AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Becky Haddad for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education, presented May 1, 2020.

Title: That's Not in My Position Description: A Discourse Analysis Study of SBAE Teacher Migratory Context

Abstract Approved: _____

Josh Stewart

The purpose of this study was to unfold positions of migrating SBAE teachers to understand support and challenge to retain teachers in migratory contexts. Previous literature discusses problems related to teacher mobility as functions of teacher-student matching, teacher skill and effort, school environments, and advancing student learning. In an effort to focus on the teacher within their system, I conceptualized migration as a social interaction, drawing on the work of the International Symposium on Teacher Migration (Penson & Yonemura, 2012), the concept of socialization (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 2018; Mead, 2018), and current data discussing teacher mobility in the United States. Outlining teacher migration as a social interaction permitted the use of Positioning Theory (Davies, 2000; Harré & van Langenhove, 1999), through discourse analysis, to co-investigate the social navigations and structures in which mobile teachers operate.

Participants for this study included two former SBAE teachers and four community influencers (administrator, two co-teachers, and the FFA alumni president), in addition to a contextual interview with the state supervisor for agricultural education. These participants represented experiences with a specific school (North Plains Consolidated, NPC) as migratory

context. Interview transcripts, follow-up interview transcripts, confirmed data mapping, and co-iterative construction of the conclusions comprised the data for this study.

Findings for this study find SBAE teachers positioning themselves with belonging, as overworked, as capable, and as unique. Community influencers positioned themselves as doing the best they could, seeking commitment, having high expectations for SBAE programs based on agriculture legacies, and being engaged in reciprocal investment. Together, these positions exposed conflicting requirements, willingness to persevere despite challenges, and available support if appropriately taken up. Ultimately, these compile to illuminate SBAE teachers positioning themselves as supported when they have human resources to draw on, the resources to grow their program, and validating relationships with their communities. Challenge is imposed when autonomy is infringed upon, expectations are unclear, or relationships do not extend ideal support.

The findings identify teacher migration as a phenomenon bringing several other challenges in education to light. Implications of expectations, power dynamics, and workload depict the nuance of support and challenge as relational constructs. Several implications arise for the various stakeholders in this study: SBAE teachers, administrators, co-teachers, alumni, and state staff. In order to make the exposed positions useful, a conceptual framework of support and challenge as relational constructs to identify mitigating positions concludes this study.

That's Not in My Position Description: A Discourse Analysis Study of SBAE Teacher Migratory Context

by
Becky Haddad

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Dean of the College of Education

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Dean of the Graduate School

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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Becky Haddad, Author

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*Gratitude turns what we have into enough.* –Aesop

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**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

**Overview**

When I was younger, my family moved a lot. After selling the cows, my family lived in

four different houses in a nine-year span. Nothing particularly bad seemed to necessitate the

moves. Some would call it a mid-life crisis for my dad; others might add my dad was not quite

sure what to do with himself without cows to milk or fields to plant. Regardless, we moved.

Looking back now, I think moving was a healthy experience, even though I did not think so then.

Moving taught me to bloom where I was planted. It taught me a place is just a place until you put

down roots and make it home. Moving taught me, wherever you go, people are willing to help

you grow. Migration followed me into my own family as an adult. My husband and I moved our

belongings 14 times in our first year of marriage. In ten years, we leased or owned seven

different residences and worked in six different states. In this way, my fascination with migration

began in 2001 and continues as I try to relate to others' migrations.

While the reasons people move are varied and interesting, researchers, administrators,

and fellow practitioners seem to hold little influence over moves often resulting from a personal

choice (Ingersoll, 2001). The former state supervisor for agricultural education and state FFA

advisor in this study, Mark Sparley, put it this way:

> One of the things I see, especially with first year teachers, is everybody wants to go
> home. I always advise them that you can always go home, but you can't always start. So
> sometimes it's good to go somewhere else, cut your teeth, learn the profession, and then
> that opportunity will come to go home. I don't know how long that'll be. It could be one
> year; it could be 15 years before you get there. I think most people move to be closer to
> home, to be closer to family, to be closer to spouses' family.
>
> There's also, what you're looking for in a community, for quality of schools,
> opportunities for a spouse, those services that might be available. I think I've had more
> teachers who have come into [this state] based on medical needs of a child…there's also
> part of it that says, "If I go to a really small community and I have to travel half an hour

to go get groceries, or if my kids have to travel to be able to get the fine arts experiences or athletic experiences they want," those come into play.

Yet, while career moves often result from personal choice, validation in migratory processes largely manifest where researchers, other teachers, and administrators can exert significant influence. I can influence the ways School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) migrators are welcomed into new communities, as my research informs how the education profession studies the uniqueness of migrating teachers and their needs. This work shifts the paradigm of the professional conversation from current discourses of migrators being leavers, less effective, and generally lacking (Atterbury, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary, Taie, & O'Rear, 2015; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2012; Ross, Wang, Sanders, Wright, & Stringfield, 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). I move away from terms like *churn*, *movers*, *mobility*, and *job-hopping*, as they position *career migration* (terminology suggested by Penson & Yonemura, 2012 for an international platform) as a one-time event between fixed geographical locations contributing to teacher *attrition*. Such terms fail to recognize migration as a potentially unfolding and discursive navigation. In recognition of the significant vocabulary associated with teacher migration, terminology is defined in Appendix A.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem with the current terminology lies in a failure to credit migrators with intentional decision making to engage work. Instead, I assume there is a system, people operate in it, and people seek learning and growth as distinctly hopeful human phenomena. I argue for an explanation of migration using vocabulary identified in social psychology to account for the work and intention of migration as a process. However, people exercise social discourses in social structures, informing and being informed by them. This opens the door to view migration relationally rather than statistically, economically, disruptively, or from a deficit perspective.

Therefore, to better relay the relational nature of migration, I engage *positioning theory* as a way to identify how people take up, reify, or reject social structures (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999; Davies, 2000). To unfold this interpretation of migration, I offer terminology addressing my conceptualization of migration, the components of the education system in which migration occurs, and migration work. I aim to understand the positions taken up, reified, and rejected in SBAE migrators perceiving support and challenge to further clarify retaining these teachers. Subsequently, I outline the current state of *teacher mobility* and *mobility* research in the United States, and conclude this chapter by addressing the purpose of this study and research questions.

**Conceptualizing Teacher Migration**

Until recently, teacher mobility was explored organizationally as a component of *teacher turnover* and *attrition*. Holme, Jabbar, Germain, & Dinning (2017) called for the reconsideration of short-term (year-to-year) measures of *turnover* to account for the various ways schools interact with the phenomenon. Holme et al. (2017) recognized short-term measures of turnover as the annual accounting of loss of teachers at the district level from one year to the next. They also called attention to the limited picture this accounting provided, and recognized it may conceal more chronic, underlying staffing problems (Holme et al., 2017). To justify a more holistic approach to teacher turnover, they identified turnover patterns to help policy target high turnover schools more effectively (Holme et al., 2017). The terms outlined in Table 1 (Holme et al., 2017) engage a more nuanced, albeit statistical, conceptualization of teacher turnover.

**Table 1**.

*Summary: Short and Long-Term Measures of Teacher Turnover* (Holme et al., 2017)

| Measure | Definition | Purpose |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Short term measures of turnover | | |
| *Annual turnover* | Measured by the proportion of staff in year ($t$-1) who left the school by year $t$ | Identify the proportion of teachers who leave from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next school year[1] |
| Longitudinal measures of turnover | | |
| *Chronic Instability* | "High" annual turnover, measured both by absolute and relative rates, for a certain number or percentage of years in a given band of years | Identify schools that perpetually struggle with high turnover |
| *Cumulative instability* | Proportion of staff lost over time (e.g., 20% each year, totaling 60% of original staff in 3 years) | Identify the schools that lose the majority of their staff over time and those that lose few staff over time |
| *Instability entry and exit* | Low turnover one year but move into high turnover status another year or vice versa | Identify the schools that are more likely to fall into or recover from a period of high turnover |
| *"Spell" of instability* | The number of consecutive years schools experience high turnover | Identify the average length of time that it takes for schools to stabilize once they experience high turnover |
| *Episodes of instability* | "High turnover" status temporarily (e.g., two or more consecutive years of turnover) but return to stability | Identify schools that experience relatively short bouts of high turnover |

*Note.* Although annual turnover measures attempt to capture this nuance, most administrative data sets only capture a snapshot of teachers' positions each year. Therefore, there may be within-year turnover (a teacher starts and leaves midyear) not captured by such measures. Indeed, less well-documented occurrences of turnover (e.g. teachers hired late or quitting after

a couple of weeks) are more likely to impact the most underserved schools (Holme et al.,

2017).

This conceptualization validated a more nuanced approach to teacher turnover, but still

only addressed school level churn. To supplement this understanding of turnover, Ochs (2012)

conceptualized the actors (e.g. teachers, departments of education, schools, and school

administrators) and contexts (e.g. school districts, unions, educational policy, and broader

politics) at play in the international teacher migration framework accounting for the actors to

which the current study attends (Figure 1).

Figure 1. System of teacher mobility: recruitment and migration (Ochs, 2012)
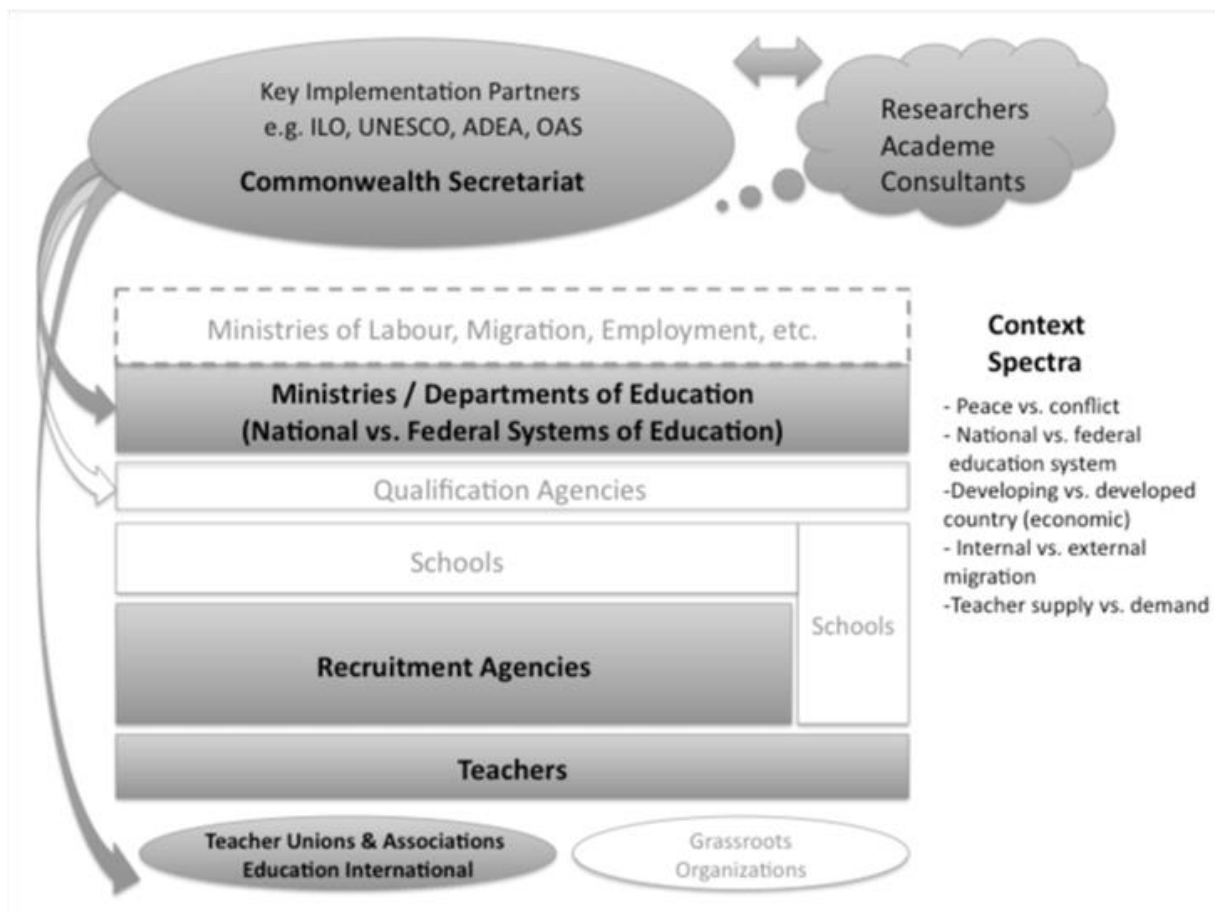


*Note.* Ochs' (2012) representation of the system of teacher mobility. Ochs (2012) identified

several needs relative to the actors in the system of teacher mobility, including teachers,

teachers' unions and associations, grassroots organizations, recruitment agencies, schools, qualification agencies, government ministries, and international organizations. She also recognized several contextual concerns including the organization of the education system, teacher supply and demand, peace and conflict, developing vs developed countries, internal and external mobility, and the state of the labor market (Ochs, 2012).

Considering teacher mobility, as a system, better enabled evaluation of best practice in recruiting and retaining mobile teachers, particularly as it shed light on the various influencers at play (Ochs, 2012).

Bringing Ochs (2012) conceptualization to the current study focuses attention at the local level, including schools, teachers, and grassroots organizations (FFA, FFA Alumni, the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE), and the American Association for Agricultural Education (AAAE), among others) in the contextual image. It also gives place to SBAE teacher supply and demand, in addition to other, local, contextual considerations (Ochs, 2012). This conceptualization furthers the credibility of taking a profession wide (SBAE) view of migration and migratory contexts. Notably, the majority of current literature focuses on the school (Atterbury et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). Mr. Sparley outlined some of the school factors specific for this study's state context, and SBAE more directly:

> [Administrators] don't know how many [extended] days they need to offer. I think it probably drives them to ask their community what they want. You have to have that advisory committee and ask them, "What do we want to accomplish over the summer?" You have to ask an alumni, "What do you want to accomplish in the summer?" You have to determine if there are a lot of kids that show livestock. Do you want to be involved in the county fairs? [SBAE teachers] have to dig a little deeper to get it. [Community members] are not going to have it off the top of their heads.

> [The State Department of Education] has a lot of admin who call in and want to know about what the program should look like; what they need and what they should be

offering. Most of the time they're either expanding a program--and if they're expanding a program, that usually means somebody's done a good job-- or they've got a retirement in Industrial Tech, or Family & Consumer Science, or another CTE area, and they're just looking for somebody to fill that. That's really where we're at right now. You look at the 50 or 60 positions we've added in the last five years. Half of them are because somebody left and they couldn't find anybody in Industrial Tech to fill positions. It's a little bit challenging because it takes a different skill set if you want them to do that.

Such explication of the larger systems at play allows discussion of the migrator in the context of a broader education system. One may also ponder the social structures supporting the maintenance of this configuration. Here, migration reflects individuals actively engaging their construction of reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) in the practice of their chosen vocation. In this study, I examine migration by focusing on the individual to understand interactions in their chosen structures.

**The State of Teacher Mobility in the United States**

I don't see teachers moving from one school to another a lot because they're dissatisfied or unhappy with where they're at. Moving is really pretty traumatic. It is interesting because there are some teachers who, in that first couple of years, have made some errors in their working with administration, or kids, or whatever it might be. They go to a new school, get to start over again, and are very successful. (Mark Sparley)

The traditional conceptualization of United States schools as units functioning, and subsequently affected at the district level, is embodied in the teacher attrition and mobility literature (Atterbury et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). In light of prior conceptualizations of teacher turnover and the education system (Holme et al., 2017; Ochs, 2012), teacher mobility in the United States is largely discussed at the school district level relative to effects of mobility on local districts. Arguably, the study of teacher mobility is still emerging, having gained national attention after the most recent Schools and Staffing Survey, (2012) and the subsequent analysis and reporting from the National Center for Education

Statistics (NCES, 2014). Earlier work focused largely on teacher effectiveness (Grissom, 2011; Keesler & Schneider, 2010; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009), teacher career paths (Goldhaber, Gross, & Player, 2011), general school staffing problems (Ingersoll, 2001; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003), and student achievement (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Harris & Sass, 2007; Ronfeldt et al., 2012).

Following the Schools and Staffing Survey in 2011-2012, and analysis from the National Center for Education Statistics, the most recent quantification of teacher turnover came to light. In 2014, the Learning Policy Institute reported overall teacher turnover and attrition in the United States at 16%. Of that turnover, 14% was involuntary, 18% due to retirement, 30% was pre-retirement leavers, and 37% encompassed voluntary movers (Learning Policy Institute, 2014). Particularly relevant to the current scope of inquiry are the 37% of teachers who voluntarily moved. This comprises approximately 6% of the total U.S. teaching population who cited reasons for moving as dissatisfaction, family and personal reasons, desire to teach at another school, financial reasons, and retirement benefits (Learning Policy Institute, 2014). In conjunction with this study, mobility rates for US teachers have been relatively stable (8%) since 1988-89 (Goldring et al. 2014), while rates of leaving teaching have increased by approximately 2%.

