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*Cultivating Novice Teachers Through  
Meaningful Mentorship*

## Be the Right Mentor at the Right Time

by Gaea Hock

**A**s I prepared to write the editor comments for this issue I came across the following quote from James Levin, “*I was lucky that I met the right mentors and teachers at the right moment.*”

That quote prompted me to reflect on my professional career and the key individuals who helped



*Mr. Cary Granzow was my “right mentor” during my novice teaching years.*

shape me into the educator I am today. While my extended family was engaged in agriculture, both of my parents were educators. It was my high school agriculture teacher, Mr. Bill Johnston, who opened my eyes to the agricultural industry and lit a fire in me to be a leader. I then had the opportunity to be educated by great teachers at Kansas State University who helped prepare me for a teaching career. These educational experiences were key, but it was my cooperating teacher dur-

ing my student teaching semester who became the right mentor and teacher to propel my career.

Mr. Cary Granzow built a quality agriculture program at a small rural high school in central Kansas. He had been the only agriculture teacher for 26 years when I showed up in January 2003. I had a wonderful learning experience that spring and jumped at the opportunity to stay and be the second agriculture teacher. He

pushed me to try new things and ran interference when others questioned my actions. Cary was also willing to take on new courses in order for me to teach the traditional agriculture curriculum. We spent many car rides discussing the program and ways we could support our students. The six years I spent working with Mr. Granzow allowed me the unique opportunity to have my mentor also

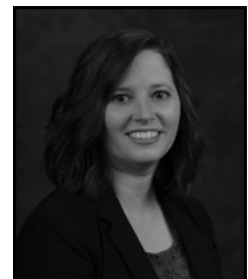
be my colleague and friend. He was exactly the right mentor and teacher for me to start my agricultural education professional staff.

As I transitioned from the high school classroom to the college classroom, my twin sister, Dr. Courtney Meyers, became a key mentor in my life. She understood how to navigate the academic world and offered key advice (fun fact: my doctoral advisor was not able to be at my graduation, so

my sister hooded me). I still call her on an almost daily basis to discuss what is happening at my institution and get advice regarding teaching and learning.

I have had the privilege to work with numerous mentors during my educational and professional career. A mentor encouraged me to pursue my doctoral degree. I had mentors during my time at Texas Tech University and Mississippi State University. There are many current and retired agriculture teachers who served as a mentor for me when I taught agriculture and now as a teacher educator. I consider my colleagues at Kansas State University as mentors in different aspects of my academic duties.

As you read the articles included in this issue, reflect on who has served as the mentors in your life. Also consider who you are currently mentoring, officially or unofficially, and how you can make that relationship as impactful as possible.



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# Cultivating Novice Teachers through Meaningful Mentorship

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**Article Submission**

Articles and photographs should be submitted to the Editor or Theme Editor. Items to be considered for publication should be submitted at least 90 days prior to the publication date of the intended issue. All submissions will be acknowledged by the Theme Editor and/or the Editor. No items are returned unless accompanied by a written request. Articles should be approximately four double spaced pages in length (1500 words). Information about the author(s) should be included at the end of the article. Photos and/or drawings appropriate for the “theme issue” are welcomed. Photos/drawings should be submitted in an electronic format (jpg or tiff format preferred – minimum 300 dpi). Do not imbed photos/drawings in the Word document. A recent photograph (jpg or tiff format preferred– minimum 300 dpi) of all authors should accompany the article unless photographs are on file with the Editor. Articles in the *Magazine* may be reproduced without permission but should be acknowledged.

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## *Find Meaning in Mentorship*

by Ashley Yopp

**T**he year 2020 hasn't been a total catastrophe, right? Right?

I recently mused over the trials and tribulations of this nonsensical year and like pulling on the threads of an old sweater, I began unraveling the warm and sunny spots of this wild and ridiculous, absolutely no-good year. Maybe it wasn't so bad after all?

I learned a lot this year. I mean, most of it was out of sheer necessity, but hey, that's something. For example, I may not be able to find my keys most days, but I can recall the name, breed, and favorite toy of each good doggo, cat, parrot, iguana, and toddler that scuttles across my screen during class. Believe it or not, I'm also quite skilled at covering every square inch of my home in shiplap and killing overly-sensitive succulents. But, ya know the best thing I learned in the calamity of the past nine months? How much I need other people. I mean, the good ones. Ok everybody, but you know what I'm saying; the folks that bring you doughnuts and coffee when you've clearly started another new diet. Or the ones that stay late to help you brainstorm a big idea and challenge you to keep going when you think you've run out of

steam. I missed those people. I missed the way they'd let me ramble on and on about something I couldn't change only to turn around and make me laugh about it 'til my cheeks hurt. I guess you could say I realized the value of a decent pair of yoga pants, a sleeve of Oreos, and a good mentor along the short, but lonely trek between my desk and the fridge.

Now, of course, my mentors were still around. It just wasn't the same. I wasn't the same if we're being honest. I needed perspective and found it while brainstorming crazy cool ideas with my students and encouraging them to push past the complications of an "unprecedented year." At some point, while listening to them ramble on and on about the things they couldn't change and belly laughing 'til our cheeks hurt, I finally completed the circle.

And here we are.

We're all seeking purpose, connection, and a couple minutes of good advice. And I'm not sure I've ever met an ag teacher who can't tell a good story without a little of that mixed in. I hope this issue of the AgEd Magazine spurs a bit of renewal when it comes to your outlook on real, meaningful mentorship, especially when it

comes to considering the needs of novice teachers. No matter the age or stage - mentor or mentee - our lives are enriched by the reciprocal gift of these unique relationships. So, be intentional about it. Seek opportunities to grow. Help a newbie lighten their load. Get out of your rut. Ask for help.

I know my life and work is exponentially more rewarding because I happen to share a razor-thin office wall with the best mentor on the planet. It's that kind of mentorship that makes returning the favor a no brainer. Even in the year 2020.



*Ashley Yopp is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication at the University of Georgia*

## *The Mentors Creed*

by Bo/David Williford

I believe in the future of young agriculture teachers with a faith founded in relationships, not paperwork--goals shared by two educators with a common belief in progress and personal development; in the promise of time spent planning, reviewing, and monitoring a shared goal.

I believe that to serve our colleagues is a responsibility, as well as a privilege, for I know the support I needed when I began this career and hold a deep belief that others invested in me in my hours of discouragement which led to my greatest moments of growth.

I believe in honesty from ourselves, and the encouragement of others. I believe in my own ability to find time to give to others what was given to me in such a way that I can cultivate enthusiasm for others' growth, even when my plate is full.

I believe in less dependence on paperwork driven mentorship and more power in building relationships with those in arms reach of me; in the importance of making progress toward a goal alongside a colleague; in less need for feedback and more of it when needed; in growing myself and investing in those who have relied upon me.

