports asked student teachers to quantify time spent during student teaching based on an instrument developed by Torres and Ulmer (2007). Hours were reported in the following areas: 1) Observing Cooperating Teacher, 2) Conferencing with Cooperating Teacher, 3) Preparation for Instruction, 4) Classroom/Laboratory Teaching, 5) Laboratory Preparation and/or Maintenance, 6) Grading/Scoring Students' Work, 7) Administrative Duties (Program Management), 8) Professional Activities (Meeting, In-service), 9) SAE Observations and Livestock Shows, 10) Local FFA Activities, 11) District, Area, and State FFA Activities, 12) CDE Preparation, and 13) Adult Education. Student teachers from these cohorts submitted weekly reports to their university supervisor over a 15-week period using a Qualtrics questionnaire. Teaching decision status was determined by checking the state agricultural teacher directory or through direct contact with the individual. Data from all student teachers in the three cohorts (N = 58) were compiled in IBM SPSS version 25.0 where Pearson point-biserial correlations were calculated.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between time spent during student teaching and the decision to enter the field of agricultural education as a secondary agricultural education teacher. Grading/scoring students' work (r_{pb} = -.30) was the only category with a moderate relationship (Davis, 1971). The remaining categories were either low or negligible relationships. A complete list of correlation coefficients for time spent student teaching and the decision to teach is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Relationships Between Time Spent Student Teaching and Decision to Teach (N = 58)

Student Teaching Time Category	Teaching Decision (r_{pb})
Grading/Scoring Students' Work	-.30
Overall Total Hours Spent Student Teaching	.20
Professional Activities (Meetings, In-Service)	.19
FFA Activities – Local Level	.19
Laboratory Preparation and/or Maintenance	.14
SAE Observations and Recording (Including Livestock Shows)	.11
CDE Preparation	.09
Adult Education	.09
Conference Time with Cooperating Teacher	.08
Administrative Duties – Program Management	.08
FFA Activities – District, Area, and/or State Level	.06
Classroom/Laboratory Teaching	.06
Preparation for Instruction	-.05
Observing Cooperating Teacher	-.01

Note. Decision to teach coding: Decision not to teach = 0, Decision to teach = 1.

Conclusions/Implications/Recommendations

From the findings of this study, conclusions can be drawn about time spent in the student teaching experience and the decision to enter the field. When comparing the relationship of time spent student teaching and the decision to enter the field, all categories except grading/scoring student work had a low to negligible correlation. Given this information, it can be concluded time spent in the student teaching process did not relate to the student teachers' decision to enter the profession. This contradicts the work of Fives, Hamman, and Olivarez (2007) that suggested high hours experienced in the student teaching process is leading to early burnout of student teachers. If the quantity of hours spent student teaching does not relate to the decision to teach, would it not be best for student teachers to receive the most experience possible during their student teaching program? This leads to the recommendation that teacher educators should encourage their students to engage in as many activities as possible during their student teaching experience so the students will have the opportunity to gain the most knowledge and experience. Further research should be conducted gathering self-efficacy information from student teachers during their student teaching experience to determine if there is a relationship with time spent in student teaching activities and levels of self-efficacy.

References

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Blackburn, J. J., & Robinson, J.S. (2008). Assessing teacher self-efficacy and job satisfaction of early career agriculture teachers in Kentucky. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 49*(3), 1-11. doi:10.5032/jae.2008.03001

Camp, W. G., Broyles, T., & Skelton, N. S. (2002). *A national study of the supply and demand for teachers of agricultural education in 1999-2001*. Blacksburg, VA: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Davis, J. A. (1971). *Elementary survey analysis*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall

Fives, H., Hamman, D., & Oliverez, A. (2007). Does burnout begin with student teaching? Analyzing efficacy, burnout, and support during the student-teaching semester. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23,* 916-934. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.03.013

Myers, B.E., Dyer, J.E., & Washburn, S.G. (2005). Problems facing beginning agriculture teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 46*(3), 47-55. doi:10.5032/jae.2005.03047

Parmley, J. D., Bowen, B. E., & Warmbrod, J. R. (1979, August). *The supply and demand of teachers of agriculture: Can the situation be explained*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Central Region Conference in Agricultural Education, Manhattan, KS.

Smith, K., & Rayfield, J. (2017). Student teaching changed me: A look at Kolb's learning style inventory scores before and after the student teaching experience. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 58*(1), 102-117. doi:10.5032/jae.2017.01102

Torres, R. M., & Ulmer, J. D. (2007). An investigation of time distribution of pre-service teachers while interning. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 48*(2), 1-12. doi: 10.5032/jae.2007.02001

Walker, W., Garton, B., & Kitchel, T. (2004). Job satisfaction and retention of secondary agriculture teachers. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 45*(2), 28-38. doi: 10.5032/jae.2004.02028