Interestingly, 2014 also marked the revitalization year in SBAE for monitoring SBAE teacher supply and demand with the release of the 2014 Supply and Demand Study Executive Summary (Foster, Lawver, & Smith, 2014). This annual study reported 32.9% of vacancies filled by licensed agriculture teachers moving to new schools (Foster et al., 2014). It was also the only study to include migrating teachers as a *source of hires* rather than a function of attrition (Foster

et al., 2014). As a baseline, SBAE noted a 4% migration rate in 2014 against a 7% attrition rate (Foster et al., 2014).

Continued analysis of the National Center for Education Statistics data yielded the Public School Teacher Attrition and Mobility longitudinal study (Gary et al., 2015). Gary et al. (2015) highlighted much higher rates of mobility among less experienced teachers. Teachers with one to five years of experience, nationally and across disciplines, reported a mobility rate of 16% (2008-2009) and 10% (2011-2012). In SBAE, analysis of the supply of teachers found 38% of new hires sourced from licensed teachers moving from another school (Foster, Lawver, & Smith, 2015). This yielded a 5% migration rate (*n*= 555) for SBAE overall (Foster et al., 2015). In addition, SBAE had an 8% attrition rate (*n*= 901). With this barrage of data, it is thought provoking to see 2015 also marked the publication of the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol (CTRP) (Commonwealth Consortium for Education, 2015). Several historical events converged and incited heightened concern for the future supply of teachers across disciplines in the United States and across the world, namely the Great Recession in 2008 (Goldhaber, Strunk, Brown, & Knight, 2016), though little emerged since. SBAE migration rates held steady at 37% (*n*= 539) of new hires and 5% of the SBAE teaching force (Smith, Foster, & Lawver, 2016). The attrition rate in SBAE dropped slightly to 6% (*n*=721), while the migration rate maintained (4%, *n*=542) in 2017 (Smith, Lawver, & Foster, 2017). Migration dropped substantially in 2018 (3%, *n*=443) while attrition rose (7%, *n*=900) (Smith, Lawver, Foster, 2018).

**Teacher Mobility Research in the United States**

A discourse analysis approach to migration brings a need to explicate current knowledge around teacher migration, discursive contexts illuminated in the education literature, and concepts previously studied in education using positioning theory. Little exists in the

Agricultural Education literature to examine broader discourses of SBAE. In addition,

positioning theory is not used as a theoretical lens in published articles in the Journal of

Agricultural Education. Scant research is available in either body of work to separate *teacher*

*migration* from *turnover* and *attrition*. In keeping with the outline of the SBAE Supply and

Demand Studies (Foster et al., 2014; Foster et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2017,

Smith et al., 2018), this study examines migrators as a *source of new hires* rather than a source of

attrition. This shifts the conversation from an organizational approach examining the school in

terms of migrating individuals within disciplines. Given the limited scope of inquiry relative to

teacher mobility in SBAE, it is necessary to look outside the agricultural education literature to

examine the methods used to research teacher migration, school discursive context, and teacher

positionality.

Teacher mobility is largely studied quantitatively as a demographic characteristic

affecting student performance and teacher retention and effectiveness. Data from the National

Center for Education Statistics (NCES, Schools and Staffing Survey, 2012-2013) provided

descriptive statistics for teacher mobility rates in the United States as reported and analyzed by

several scholars (Atterbury et al., 2017; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001).

SBAE also quantifies *movers* through an annual supply and demand study (Foster et al., 2014;

Foster et al., 2015; Smith et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2017, Smith et al., 2018). Numerous studies

performed regression and path analyses to determine the purported effect of teacher mobility on

student achievement and teacher effectiveness against school staffing data (Feng & Sass, 2012;

Harris & Sass, 2007; Ingersoll, 2001; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). These studies

condemned mobile teachers as disruptive to school staffing and a cause of decreased student

achievement. While it may be helpful to see the broader trends, these analyses do not tell the

whole story. To date, quantitative means do not account for teachers' process or address the ways migrators may better their practice or reinvigorate their teaching through a change of location (Haddad, Velez, & Stewart, 2019). Studies, thus far, do little to credit migrators with making agentic or intentional decisions regarding their careers (Ebaugh, 1988), and generally position migrators as inefficacious and organizationally illiterate (Atterbury et al., 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001).

Migrators, by any name, operate in schools and systems. The literature regarding teacher mobility currently takes a one-sided address of this issue, namely, the effect of migrators on their schools and systems (Atterbury et al., 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001). Therefore, my study situates teachers in their context to consider support affected by schools and systems on the migrating teacher. This is supported within the state context in which I studied, elaborated by Mark:

> In every school and community there are gatekeepers; people who can help you get what you want. You have to figure out who the gatekeepers are, right? Then, once you figure out who the gatekeeper is, you have to make the idea theirs. Once you do that, suddenly the doors are wide open. But if you're trying to make change and people aren't understanding of the changes, they're not willing to step out of their comfort zone to help you get there.
>
> Part of this whole philosophy is, in a school or community, 99% of the people want to help you succeed. There are very few people who want to see you fail, so they're going to do everything they can, once they understand you're invested. They're not going to go out of their way to help you until you start to show you're invested…How you identify who those key people are--there's no science to it. You just start making connections and you're going to figure out real quick which ones are going to work and which ones aren't.

This study challenges the current discourse beyond quantitative data and organizational trends to think about the sociology of the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978), dualism in school settings (Davies, 1989), and positions occupied in context (Davies, 2000). Examples of recent discourse studies in education addressed knowledge co-construction and

difference (Duff, 2002), effectiveness (Stables, 2003), emotion, race, and context (Buehler, Ruggles Gere, Dallavis, & Shaw Haviland, 2009; Evans, Morgan, & Tsatsaroni, 2006), and "othering" (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz, & Suda, 2012). These studies, in contrast to studies of attrition, were largely qualitative. They examined cultural and discursive contexts from an array of approaches, theories, and methodologies. Approaches included panel, interview, and survey (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978), and identity-focused cultural ecological perspective (Spencer, 1999). Social semiotics, pedagogic discourse theory, and psychoanalysis (Evans et al., 2006), and discursive approaches (Stables, 2003) make up a sample of theories employed. Methodologies incorporated narrative positioning (Davies, 1989), ethnography (Duff, 2002), case study (Buehler et al., 2009), and grounded theory/ecological systems (Borrero et al., 2012). In addition, several studies in the education literature directed specific attention to teacher positionality in school discourses relative to role and frame (Edmiston, 2003), the construction of teacher identity (Søreide, 2006; Arvaja, 2016), reform (Leander & Osborne, 2008; Luttenberg, Imants, & Van Veen, 2013), and classroom power structures (Hazari, Cass, & Beattie, 2015). Furthermore, several studies undertook close examination of teachers positioning students (Davies, 1989; Davies, 2000, Davies, 2008; Turner, Dominguez, Maldonado, & Empson, 2013).

**Assumptions & Approach**

A variety of means exist to examine teacher migration, school discursive context, and teacher positionality. I problematize the gap in the literature between an organizational approach accounting for the detriments of mobility on school systems and a discipline-specific accounting of migration as healthy, if not necessary, for some teachers. SBAE's migration rate is lower than the national migration rate (6% compared to 8%). Keeping in mind, SBAE teachers are a very small demographic within the larger teaching profession, this subset of teachers allows the

address of the ways migration may be good for teachers. Apart from one study (Haddad et al., 2019), little research examined teacher migration from an asset-oriented perspective. This is evident in the education literature and workforce development literature more broadly, as no theory of migration is proposed for movement within a career. Theories have been applied from a plethora of fields--Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1962) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) being prime examples. Yet among the myriad explanations, little exists to clarify migration as its own episode, comprised of several distinctly human phenomena. Therefore, while migration provides the context for this study, deeper and more far-reaching questions regarding teacher positionality in school discursive contexts remain. Indeed, studies in the broad education literature echoed Lortie's (1975) positioning of teachers as individualistic, conservative, and present focused. The literature focused on student impact and relationships almost exclusively (Atterbury et al., 2017; Borrero et al., 2012; Davies, 1989; Harris & Sass, 2007; Hazari et al., 2015; Turner et al., 2013) and left relationships with colleagues, administration, and others to the fate of anecdote. Several questions remain, but I focus my attention as follows:

1. How do SBAE migrators position themselves and others in their co-constructed discursive context?

2. How do community members position themselves and SBAE migrators within their co-constructed context?

3. How are assigned positionalities taken up, rejected, or reified by SBAE migrators and community members?

4. How does the uptake, rejection, or reification of positionalities influence the support and/or challenge perceived by SBAE migrators and their communities?

**Significance & Purpose**

This work is significant for several reasons. First, this study separates *teacher migration* and *mobility* from *turnover* and *attrition*. Without discounting the purported effects of teacher mobility on school districts (Atterbury et al., 2017; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014; Ingersoll, 2001), little research exists regarding teachers' naviation of their migratory processes, including the challenges they encounter and the supports they find. Furthermore, although mobility at the district level could certainly be categorized as attrition, little accounts for the point that mobile teachers are, in fact, still teaching. It should not be a stretch to consider *remaining teaching* as distinctly different from *leaving teaching*. My work takes up the challenge of understanding SBAE migrators' navigation of their positionality in context. I aim for greater clarity around the work occurring, and the support required, to retain migrators to education at large. Third, this study is significant in its scope and approach as it undertakes an examination of migration holistically including various influencers: agriculture teacher, state staff, colleagues, administrators, and program alumni. Given the emerging nature of this means of studying teacher migration, an exploration accounting for the multiplicity of school systems provides a product that may be helpful on a variety of levels: school district administrators, teacher educators, education researchers, practicing teachers, and organizations concerned with teacher retention. To account for this multiplicity, my study takes up a positioning approach to discourse (Davies, 2000). The purpose of my study is to unfold positions of support and challenge for SBAE migrators as it pertains to retaining migrating teachers. This work addresses a little explored field in SBAE, despite mounting anecdotal evidence, that the advice offered, support conveyed, and action of the workforce tends toward mobility.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

**Migration Effects Propositions**

Before taking up the work of people's operation in their discourses, a requisite consideration of discourses at play must be engaged. Currently, over twenty years of compiled research, from a variety of perspectives, comprises the knowledge base around teacher attrition, turnover, and mobility. However, in keeping with a sociological perspective and recognizing much of the focus in the current literature, Morgan & Shackelford (2018) offered four propositions regarding teacher and student effects to help parse the current migration literature into discourses. These propositions include:

1. Teacher effects on student learning are real, and these effects vary according to the match of each teacher to each student.

2. Teacher effects are a joint function of teachers' skills and effort, the first of which is strongly shaped by experiences before entering the profession.

3. School environments, which encompass both administrative structures and networks of social relations, shape both student effort and teacher effort.

4. Effective schools align student effort and teacher effort to advance student learning (Morgan & Shackelford, 2018).

These four propositions outline the discourses presented in education research to identify the approaches taken to issues of teacher turnover, attrition, and mobility. By discussing the available research around these four propositions, I approach the literature to synthesize the varying perspectives on issues of teacher mobility. This review undertakes a systematic method to appraise the discourses unfolded in the current literature. Through searches of *teacher migration*, *teacher churn*, *teacher mobility*, *teacher career patterns*, and *teacher turnover*, over

forty documents from the last twenty years (1999-2019) addressed aspects of teacher mobility. Across proposition themes, teacher mobility is measured in terms of teacher effectiveness toward student learning outcomes, largely in light of the detriments imposed by mobility on schools and students. For each search term, the compilation terminated when the yield no longer included the key terms, relevance was no longer achieved for five consecutive documents, or documents were largely drawing on studies already cited. In addition, some snowball type searching occurred from reference sections of documents newer than 2017 and back-searching popular press articles.

Besides summarizing the current state of education, this literature review also exposes the current discourses around issues of teacher mobility and the ways current literature positions migrators in given contexts. This review aligns with the theoretical approach to this study, namely positioning theory, to explore how people take up, reify, or reject available positions (Davies, 2000). This review does not intend to take up a content analysis of the discourses within the literature, though additional research should pursue this avenue. Instead, identifying the existing discourses under these sociological propositions (Morgan & Shackelford, 2018) frames the current study relative to the positions imposed and taken up (Davies, 2000) across the migration framework from global to local perspectives.

### Teacher Effects on Student Learning as a Function of Matching

*Teacher-student matching* identifies a tendency of more advantaged students to be taught by highly qualified teachers (Clotfelter et al., 2007). Teacher effects on student learning as a function of matching are a relatively new exploration in the education literature. This literature studies teachers in light of the performance of students, viewing migration as a sorting mechanism disenfranchising students in already challenging situations. The effect of matching on teachers' ability to be effective with students notes the disruptive effect of turnover in low-

performing schools as particularly detrimental to minority students (Ronfeldt et al., 2012).

Without seeking means to address systemic issues, Ronfeldt et al. (2012) referenced a need for

schools to work harder to keep grade-level teams intact and to offer better incentive structures as

key to retaining teachers. This initial study in functions of matching also served to fuel a broader

discourse of teachers as individuals (Lortie, 1975), motivated by external incentives.

Even on the international stage, teacher migration is recognized as bearing negative

repercussions for schools and districts (Vigilance, 2012). While positive for teachers at the

individual level, and even positive for society relative to remittances and savings, principals

lamented the experience lost to school districts as younger colleagues replace migrating teachers

(Vigilance, 2012). Migration, then, becomes a "discriminatory congregating force" (Vigilance, p.

7, 2012) with key issues of *brain drain*, impacts of *remittances*, a dispersion of teachers,

international recruitment as exploitative, temporary labor migration, irregular migration, and

global challenges as impacting migration *push factors* (Vigilance, 2012). Yet, on the

international scene, "the link between international migration and development means that

economic issues resulting from migration, namely remittances and the skills of the diaspora, are

resources that can be used to aid poverty reduction and foster development" (Vigilance, p. 12,

2012). Vigilance (2012) called for more collaboration among development partners, greater

scope for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and capacity building for developing

countries.

Kalogrides and Loeb (2013) observed novice teachers as much more likely to teach in

classrooms with poor, minority, and lower-achieving students. They particularly condemned

sorting students by achievement level as exacerbating the achievement gap through exposing

poor and minority students to lower quality teachers (Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013). DiCarlo (2014)

looked specifically at New York City Schools, recognizing annual changes in assignment as having a slight negative impact on student test scores. Balaz (2015) added to this picture, noting a high rate of change between grade levels, disproportionate among early career teachers at high-minority or low-achieving schools. Balaz (2015) also noted the high rate of attrition among teachers who change grades in addition to their lower impacts on improving student achievement. Among teachers who switched to *nonadjacent* grades, Balaz (2015) argued for the lingering negative consequences offsetting experience yields even years after a grade change occurred. Atterbury et al. (2017) evaluated the implications of teacher reassignment rates on student achievement. Notably, they found the negative effects of having a *churning* teacher to be approximately one-third the extent of having a new teacher (Atterbury et al., 2017). In this case, *negative effect* is defined as lower student math and ELA achievement (Atterbury et al., 2017), while *churning* categorized a teacher who made multiple career moves. In addition to these lower student scores on standardized tests, in New York City schools, the average student was found four times more likely to be assigned churning teachers over new teachers, with underserved students as slightly more likely to be assigned a churning teacher (Atterbury et al., 2017).

McKinnon, Freidman-Krauss, Roy, and Raver (2018) identified the criticality of children's relationships with teachers in light of transitions children may make during their school years. While focusing specifically on a low-income, ethnic minority sample, they drew attention to *mobile students* being less close with teachers than their geographically stable peers were (McKinnon et al., 2018). Perhaps, if students have a need for closeness with their teachers warranting a call for supportive transitions (McKinnon et al., 2018), additional work may be needed to understand supportive transitions for teachers as well. Gibbons, Scrutinio, and Telhai

(2018) also focused on the matching of teachers to the success of their students. They suggested, relative to standardized testing, disruption from new teachers could be minimized by assigning new teachers to lower-stakes assessment groups (Gibbons et al., 2018). They offered this suggestion as economically meaningful and suggested new-teacher effects are general and non-dependent on context (Gibbons et al., 2018). Together, functions of teacher matching contribute to broader discourses of teachers being extrinsically motivated, with specific attention on mobile teachers as disruptive and less effective.

### *Teacher Effects on Student Learning as a Function of Teacher Skill and Effort*

The education literature maintains a sustained focus on teacher mobility and turnover evaluating the *effort* (i.e. quality and effectiveness, Morgan & Shackelford, 2018) of mobile teachers. These studies mark a shift in the chronological conversation from an organizational analysis of turnover to examine teachers based on the districts they serve. The discourse surrounding turnover moves from an issue of the organization to an issue of teacher quality, productivity, and experience. Ross et al. (1999) offered an early connection between teacher effectiveness and mobility. While examining inner-city schools undergoing restructuring, they found teachers in their first year at a new school (regardless of prior experience) were less effective than their geographically-stable colleagues in the same district (Ross et al., 1999). They further noted teacher mobility was higher among less effective teachers and first through sixth-year teachers. This study denoted a particular tie to mobility and effectiveness that has proved difficult to escape.