I believe that American agriculture teachers can and will hold true to the best intents of Career and Technical Education and that I can exert an influence on the future of my profession which will stand solid for my part in this imperative task.



*Bo/David Williford is an agricultural educator turned assistant principal in Lufkin, Texas. Bo/David holds a Bachelor's of Science from Texas A&M University and a Master's of Science in Agriculture Education and Extension from the University of Arkansas.*

## *Elements of Mentoring Student Teachers in Agricultural Education*

by Ashley Yopp, Ali Ikner and Barry Croom

The best student teaching experiences are those where novice teachers are provided with significant and high-quality supervision by their mentors (National Research Council, 2010). Yet, for many seasoned teachers, mentoring student teachers can seem like a juggling act between imparting years of content knowledge and providing intensive hands-on training all while teaching students of your own (American Education Research Association, 2005). So, what does mentoring a student teacher include? How should a mentor teacher facilitate the continued improvement of a student teacher? Student teachers need exposure to almost every aspect of the school system and total program of Agricultural

Education. They need experience facilitating instruction in diverse environments of varying class size, even as they transition from formal environments to in-service professional development. Student teachers need experiences understanding students of differing abilities and motivations and how these factors may be influenced by family, peers, and by the community. In short, they need to know it all and they need to know it quickly. So, how might a mentor teacher best structure their student teacher's learning experiences?

Here are four major elements to consider when mentoring student teachers:

### **Onboarding**

Onboarding is the process of orienting the student teacher to school policies, procedures, and routines by introducing them to the school and surrounding community. Mentor teachers should devote a substantial portion of the student teacher's first days at school describing school policies and procedures including a review of the school's policy guides, the teacher handbook, and the student handbook. Of these documents, the student hand-

book is perhaps the most concise source of useful information. Student teachers need to understand and be prepared to follow policies related to student absences, disciplinary procedures, field trips, daily schedules, handling school funds, inclement weather plans, fire and tornado drills, and emergency lock-down procedures.

After a thorough orientation to school policies and procedures, load up your student teacher and take them for a drive around the community. Show them where your students live and where their parents work. Familiarize them with the various types of agriculture prevalent in your community and spend time introducing them to key people who support your program. Having a student teacher is a badge of honor and your community supporters need to know your program not only trains young people for careers in agriculture but prepares future teachers, as well. Introducing student teachers to key supporters in your community communicates the expectation that they should also develop the same type of relationships when they begin programs of their own. Student teachers bring their own culture, social circumstances, community mores, and standards to your classroom; helping them comprehend the influential role community plays in Agricultural Education will be exponentially beneficial to their future programs.

Now, it's time to introduce them to how you do things. Sit





down and give the student teacher an overview of the courses you teach and your expectations when they take over the teaching of those courses. Review your class rosters, noting students with special needs and accommodations. Answer questions about the structure and sequence of your curriculum. Devote plenty of time to reviewing the academic calendar, the community calendar, and the FFA program of activities. Explain how you manage to keep up with the dates associated with school activities, community events, and FFA programs. Help them conceptualize the characteristics of the yearly calendar and the need for event planning. Student teachers need to experience the intensity of teaching, but in a manner that prevents disorientation, confusion and demoralization. Good mentor teachers can structure the student teaching experience for maximum benefit (National Research Council, 2010).

### Teaching

The next element of preparing student teachers is in the practice of teaching. There are over 11,000 agriculture teachers in the United States and every one of them has a different way of designing and delivering curriculum. Demonstrate how you plan your lessons and prepare for each class. Student teachers commonly report, “My mentor teacher just walked into class, carrying nothing more than a pencil and started teaching. He/She didn’t have a lesson

plan in front of him/her, but kept students busy and productive the whole period. How does he/she do it?!” Experienced agriculture teachers may not teach from a paper lesson plan, but they do have one in their heads. Be explicit about how you plan instructional activities. After teaching the same subject 20 times in a row, it’s easy to remember what to do each time. However, sometimes student teachers have a difficult time making that connection.

Show student teachers where teaching materials are located and provide access to the teaching materials you recommend they use. Teach them how to use all equipment and technology including shop and lab equipment, any tractors or vehicles used on the school farm, and anything else more complicated than a manual pencil sharpener.

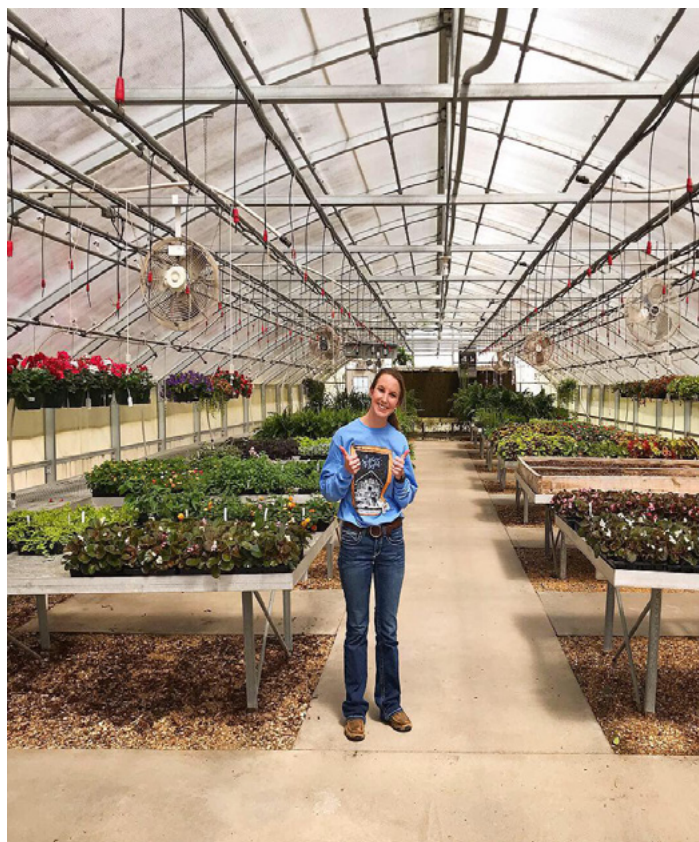
Student teachers’ level of experience with the equipment used in Agricultural Education is wide and varied. Be absolutely certain they know how to safely operate all equipment in your program. One good way to do this is to have them demonstrate how to safely set up and use shop and lab equipment. Don’t just take their word for it; confirm they know how to use the equipment.

As a mentor teacher, you’ll need to further your student teacher’s hands-on experiences in teaching methods and technical content in agriculture, food, and natural resources. It’s impossible for student teachers to learn everything they need to know about being an agriculture teacher in four short years of teacher education. Be prepared to provide some technical content instruction. Student teaching is

an opportunity to test out the methods they’ve learned in college. Let them try new things during the teaching phase, even let them fail, but ensure they practice effective teaching methods in your classroom.

### Mentoring

Being a mentor teacher in the field requires you be both teacher and mentor at the same time. A teacher teaches; a mentor provides guidance and advice. The mentoring element of your role as a mentor teacher requires you advise your student





and occurs when you signal, note, or somehow cue your student teacher to things they ought to do or consider during a lesson, without alerting the class that you are doing so.

University faculty will need you to conduct formal evaluations of your student teacher weekly. This involves observing them teach and sitting down with them to review their teaching practice. This evaluation should include commendations for good teaching methods, as well as recommendations on how to improve. For mentor teachers, sitting in the back of the room

teacher on how to best handle the daily issues they will face in classrooms of their own. For instance, student teachers need solid advice on handling misbehavior and how to structure lessons that really engage students in learning. Student teachers need advice on how to best manage the workflow of a busy Agricultural Education program, and they especially need advice on how to manage stress. Teaching agriculture is a rewarding occupation, but it does come with its share of stressful situations. Counseling student teachers on managing the stress of the job is essential to their happiness and longevity in the profession. Student teachers may also need your guidance on

how to structure and manage their career. They will ask for your opinion on which teaching jobs to apply for and advice on preparing for interviews. They will seek your advice on how to work with administrators, parents, and community supporters.

### **Evaluating**

The most successful mentor teachers provide informal assessment and evaluation on a regular basis in between classes, in the hallway, and on the way to and from meetings and competitions. Informal assessment also includes providing practical tips and tricks to student teachers while they're teaching. This is called "coaching in the moment"

completing a formal observation of a student teacher seems like as much fun as watching paint dry, but it is in these weekly evaluations that the mentor teacher has the best chance to help a novice teacher survive and thrive in the classroom. Some teacher education programs may require a summative teaching performance evaluation along with the recommended grade for their student teacher. Every student teacher should receive the grade earned for their performance, but this grade should never come as a surprise. Conducting informal assessments and formal evaluations on a regular basis provides the best opportunity for you to help



student teachers cultivate habits that will successfully carry them into their first year of teaching.

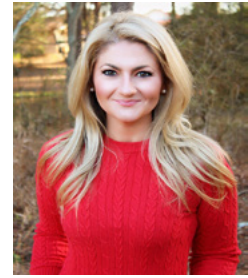
### Communicating Expectations

Another important underlying theme must be addressed by mentor teachers from the very first day. As a mentor teacher, you will need to help student teachers develop a positive and constructive work ethic. Teaching is a demanding responsibility. The sooner student teachers develop a positive work ethic, the better. It is essential for you as a mentor teacher to continue to communicate your expectations to your student teacher every day (Richardson, 1990). Address problems associated with work ethic and the quality of their instruction as soon as possible. It's all about helping student teachers develop good habits. There is considerable variation in how long it takes for a person to develop a habit with somewhere between 18 and 254 days (Lally et al, 2010). Mentor teachers guide student teachers so best practices are repeated intentionally over time.

Your student teacher should have a solid foundation from their teacher preparation program, but it's under your guidance they will first be able to immerse themselves in applying everything they've learned in a real-world setting. Success at any one stage is not enough to ensure your student teacher gets the most out of their time in your program. All four elements are necessary to provide your student teacher with the experiences, tools, and feedback they need to successfully manage their own Agricultural Education program.

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## *From Sowing to Harvest: Growing Mentoring Relationships*

by Brandie Disberger

**M**entoring relationships can be highly impactful or viewed as an item to fulfill a professional requirement. The difference is based on how both individuals approach the experience. How the seed is sown has a dramatic impact on what is harvested from the relationship.

As a former high school agriculture teacher, I lived the life of a beginning teacher and later served as a mentor. Through my graduate degree and as a faculty member I have spent the last four years conducting qualitative research focusing on the beginning agriculture teacher experience, including how they utilized mentors. These experiences provided insight into best practices to establish high quality mentoring relationships.

As a mentor, I remember having “reach out to my mentee” on my to do list each month. I would send them a text, e-mail, or give them a call, whatever I was comfortable doing. In return, the beginning teacher may or may not respond and if they did, it was usually something along the lines of “I’m doing fine.” I felt like I did my job, checked it off, and returned my focus to my program. Looking back, I was doing a disservice to myself and my mentee by not working to grow both the mentoring relationship and the beginning professional.

### *Advice to mentors...*

- Work to **build the relationship** early based on common interests or experiences, open up to the beginning teacher about your background, prior experiences, and what it was like for you as an early career teacher. The most beneficial mentoring relationships identify and build upon similarities between the pair.
- Ask the teacher **how they want to communicate** when they have a quick question. Text, e-mail, GroupMe, or another option. Respond to these specific questions in their preferred mode of communication.
- Guide **monthly reflection**. Schedule a phone call or virtual meeting for about 30 minutes in length with the teacher after they have started school. A day in advance, drop them a reminder about the meeting. This interaction will lay the foundation for the mentoring meetings. During the call, pose the following questions to the mentee:
  - How are you?
  - What has gone well?
  - What have you struggled with?
  - In the month to come, what are you excited about?
  - In the month to come,

what are you concerned about?

- How else can I help?
- Let’s talk again in a month, what day and time works for you so we can get it on the calendar?
- Every month during the school year, have the same conversation. It may feel like it would get redundant, but I have conducted this conversation with the same teachers for three years and we both benefited from and discussed different items in each conversation.
- **Visit the mentee** at their school within their first semester. Request a tour of the program and school, ask for them to identify a class for you to observe, and to set up an introduction with an administrator of their choice. During this experience, provide both positive and constructive feedback with the purpose of growing the young professional. Invite the mentee to tour your school and watch you teach as well.

Why does it work? The power of reflection is well documented in experiential learning, as pre-service teachers they were most likely guided to reflect in their education classes and through the student teaching process. However, as a beginning teacher they are rarely asked to reflect. They know they should but feel there is no

time. This mentor-led conversation forces them to reflect on the last month and think about month ahead. As a mentor, hold them accountable for coming up with at a response to every question. Some teachers struggle with what is going well, others struggle with what they are challenged by, but all teachers need to be guided to consider both.

As a beginning teacher, I was formally assigned a mentor in my school who was the industrial arts teacher in the next classroom. He was excellent at listening, supporting me through school policies and procedure questions, and teaching me about the community. I also benefited from agriculture teachers in neighboring communities who would answer my thousands of questions about FFA events. However, the conversations I appreciated the most were with a peer, another first year teacher who helped me remember that it was not “just me.” That being a beginning teacher had its rewards and challenges.

#### *Advice to mentees...*

As a beginning teacher, you should seek multiple mentors to support your professional development. Consider seeking the following mentors:

- A teacher within your school. A **school-based mentor** can answer questions about policies and procedures within the school and problem solve student management challenges. It is important to have a mentor who shares a common time during the day to talk such as a plan-

ning period or lunch time.