As a project of the Calder Urban Institute, Harris and Sass (2007) examined teacher training, teacher quality, and student achievement. They highlighted productivity for elementary and middle school teachers as increasing with experience on the job, though gains continued well

after the early years of teaching (Harris & Sass, 2007). Professional development, pre-service training, and college entrance exams held no bearing on teachers' productivity (Harris & Sass, 2007). This focus on productivity connected with the conversation advanced by Clotfelter et al. (2007) recognizing inequalities in distribution of *productive* teachers across the United States. The condemning conclusion identified novice teachers as distributed to specifically disadvantage black students (Clotfelter et al., 2007).

Jackson and Bruegemann (2009) continued the contemplation of student achievement as a function of teacher effectiveness. Relative to the turnover conversation, they found greater gains for students in math and reading when a teacher worked with more effective colleagues (Jackson & Bruegemann, 2009). West and Chingos (2009) also took effectiveness into account with attrition and mobility. They presented effective teachers as more likely to pursue administrative roles (e.g. principals or assistant principals), and less likely to be subjected to an involuntary move (i.e. right of assignment) (West & Chingos, 2009). In addition, schools receiving low ratings from their state's school accountability system tended to have highly effective teachers in particularly high-stakes grades and subjects (West & Chingos, 2009).

At the same time, migration and mobility came to the attention of the American Federation of Teachers ([AFT], 2009) as *migrant teachers* became more prevalent in American schools. While the effectiveness debate continued, AFT (2009) recognized the challenge internationally trained teachers faced as they were recruited to teach in particularly hard-to-staff schools. This brought attention to the necessity of mobility in a globalized world, while condemning profit-driven exploitation of teachers (AFT, 2009). Unfortunately, little changed as Goldhaber et al. (2011) presented more effective teachers as more geographically-stable. They

cited teacher mobility as affected by student demographics and achievement levels (Goldhaber et al., 2011).

Feng and Sass (2012) noted the congregating effects of teacher quality and mobility. They suggested high and low-quality teachers were more likely to leave than their mediocre coworkers were (Feng & Sass, 2012). However, they also changed the conversation regarding teacher productivity and inter-school mobility, noting the relationship was weak, despite being significant (Feng & Sass, 2012). Greater experience, degrees, or certificates, rather, seemed to indicate greater likelihood to remain in a given district (Feng & Sass, 2012). Still, they concluded the most effective teachers transferred to teach with more effective colleagues (Feng & Sass, 2012). Feng and Sass (2012) found this congregating effect as particularly aggravating differences across schools. Bowdon and Boruch (2014) noted the relatively high mobility rate of STEM teachers compared to their counterparts in the humanities (e.g. English and social studies), specifically focusing on year-to-year turnover.

In 2017, Vagi, Pivovarova, and Barnard summarized the aforementioned work and suggested the preparation, recruitment, and retention of high-quality teachers as a longstanding policy concern. Vagi et al. (2017) focused attention on pre-service teacher quality, and noted more qualified teachers were more likely to enter and stay teaching than their less qualified peers. Recently, Redding and Henry (2018) positioned mobile teachers as less committed, not invested, and less professionally developed than their stable peers. Redding and Henry (2018) continued by suggesting within-year churn may be an indicator of district support. Redding and Henry (2018) also recognized within-year churn diverted resources away from managing instructional culture to hiring and training replacement teachers.

***Teacher Effects on Student Learning as a Function of School Environments***

Perhaps the most extensive study of teacher mobility examines effects of school environments from an *organizational perspective*. The *organizational perspective* focuses attention on improvements to the structure of an institution. Morgan and Shackelford (2018) focused on teachers as the central mechanism generating learning, recognizing the organization as the *activating* component. They defined the *activating component* as the piece determining whether a teacher is successful in initiating student learning (Morgan & Shackelford, 2018).

Ingersoll (2001) spent a career in educational sociology examining teacher turnover, particularly focused on teachers' reasons for career exit. He provided some of the earliest recent work regarding teacher trends in the United States. Through organizational analysis, Ingersoll (2001) attributed teacher turnover and teacher shortages to a *revolving door*. The *revolving door* effect described the ways teachers move into and out of positions interchangeably (Ingersoll, 2001). Ingersoll (2001) specifically attributed turnover to teachers pursuing other jobs (outside of education) prior to retiring from teaching. Beyond the varying reasons discussed for teacher dissatisfaction, Ingersoll (2001) pointed to teacher turnover as a *professional thermometer*; when turnover reaches its fever, it implies something about the organizational sociology of the *system* rather than those leaving. Specific to Career and Technical Education (CTE) teachers, Ruhland (2001) echoed Ingersoll and Smith's (2003) call to address the environmental stressors under which teachers practice. Ruhland (2001) specifically noted high levels of persistence and positive first-year experience in teachers who remained committed to teaching. Those who left cited job related stress and did not rate as highly in their skills of organization, planning, teamwork, and practical experience (Ruhland, 2001). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) continued researching in this vein, citing school staffing action, family or personal reasons, pursuit of another job, or general dissatisfaction as reasons for leaving teaching.

It bears reminding a focus on *migration* (i.e. teachers moving schools) should be retained. However, at this juncture, researchers had not clearly delineated what "other jobs" were being pursued as they considered mobility organizationally. As it stands, any move out of a school was categorized as *turnover* and *attrition* (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Overall, a relatively bleak outlook on the teacher pipeline presented. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) reiterated if teachers were not being retained beyond three years, additional recruitment would not solve the teacher shortage. Ultimately, they called for better management to improve teachers working conditions as a solution to school staffing issues (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

Barnes, Crowe, and Schaefer (2007) recognized teacher turnover as particularly costly to high-minority, low-performing schools. They defined these costs as significant at both the district and school levels, noting a *differential impact* of the costs of teacher turnover on high-need schools (Barnes et al., 2007). In other words, the cost of teacher turnover was heightened for high-need schools. Keesler & Schneider (2010) presented school workforce composition as related to the school's *Annual Yearly Progress* (AYP) measures. They specifically linked teacher mobility as a key element in a school's AYP, citing the reduction of mobility as a means to improve school effectiveness (Keesler & Schneider, 2010). Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) continued in this vein, recognizing a gap in performance between teachers who remain in their school and those who leave. They suggested high turnover might not be as damaging as previously suggested, citing a larger performance gap in schools serving low-income students (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010). In addition, they implicated teacher mobility as inefficient, particularly relative to *parallel improvements* in the general labor market through mobility (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2010).

This conversation also prompted research attention on how administration might retain teachers to schools. Boyd et al. (2011) suggested teachers' perceptions of school administration had the greatest influence on teacher's retention choices. Grissom (2011) once again pointed to the challenge of teachers' work environments as less positive in schools with more disadvantaged students. However, Grissom (2011) noted positive impacts of principal effectiveness on teacher outcomes, suggesting the focus should be on securing the best principals for the most challenging school environments to reduce teacher turnover. In the context state for this study, Mark Sparley clarified how administrators must work to recruit and retain SBAE teachers:

> When I talk with administrators, I think their goal is for everybody to be successful teacher wise…If the school wanted to start an ag program or add a person next year…they need to figure out what kind of compensation they're willing to offer somebody. A lot of that comes in in the summer contract, and 90% of the administrators don't know what that is. You've got somebody who doesn't have a CTE background, somebody who doesn't have any background in ag education, who is trying to hire somebody. But they're thinking about this nine month model. So, when we talk about summer contracts with administrators, the first question they ask me is, "Well, how many days do I need to offer the new person?" And most of the time I turn it around and say, "What do you want to accomplish in the summer? Because if you can tell me what you want to accomplish in the summer, I can tell you how many days it's going to take." I'd start to get them thinking about what they want the program to do in the summer rather than how many days to offer.

Bond (2012) compiled the challenges already outlined to suggest a convergence on the U.S. school system. A chronic need exists in the United States to staff inner-city schools in critical-need subject areas with highly qualified teachers (Bond, 2012). This sent the U.S. back to the international stage to encourage teachers in other countries to quit their jobs, dispose of poverty, and leave their families to immigrate to the United States (Bond, 2012). Bond (2012, p. 57) conceded, "Teachers have the right to migrate. They migrate as people first, with specific desires and needs. They may migrate to feel safer, have a higher standard of living for

themselves and their families, and satisfy the need for self-fulfillment." The former AFNR

education specialist and state FFA advisor clarified this "right" for the context state:

> I think the whole concept of pulling up roots and finding a new place to live [is pretty traumatic]…Because, really, when you go from one school to another, is it a lateral move or is it a move up? How do you define a move up? I think teachers move because they can. They see opportunity, and they see classes they're interested in, opportunities to be in a larger school, opportunities for their kids and their spouse; so those are probably the big ones. Salary wise makes a difference…what kind of compensation and benefits you're going to get from a move.

Bond (2012) cited the work of Segun Eubanks, and suggested the issue is less a shortage

of teachers and more a shortage of enthusiasm. Regardless, Bond (2012) uniquely called to

invest in Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) as

places specifically equipped with programs to better prepare teachers for service in challenging

school settings.

Ochs (2012) suggested a thorough understanding of the development and compensation

opportunities available to teachers as the best means to reach teachers in search of the best

opportunities. In addition to the need for a global response, Omolewa (2012, p. 16) noted the

"grave consequences" of migration as "restricting the advancement of developing countries."

Omolewa (2012) cited *brain drain* and *brain gain* as significant challenges of personnel

movement on the international stage. The call went out for a legally binding, international

protocol accounting for the social, economic, and political implications involved with teacher

recruitment, preparation, mobility, and migration (Omolewa, 2012).

Rudder (2012) suggested several ways to retain teachers, including requirements to resign

a current position to take up a different option and greater incentive packages, while establishing

ineligibility rules for teacher leave. These largely responded to the negative impact of migration

on *accrued experience* in certain countries where small percentages may have large impacts,

depending on the size of the teaching force (Rudder, 2012). Interestingly, among the teachers

Rudder (2012) interviewed a decade post-migration, most had returned to their initial country of

service. Most strikingly,

> The majority of teachers who were interviewed were highly experienced practitioners
> with more than 25 years in the service. Most of them indicated that they needed a new or
> different teaching experience and a change from the situation they were in at the time
> (Rudder, 2012, p. 51).

In addition, Rudder (2012) noted interesting perceptions of overseas teacher migration bearing

repeating for the national context of the United States. Overseas teachers observed the most

difficult parts of teaching in developed countries (particularly the United States) to include lack

of respect for teachers from students, lower academic standards, and high-levels of teachers

disciplining students (Rudder, 2012). This begs the question: Do these challenges, in particular,

present the same issue for American teachers as they weigh their migration options?

The seminal work available regarding the international migration framework largely rests

with work following up the Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol ([CTRP],

Commonwealth Consortium for Education [CCE], 2015). This protocol outlined essential rights

for international *migrant teachers* balanced against protecting the integrity of national education

systems (CCE, 2015). The CTRP explicitly distinguished international teacher migration as a

social justice issue, aiming to prevent the exploitation of countries with already scarce human

resources (CCE, 2015).

Goldhaber et al. (2016) recognized the effect of economic history on the teaching force;

particularly the 2008 recession. Through considering layoffs and *Reduction in Force* (RIF)

induced shuffle of teachers, they concluded layoffs produced churn with the impacts extending

beyond those directly laid off (Goldhaber et al., 2016). The ripple effect of RIF measures

extended impacts beyond necessary budget-reducing targets (Goldhaber et al., 2016). Re-

evaluating the previously reviewed literature, especially from 2009, in light of the 2008

recession, contextualizes events transpiring a larger, younger, grayer, greener, more female,

more diverse, and better educated teaching force (Ingersoll et al., 2010).

Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) compiled teacher turnover literature and

data to corroborate findings of the last ten years presenting the depth of the turnover problem and

potential solutions. The summary began by offering this regarding teacher turnover:

> Teacher turnover can…contribute to labor market imbalances. When teachers move between schools, even if they stay in the profession, the effect on the schools they leave is essentially the same as if they had left teaching all together. In times of shortage, teachers who shift between schools, known as *movers*, can further exacerbate hiring difficulties in the hardest hit schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017, p. 1).

Against this backdrop, they went on to propose turnover as a significant issue for schools and

students across the United States (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The cost for an

urban district to replace a teacher is approximately $20,000.00 (Carver-Thomas & Darling-

Hammond, 2017). Regions of the United States (the South), disciplines (math, science, SPED,

English language development), and school districts (high concentrations of students of color)

are disproportionately affected by teacher turnover (40-70% higher turnover rates) (Carver-

Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In addition, they recognized alternatively certified

teachers as more prone to leave their schools and education as a profession (Carver-Thomas &

Darling-Hammond, 2017). Across disciplines, teachers cited lack of administrative support as a

key reason for turnover (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Higher paid teachers were

less likely to leave their schools (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017).

These researchers concluded with a call for more competitive compensation packages,

service scholarship and loan forgiveness programs, teacher residency programs, "Grow Your

Own" models, and high quality mentoring and induction (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond,

2017). While the statistics presented are clear, the recommendations target the teacher rather than available support. However, Carver-Thomas and Darling-Hammond (2017) did go on to offer recommendations for school leaders as well: accreditation and licensure standards for principal training programs, residencies for principal training, state leadership academies, and robust leadership pipelines. Still, little in these recommendations helps the opposing parties come together and enhance clarity regarding the support affecting retention.

Harréll, Thompson, and Brooks (2018) approached mobility with Ehrenberg and Smith's (1997) Labor Market Theory of Supply and Demand, recognizing as their basic tenet: individuals will only fill and remain in the teaching pipeline when teaching represents the most desirable employment option available (Thompson & Brooks, 2018). Counter to much of what has already been conveyed, Harréll et al. (2018) found poverty, minority composition, and passing state exams *did not* impact a decision to transfer schools after the first year of teaching despite a 20% transfer rate and 11% attrition rate. In other words, teachers transferred to similar schools to those in which they had already been teaching (Harréll et al., 2018). They further noted teaching is not immune to the flux of the larger labor market and thus the larger labor market should drive changes in school policy (Harréll et al., 2018). Geiger and Pivovarova (2018) also examined the effect of working conditions on teacher retention. Unsurprisingly, where teachers rated their working conditions satisfactorily, attrition rates were lower (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Notably, these schools were also schools with higher rates of low-income and minority students (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018). Grissom and Bartanen (2018) focused on principal effectiveness as the key influencer of strategic retention. They noted the masking effect of average turnover on teacher effectiveness, noting high performing teachers as less likely to leave when they have an effective principal (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). However, even with effective principals, if

teachers received low observation scores they were more likely to leave regardless of their

quality as an educator (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). In light of the previous research, Holme,

Parker, and Gibson (2019) suggested rethinking teacher retention starts with effective leadership.

They quoted the disproportionate effect of principals in low-achieving or high poverty/minority

schools relative to impact on student outcomes compared to principals in less challenging

schools (Holme et al., 2019). They also noted the reciprocal effect of principals on teachers,

namely: highly effective principals will retain highly effective teachers, thus increasing student

achievement through classroom stability (Holme et al., 2019).

Currently, one study exists in the SBAE literature (and the broader education literature)

to credit teachers with this work in school environments. Incidentally, it is my own study. We

found teachers perceive success in program moves largely as a function of the support provided

by the broadly defined community (Haddad et al., 2019). Teachers in this study encouraged

others to contemplate their program moves, particularly in light of their willingness and desire to

learn and be challenged (Haddad et al., 2019).

***Teacher Effects on Student Learning as a Function of Advancing Student Learning***

Since the establishment of the CTRP, several countries took up work to examine the

migratory paths of teachers in recognition of the needs of their home countries (Penson &

Yonemura, 2012). This collaborative undertaking converged as the Sixth Commonwealth

Research Symposium on Teacher Mobility, Recruitment, and Migration (Penson & Yonemura,

2012). Seeing migration on the international stage assists the viewing of migration as an

incredibly complex issue. As Penson and Yonemura (2012) offer:

> The field of teacher migration encompasses a whole range of different disciplines:
> education and economics; conflict studies and climate change; sociology and psychology.
> Coming together in a complex and dynamic interplay, in a world where change is

occurring at an ever more rapid rate, these issues make understanding the centuries-old phenomenon of migration difficult. But understand it we must. (p. 4)

Penson and Yonemura (2012) called for international research to serve as a bridge in shifting attention from migration as an international phenomenon to the context of the education system in the United States. First, host countries must mainstream migration issues on the national policy stage (Penson & Yonemura, 2012). Second, educational policy must provide the professional development to ensure qualified teachers (Penson & Yonemura, 2012). Third, research must specifically address the gaps challenging policy reform (Penson & Yonemura, 2012). On the global stage:

> Well-managed teacher migration can contribute to both increased access to education for at-risk children and the quality of education children receive, even in difficult circumstances. If teachers are prevented or discouraged from teaching by institutional barriers, it represents a double *brain drain*; the teachers are benefitting the education system in neither their home country, nor their host country. While they may be contributing in other ways, this still represents a loss of investment in the teaching cadre—'a denial of rights and a waste of humanity.' It is critically important to provide frameworks which protect teachers, especially when cross-border migration is involuntary, as teachers are then at their most vulnerable. It is also important to acknowledge that, formally recognized and properly supported, these same teachers can present an important resource for host countries to educate children (Penson & Yonemura, 2012, p. 156).