- An **agriculture teacher mentor** within your FFA region or district can answer questions about FFA events and activities. When they are teaching in the same region, they can also identify where you can purchase supplies and equipment and help brainstorm SAE opportunities for your students. An added benefit is the increased chance of casual conversations that can happen during gatherings for student career development and leadership development events.
- A **peer mentor** can exchange ideas, tools, and resources with you. They are also getting established as a professional and may be able to relate to some of your experiences while offering ideas they used when they were challenged. A peer can also appreciate the successes you are experiencing as a beginning professional.

Work to develop at least one of these relationships into a more formal mentoring experience. Ask the mentor to guide you through frequent reflections (consider monthly) to hold you accountable for reflecting. This process guides you to think about how are going and helps you to look forward and properly plan and prepare. Early career professionals can get very focused on day-to-day activ-

ities and miss big events headed their way if they are not guided to think about the “big rocks” in the future.

Ask to observe your mentor in the classroom. Much can be learned from such as observing student management, organization, and engagement strategies. Most likely, you will return to your classroom with new ideas and strategies.

The best mentoring relationships are built when the mentor and mentee share common interests. Work with each of your mentors to get to them better. Learn the preferred modes of communication for each other. A mentoring relationship should be a two-way street, when a mentor shares a resource with you, show appreciation and share something back in return.

Make mentoring more than a requirement, make it a mutually beneficial experience for everyone by communicating regularly, exchanging resources, and growing a lasting relationship.



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# *The Perfect Mentor Doesn't Exist: How to Establish A Constellation of Mentors to Become a Star Agriculture Teacher*

by R.G. (Tre) Easterly III

A common practice in the corporate world is for well established, senior members of a profession, to select someone to be their protégé. This lucky individual would develop a personal and professional relationship with the senior member in their company. As a result, they gain more access to necessary resources, get the first chance to work on new projects, or more trust and additional responsibilities. As an example, a senior partner at a law firm may take a junior associate under their wing, give them advice, allow them to work on higher profile cases, and increase their likelihood to move up the ranks and become partner themselves.

In most schools in the United States, rankings between teachers are less defined and the opportunities and access to resources are somewhat evenly distributed within a school. Despite their vast experience related to teaching, more senior teachers do not have access to resources or opportunities they can bestow on their protégé. Because of their teaching demands, they also may not have time to take a protégé under their wing and teach them everything they need know. This can leave teachers early in their career with a feeling of isolation, like they must take on the system alone. Some teachers thrive in this system, but several leave the profession after only a few years (Ingersoll, 2001).

There is evidence to sug-

gest providing resources and support to beginning teachers can increase the likelihood they will remain in the profession and improve the learning outcomes of the students they teach (Ingersoll, 2012). So how can a beginning teacher get access to resources and opportunities, or even just good advice, as they grow and develop as a professional?

A mentoring constellation is set of individuals a professional goes to for advice and guidance on various aspects of their careers. Mentoring constellations are emerging in the corporate setting as a preferred method of mentorship to traditional protégé/mentor models (Higgins & Thomas, 2001). They have also been shown to increase job satisfaction for faculty members in a university setting (Van Emmerik, 2004). But can a mentoring constellation work for agriculture teachers? And if so, how do you build a constellation that fits your needs?

## **Can a Mentoring Constellation Work for Agricultural Education?**

Honestly, we are still figuring out this question through careful research. However, we do know that most teachers have a difficult time finding a “super mentor.” Because agricultural education is so diverse, and school contexts are so unique, the prospect of finding someone who teaches the same agricultural subjects, who works in the same school, who has the same teach-

ing philosophy, and who has time to help answer every question is not likely to exist. A less daunting task would be to find the right person to help with each question separately.

One thing we do know through research, is most teachers are willing to help other teachers. Experienced agriculture teachers are happy to help by answering questions, sharing resources, or just listening, but they have to be asked (Easterly & Myers, 2017). I remember meeting Julian Smith as a young teacher in North Carolina. Mr. Smith had prepared the state winning Nursery Landscape team for decades and had outstanding horticulture facilities. I was surprised to find out that Mr. Smith said to a group of first-year teachers, “I will share every resource, practice test, handout, or anything else I have with you. I will even let you take cuttings from any plant you want. I just know my students are going to outwork your students.” Saying that was like Bill Belichick sharing his playbook with anyone who wanted it!

While we don't really know the exact impacts of having a constellation of mentors for agriculture teachers, it will not hurt us to try. Some states have the resources to pay individuals to mentor first-year teachers. As a teacher in Minnesota, I participated in the Teacher Induction Program through the University of Minnesota, which afforded me a senior mentor. My assigned mentor visited my school several times to support me and help me



grow as a professional. However, most places do not have the resources to have this type of mentor support. Even if they did, the chances of one mentor being able to help with every aspect of teaching is unrealistic.

**How do you build a mentor constellation that fits your needs?**

Building a mentor constellation requires a careful examination of the competencies needed to perform your job. Think of it as a set of skills you would include on a job description for your job. New teachers can create their own list of needs as a professional by documenting the aspects of their job to create a skills inventory. I have created a list here, but you may find you need to add or take away items from this list.

- Content knowledge

- Classroom management
- Pedagogical practices
- Providing opportunities of SAEs
- Advising an FFA chapter
- Building community support
- Negotiating school policy and procedures
- Facility management
- Maintaining balance & building personal resilience

After you have created the list, rank the items based on the importance and need for growth. The item where you have the most potential for growth would go to the top of the list. You may also consid-

er how important that task is to perform and to be successful for your job. For example, if classroom management is a major issue, addressing that is more important than most other items at the current moment.

Once you have the ranked list, work to find individuals to help you grow in each of those areas. It would be good to start with two or three areas to begin with, then expand once those are in place. If you don't know who to ask, work with an administrator, department head, CTE director, state staff support person, or university faculty member in your state to help identify individuals who excel in those areas.

Reaching out to these individuals may be the hardest part of the process. It can be difficult to send an email or cold call someone you do not know. Here are some tips that might make the process go a little more smoothly.

- If it is another teacher, call them by their first name. You are colleague with this person now, be respectful, but there is no need for formality.
- Introduce yourself, where you work, and how you came into this position.
- Tell them what you are working on in a direct and clear way.
- Tell them who recommended them and note their expertise in that area.

- Make a clear and direct ask.
- Thank them for their time.

Here is an example email you could send:

*Dear Tom,*

*My name is Tre Easterly. I have been hired as a first-year agriculture teacher at Belle Glade High School. I took this position after graduating with my degree in agricultural education from the University of Florida. I am working to teach my students about food safety, specifically getting food from harvest to market while minimizing the risk of contamination. I talked to Dr. Bunch at the University of Florida and he mentioned you have a similar project with strawberries in your school. I would like to visit with you to get your ideas about how to teach this subject to students. Do you have time to visit over Zoom in the coming weeks? I am available most afternoons after 3:30 except for Wednesday.*

*Thank you for your time and I look forward to meeting you.*

*Sincerely,*

*Tre Easterly*

Once you set up the meeting, it is up to you and the mentor how you choose to go forward. But it is a good idea to leave that meeting with a clear plan for following up. You may only need to meet with that person once to get the information you need. Improving a specific teaching behavior may take more than once meeting. It may be beneficial to set reoccurring checkpoints. Re-

member to be respectful of their time. After you have finished the task and no longer need to meet with that person, be sure to send them a thank you note. Hand-written thank you notes will never go out of style.

While building a constellation of mentors may seem overwhelming, remember that the constellations we see on a clear night are made up of stars that were formed over billions of years. In fact, the light we see from some stars left as a light wave over 2.5 million years ago. While it will not take that long to build the support network you need to be successful, be patient and work steadily to provide the support you need.

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## REACH: A Strategy for Beating the Burnout Blues

by Jason Bullock

**5**:45AM. BEEP! BEEP!  
BEEP! Hit snooze.  
5:54AM. Roll out of bed.  
Feed dogs. Eat breakfast. Get dressed. Drive to campus. 7:00AM. Check in at the office. “Good morning!” Chat with colleagues. Check mailbox in teacher’s lounge. Report for bus duty. Sprint to my classroom. Answer student questions. Take up permission slips. Organize materials for today’s CDEs. Grab bus key. Walk to bus. Bring bus around to load students. Make sure everyone is appropriately dressed for their specific contest. Wait for Jonathan to get his tie out of his truck. Double check we have calculators, pencils, clipboards, ponchos, etc. Walk back to the classroom. Make sure substitute plans are on my desk. Debrief substitute and highlight student leaders on each roster. Walk back to bus. 8:17AM. Leave school. Stop for bathroom break. Check in for CDEs. Chat with State Staff. Herd students to the right CDE location. Run back to bus for more pencils. Wait for students to compete. Celebrate their success! Load up the bus. 5:30PM. Depart. Stop for dinner and ice cream. Arrive at school. Unload supplies. Wait for parents to pick up their child. Return bus keys to office. 8:45PM. Leave school. Arrive home. Spend time with family. Take care of dog. Wind down by reading or watching tv. 11:19PM. Fall asleep. 5:45AM. BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!



This is only a snapshot of one day in the life of an agriculture teacher, but one we can all relate to. You know, the days that begin before the sun and end long after dark? The ones that leave us exhausted, stressed out, and sometimes questioning if we belong in this career in the first place? I experienced my fair share of “joys and discomforts” during my twelve years as an agriculture teacher and certainly put myself on the back burner more times than I can count. I wasn’t taking care of things at home and slowly burning out at school. Even more, I found the positive mindset I needed to help others was lacking. Then the guilt set in. My students need me. My school needs me. Other teachers need me. How am I supposed to help beginning teachers when I’m feeling this way? I wrestled with this and finally came up with a plan. I decided to REACH. Let’s talk about it.

What is burnout anyway? The World Health Organization (2019) describes burnout as a syndrome occurring when chronic

work stress isn’t properly managed. Most commonly researchers discuss the burnout phenomena with three basic dimensions: *Emotional Exhaustion*, *Depersonalization*, and *Decreased Personal Accomplishment* (Maslach, Jackson, & Schwab, 1986). Teacher burnout in agricultural education can be attributed to stress factors such as disproportionate amounts of paperwork, working long hours, insufficient work-life balance, lack of administrative/colleague support, lack of resources and quality equipment, and apathetic students and co-workers (Thieman et al., 2012). In addition, the constant comparison of programs and success among agriculture teachers can also trigger burnout as teachers are scorned for doing things differently or not meeting unconscious expectations of success (Kitchel et al., 2012). Thieman et al. (2012) discovered a relationship between stress, resilience, coping mechanisms, and burnout in teachers. Teachers who operate with emotion-focused coping strategies are often defensive in nature, susceptible to higher stress levels, and therefore less re-

siliency. This research also suggests burnout teachers have more difficulty working with unmotivated students, request assistance with classroom management, are overwhelmed by student problems, cast blame on others for perceived failures, and exhibit ineffective coping strategies leading to additional days of missed work.

Have you experienced any of these stress factors? Maybe you can identify with some of the symptoms and causes of burnout? (The Graide Network, 2019)

Let's meet three agricultural education teachers experiencing various levels of burn-out.

Meet **Sherri**. Sherri lacks motivation and interest and does not apply herself to her work beyond a superficial effort. Sherri leaves school at the end of the day often driving out of the parking lot before the buses. Sherri seldomly engages with colleagues and students outside of her classroom. Sherri provides numerous worksheets,

videos, and busy work for students to complete. Her experience of boring routine and lack of acknowledgement drives her to seek other employment. Sherri is experiencing *underchallenged* burnout.

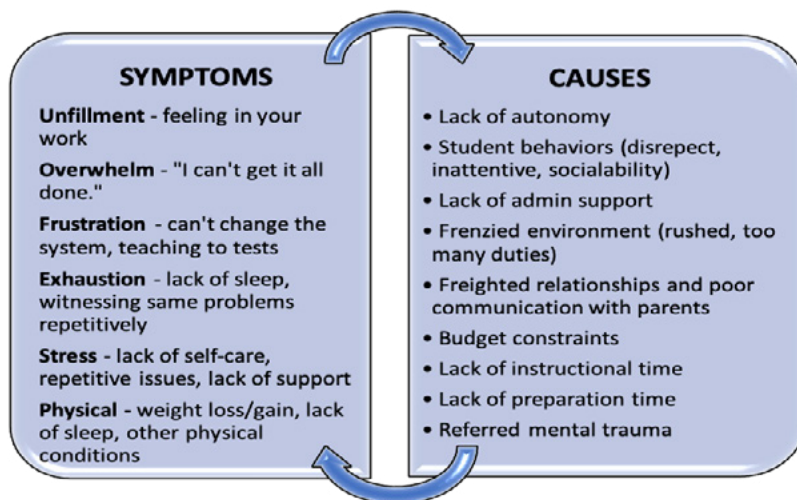
Meet **Justin**. Justin no longer has anything to give to the profession after serving in leadership roles with the professional agriculture teacher association and leading an active agricultural education program with numerous wins at the state and national level. He is tired and beginning to disregard his responsibilities. A lack of power and recognition leads Justin to neglect of his duties. Justin is experiencing *worn-out* burnout.

Meet **Charlene**. Charlene puts a lot of time and energy into her work. She's often called a workaholic by her peers and family. She is extremely dedicated to achievement and attaches personal ambition to her efforts. As a result, her personal life suffers as she works long hours, weekends, and does not balance time with her family and friends. She feels

she cannot get the self-care she needs to balance out her workload because of the demands associated with leading a balanced, involved, and successful agricultural education program. Charlene is experiencing *frenetic* burnout.