On the international stage, teacher retention, mobility, and migration imply study terms of the country of origin, destination country, school systems, and individuals (Penson & Yonemura, 2012). This systematic view presents a discourse cognizant of the challenges to the system as teachers move. It also recognizes the rights of individuals to move, while prompting a challenge of betterment to systems of teacher retention (Penson & Yonemura, 2012). As such, much of the work in international teacher migration directs specific attention to policy on behalf of the teachers working in the system. Going back to this broader picture and system allows a

different view of the migration framework and means of contemplating *in-country* teacher

mobility in the United States, and more specifically in SBAE.

*Summary*

        Overall, the current discourse around teacher mobility adopts the stance, at the

organizational level, of teacher migration and attrition having the same effect on schools; that of

leaving vacant positions (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Holme et al., 2017). The

discourse identifies mobile teachers as abandoning schools, contributing to the achievement gap,

and exacerbating issues of the school system. There is a distinct gap between the organizational

approach demonizing the migrator in the education literature and the *source of new hires*

approach identified in the NAAE Supply and Demand Studies (Foster et al., 2014; Foster et al.,

2015; Smith et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2018). In aligning with the second

approach, I offer a discipline oriented perspective to issues of migration. This aids in identifying

the multiple ways individuals interact with and around their work. Without discounting the

impacts of teacher mobility on schools, another gap in the literature exists in seeking out

migrating teachers to determine how they may be unique in their professional choices relative to

their exiting counterparts.

        There is a significant hurdle in shifting from an organizational approach when the nature

of *organizational careers* has shifted across the workforce (Biemann, Zacher, & Feldman, 2012).

This acknowledgement defines *work-related experiences* as occurring over long periods of time

and aids in changing the focus from *organizational turnover* to *career trajectories* (Biemann et

al., 2012). Biemann et al.'s (2012) recommendation to consider types of career transitions,

individual personality differences, and context variables are taken up in the current study. My

approach values the ways people perceive themselves relative to the supports available and challenges presented in illuminating teacher mobility as a means of teacher retention.

**Theoretical Orientation**

*Social Psychology & Migration*

I draw on the vocabulary of social psychology to give name to teacher migration structures loosely identified in the education literature. Unpacking this vocabulary allows the examination of the ways this language falls short of embracing the complexity of successful migrations as relational. Social psychology offers five key assumptions about the world and about knowledge, operationalized relative to migration:

1. Realities exist based on attachment of meaning and are therefore fluid, unfixed, and dynamic with multiple possibilities, natures, and interpretations (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

2. Human behavior is not determined by the objective facts of a given situation, but rather by the subjective meanings people assign in a given situation (Mead, 2018).

3. Humans are not passive knowers inside situations, but are actively engaged in the construction of their reality, establishing meaning through experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

4. Until shared, individuals' active engagement may run counter to established norms of operation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966), particularly as a migrating teacher enters a new setting.

5. Meaning is not inherent in objects; but rather assigned based on the language used and the historicity of experience (Mead, 2018). Language is an essential piece of what

makes humans distinct from other creatures, allowing coordinated action, reason and

thought, and communication (Mead, 2018).

As an assumption of social psychology, various actors define given situations differently

(Berger & Luckmann, 1966). I operationalize migration as such a situation. A lack of shared

definition is a potential source for conflict, particularly as migrators enter their new community.

Recognizing breakdowns in any of the above assumptions is antecedent to explaining potentially

turbulent program migrations. Migration is more closely contextualized with these assumptions

operationalized.

Examining migration structures through a social psychology lens helps articulate the

positions taken up through migration. The concept of *socialization* suggests two key

assumptions:

1. The basic task of any society is to reproduce itself through instilling normalized

   values (Mead, 2018).

2. Socialization is a learning process whereby people acquire social skills, interpret

   their world, interact with others, and determine action in given situations (Blumer,

   2018).

*Socialization* is society's means of enacting conformity, the agents of which are groups and

social institutions that create functioning and independent human beings able to define situations

and make decisions in their social structures (Blumer, 2018). Examples of such agents include

family, school, religion, peers, workplace, and mass media, among others (Blumer, 2018). When

individuals become aware of the structures in which they operate, they reevaluate themselves in

the new context (Mead, 2018). In the case of migration, the teacher ponders him/herself as

teaching elsewhere in light of their current socialization in education and their local school district.

Teachers are socialized into school well before they set foot in their own classroom as a teacher (Lortie, 1975). Ideas of "what school is" are acquired well before teachers take up the autonomy of their own career (Lortie, 1975), making professional alignment an important goal of the teacher. While socialization can be discussed as part of the life course (*primary socialization*, Berger & Luckmann, 1966), I focus on adult socialization (*secondary socialization*, Berger and Luckmann, 1966). I am particularly attentive to professional socialization as outlined specifically for teachers by Lortie in *School Teacher: A Sociological Study* (1975). Lortie (1975) characterizes several societal constructions solidifying the place of teachers in society. This illuminates the larger societal expectations pushing against teacher migration as productive. At the core of Lortie's (1975) argument is society's construction of teachers as individualistic, conservative, and present-focused. These sociological characteristics of teaching arguably make the role of teacher a difficult one to separate from identity.

Yet, entry into a profession is only one part of the socialization picture. To unpack socialization further, work in adult socialization focusing on career patterns and mobility in adulthood lends vocabulary to the ways teachers may navigate their program transition. While much of this literature focused on *upward mobility* (i.e. promotion), Featherman and Hauser (1978) directed attention to the opportunity presented with change. Particularly in recognizing mobility and occupational structures, they noted the reciprocal effects of socializing institutions; schools and social selection in an economic system (Featherman & Hauser, 1978).

Teachers' career patterns receive some attention in the education literature as a means to understand the ways teachers move. This body of work focused on teacher satisfaction

(Chapman & Lowther, 1982), differences in career patterns for males and female teachers (Murnane, Singer & Willett, 1989; Whitcombe, 1979; Whitmarsh, Brown, Cooper, Hawkins-Rodger, & Keyser-Wentworth, 2011), and the intention involved with patterns over the course of a teaching career (Burden, 1982; Draper, Fraser, & Taylor, 1998; Peterson, 1978). Particularly relevant to the current study are studies highlighting choices and intentions of teachers.

The examination of teachers' career patterns first looked at retired secondary school teachers (Peterson, 1978). Peterson (1978) noted challenges persisting in articulating teachers' careers, namely definition, bias, and methodology. In recognizing these challenges, Peterson (1978) echoed Lortie (1975); claiming teaching is not a true career with a progression of sequenced steps of *upward mobility*. Rather, it is *unstaged*. *Unstaged* means the teacher does not engage specific progressions denoting their expertise within their profession. Specifically important to this study is the claim *upward mobility* in teaching involves *leaving* the classroom (Peterson, 1978). This is an area where organizational approaches to teacher mobility fall short. If a teacher is to improve their position, they must progressively engage in *horizontal mobility* if they are to experience promotion while remaining a classroom teacher (Peterson, 1978). Peterson (1978) recognized the various improvements gained through *horizontal mobility* as significant victories necessitating acknowledgement as part of a career pattern in the social world of a school. To only see teaching organizationally implies retention through career incentives such as are unavailable to the classroom teacher (Peterson, 1978). An organizational approach is inherently at odds with the actual state of the profession.

To move beyond organizational approaches, Peterson (1978) offered nuanced vocabulary to describe types of career patterns, outlined in Table 2.

**Table 2.**

*Types of teacher career patterns (Peterson, 1978)*

| | |
|---|---|
| *Continuous* | Permanent and early commitment from an individual to an uninterrupted teaching career |
| *Interrupted* | Individual who left or was forced to leave teaching for five or fewer years before returning to the classroom |
| *Multiple* | Person having two different jobs in their occupational history related or unrelated to classroom teaching (non-simultaneous) |
| *Double-track* | Female teachers who work in the classroom as teachers and at home as mothers and spouses |
| *External* | Events during a career that chronologically influence the individual's career development |

*Note.* Peterson (1978) outlined five types of teacher career patterns, providing vocabulary for defining teacher mobility today

In addition, she provided an extensive review of internal teacher career patterns accounting for job morale, affective changes associated with aging, perceived changes in school environment, shifting commitment from teaching, personal revitalization, and attitudes about teaching at retirement (Peterson, 1978). A notable time of personal revitalization happened for teachers following a move to a new school, a change in the subject being taught, a reassignment of duty, opportunity to take additional coursework, and challenge of meeting the needs of new students (Peterson, 1978). Ultimately, Peterson (1978) concluded by offering success for the individual teacher as partially measured by teaching circumstance. Moves to more desirable teaching positions, in effect, are the mark of a *successful teacher* (Peterson, 1978).

Burden (1982) and Draper et al. (1998) noticed distinct delineations between those ready to apply for promotion as a developmental career process and the low level of appeal classroom teaching seems to hold for those traditionally prepared in education. They noted two types of

teachers who remain in classroom teaching: those who enjoy their jobs in the classroom and those who feel unempowered in other career outcomes (Draper et al., 1998). They also corroborated Lortie (1975) and Peterson (1978), recognizing the route of promotion for teachers to be career options that take teachers out of the classroom (Draper et al., 1998).

Ebaugh's (1988) vocabulary clarifies the challenging work of mobility through the conceptualization of the *ex-role*. Teachers must leave their classroom positions to experience promotion (Draper et al., 1998; Peterson, 1978). Ebaugh (1988) used earlier work in *anticipatory socialization* to expound on the ways individuals acquire values and orientations found in the groups they are likely to enter, even if not currently engaged. She argued anticipatory socialization functions to identify the ways individuals ease into group entry and their subsequent ease of *readjustment* (Ebaugh, 1988). Particularly salient to the current study is anticipatory socialization as just one part of a process including "doubting, decision making, and disengaging from an array of obligations and expectations associated with a present role" (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 8). She noted the particular value of unpacking *disengagement* as a frequently occurring process for most people.

> Whether one is moving from childhood to adolescence, from single life to marriage, from employment to unemployment or vice versa, each of these movements involves disengaging from the values, norms, social supports, and ways of thinking that are associated with the group one is leaving (Ebaugh, 1988, p. 10).

While studying ex-convicts and ex-spouses Ebaugh (1988) noted even after a role was vacated a portion of the role remained with the *ex*. She attributed several social psychology concepts to the ways *hangover identities* are particularly challenging to separate from the individual (Ebaugh, 1988). Among these, she distinguished professional roles as particularly susceptible to *identity merger*; especially when the professional role fulfills a childhood dream (Ebaugh, 1988). Together, Lortie's (1975) propositions of teachers and Ebaugh's (1988) concept

of the *ex-role* shed light on the particular challenges teachers face as they engage the work of migration. Lortie's (1975) accounting for decisions to enter teaching recognized teachers saw themselves in the role of teacher since their youth. Ebaugh's (1988) work bridges adult socialization as a process of entering the teaching profession (Lortie, 1975), to understand exits as well. Taken together, Ebaugh's (1988) and Lortie's (1975) work illuminate a heightened attachment to the role of teacher and the subsequent challenge of separating from role as carried out in a particular place.

If these positions and challenges describe the general teaching population, I theorize they are amplified for SBAE teachers based on their community embeddedness. SBAE teachers are broadly described as filling multiple roles (Robinson, Kelsey, & Terry, 2013), having the unique identity of agriculturalist and teacher (Shoulders & Myers, 2011), being overworked (Traini, Claflin, Velez, & Stewart, 2019), and interacting extensively with a broad community on multiple levels (FFA, SAE, classroom, etc.) (Phipps, Osborne, Dyer, & Ball, 2008). They are also diligent, daring, or devoted educators (Roberts & Montgomery, 2017). These descriptions outline a marked difference in how Agricultural Education researchers talk about their secondary counterparts compared to educational researchers' discussion of theirs. In short, there is little room for the SBAE teacher to be mediocre, let alone poor (Traini et al., 2019). These conveyed expectations position agriculture teachers as better than their colleagues in other disciplines, able to take on more, and as members of a club more connected with their community (Traini et al., 2019). In this way, the socialization of teachers as individualistic, conservative, and present focused (Lortie, 1975), and the professional expectations of SBAE teachers, converge on the SBAE migrator's *ex-role* (Ebaugh, 1988) in ways, I posit, multiply their potential for challenge as they enter new environments and communities.

Explicating society's orientation toward teachers, and specifically SBAE teachers, helps outline how educators perpetually see their engagement with teaching. If the socialization of the schoolteacher (Lortie, 1975) is taken up, teachers are in the difficult situation of looking out for themselves in a system that expects them to look out for everyone else. If their looking out for either party is in conflict, teachers may seek to alleviate the conflict by instigating a geographical move (Haddad et al., 2019). Often, a tacit goal of these moves is to more closely align values and find greater levels of support (Haddad et al., 2019). This tacit goal becomes a strong measure of a move's success as migrators consider their new communities (Haddad et al., 2019). The aforementioned demands could pose a significant challenge over a career in one community, but I speculate the challenge multiplies when teachers navigate communities regardless of what they seek in a work environment. The professional challenges are indeed vast, but are not the only social structures at play in navigating migration. Having contextualized the orientation of society to the socialization of teachers, I proceed to outline migration as *desocialization* and *resocialization* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

### *Desocialization and Resocialization*

Within socialization, Berger and Luckmann (1966) offer *desocialization* and *resocialization* to describe transitory processes through which people navigate their surroundings. *Desocialization* involves unlearning and discarding previous norms, roles, beliefs, and values, inciting the deconstruction of identities, self, and roles (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). For the SBAE migrator, this encompasses the rules of former districts, roles assumed as teacher and advisor, and beliefs about school functions and systems, in addition to what communities value in a SBAE program (Haddad et al., 2019). I postulate, at the local level, having made the decision to change school districts, agriculture teachers must desocialize from their previous

system of operation. This consists of discarding the norms, expectations, roles, resources, community, and place of the former district (Haddad et al., 2019). Failure to desocialize makes resocialization nearly impossible (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). However, once desocialized, the migrator resocializes through *adjustment*, *rehabilitation*, and *self-transformation* (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) to embrace the constructs of the new district. *Adjustment* sets no prescribed amount of time as individuals appraise changes in everyday life and subsequently adapt (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). *Rehabilitation* engages reform, undoing the previous socialization and assimilating to a new change in self (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). *Self-transformation* finalizes a conversion to the newly constructed identity with new ideologies (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Using these concepts, I propose *migration work* as navigating the desocialization from one school community and resocializing in another.

The concepts of socialization within a profession (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) are largely addressed as *resocialization* processes without explicit accounting for the desocialization process. Having already outlined Ebaugh's (1988) conceptualization of the *ex-role* to discuss desocialization processes, I turn to recent studies in teacher socialization. These studies focus on the physical education (PE) teacher; an apt comparison to SBAE teachers, given the community engagement expectation placed on PE teacher as coach. Lawson (2017) drew on a social institutional framework (rather than organizational) for a macro-level perspective focusing on the relationships of teacher socialization. Lawson (2017) again recognized the socialization process as beginning well before formal induction as a teacher to include school experiences, personal experiences, and eventually teacher education. He recognized the expansive nature of socialization as teachers weigh their various career options, including mobility (Lawson, 2017). Lawson (2017) further argued for the recognition of an iterative process of socialization,

recognizing the agentic nature of participants in their processes. The particular challenges of an educational content area (e.g. physical education) that encompass siloed sectors (sport, health, and education) (Lawson, 2017) outline parallels for this study. Equivalents can be drawn between the challenging socialization of the PE teacher and the SBAE teacher in this regard, as Phipps et al. (2008) also note the varied sectors SBAE teachers must accommodate.

Lawson (2017) concluded by calling for a more aligned and coherent occupational socialization for PE teachers that can be transferred to other disciplines. This call sought consensus of collective action to prioritize maintaining PE programs (Lawson, 2017). This necessitates attention to the competing employers and freedoms afforded by a career outside the classroom (Lawson, 2017). In conclusion, Lawson (2017) called for renewed institutional design for teacher socialization to allow education to maintain some competitive edge over the broader workforce. This renewal would reform teacher socialization at all levels (occupational, teacher, and professional socialization), accounting for the specialized discourses contrasting in the field of physical education.