Do these teachers sound familiar? Maybe too familiar? I know quite a few Sherries myself. Being underchallenged, worn-out, and frenetic at work can be difficult for any occupation, but as we've all probably seen, these issues can quickly push great agriculture teachers out the door. So, what do we do? How do we recognize burnout in ourselves and others? How do we cope? These are tough questions to tackle, but here's something we can do today to beat a few of those burnout blues. Let's use an acronym I turn to when things are tough. Let's REACH!

**Reflect and Be Realistic!**  
When you're feeling the pressure and exhaustion, try to stop, reflect, and be realistic. What expectations have you set for yourself, your program, and your students? What about your community, volunteers, parents, and administrators? One of the best pieces of advice I ever heard was to "learn to say no" (I even have a No button on my desk from NAAE XLR8). It's easy to say, but hard to do, right? The next time you're approached by stakeholders with an idea for your program, take a moment to evaluate the placement of that activity/idea within the goals of the total agricultural education



Experiencing  
**BURNOUT...**



program. Does that activity align? If not, learn to tactfully, respectfully, and politely say no. As a dear friend of mine says, there's great value and strength in learning to say yes with enthusiasm and no with grace. Be realistic and remember you have a job, but you also have an obligation to yourself, your friends, and your family to maintain those relationships. Overcommitting and stretching yourself thin may result in more banners, but at what cost to your health and family down the road? Stop, Reflect, Be Realistic!

#### **Embrace Positivity**

I passionately believe in the power of positive thinking and encourage you to navigate conversations, interactions, and reflections through the lens of positive thinking. Positive thinking is defined as the "mental and emotional attitude that focuses on optimistic and positive thoughts and expects positive results" (Sasson, 2010). McLean and Dixit (2018) shared "thinking positively encourages resilience,

adaptability, perseverance, and a range of other dispositions that are instrumentally useful to individuals whose professional or personal circumstances are subject to unpredictable changes" (p. 291). Be proactive and deliberate in the choices you make, the time you spend on activities, and the mental, emotional, and physical energy devoted to your program. Positive psychology can help us cope with stress and prevent burnout (Kitchel et al., 2012) while contributing to the growth of the profession by mentoring others. Embracing positive psychology can help you to focus on positive thoughts, positive actions, and positive outcomes in all aspects of your personal and professional life. Engage in critical self-reflection, read self-help books, and actively participate in professional development that encourages a growth mindset.

#### **Ask for Help**

Agricultural Education is blessed with a large network of support. Ask for help from your students, parents, community, colleagues,

family members, etc. in facilitating program activities. Delegation can help relieve the workload associated with operating an active, engaged, and successful agricultural education program. Encouraging parents to assist with activities in your program is a great way to connect and support their participation in their child's education. If you are fortunate to have an alumni affiliate program in your community, consider asking them for help. Local civic organizations and businesses are also great resources to ask, such as chamber of commerce, Lions Club, Boys and Girls Club of America, Rotary Clubs, ASPCA, or Master Gardeners.

Contribute to the Profession Discover ways you can give back to our profession. The balance between give and take can be pivotal to preventing burnout and sparking a renewed passion and motivation for teaching. Get involved in your local, regional, and national professional organization(s). Actively participate in professional development



opportunities offered through your membership. Teachers Turn the Key, Ideas Unlimited, XLR8 Conference, and the National Agriscience Teacher Ambassador programs through NAAE are just a few examples of programs to help rejuvenate and focus your energies toward the classroom. The networking, information, and strategies provided through these experiences can help to reinvigorate your pedagogy while building a network of teachers who share similar struggles and challenges.

### Help Others

After reflecting on your commitments, embracing positivity, asking for help, and contributing to your profession, use that wisdom, experience, and knowledge to help others. One of the greatest ways to give back and help others is through mentorship. Mentorship is not limited to veteran or mid-career teachers, but numerous possibilities exist for establishing mentoring programs. Young and novice teachers need devoted mentorship while navigating the obstacles associated with a complex landscape of teaching and learning. However, mid-career and veteran teachers can also benefit from the camaraderie found in mentor-mentee relationships. Might you also benefit from helping a colleague, new teacher, or student teacher? Developing partnerships and mentoring relationships can do wonders when combatting burnout and even rejuvenate our teaching. I've found new teachers have great ideas that often add pizzazz to a tired old lesson. They also refo-

cus me toward a well-balanced program while reminding me of what's most important at both school and at home. The next time you feel overwhelmed, frustrated, stressed, or exhausted, stop. Take a deep breath and **REACH!** Reflect and be realistic. Embrace positivity and proactively change your viewpoint. Ask for help from those around you. Contribute to your profession if you can. And last but not least, help others. Sometimes it's the giving back that really does the trick by highlighting all the good we often overlook. It can provide hope, spark motivation, and rejuvenate the spirit.

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## *The Art of Teaching Agriculture: An Outside Perspective*

by Sara Scott Shields

I grew up with a dad, tan like sweet tea, steeped in the world of agriculture. He started as a groundskeeper at a small college in North Carolina, eventually becoming the grounds supervisor, later he owned his own nursery, taught agriculture at a community college, hosted a public TV show as the “plant pro” and finished his career as a high school ag. teacher. My formative years all happened with a backdrop of agriculture and alongside the farms and farmers of Eastern North Carolina. I feel a deep nostalgia for the world of agriculture. On top of this is my own family’s commitment to education and you begin to see why an art teacher is writing something for this issue. You see my mother, grandmother, both maternal aunts and my father were all teachers. Touched by the same fateful commitment to education, I became a high school art teacher, eventually leaving to pursue a PhD in art education at UGA and begin my career as a pre-service educator and mentor. Currently, I serve as the chair and co-director of student teaching for the department of art education at Florida State University.

To bring this full circle, I consider my earliest, and arguably most meaningful, mentor to be my father. I vividly remember placing burlap wraps around the young dogwoods he grew in his nursery. He would carefully lay his hands over mine, showing me

how to wrap the root ball. You may be thinking “what does this woman know about mentoring in agriculture education, she’s an art teacher.” Well, it’s this interactive and caring model of mentoring that I continue to hold close as I work with art educators moving through our program at FSU. This patchwork history of agriculture, teaching, and pre-service education are what bring me here today, to talk about meaningful mentoring for new/emerging teachers. I see the world of Agriculture and Art Education as living in the same spheres. These fields both lay the foundation for students to continue lives guided by practice, be it planting or painting. Rarely do science, math, or English classrooms do this kind of soul building. Art teachers, like ag teachers, spend their days sharing a craft, teaching through modeling and demonstration. Both teachers spend their time with their hands in the dirt, helping students be successful by showing, not just telling. You can’t learn about agriculture, or art for that matter, without planting/painting something. These are subjects that we learn as our hands engage with the materials of the field (earth and seeds or pastels and paper). And it is precisely this tactile engagement of materials that makes mentoring our pre-service teachers uniquely different than many other fields. We are not teaching teachers to show through textbooks and lectures, instead we are teach-

ing teachers to show through the practice of being horticulturists, farmers, painters, or sculptors.