While social psychology provides language to conceptualize migration as desocialization and resocialization, it assumes one can be removed from previous experience (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). The assumptions of this lens contribute to the further stigmatization and positioning of migrators as less, inexperienced, and in need of rehabilitation (Berger & Luckmann, 1966) despite potentially vast knowledge brought from previous experience. Furthermore, social psychology does not permit discursive production and varied interpretation, only conformity to the existing social system (Mead, 2018). While an essential starting point, this lens does not allow evaluation of the relationships of those operating inside social structures.

Therefore, having outlined the structures in place, I challenge the conventions of these structures to discuss navigating positions in migration as relational.

### Positioning & Migration

Positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) exposes and challenges the positions into which societal norms place people as speakers. This enables the examination of *subjectification* as the *constituted character*, a precondition to agency (Davies, 2000). Such an examination looks at relationships as constantly negotiated and intentionally reconfigured (Davies, 2000). To examine the individual navigating migration, migration must be measured as subjectifying. I hypothesize new members of communities necessarily position themselves, push against positioning by others, and in turn, position others in hopes of finding support and navigating challenges. My purpose is to unfold migration as a relational process in the context of school and teacher discourses. This will aid in greater understanding of the ways teachers take up, reify, or reject positions as they navigate support and challenge.

This lens moves away from conceptions of human activity as *roles*, to a *self*, constituted and reconstituted through various social, discursive practices in which an individual participates (Davies & Harré, 1990). A *discursive self* involves learning, participating, positioning, and recognizing oneself as located in various binary categories and not others (Davies & Harré, 1990). In the migration context, existing dichotomies may include success/failure, experienced /beginner, mover/leaver, and effective/not (Atterbury et al., 2017; Feng & Sass, 2012; Haddad et al., 2019; Ronfeldt et al., 2012; Ross et al., 1999; Traini et al., 2019; West & Chingos, 2009; Smith et al., 2018).

The *discursive migrator* is one able to learn, participate, position, and recognize their location in the various discourses co-constructed with their community. This conception allows

the re-examination of migrators as capable, seeing what individuals can do in relation to the

discourses in which they operate, locate themselves, and take-up narratives (Davies, 2000).

Identity, through this lens, is a "commitment to a pre-existing idea of self 'possessed' prior to an

interchange" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 17). These assumptions account for a fluidity and

messiness engaged through discursive construction of the self and others in relation to each other

(Davies & Harré, 1990); a fitting approach to migration as messy and extensive (Peterson, 1978).

As a lens for studying migration, positioning looks at, rather than through, the structures

and discourses already engaged (Davies, 2000). This enables a view of migrators as speakers in

relation to the other discourses to which they are subjected and then choose to take up (Davies,

2000). Positioning raises awareness of normalized values, uncovering them to question their

existence and allowing a changed conversation to examine the assigned value discursively

(Davies, 2000). Positionality is inherent to migrators as they enter a community, examine it, and

make choices regarding adopting normalized values. It makes the micro-processes of social

psychology apparent and calls them into question (Marinova, 2004). *Apparentness* recognizes

the interactions between self and society (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) rather than seeing the

self as inseparable from societal construction (Mead, 2018). Through a positioning approach,

migrators receive credit as agents, able to take up narratives rather than merely acting through

them in prescribed ways. Central to the application of this lens is not casting off ideologies and

experiences as situations change, as postulated by Berger and Luckmann (1966). Instead, each

episode informs current developments (Davies & Harré, 1990). Former ideologies inform and

propel action (Davies, 2000). They identify the rules of the game that determine a win in one

setting but cause danger in another (Davies, 2000).

Therefore, to think of migrators in terms of positioning opens an array of possibilities for what could be (Davies, 2000). Having identified social constructs they can now be dismantled to examine relations in and to said constructs. The focus shifts from the dichotomies of social constructionism (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) to a post-structuralist (Davies, 2000) approach that embraces the chaos and messiness inherent in the episodes of migration. I speculate this chaos may include any number of migratory processes: interviewing, decision-making, moving, and updating curriculum, meeting members of a new community, and parting with members of a former community, among others. Messiness accounts for the ways these do not happen instantaneously or cleanly, but rather occur as a progression with successes, setbacks, failures, and fresh attempts.

Bear in mind social constructionism and post-structuralism can, and in fact must, co-exist (Marinova, 2004). As Marinova offers, "these approaches complement each other and work towards gaining a better understanding of…interaction" (2004, p. 211). Social constructionism aids in identifying social structures while post-structuralism exposes and evaluates constructs (Marinova, 2004). The thesis of all branches of social constructionism purports "all psychological phenomena and the beings in which they are realized as produced discursively" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999, p. 120). Post-structuralism advances constructions to an ability to evaluate the ways in which they occur and to accept, reject, or redo any previous constructions (Davies, 2000). Subjects are viewed as "both constituted and constructive, subjected and agentic, all at once" (Davies, 2000, p. 139). For the migrator, identifying and operating inside the normalized structures is certainly the easiest path. Yet, the previous experience of the migrator may incite inward and outward evaluations of their new community, comparing and questioning what is normatively enacted (Davies, 2000). I speculate, where positionality aligns with desired

positions, migrators assess an ideal situation. Where positionalities are perceived as oppressive to achieving desired positions, a new situation (in this case, a school) may be sought.

A final conceptual component of positioning involves the topic of desire. Subjectivity is inherently contradictory and outside rational and conscious control (Davies, 2000). It is established through the discourse in which positioning occurs, and captures experience (Davies, 2000). Choices may be based on rationality but are subverted by desire (Davies, 2000). This was evident in my previous study regarding SBAE teacher migration. By applying a positioning theory lens to that study, teachers rationally discussed the things that should matter to their professional lives: salary, equitable supervisors, and supportive communities (Haddad et al., 2019). However, their rationality was also subverted by the desire to be positioned as authoritative in their community, as integral to their community's agricultural success, and as valued agents in their school systems (Haddad et al., 2019). Desire is integral to the various discourses through which each person is constituted. The individual and collective are not dualistic; they discursively inform, construct, and position each other (Davies, 2000). Thus, a positioning approach to migration is integral to the continued shaping of systems of education. Every district is composed of global, occupational, professional, and local migrators. Does the current body of literature account for the discursive experience of the teacher, the ways experience shapes the local system, and vice versa? I argue it does not.

### The Discursive Positioning of Migrators

In the case of migrators as speakers and for the intent of this study, I position individual migrators in school systems, but also in broader discourses of education, teachers, SBAE teachers, and individuals' own subjectification inside their family systems and communities. I

offer migration as a positioning phenomenon based on its circular nature. Figure 2 illustrates this point.

Figure 2. Conceptualizing the discursive position of SBAE migrators
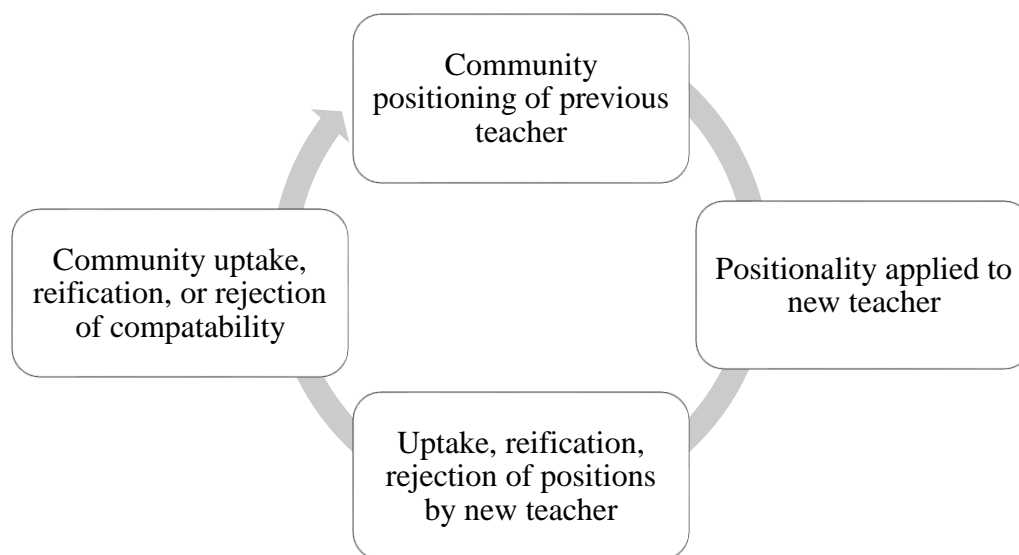


*Note.* Migration can be conceptualized as a cyclical positioning phenomenon. Davies (2000) positioning theory can be operationalized for migration to identify the trauma (Sparley, 2019) associated with mobility. There is a specific break in the cycle where the community's assessment of compatibility yields retention rather than a *revolving door* (Ingersoll, 2001). The incoming teacher fills the vacancy the outgoing teacher left. The community positioned the previous teacher and positions the incoming teacher in the previous context. The incoming teacher repositions themselves in their own context through various uptake, rejection, and reification of their community's positioning. I posit the compatibility of the teacher's positionality against the desired position from the community determines the potential for positive reflection on the decision to migrate. Exploring the choices migrators make between contradictory demands allows the weaving together of available positions in broader discourses (Davies, 2000). Discursive positioning accounts for the personal experience and stories through

which individuals make sense of the categories assigned and the emotions experienced (Davies, 2000). Additionally, it identifies the moral system that links and legitimates the choice made (Davies, 2000).

Thinking of migration as a choice through the lens of positioning allows the unfolding of migration as relational. This further permits the questioning of the ways communities may or may not position migrators' and subsequently maintain the imposed positionality, regardless of the migrator's alignment. The goal of this study is to move the conversation beyond satisfaction, intention, and identity to focus on the subjectification in relationships and the agency craved by migrating teachers. This will illuminate the productive positions enabling positive migration experiences. The relationships thus engaged are the means of positioning, informing structure and subject to align the "quarrel engendered in the structural properties of the conversation and not at all the intentions of the speaker" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 269). No clear bridge exists where the process of migration ends and the individual navigation begins. Migration and individual inform each other.

"It's interesting to hear your perspective on moving that way," my husband told me as I reflected with him regarding our own mobility. "I would have been comfortable staying in State to work for [my company] our whole lives." Even as my husband and I positioned ourselves differently in the prospect of moving and the uncertainty it engages, we negotiated positions. Illuminating these positions empowers those involved with migrators to further show value for the different ways people situate themselves in their worlds. Positioning assumes a relational nature to experiencing phenomena (Davies & Harré, 1990) allowing the rendering of incompatible discourses. These are the incompatibilities I hope to expose through examining individuals having emerged through and continuing to engage in a relational process of

migration. With this framework in mind, discourses can now be reviewed in the following ways (Davies, 2000):

- As having multiple possible interpretations

- As interactive

- As imitating the relation between perception of positions and the perception of the storylines engaged

- Recognizing difference as something interesting to be listened to rather than as deviance

Instead of limiting my focus to structures created by society, I am equipped to focus on the words a speaker chooses, how words convey assumptions, and the constitution of occasions, recognizing both the concrete and the fleeting (Davies & Harré, 1990).

**Summary**

The research on teacher mobility is convoluted. Given the variety of approaches and examination from the micro to macro-levels, it can be daunting to think one has much to contribute. The pervasive discourse presented in the literature, however, necessitates a reevaluation of teacher mobility to focus on the ways support is perceived for the individual. The current discourses position teacher mobility as detrimental to students and school systems. Arguably, this is a valid starting point, given the available data and the concern with education *for* students. However, this method of study has yielded little by way of increased teacher retention or recognition of the differences between teachers who leave education and who leave individual schools. As someone with a history of personal and professional migration, I am uniquely equipped to view migration in a positive light for individuals rather than condemning them based on organizational detriments imposed by teacher mobility. Teachers have already

suggested reinvigoration through challenge and supportive communities are key to their

perceived success in migration (Haddad et al., 2019). Unfortunately, little research exists to

identify teachers' successes and challenges in their school context as an element of retention.

This study seeks to change that landscape.

**CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

**Introduction & Purpose**

My study seeks to describe how SBAE migrators' positionality (assigned or self-ascribed) is taken up, rejected, or reified (Davies, 2000). This description aids in unfolding perceptions of challenge and support within the communities in which SBAE migrators operate. My purpose intentionally shifts the focus from teacher migration as problematic to the ways positionalities affect teacher retention. Currently, there is little in the literature, Agricultural Education or otherwise, to focus on migration this way. The scope of this study, including multiple community members influencing the SBAE migrators' practice, bears importance for several audiences. For teacher educators, this study can aid in helping new teachers navigate the context into which they embed themselves as a member of a school. For administrators, I hope to offer ways strong leadership can affect the goal of retention with SBAE teachers and others. For members of the community, I seek to illuminate the ways support is perceived or challenge is intentionally or unintentionally imposed. For the educational researcher, this study provides a stepping-stone. Each of these audiences stands to gain from understanding ways to reconcile conversations around desired positions.

I approach the world from a pragmatic paradigm, recognizing the best ways to solve problems depend on the questions asked and the opportunity to generate practical solutions from the method employed (Guba, 1990; Patel, 2015). Ontologically, interpretations of what is real are renegotiated, debated, and varying in their situational usefulness (Guba, 1990; Patel, 2015). The best method, then, for understanding others' reality is the one that solves problems. For this study, a co-iterative analysis (Patel Stevens, 2004) is the means to change implementation of support and challenge within migratory contexts. This Deweyan perspective employs discourse

in an information-based research design (Patel, 2015; Zimmerman & Forlizzi, 2014) to identify specific solutions across a migratory context to affect the support and challenge perceived through positioning (Davies, 2000; Harre & van Langenhove, 1999).

While teacher mobility has been examined from an organizational perspective, little has been done to study migration from the perspective of an individual in a profession. To this end, it was essential to be interconnected with the individual participants, familiar with the context, and aware of the history of the study site. Employing positioning theory as an approach to discourse analysis shed light on SBAE teachers' positioning of members of their new community and the members' positioning of the SBAE migrator (a SBAE teacher moving between programs). I conceptualized community broadly, reaching from traditional definitions of people inside a geographical location to also include administrators, colleagues, former teachers, alumni leaders, and others, such as "Team Ag Ed" at the state level. All references to this community and its members use pseudonyms as discussed with participants during recruitment and when securing verbal consent (Appendix B, Recruitment Materials).

This conceptualization of community aligns with a social psychology perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 2018; & Mead, 2018), as positioning occurs in social contexts (Davies, 2000). The migrator does not come into their new circle abandoning all prior personal relationships, so this broad definition accounts for a teacher's personal community (e.g. family and friends) as well. I argue the uptake, rejection, or reification of various positions (Davies, 2000) establishes migratory contexts, and the enlightenment of such allows individuals in contexts to examine their positionalities. This incites a raised consciousness of interaction (Davies, 2000). My purpose is to unfold positions to think about migration as teacher retention, through exploring support and challenge for SBAE migrators. *Challenge* in this case is a

construct rather than a series of difficult circumstances (Haddad et al., 2019). Positions cannot be discarded once they no longer appear useful, nor is there one *defining* positionality to be occupied at a time (Davies, 2000). Rather, positionalities are unfolded and refolded on top of each other as discursive events transpire; they are not fixed establishments, but rather constantly negotiated (Davies, 2000).

**Site Selection**

I focused on migration in one Agricultural Education program with consistent SBAE *churn* (i.e. a new teacher every five years for the last 30), where teachers migrate in and out for a variety of reasons. Rather than taking a national, regional, or statewide view to positionalities through relationships in migration, it was essential participant-researcher relationships were already present (Patel Stevens, 2004). This permitted genuine conversations with migrators and key influencers, and allowed accurate tracking of teachers in this context. By focusing on a familiar site, migrators were findable over a span of time relative to one space. The familiar site of my former school district (North Plains Consolidated High School, NPC, Oakville, NA) balanced these needs with operationalizing the assumptions of the theoretical framework for this study. Utilizing my former school district allowed me to capitalize on the assumption of knowledge as contextual and sociocultural. By this, I mean people assemble knowledge from social constructions, informed by culture, as "shared meanings, processes, and practices" (Hall, 1997, p. 2).

Having taught in the district for five years, I was better able to situate community knowledge and engage speakers in an accounting of the social and "cultural" factors influencing people's positioning of themselves and others. This made my position and embeddedness in the research site salient as central to this study, while recognizing my interpretations of the context

were my own, informed by my experience (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). My interpretations

are limited in their broader applicability relative to others' experience based on their own

positionality, their positioning of others, and others' positioning of them. These comprised the

key ideas under investigation. With this in mind, the participants and I (we) produced findings

discursively. I engaged my participants in an iterative process to co-construct our navigation of

positions imposed by others and taken up by those on whom they are imposed.

**Methodological Context**

Patel Stevens (in Rogers, 2004) recognized a trend in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

engaging situations where the researcher and speaker are in close relational proximity with each

other. Drawing on the work of Rogers and Mosley (2008), Sieg (2008), and Tuten (2007) to

apply principles from Fairclough (1989 & 1992), Patel Stevens (2004, p. 183) explored the ways

"proximity brings to bear altogether different questions of power and responsibility." While the

conventional approach for CDA calls for the examination of power dynamics, oppression, and

privilege (Patel Stevens, 2004), there is value for this study in a relatively unexplored component

of teacher migration *with* rather than *on* the participants.

As seen in chapter two, the current literature discusses teacher mobility as yearly turnover

that negatively affects schools and students. I approached this examination to teacher migration

as a beneficial option for teachers as a retentive move within the profession of SBAE. Given the

limited literature taking up this specific approach, I outlined a discourse toolkit that allowed the

co-construction of various episodes from multiple speakers (Appendix C, Researcher Routines).

This established a starting place for continued exploration, largely mirroring Patel Stevens'

(2004) study examining the role of the Critical Discourse Analyst. Proceeding in this way called

for a particular "forthrightness about intents" (Patel Stevens, 2004, p. 184), which accounted for institutional positions, reflexivity, and answerability.

### *Intent & Desire*

My intent in studying SBAE teacher migration from a multitude of perspectives was to engage the ways positionalities impact retention through migration. Patel Stevens (2004) *intention-forthrightness* also aligns with Davies (2000) topic of *desire*. My overarching intent was subverted by several other desires for my work and my participants. These included a desire to aid in the betterment of a place I once worked, an intent that assumes something inadequate about the organization. In addition, I desired to work with former colleagues with whom I built relationships, trust, and collegiality. While this aided my study in some respects, the confrontation inherent in this type of analysis (Patel Stevens, 2004) rendered conflicting desires between the unfolding positions and the comfort of those with whom I previously worked. This necessitated unfolding my own institutional positionalities as a SBAE teacher and researcher as follows.

In accounting for my institutional positionalities as a SBAE teacher, co-worker, and researcher, my interest in agriculture and my work developing students is a common thread. In my work as a SBAE teacher, I taught six courses each twelve-week academic term for students in grades 7-12. Courses included Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Automation and Robotics ©, CASE Introduction to Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources ©, and Agricultural Literacy at the 7-8 grade level and Agricultural Mechanics, Small Gas Engines, Welding, Animal Science, Crop and Soil Science, State Wildlife, Food Chemistry, and an internship course for grades 9-12. In addition, I advised the school's FFA chapter, coordinated with an active alumni chapter, and engaged with FFA on the region and state level as region advisor and adult board representative.

Throughout my time as a SBAE teacher, I worked closely with administration to grow the Oakville SBAE program and partnered with the Industrial Technology teacher as we refurbished our classroom and shop spaces over four years. The timing in my hire at North Plains Consolidated was fortuitous as the broader community was ready for a more stable agriculture teacher.

During the process of reconciling my position as a SBAE teacher and university researcher, I attended the National Association for Agricultural Educators (NAAE) conference. At this conference I observed an experienced teacher give this introduction: "I'm a first year teacher with twenty-two years' experience." Given my own experience with personal and professional migration, this statement raised a series of questions regarding the challenge of migration if even the most experienced teachers, anecdotally, view migration as a restart. Personally, the nagging question remained: What could I have done differently to better situate my replacement for success?

I have dedicated the last two years to examining teacher migration. Through quantitative and qualitative work, I studied the state of migration in Agricultural Education, and teacher mobility and attrition in the education literature more broadly. This study continues the conversation, unpacking the various ways teachers find success and challenge in their working environments, and the choices they make in attempting to better their situations. I shifted from examining administrative data to examining relationships in the migratory context. This allowed the "possibility of analyzing and exploring discourse as a mediational tactic to understanding and transforming these social relations" (Patel Stevens, 2004).

***Assumptions of Positioning Theory***

As I represented shared meanings of school discursive contexts converging with migration as a relational process, I engaged in discourse analysis through a positioning theory approach (Davies & Harré, 1990). This necessitated looking *at* the linguistic surface comprising the discourse (Davies, 2000) and carried the following assumptions:

1. Schools are embedded in their communities and the social structures of what "school" is (Davies, 2000).

2. The same sentence may perform several different speech acts with several conversations proceeding at once (Davies & Harré, 1990).

3. Every conversation is a discussion of a topic and the telling of personal stories (Davies, 2000).

4. Telling is determined as participants orient themselves in the *local expressive order* in which they operate (Davies & Harré, 1990).

5. Words only carry meanings in their context, use, and prior knowledge (Davies & Harré, 1990).

6. Speech episodes are not stand-alone occurrences. They closely associate themselves with the context of a given situation (Davies, 2000).

Any speech episode must account for the history of prior episodes, interactions, relationships, and knowledge. This accounting recognizes these as influential in unfolding episodes in terms of subjectivity, culture, power, self-reflective analysis, and desire (Davies, 2000).

**Participant Profiles**

This type of discourse analysis required "high levels of trust and the willingness of both parties to engage in an exploration of plausible descriptions and interpretations of discourse" (Patel Stevens, 2004, p. 184). In addition, speech episodes occur in given contexts (Harré & van

Langenhove, 1999), and recognize context as "indefinitely large" (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 4),

I selected a research site where trust had already been established and willingness to engage on

this level was accessible. I resituated myself in the research site relative to my knowledge of the

site and participants. The research site, North Plains Consolidated (NPC) High School, provided

significant contextual experience developed over a five-year teaching career. During this time as

a SBAE teacher, I worked with administration, teachers, and community, and in fact, migrated

from this district (professional level migration). As such, I already established the access,

rapport, and insider perspective necessary to conduct rich qualitative research (Creswell, 2013).

This, however, was not without challenge. I cannot remove myself from my bias, and

embracing the theories with which I approach this study, would be challenged to separate myself

from my experience (Davies, 2000). However, I acknowledge my deep concern for this site and

the people with whom I worked, and recognize the ways bias affected my analysis. While

offering a unique space for data collection grounded in dialogue and answerability the issues of

honesty, given deep familiarity with the setting bear explicating. The risks were two-fold: on one

hand, there was a risk to my friendships as this sort of analysis brings with it levels of

confrontation (Patel Stevens, 2004). The opportunity for apparent, irreconcilable differences

between my interpretation and others experience called for openness, humility, and a *soft*

approach by me as the researcher (Patel Stevens, 2004). On the other hand, a data collection and

analysis based in dialogue was essential to ensuring reported findings are co-constructed and not

my own, outside, interpretation of a migratory context (Patel Stevens, 2004). These concepts

worked together as part of my discourse analysis toolkit. The co-iterative nature of this analysis

ensured consistent work with the participants to capture the fullness of their experience in an

attempt to present it accurately (Patel Stevens, 2004).

While the literature does not define average migration rates by school, I offer this site as having typical migration levels. Teachers are regularly moving in and out of various departments at the middle and high school, but individual departments are not overly *churny* as to indicate chronic problems with personnel or administration. However, in onboarding 15-20 teachers across the district annually, this site provided the environment to examine migration as a relational process. This site also included a typical infrastructure around SBAE programming for NA: a single SBAE teacher department and alumni chapter backed by a supportive agricultural cadre, advocating the department's interests to the school board and administration. The program serves 150-300 students in 7-12th grade annually through a comprehensive agriculture curriculum.

To examine the relational nature of migration, I invited the last three SBAE migrators since 2003 (myself, as the researcher, excluded), and key influencers, to participate in the study. *Influencers* had close ties to the agriculture department or long-standing ties to the school and community. The SBAE teachers in this study taught at NPC for five years or fewer before making their next career move. All the teachers are currently involved with the broader education profession in some form, and at the time of the study, all three were still employed by the NPC school district. The SBAE teachers, by pseudonym, include:

- Aaron Mueller: A native to this state context, taught at NPC for five years (2003-2008) after two different districts in a neighboring state. Aaron moved into administration at NPC and currently serves as vice principal.

- Stephanie Goodrie: A native to this state context, she began teaching at NPC after two years teaching in another district. She taught in Oakville for four years (2008-2012) before opting for a career move that allowed more time with her two young children. She

resumed teaching in the district in the Early Childhood building, where she is currently
still employed.

- Jessie Schaser: A native to this state context, she has been teaching at NPC for three
  years (2017-present) after teaching in two other programs in the state (for six months and
  one year, respectively). At the time of the study, she was the current agriculture teacher in
  Oakville. She has since left employment at NPC. After receiving the draft of the findings
  for co-iterative analysis, Jessie withdrew her participation in the study. Data she provided
  were removed from the findings. The representations of Jessie's experience are others'
  perceptions only.

In addition to these teachers, I engaged influencers to establish a more holistic
presentation of the discursive context in which SBAE migrators are positioned for the NPC
district. All of the community influencers were male. While female participants could be sought,
they are not in relative positions of influence (i.e. close colleagues, administrators, or officers of
the alumni chapter). The community influencers, by pseudonym, include:

- Ben Meyer: Industrial Technology teacher (1976-2012). Ben is a native to this state
  context who spent his teaching career at NPC.

- Caleb VanZee: Industrial Technology teacher (2012-2017). An international, within state,
  and across career migrator himself, Caleb team-taught with and mentored me after we
  both started at NPC in 2012.

- John Shellum: Grew up in Oakville, NA and currently operates a third-generation corn
  and soybean farm. He had students in the program over three agriculture teachers. He
  currently serves as NPC Ag Booster president.

- Mark Sparley: State FFA Advisor (1995-2019). Mark is a native to the state context, and served as the state FFA Advisor/Program Coordinator for Agricultural Education at the Department of Education for the span of the migratory period under study.

Most of the data captured from Mark's interview was contextual. As such, his data are used throughout the study, particularly in the introduction, literature review, and in the conclusions, to situate participant experiences in the state context of Agricultural Education. I confirmed this use of the data generated from his interview during member checking.

In addition, others were referenced by interviewees, but not included in the study. These community members, by pseudonym, included:

- Logan Klammer: High school principal at NPC (2010-2018). He is now a principal at a neighboring district. I reached out to him for initial participation, but his schedule did not permit participation.

- Amanda Whiting: High school guidance counselor (2008-present). I reached out to her initially, but she opted out of participation.

- Stewart James: Current NPC school district superintendent.

- Josh Schmidt: Current NPC High School principal (2018-present).

- Rae Knight: Student in the NPC agriculture program (2011-2018).

Room 340 is the agriculture classroom at NPC High School. Over the last 25 years, little has changed. As student, alumni, administrator, teacher, or observer, the breadth and variety of experience with the classroom, office, and shop among the participants is diverse. The classroom includes a traditional setup consisting of tables and chairs with various technology keeping pace with the time. Recent (2016) classroom updates established a lab-type setup. In addition to the classroom space, metals and engines shops accompany the facilities under the purview of the

agriculture instructor. The space is shared in various capacities depending on the working

relationship and expertise of the teachers in the Agriculture/Industrial Technology department.

**Data Collection & Analysis**

*Approaching Discourse with Positioning*

Conducting discourse analysis with a positioning approach required attention to a

"process by which certain trains of consequences are set in motion" (Davies, 2000, p. 94).

Discourse engages multiple modes of positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). These

include first and second order; *first order* being the way persons locate themselves in essentially

moral spaces and storylines, with *second order* questioning and negotiating first order (van

Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Inside positioning orders, *tacit* and *intentional* positioning occur as

*performative* and *accountive*, *moral* and *personal*, and *self* and *other* positioning (van

Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Orders and types of positioning are outlined in Table 3.

**Table 3.**

*Positioning Orders and Types (Davies, 2000; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999)*

| Orders | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| *First Order* | Ways individuals locate themselves within speech episodes | "I was the SBAE teacher there for five years" |
| *Second Order* | Questioning and negotiating first order positioning | "But during my five years of teaching I was more of a program manager than a teacher." |
| *Third Order* | Perceived position from others | "They wanted me to be a lot more active in the community than I would've needed to be as a core area teacher." |

| Types | Definition | Manifestation in Current Study |
|---|---|---|
| *Tacit* | Unintentional, subconscious positioning | Unable to derive based on reflective data collection method |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Intentional* | Deliberate, conscious positioning | Interview data and co-analysis capture intentional positioning |
| *Performative* | Determinate act creating a position within the conversation | Unable to derive based on reflective data collection method |
| *Accountive* | Talk about talk, questioning within or about the conversation | Interview data and co-analysis capture accountive positioning |
| *Moral* | Moral orders in which people perform social actions | All positioning is a moral endeavor |
| *Personal* | Individual attributes accounting for "role" deviance | All positioning is a personal endeavor |
| *Self* | Discursive; positioning oneself in relation to others | All positioning accounts for location of self |
| *Other* | Discursive; positioning others in relation to oneself | All positioning positions others |

*Note.* Davies (2000) and van Langenhove & Harré (1999) conceptualize positioning in the above

orders and types, outlined here as they arose in my study. The interview method capturing

reflective data, in conjunction with co-analysis captures each order of positioning while focusing

attention on intentional and accountive positioning. All positions captured are moral, personal,

self, and other.

**Operationalizing Positioning.** Using the orders of positioning, I operationalized the

assumption of SBAE migrators as positioned and positioning themselves in their situations.

Migrators make choices between contradictory demands through a complex weaving together of

the available positions in their discourses. They attach emotional meaning to each position

developed through personal experience, stories through which categories and emotions are made

sense of, and the moral system linking and legitimating the choice being made (Davies, 2000).

Positions are variously deposed (Table 4); they can be taken up, reified, or rejected (Davies, 2000; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

**Table 4.**

*Deposing positions* (Davies, 2000; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999)

| Deposition | Definition | Example |
|---|---|---|
| *Uptake* | Occupying a position imposed by self or others | "I wanted to be a SBAE teacher, so I got my credential from [University]." |
| *Reification* | Confirming, through repeated action or speech, the uptake of a position | "As a SBAE teacher, I taught [classes] and served as the FFA Advisor." |
| *Rejection* | Dismissing, through action or speech, an imposed position | "I didn't want to be the FFA Advisor, so my co-teacher filled that role." |

*Note.* Positions are variously deposed and multiple positions can be deposed in a given speech episode. Table 4 outlines uptake, reification, and rejection by definition and simple example

To capture various uptake, rejection, or reifications of positioning, I took up an interview approach based in dialogue to capture and analyze discourse (Patel Stevens, 2004). The participants and I engaged in a process of reflexive autobiography (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) captured in semi-structured interviews and my reflective journals (Patel Stevens, 2004). Beginning with *reflexive positioning* to elicit each participant's autobiography (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999), speakers overviewed their experiences individually and in the migratory context (Appendix D, Interview Protocol). These autobiographical reflections were essential in allowing speakers to express and experience their own selfhood, navigate the emergence of self from complex stories, see the relationship of self and person, and to account for each participant as a *round character* (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999). Collection and analysis based in dialogue (Patel Stevens, 2004) challenged and examined the tendencies of participants to position themselves using *self and social reifications* in their own stories (Harré & van Langenhove,

1999). These autobiographies aided in identifying the cultural and private discourses, positioning each participant as themselves and in relation to others (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999).

*Data Collection*

**Conducting Interviews.** Having worked with participants through their reflexive positioning in their autobiography, further semi-structured interviews, based in dialogue, allowed for an answer (Patel Stevens, 2004, citing Bakhtin, 1990) regarding the positions imposed by self and others (including research discourses). The semi-structured nature of the interviews highlighted different *episodes* (Davies & Harré, 1990) of the migration experience: coming to teaching, prior teaching appointments, coming to North Plains Consolidated High School, working at NPC, and moving on from SBAE at NPC. Interviews occurred via the Zoom video conferencing platform and in person during November of 2019. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. Interviews ranged from 60 minutes in length to two and a half hours, generating approximately 20 hours of audio data over 16 interview sessions.

Permitting time and integrating purposeful reflection were essential to account for the conscious-raising nature of an iterative analysis brought on by a discursive process (Patel Stevens, 2004). The discursive process permitted space to reflect on and produce the meanings associated with the positions offered and taken up (Davies, 2000) by allowing participants to process their conclusions on their own terms and in their own words. By recognizing the "quarrel engendered in the structural properties of the conversation and not at all the intentions of the speaker" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 269), I sought to alleviate tension around judgement passed on the speaker in the analytic process. In addition, transparent vulnerability was integral to "easing into" the re-entry process of engaging with the community again (Carbaugh, 1999). My own authenticity (Patel Stevens, 2004) included recognizing the positions I once occupied,

reconciling their validity with the positioning of others, and collaboratively and discursively

reassessing my current positionality with NPC and my former colleagues (Davies, 2000).

Rekindling relationships organically, transparently, and comfortably allowed us to account for

the changed relationship dynamic, power differences, and the role of researcher and participant

without dismissing them (Patel Stevens, 2004). Clarifying potential goals for the research site

provided reciprocal benefit for both the researcher and the researched (Patel Stevens, 2004).