But what does it mean to show pre-service students how to be teachers? For me it means my curriculum practices what I preach. I spend my days reminding students that we do not teach art because the world needs more paintings, but instead we teach because the world needs more painters. What I mean is that the world needs more people who think like artists. This rings true for the world of agricultural education as well. At its core, Ag Ed isn’t just concerned with filling the world with more plants or cattle, but instead creating future generations of folks who will value and care for land, animals, and resources. To do this we must roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty. So much is learned when we work alongside our students. Educational philosopher, and mentor to many, John Dewey (1995) talks of this kind of experiential learning:

It is quite possible to enjoy flowers in their colored form and delicate fragrance without knowing anything about plants theoretically. But if one sets out to understand the flowering of plants, he is committed to finding out something about the interactions of soil, air, water, and sunlight that condition the growth of the plants (p. 2).

We must also do this with our mentoring practices, instead of just thinking of mentoring pre-service teachers as part of our teaching, we must strive to think about the structures that exist underneath the mentoring experience and how our teaching practices create, or in some cases destroy, the optimal environment for learning to become a teacher. Simply giving students the tools they need to teach a subject is not enough, instead we have to find ways to prepare students to be teachers, to do the daily work of *being teachers*. As mentors, we must carefully select appropriate activities aimed at facilitating the development of habits of thought and inspiring the natural curiosity of pre-service teachers (Dewey, 1997). It is this kind of educational experience that will help prepare students for life as teachers. Dewey (1997) argues that the mentor's role is to encourage curiosity, meaning ultimately the job of the teacher mentor (both pre-service and in-service) is to find ways to encourage a desire to learn and reflect independently. The mentor's job is "to keep alive the sacred spark of wonder and to fan the flame that already glows. His problem is to protect the spirit of inquiry, to keep it from becoming blasé from over-excitement, wooden from routine, fossilized through dogmatic instruction, or dissipated by random exercise upon trivial things" (Dewey, 1997, p. 20). This is a tall order in a job that can quickly become mechanized and routine.

Teaching is much easier when we never change our lessons, in favor of recycling decade old curriculums. The work of teachers is often misrepresented by the production of lesson plans, where teachers reduce pedagogy to a series of steps to be followed. Enter the mentor, whose duty is to show new teachers that the mark of a valuable educator is their innovation and commitment to curricular development. I remind my students to constantly ask this question: Why is what you are teaching important? It seems pertinent then for mentors to consider this as well. I think of many of the lessons we consider *crucial* in our mentoring relationships. For example, classroom management, why is it important to teach classroom management? The answer might be because teachers must learn to control their students or to avoid chaos in the classroom. But we rarely consider the role of curriculum in managing student behavior during classroom management discussions. Classroom management cannot be reduced to a series of steps and consequences, despite what the principal might think. Instead, could we consider classroom management as a by-product of relationships and student investment in the content? When students feel connections to teachers and invested in the curriculum, they are far less likely to stage a coup. So why then do we *teach* classroom management rather than *teaching* towards relational and personal curricular design? Teaching is a verb steeped in potentiality and

possibility. To teach, like to paint or plant, is to engage in a practice that is never-ending and cyclical. As mentors we must find ways to guide new teachers through the minutiae of educational systems and towards the potentiality inherent in teaching and learning. The mentor's job is to show, through their own practice, that we are always-already becoming teachers.

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## *We're Still Here. The Future of Our Profession Needs Us.*

by Carmen Bennett

I realized a year or so ago that I was old. I don't know why it took me so long to come to that conclusion. My oldest kid is in college. I don't have a "Tik Tok." I have heartburn whenever I eat tomatoes. If I get on the floor to play with the dog, there's no way I'm getting up unassisted. But none of these clues in on my elderly status like the calls and texts that have begun to come in from younger age teachers asking for advice. At first, I was bewildered. Why are they asking ME? My hair is literally on fire every day at work. I do not have it together. I am usually calling the lumber yard on the same day that I actually need lumber for class. I have lost my keys 16 times this week. I even caught a lab on fire once using a milk jug and clearly too much isopropyl alcohol. What advice could I possibly offer? One young teacher answered that question for me a few weeks ago when she replied, "you're still here." I realized she's right. I am still here and I am still completely in love with this job. It made me realize the importance of reaching out and helping young teachers survive and then thrive.

There are so many bits of wisdom veterans can offer young teachers. Sometimes I think we've been in the business so long we fail to consider the things that come naturally to us don't always come easy for new teachers. After talking over

the past few weeks with early career teachers and listening to their concerns, roadblocks, and insecurities, I've identified common struggles. Veteran teachers, don't wait for someone to reach out to you for help. Offer help. Think before you say "this year is like my first-year teaching all over again." It's really not. You may be having to learn a new online management system and you may be struggling with virtual CDEs and such. But you have so much more in your toolkit than an early career teacher has in theirs. I am struggling mightily due to the pandemic. However, I don't have to worry about classroom management, curriculum, content knowledge or many other issues facing early service teachers this year. So, when you can, reach out to a first year teacher and talk. Here are a few things I've found helpful when trying to encourage new agriculture teachers.

1. I always tell first year teachers what my supervising teacher told me during student teaching. I student taught at Franklin County High School under the legendary Gary Minyard. Mr. Minyard told me my first job might be "mission work." He let me know it was okay if that first job wasn't perfect. It was okay if I hated it. It was okay if it made me question my career choice. He made

me promise I wouldn't make a decision about my vocational choice after my first year teaching. Always commit to a second year before you decide. Mission work is important. It grew me as a teacher and it made me appreciate the blessings of a new school the following year. Don't be afraid to share your mishaps with young teachers. They need to know you were once standing in their very same shoes.

2. Tell them you still struggle dealing with parents. But also tell them parents are your very best supporters. Even the cantankerous ones are sending you the best they've got. Form those relationships early. Put their kids' big toothy grins on social media. Do your dead level best to make them understand you are on the same team. You are not the opponent. You both want the very best for kids. With that being said, it's equally important to tell young teachers not to be a doormat. I give everything I've got to kids. I make every effort imaginable to do right by them. I'm not going to be pushed around or verbally abused by anyone. Young teachers need

to know it's not the end of the world if a mama is mad at them because little Johnny's show pig didn't make weight after you repeatedly told him not to feed it Wendy's Frosties and french fries. Stand up for yourself.