### *Data Transcription & Analysis*

My intent was to discursively unfold positionalities in situated episodes, so I further

operationalized positioning theory through the analysis of transcribed interview data to derive

first and second order subject positionality (Davies & Harré, 1999). Open coding identified the

orders of positioning initiated in episodes (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Harré & van

Langenhove, 1999). Secondarily, thematic coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003) derived the

intentional positions individuals discursively and dynamically occupied, as accountive of self

and other (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Assuming these dynamic occupations allowed the

illumination of institutionalized discourses as challenging or supporting migrators as they

entered their new communities. Having conducted my own analysis, subsequent discourse

around the analysis and with the participants was essential (Patel Stevens, 2004) to co-construct

their positioning and positionalities (Davies, 2000). Rogers and Mosley (2008) and Seig (2008)

corroborate the importance and value of debriefing and follow-up interview type exercises with

participants with whom the researcher is relationally close.

As an approach, discourse analysis served as a framework to bring together

autobiographies (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) as a means of reflexive positioning,

incorporating reflective journaling, and engaging in iterative analysis. These methods put

discourse analysis to work as a process of "studying language in use" and "creating meaning coherence, and accomplished purpose" (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 1) around migration. My approach oriented the *situated meaning task* of discourse analysis (Gee & Handford, 2012, p. 1) relative to the contextual and cultural knowledge of migration.

In order to account for all the ways participants may represent their experience, interviews were recorded, and all audio data were transcribed for analysis. The Zoom platform facilitated this work, post recording, with additional clean up required to identify the time and speaker around focused episodes. In-person interviews were recorded, allowing for transcription via the Temi transcription service. Once transcribed in Temi, I reviewed the generated transcripts against the audio file for accuracy. Upon compiling accurate transcriptions, I began the process of data mapping.

**Data Mapping.** I drew on the work of Doris Ash (2003) to describe the data mapping structure used to examine the data collected. Particular parallels arose between her work in Conversation Analysis (CA) and an approach based in dialogue unfolded with positioning theory. Ash (2003) outlined a methodological tool for coding thematic content and inquiry processes. *Thematic content* (Ash, 2003) associated closely with *positions* (Davies, 2000), while *inquiry process skills* (Ash, 2003) align with the *deciding action* taken toward positions (Davies, 2000). Ash (2003) described language as *negotiating*, an activity of joint involvement and multiple overlaps, with varying entry points. While drawing largely on theories of cognitive development outlined by Vygotsky, she also adopted the constructionist frame applied to the current study (Ash, 2003). Namely, multiple zones of proximal development are under construction and reconstruction in any given "social ensemble" (Ash, 2003, p. 139). This aligned closely with multiple positions as constantly folded, unfolded, and negotiated in any given

speech event (Davies, 2000). Ash (2003) further accounted for "agendas" people carry based on their socio-cultural history (Ash, 2003, p. 140) connecting with Davies (2000) concept of *desire*.

**Data Reduction.** Ash (2003) set forth a means of transcription and coding to reduce data to *representative dialogic segments (RDS)*. Ash (2003) suggested varying degrees of segmentation, her own focused at the intermediate level. While typical of the larger conversation, these segments also encapsulated activity, mediation in the event, thematic content, and inquiry skills (Ash, 2003). My study employed a similar data reduction strategy focused around *speech episodes* (Davies, 2000). Speech episodes account for the history of prior episodes, address interactions, focus on relationships, and share knowledge (Davies, 2000). In addition, each RDS takes place in a context (Ash, 2003); in my case, I focused on the migratory context of the schools in which participants operate. In other words, I analyzed segments focusing on speech episodes (RDS), and subsequently analyzed the positionalities implied. For the intent of this study, RDS segments were analogous to speech episodes, including speech identifying prior episodes, addressing interactions, focusing on relationships, and sharing knowledge (Davies, 2000). A sample speech episode, and its analytic interpretation using this framework, follows in Table 5.

Ash (2003) further outlined the conventions of RDS in coding. Ash (2003) described the identification of the speaker and utterance, and subsequently the theme and process the utterance illustrates. In the vocabulary of my study, utterances were speech episodes with positions (i.e. themes) implied and orders of positions (i.e. processes) described. Furthermore, Ash (2003) used *metacomments* as opportunities for reflection, based in dialogue with the participants. These were particularly relevant to this investigation as they specifically aimed to situate the speech

episode in the larger context of the dialogue (i.e. teacher migration at a given school) (Ash,

2003). Ash's (2003) conventions are outlined in Table 5, relative to the context of this study.

**Table 5.**

*Sample data mapping using Ash (2003) model*

**Speech Episode[1]:** *I was hired with this promise of do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be. That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half of the time I was teaching junior high, which was not my fave, and the other part of the time was the high school stuff. I did a variety of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff, but was tied down schedule-wise by the junior high electives. That wasn't something I was really into. They wouldn't let me do work based learning. That was another thing I didn't get to do that I had seen very successfully at other schools. Obviously FFA advising took up a lot of time as another role. Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee because they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.*

| Position[2] | Order[3] | Type[4] | Deposition[5] | Metacomment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Evidence:** *I did a variety of a lot of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff but was tied down schedule wise by the junior high electives. That wasn't something I was really into… Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee because they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.* | | | | |
| Overworked | Second | Self | Uptake (added to program/growing program) | Workload wise, I wasn't capable of changing. I couldn't reinvent the wheel because my daily workload was so high. I was just trying to keep up there. I wasn't going to think about making new stuff. You can run a class but you've got to pay for it, so we'll go find some grants. We're not going to buy your textbooks, if that's what you're asking. I don't want it to come off like it was a bad experience because it was not a bad experience. |
| Unsuccessful | First | Self | Reification (less successful than other schools) | I think it was unrealistic expectations on my part to think that I could just come in and change whatever I wanted. There were these parameters like, "you still have to teach junior high and you're still going to have to do this." |
| Limited | First | Other | Reification (no schedule change/addition of WBL) | Workload wise, I wasn't capable of changing. I couldn't reinvent the wheel because my daily workload was so high. I was just trying to keep up there. I wasn't going to think about making new stuff. You can run a class but you've got to pay for it, so we'll go find some grants. We're not going to buy your textbooks, if that's what you're asking. I don't want it to come off like it was a bad experience because it was not a bad experience. |
| **Evidence:** *Obviously FFA advising took up a lot of time as another role. Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee because they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.* | | | | |
| Committed | First | Self | Reification (engaged in school committees) | I'll find the kids that really want to do it and work on them. You always have the lens where you're doing some really cool stuff. We really need to keep track of it. |

*Note.* Table 5 modifies Ash's (2003) coding structure to account for constructs of positioning in

the SBAE migratory context. For the sake of space, the table only provides a sample of positions

derived from the initial speech episode.

[1] *Speech episodes* account for historicity, interactions, relationships, and knowledge (Davies,

2000). Speech episodes may encompass evidence of multiple positions.

[2] *Positions* are conceptual repertoires locating persons in the structures and rights of those using the repertoire (Davies, 2000)

[3] *Orders of positioning* include *first* (self-location), *second* (negotiating first), and *third* (other imposing location) (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999)

[4] *Types of positioning* focus on intentional self and other positioning. I identify multiple positions to recognize the ways others were positioned based on self-positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). All positioning in this data set was intentional, accountive positioning.

[5] *Deposition* identifies the uptake, reification, or rejection of the identified position (Davies, 2000). Depositions were derived from evidence in the speech episode.

Using Ash's (2003) model for data mapping allowed the visualization of navigating multiple positions simultaneously in any given speech episode (Davies, 2000). However, my data reduction excluded little from the data. I only excluded speech episodes in which the speaker postulated on the general phenomenon. I focused, instead, on speech episodes intentionally positioning self and other. The excluded segments have been stored to review for subsequent study, but will not be discussed in these findings.

Given both the type of research and the ways the use of this lens on teachers' migratory context is still in its infancy, it was essential the approach provided the freedom to engage participants in sharing accurate interpretations beyond the representation of their experience. While this will be unpacked further regarding the trustworthiness of my study in accounting for reflexivity, answerability, and authenticity, I propose this brief overview: following initial video discussions with participants regarding their migration experience, we drew on specific speech episodes for co-iterative analysis to understand both the positions and the deposition thereof, permitting co-interpretation of the speech episodes (Appendix C, Researcher Routine).

**Member Checking.** Having completed data mapping, the full data map and any associated research memos were shared back to participants to confirm accuracy of experience representation. During this phase, we iteratively discussed subsequent thoughts, new questions, or conscious-raising topics that arose from having migratory experiences compiled. All members responded within three follow up requests, and confirmed the accuracy of representation. All participants communicated willingness for me to proceed with analyzing their experience to assemble the findings for the current study.

Subsequent member checking also occurred after the findings were written to allow participants to review the ways their experience would be represented. This attempted to accomplish Patel Stevens (2004, p. 191) "judicious use of modalities." The challenge, of course, lay with the navigation of confidentiality. While I replaced identifiers with pseudonyms, participants were aware of the size of the study context and focus on the specific site. In the interest of answerability, authenticity, and ethical study, I received verbal confirmation from each participant, prior to data collection, to ensure they understood the size of the study and challenges to confidentiality. All participants understood, consented, and agreed to proceeding with the interview process and compilation of their experiences.

**Coding.** After receiving confirmation of accuracy in representation, I open coded the mapped positions to ascertain themes (i.e. thematic codes) in the migratory context (Ash, 2003; Davies, 2000; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). With individual speech episodes as the unit of analysis, I coded individual positions navigated by concept conveyed. This process yielded 24 concepts encompassed in four themes for SBAE migrators, and 18 concepts in four themes for community influencers. Throughout the coding process, I generated codebooks for the SBAE

migrators and community influencers to identify code, definition, aligning positions, opposing positions, and examples (Appendix E, Codebooks) (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

**Memoing.** Beginning at pilot interviews, I engaged in consistent reflective memoing to acknowledge and account for both my bias and my process (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). I used memos to account for my experience in the interviewing process, catalog my own raised consciousness regarding the migratory context, and capture key ideas and revelations that followed, especially through the data collection process. I shared memos back to respective participants prior to follow up interviews, and in conjunction with sharing data transcripts during member checking. This sharing mirrored Patel Stevens (2004) model of reflexivity and authenticity, and fostered further connection with my participants through reciprocally shared experience.

### Credibility & Trustworthiness

The individual elements of the methods outlined above compile toward the credibility and trustworthiness of my study. Multiple points of the study accounted for answerability, authenticity, and reflexivity, as outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Operationalizing Positioning Theory
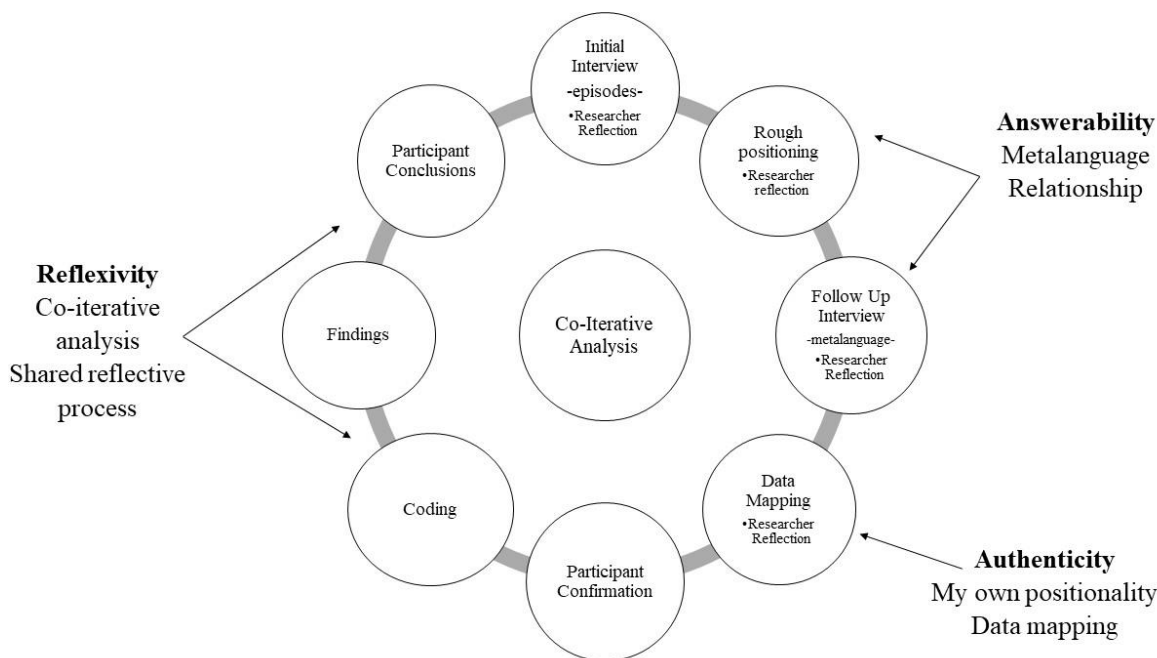


*Note.* Figure 3 operationalizes Positioning Theory (Davies, 2000) with the methods of this study

(Patel Stevens, 2004) in terms of reflexivity, answerability, and authenticity. Notably, multiple

phases of the co-iterative analysis account for reflexivity, not fully represented here.

  **Reflexivity.** Patel Stevens (2004) argued for an approach based in dialogue in which

speakers engage in reciprocal ways. This aligns with Davies (2000) description of positioning as

a process of unfolding. An approach based in dialogue accounted for the ways my role as a

researcher was more "complex, tentative, rewarding, revealing, and fraught with confrontation"

(Patel Stevens, 2004, p. 188) given the relational proximity to the study site. Sharing transcribed

interviews, initial analyses, and reflective journals was an iterative process of analysis and data

collection with the engaged speakers rather than a means of triangulation (Patel Stevens, 2004;

Rogers & Mosley, 2008). Rather than member checking for credibility, this engagement, based

in dialogue, lent to the unfolding of the analysis itself (Patel Stevens, 2004). I was interested in a

method that "helped me be explicit about my subjective interpretations" in analyzing positioning in the teacher migration context (Patel Stevens, 2004, p. 190). This reflective element aided in the movement between reflection and realism while "making subjective analyses more explicit and traceable to others" (Patel Stevens, 2004, p. 190, citing Luttrell, 2000).

**Answerability.** Patel Stevens (2004) drew on the work of Bakhtin to call attention to the ways speakers answer invitations to engage. In referencing every utterance as answerable, this aligns with Davies (2000) description of speech episodes. Recognizing the positioning occurring through each episode, whether self or other positioning (Davies, 2000) identifies the *answer* to the positioning as *uptake*, *reification*, or *rejection* of the assigned position (Davies, 2000). Answerability, for this study, was a very near matter, given the familiarity with and proximity to the research site. Patel Stevens (2004, p. 191) provided a framework for answerability as "judicious use of modalities" that softened my stance regarding issues of teacher migration, and allowed other speakers to share and examine theirs. Answerability, in this case, made space to provide varied interpretations of the context in which the positionalities I studied ensued through the shared and gradual development of a *metalanguage* as speakers reflected on their experience (Patel Stevens, 2004).

The context of my participants, former district, and community informed my interest in migrators. Having moved into and migrated out of my site, and having reflected on migration with several of my participants, we were well equipped to engage in the work of discursively navigating autobiographies of migration as a relational process to inform influencers in school communities (e.g. alumni, administration, colleagues, and students). I was a former colleague, friend, local/occupational leaver, current colleague, researcher, and ally. Having accounted for my former positionality, I also recognized my absence from NPC for two years positioned me as

an outsider, challenger, enemy, and competitor. In addition, engaging in a setting where a high

level of trust already existed allowed for respectful encounters around opposing viewpoints

(Patel Stevens, 2004). While this relationship had to be rekindled for this specific research site,

the groundwork was already in place for me to be an *answerable* researcher to both this site and

the profession more broadly. This was enacted in multiple ways: My connections to this research

site were formed over a five year teaching career and maintained loosely from a distance during

the pursuit of my doctoral education. This compelled a return to this site with transparency in

intent and authenticity regarding my own perceptions.

**Authenticity.** My own positionality at NPC took a variety of forms. I started at NPC

High School as my first teaching position after my undergraduate program. I had a relatively

positive view of NPC and the surrounding area. When I started teaching, Stephanie (the former

teacher) had been on maternity leave twice in the last three years, leaving inconsistencies in the

program no one faulted her for, but the students and alumni were eager to alleviate. The

community was hungry for someone who was ready to say yes and run forward, chasing a vision

of an ideal program. I received free reign and reported to almost no one. I got most of what I

asked for and took plenty I did not. I had all the support I could handle. I took up positions in my

SBAE teacher role of newbie, savior/hero, "yes-man," in-charge, one with vision, and someone

supported, admired, and successful.

These, however, are only the positions I took up. I rejected being positioned as a

struggling new teacher by my colleagues or as the shy new teacher by the community. I reified

positions of being a stubborn agriculture teacher and FFA advisor who took students away from

other activities. For authenticity's sake, I recognize the ways (albeit in limited fashion, being

unable to speak for the fullness of their perception and experience) my positionality affected

those I interacted with. My positionality also affected the ways someone else was able to step in as a SBAE teacher in that setting. I acknowledged the ways these positions may have made my re-entry to the community a challenge. Initial reunion aside, the form of my continued relationship with my participants made a distinct shift from colleague, to separated colleague, to researcher. This was poignantly evident in a broken barrier of respect. When I left the community to pursue graduate school most maintained a respectful distance by avoiding communication regarding challenges with my successor. This respect barrier was broken in conducting this research and is still in a process of resolve.