3. Tell them to surround themselves with positive people who love their job. Unfortunately, I've run across many academic teachers and sadly a few ag teachers who are simply negative people. They seem to thrive on criticizing everyone from the custodian to the state staff. They have excuses for every single failure. These are not people who should be influencing struggling young teachers. Instead, early career teachers need to seek out people who are thoroughly convinced they are changing the world one kid at a time. If they can't find that person on campus or in their area, take to social media to find them. I have made some incredible connections through Twitter and I continue to learn from them, even those half my age.
4. I absolutely cannot stress this last point enough. Tell young teachers how important it is to be an AGVOCATE for your kids. Every one of the kids in our program will come to an ag teacher with a

scheduling issue before a school counselor. They will call us when they are struggling in other classes. They will text us in the middle of the night when their grandma is being rushed to the hospital. They will call and tell us they've been accepted into a college before they can catch their breath and call their parents. We aren't anything special. But we love our kids and they know we have their backs. And because they know we'd go to the ends of the earth for THEM, they will do the same for us. This is the nature of kids. Do what you say you will do. Go the extra mile to show kids you're willing to stand in the gap. They will literally lick dirt for you if you do. You may start with a mess of an ag program, but if you stick your neck out for kids, you will have the best kids in that school beating down the door to get into ag. I knew I had "arrived" when a football coach stuck his arm in the elevator to keep the door from shutting one day as I was going up to my room. He said "hey-umm how do I get my kid in an ag class?" A football coach? Really? I just did that thing where you blink really quickly and replied, "I will have his schedule changed by lunch!"

As a veteran teacher, my first goal when mentoring new teachers is to do no harm. If I'm having a bad day and I don't feel like I have anything good to say then I don't. I just ask to talk later. If you're in a bad place, don't drag the young folks down with you. But if you love your job and you know beyond a doubt that you're called to this profession, spread that fire to young teachers. They need the warmth. We all do. The future of our profession absolutely depends on it. It depends on us. The old teachers. 'Cause, ya know, we're still here.



*Carmen Bennett is an agriculture teacher at Jenkins County Middle High School in Millen, Georgia. She teaches middle school exploratory agriculture along with high school courses in Veterinary Science and Wildlife Management.*

## *The Power of Mentorship for Student Teachers*

by Andra Collins Johnson

**A**s I always tell my chapter officers, you can use your powers for good or for not, the choice is up to you. That's the same philosophy I have when mentoring young teachers. I think of the gift of mentorship and leadership as beams of light that radiate from person to person. Without proper mentorship, traditions are lost and at the same time, there are no new innovations to project us forward in our teaching goals.

### **Giving Up Control**

Let's dive into the cause and effect of mentorship and how it should work. Over the past 16 years, I've had a few student teachers. I've produced agriculture science teachers and choose to mentor new teachers who ask for my advice. When I am blessed with a student teacher, I get super excited! I get to pass down my traditional beliefs about the National FFA and my belief that solid classroom instruction is the key to linking your Supervised Agricultural Experience program with your FFA chapter. I allow my student teachers to have creative control over their teaching experience. If I were to try to control every aspect of their student teaching they would not even be remotely prepared for their first job. As a new teacher, you are never fully prepared; it does not matter if you were traditionally certified or sought out an

emergency certification. It takes about 5 years to earn all of the badges on your agriculture teacher vest. I allow them to use their own scope and sequence, be as wild in their lessons as they like, and do everything that I would do as a full-time teacher. I advise them to find balance in all their tasks so they do not forget their birthday during student teaching, like I did. Student teachers should be involved in every aspect of decision making for the program for the duration of their experience. I also like to be their mother, friend, spiritual advisor, life coach and source of knowledge. I hope that after student teaching we can stay in touch and always hold each other in high regard. You should never put down your student teacher in deed or word. That is counterproductive and will result in a new teacher having a bad experience. They may or may not continue on their agriculture journey; no teacher should be left behind.

### **Finding Joy in Cultivating the Profession**

It is not every day that a seasoned agriculture teacher helps build another agriculture teacher, but when you do, it feels like you have won the World Series. Being a part of cultivating agriculture teachers has been one of my greatest professional accomplishments. I pride myself in keeping up with the majority of my students' life journey. I am with them for the long haul. They reach back and ask me for profes-

sional and personal advice. When one of my past students becomes an agriculture teacher, I get to be involved in their lives on a deeper level. I have the personal joy of one of my students that I taught for 4 years, now being one of my teaching partners. Or another student changing her life plan to become an agriculture teacher. We catch up frequently, talk about curriculum and FFA and why we all still remain in the profession. I always help them to see the big picture, their students' success. Being an agriculture teacher is a calling. No one quite understands the joys and discomforts of the profession like another colleague and I get to be a sounding board for them as they matriculate through the process.

### **Building Supportive Spaces**

Along the way, I may adopt a few teachers and we build relationships. They may be younger or my same age, but we are drawn to each other because we care strongly about our daily goal: to change the world one student at a time. I communicate with a cohort of teachers that I give advice to and they also give me advice. No question is off limits. I think administrators and other agriculture teachers believe that a new teacher should know everything about the FFA, SAE and classroom. Those are just unrealistic expectations. There should be safe spaces for young teachers to ask for every little piece of information needed to be successful.



If they are willing to do the work I am more than willing to give them information, support and ideas. When one teacher wins, we all win.

### Tips and Tricks

Mentorship is the key to keeping our profession alive and thriving. Every teacher, whether you have one year or twenty years under your belt, should offer advice, correction and guidance to a new teacher.

What does mentorship look like to have measurable success?

1. It is consistent. Even with our busy schedules we should check on our mentee to see how they are balancing life and work. All it takes is a 5-minute Facetime or Google Duo call to check the pulse of your mentee.
2. We should be open to sharing information, but not doing the work. Collaboration should be a two-way street. Your mentee should not email and say, “send me all of your equine lessons.” If you give them just the lessons without walking them through your thought process in preparing the lessons, they will not be able to fully deliver instruction that will service each child. It is also good for new teachers to share teaching methods and lessons with more seasoned teachers because they can help you update some of your older lessons with new knowledge

they gained from “the block” and student teaching.

3. Mentorship should include correction when your mentee has missed the mark. Explain to them how to change their mindset about not advancing at Leadership Development Events or about their officer team not performing at high levels. Encourage them to interject some positivity and replanning into their teaching plans to get different results.
4. Show your mentee how to be professional and humble by not speaking coarsely about others in the profession. Be the compass, salt and light for your mentee so that they will stay in the profession until retirement. Teach them when to fight certain battles and when to be at peace with certain situations.
5. Always be proud of their accomplishments and compliment them.

I hope this school year you will mentor at least one new teacher. You do not need a special program put on by your state’s teacher union or your campus to fulfill this duty. Be reflective and show some compassion to the new kid on the block. If you see a new teacher at a conference or competition say hello and ask “Do you have a mentor?”



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