Patel Stevens (2004) drew attention to authenticity as a joint function of reflexivity and answerability. She specifically focused on the challenge of using speakers' discourse as a "refracted image of his/her beliefs and practices" (Patel Stevens, 2004). This brought beliefs to bear in ways that openly acknowledged the value assigned to positions. This value assignment was based on difference of experience and perception. I worked to exercise caution to not falsely overlay acceptance of truth on given episodes through co-iterative analysis (Patel Stevens, 2004) and data mapping (Ash, 2003).

**Limitations**

This study was limited in its scope of inference relative to the study design. Results of analyses, conclusions, and implications of this study applied to this specific site as co-constructed by the participants and researcher. The aim of this study was not for broad generalizability. While recognizing threats to validity from bias on the part of the researcher, the access this site lent to the multiple influencers in SBAE teacher migration offset these challenges. Access to participants who already had a relationship with the researcher created a setting with high levels of trust to examine supports and challenges associated with teacher

migration. This study contextualized migration relative to relationships in ways that could not be achieved at other study sites.

This study is also limited in my bias toward this site. As a former member of a community, I attached a particular fondness for this school that was accounted for through reflective journals and the sharing of all data collected, transcribed, and reflected with participants. This reflective sharing was woven through data collection and analysis in an iterative process (Patel Stevens, 2004) through capturing *metacomments* (Ash, 2003). Given the limited nature of current research relative to this lens on migration, this site and approach allowed an accounting of various influencers working with SBAE teachers. The ability to collect data with implications for SBAE teachers, administrators, alumni, and state supervisors, outweighed the threats to validity of the site biases.

**Delimitations**

The second chapter of this dissertation outlined the heavy research stacked against migrators based on a variety of forces. This study breaks from previous organizational approaches viewing teacher mobility as a problem. Instead, I engaged with the relational nature of teacher migration to recognize supports and challenges with the goal of viewing migration as retentive. This study did not undertake identifying new discourses or providing further construction around the systems affecting migration. Furthermore, this was not a study in teacher effectiveness, and as such, no classroom observations were employed as a component of data collection.

The approach employed allowed the investigation of the support and challenge perceived to allow greater understanding of teacher retention through showing value for migrating teachers' experience. This study is the first in SBAE to undertake an examination of migration

that holistically accounts for the influencers involved: agriculture teacher, state staff, colleagues, administrators, alumni, and other school personnel.

# CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to understand the relational nature of SBAE teacher migration by exploring the ways positions are taken up, reified, and rejected in a migratory context. The goal of this study was to recognize support and challenge as they affect teacher retention at the professional level. To achieve this, I asked four research questions to guide my analysis, grounded in positioning theory. These included:

1. How do SBAE migrators position themselves and others in their co-constructed context?

2. How do community influencers position themselves and others in their co-constructed context?

3. How are assigned positionalities deposed (taken up, rejected, or reified) by SBAE migrators and community members?

4. How does the uptake, rejection, or reification of positionalities influence the support and/or challenge perceived by SBAE migrators and their communities?

By way of reminder, positionings transpired as SBAE migrators recounted their experience through autobiographical reflection (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). Positions discussed throughout the findings reflect the ways SBAE migrators accounted for their experience in describing it back to a researcher. As such, I draw specific attention to the ways migrators were positioning themselves to me as the researcher. Davies (2000) reminds all tellings are fictions; however, every effort was made to ensure an accurate recounting of experience as these migrators recall their positionality. In addition, speech episodes likely provide evidence of negotiating multiple positions at once (Davies, 2000). As such, similar speech episodes may appear under multiple positions.

**Question 1: How do SBAE migrators position themselves and others in their co-constructed context?**

Four themes emerged to describe the ways SBAE migrators position themselves in their co-constructed discursive context. Positioning is inherently reciprocal (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). In positioning oneself, individuals also position others, therefore, I discuss SBAE migrator positioning both as positioning self and as positioning others in their co-constructed context. The four emergent themes, and their definitions, include:

1. *This is Where I'm Meant to Be*: This theme embodies positions that recount a sense of belonging. Beyond identifying from a particular geographical area, participants express ideas of belonging to a particular institutional position, through either initial desperation or particular demand. Belonging encapsulates positions of being connected and supported. This construct breaks down when participants are less committed to their situation, lack tangible connections through their interactions, or feel unsupported in their work.

2. *Additional Duties as Assigned*: This theme captures the ways these SBAE migrators position themselves as agricultural educators and FFA advisors, especially in light of the workload and challenge of the job itself. Participants outline the challenges of their positions in particular institutional roles, expressed as participants position themselves as less competent, but surviving and persevering through the role despite significant challenges.

3. *I'm the Real Deal*: This theme embodies a sense of being well-equipped to do the job. Beyond being able to perform well in an institutional role, participants express being able to elevate a program beyond what it was when they arrived. Participants identify

persevering despite limited resources and overcoming other challenges to become a

competent practitioner.

4. *Everyone is Special*: This theme unpacks positions of purpose derived from being

different from one's peers. Participants discuss enacting their own agenda and plans for

what a program should be, particularly as it positions them as more capable than their

peers. This positionality serves participants well when their agenda aligns with those with

whom they interact, but breaks down when limits are imposed on a person's autonomy,

challenging their ability to position themselves as independent in their work.

In this section, I unpack each of these themes in relation to the positions recounted, similarities

and differences in experience among the agriculture teachers in this study, and evidence of the

positions occupied in each theme. In addition, the teachers are discussed in the order of their

teaching tenure at NPC. This presentation operationalizes the theoretical framework in exploring

the data to recognize the positionalities of a predecessor affect the positions available to a

successor.

### *Theme 1: This Is Where I'm Meant to Be*

Participants negotiate multiple interactions to position themselves as someone with

*belonging*. Positions relating to this theme include *geographically bound*, *committed*, *connected*,

*supported*, *desperate*, and *in-demand*. These interactions and negotiations occur first through

identifying with a geographic location. However, interactions expressing commitment and

connectedness, reciprocated support, and being essential to the strength of agriculture, extend

SBAE teacher positions within the school program and community.

**Desperate.** Both SBAE teachers in this study came to their high school teaching jobs as a

function of demand. While few 2020 readers will be surprised to hear agriculture teachers are in

demand, this idea has not reconciled feelings of desperation around job seeking. These ideas

conflict as desires emerge relative to *having* a job teaching in a high school agriculture classroom

and assessing that particular job against a checklist of desires encapsulating an *ideal* program.

Aaron captures the conflict this way:

> …when you first graduate, you're like, "Okay, how am I going to go get a job in this profession?" Now you're, of course, nervous. Are you ready? Do you feel confident? All that kind of stuff. I was confident I was going to get a job. I just didn't know where, and I had a long range of geographic area. So I knew I would get a job, but I knew there were several steps. There's lots out there. It was kind of surprising to me how it all fell into place and how in demand I was, in that I was 22 at the time. Being in that much demand and that tough decision was kind of an interesting feeling. Now looking back on it, I probably could have used that more as leverage to get the exact position that I wanted. But again, when you first come out of school you just want a job, right?

The availability of program openings is certainly a bonus for a new teacher with minimal ties to

a particular geographic area. However, available jobs are often present in remote areas or in

more difficult teaching situations, as the state supervisor, Mark, recounted:

> One of the things I see, especially with first year teachers, is everybody wants to go home. I always advise them you can go somewhere, you can go anywhere, you can always go home, but you can't always start. Sometimes it's good to go somewhere else, cut your teeth, learn the profession, and then that opportunity will come to go home. I don't know how long that'll be. It could be one year, it could be 15 years before you get there. I think that's the context I look at it in…but there's also part of it that says if I go to a really small community and I have to travel half an hour to go get groceries, or if my kids have to travel to be able to get the fine arts experiences or athletic experiences they want, those come into play.

Aaron further discussed the challenges of his first teaching job:

> I think when you first come out of college you're looking for that first job, so you'll kind of take anything. [My first job] ended up being kind of a challenging job. It was right off the [Indian] reservation, so we had a large population of Native American students there. Lots of poverty, gangs, drugs, that type of stuff. Lots of almost inner-city type problems, almost trial by fire.

> **Committed.** Despite these SBAE teachers positioning themselves as from the general

geographic area, none of them grew up in Oakville or attended North Plains Consolidated High

School. Regardless of the moves required for participants to get to NPC, each migrator discussed

their position of *commitment* to their geographic position. Stephanie saw this *commitment* as

particularly important to being a stable figure in the community:

> I feel like I walked into a different situation. I feel like when teachers come in the community is like, "You're not the last teacher," and that's a big thing to overcome. I was lucky not to have that because the person before me was a long term sub they let go half way through the year. And the community welcomed me with open arms, and I think they were happy to have someone stable again.

Actions associated with *commitment* included being involved in FFA, going to school board

meetings, learning about CDEs, coaching, helping new teachers, joining community

organizations, and trying new activities.

**Connected.** Commitment from the SBAE teacher seemed to manifest itself further in

*connectedness*. On multiple levels, the teachers in this study discussed the ways they developed

and maintained connections across the various communities they served. These connections were

fostered at summer FFA activities, in local businesses, in participating in community norms,

being a member of a department, teaching content that resonated with students, and being a

communicator beyond the classroom. Stephanie mentioned:

> I think it was the content area. If they were interested in that, it was so much easier to connect with them. A lot of times the kids that were having trouble connecting with other teachers, it was because they weren't interested, or they weren't good at it, or they just didn't like it. Whereas in ag, at least one of those things was probably turned around.

Aaron capitalized on the importance of connecting with fellow teachers, especially as it related

to being a department:

> [The other teacher and I] started a connection right away. The first day I was hired, I signed my papers and he said, "Hey, I'm gonna go pick this up for the ag program, you wanna come along?" So it was jumping in the truck and us talking about where the program has been; positives, negatives, things we want to do, community, that kind of stuff. It was good and then continued throughout the summer and school year. I really enjoyed that collaboration piece…That was something I was looking for and I found at Oakville.

Aaron expressed the ways community influencers contributed to his position of connectedness. Aaron discussed one such interaction with his co-teacher outlining the importance of the connection expectation:

> That teacher had about three years experience, same as me. So when we came in, we weren't brand new to the profession. That was nice. Not that we knew a lot at three years, but at least we knew a little bit. So just trying to figure out what we wanted to do, figuring out the officer team, [discussing] strengths, weaknesses, where I fit in the whole thing, what kind of things he expected from me. Him being the FFA advisor, how I could support him, that kind of stuff.

Migrators also saw themselves positioned as members of the community in which they worked. Aaron relayed this story as he remembered the ways he worked to fit in and connect in his communities:

> When I got my house at my first school, the superintendent called me into his office and said very seriously, "We will not see you under the influence of any alcohol here in town. You will not be seen in any drinking establishments and you will not buy any alcohol. You will not be seen in any of these places. If you want to drink alcohol you're going to drink it in the next town over. Same if you want to buy it…."

> In my second school, let's say I ran the clock for the girls' basketball game. The tradition is everyone goes up to the local bar. The coach says, "Why don't you come up?" And I said, "No, I gotta get home." The second time, same thing, but he says, "Listen, in this town, you gotta come up to the bar or people are gonna think you're stuck up and too good for them. People wanna talk to you. They want to talk basketball, ag, FFA. Parents and community members want you to be there. You don't need to go up and have five, but you need to come up and at least have one." So from then on after every event we went up to the local bar and had a beer and talked to people.

**Supported.** Much of this connection translated into perceived *support*. This was the area teachers first and most discussed their positioning with others. In positioning themselves as *supported*, teachers recognized the weight of the job and the various human resources in place to carry out the job well. These included administrators, the previous teacher, community members, and mentors. Across the board, areas challenging positions of *support* were largely logistical: scheduling, student election into classes, funding and resources, opportunities for professional

development, and follow-through were specific challenges to teachers positioning themselves as *supported*.

Aaron discussed community support at NPC as, "everyone was nice as far as the community and at the school. Very nice, very welcoming. They wanted to know about you and your family. They were making connections from where I grew up and stuff." However, care for the individual was not the only expression of support. Stephanie specifically discussed some of the human resources she had available in her content area:

> One unique thing I had was the assistant principal was one of the former instructors, so I had him to help with onboarding. He was especially helpful with some of the discipline things I had because he already had relationship and rapport. Him being able to tell me, "This is who we use for welding materials," and "This is what we've done with that," was so helpful. At the time, PLCs weren't really a thing yet, but Mr. Meyer was a major veteran, so he was very helpful in that process.

Finally, these agriculture teachers identified several members of their communities who positioned themselves as helpers, putting the agriculture teacher in a position to ask for and use available human resources. These teachers positioned their administration, co-teachers, nearby agriculture teachers, fellow teachers in the building, mentors, and even predecessors as incredibly helpful. This help eased the transition process of making a move to a school and facilitated long-term success as a teacher. While Stephanie talked specifically about having a principal who was supportive of staff, Aaron relayed:

> [At my second school], I had a lot more resources. The former teacher was still a member of the community and was there throughout the year. All I needed to do was call him and he would give me help and resources. I was sitting there on August 5th, going through materials and the principal and superintendent stop down and said, "Let's go golfing." So they grabbed me, we went to the local golf course, and I pretended I knew what I was doing trying to hit the golf ball around. People would stop in the ag department; different community members to introduce themselves… [examples]. It was a very positive and nice community.

However, participants discussed two sides to *support*. On one side, personal support in alignment with a teacher's desired direction is helpful. On the other, support can come across as lacking altogether or as smothering. While Stephanie found support with her assistant principal, she discussed the ways support was limited by the logistics of the school system:

> I was hired with this promise of, "Do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be." That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half the time I was teaching junior high, which was not my fave, and the other part of the time was the high school stuff. I did a variety of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff but was tied down schedule-wise by the junior high electives.

Stephanie further expressed frustrations with support when it came to developing a total program:

> [They told me,] "Well, you can't do work based learning because you have to have a study hall." [And I said,] "I don't want to do a study hall." The school didn't see the value or try to find a way to make that work. They just said, "Well that won't work because you have to do a study hall." I never quite figured it out because Aaron knows what [work placement] is. He knows I wouldn't just be sitting here twiddling my thumbs for an hour every day. But sometimes, I feel the people doing the schedules just don't want to figure out how to make it work. Instead, they just say, "Oh, we can't do that, it'll never work with the schedule."

**Summary: I'm Where I'm Meant to Be.** Altogether, the SBAE teachers in this study established themselves in a variety of positions through their interactions. These included determining their *belonging* in the immediate community of the school and the broader community in which they taught. Across the theme *I'm Where I'm Meant to Be* teachers positioned themselves and those around them as *committed*, *geographically bound*, *connected*, and *supported/supportive*. These intertwined as teachers discussed the ways support from various community influencers fostered greater connectedness in successful teaching in their community.

Conversely, when teachers do not feel supported by their community, they suggest a diminished desire to connect within a given community and commit to community for the long-

term. Teachers consistently mentioned the ways various community influencers took it upon themselves to aid in fostering or reducing a position of *belonging* in the teachers with whom they worked. This initiative on the part of the community influencers seemed to be expected, appreciated, and largely reciprocated.

### *Theme 2: Other Duties as Assigned*

There is ample literature to discuss what it means to be a teacher, even a good SBAE teacher (Bolton, Edgar, & Carter, 2018; Clemons & Lindner, 2019; Grissom, 2011; Keesler & Schneider, 2010; Ross et al., 1999; West & Chingos, 2009). The same holds true for the role of FFA advisor (Smalley & Rank, 2019). However, even with a mounting base of literature, the execution of the institutional roles of agriculture teacher and FFA advisor varies. Depending on the individual, the community, and the available resources, the role of *agricultural educator* and *FFA advisor* look vastly different, even in geographically similar areas. The second theme deals with these differences. First, this theme gives a sense of what it means to be in the institutional role of *advisor* and *teacher* at NPC. Second, this theme encapsulates the positions individuals took up toward that role: *survivor*, *imposter*, and *someone up for a challenge*.

**SBAE Teacher.** As teachers, the participants discussed the ways they wanted to be teachers first, their concern for students, and the work required to be good at their job. Particularly notable to establishing the migratory context for these teachers is the intensity of the workload of an agriculture teacher, coupled with the addition of the work involved with learning a new system of operation. Stephanie put it this way:

> In teaching, you can't just show up like, "The baby didn't sleep and I'm extra tired. I'll just work at something that's mind numbing and not a priority." With teaching there was no, "Oh, I'll just take it easy today." January and February was ag Tech [conference], and then leadership conference, and then state degrees. State degrees were two nights of driving to another school. I was just like, "There's gotta be something. I have to find something else that gives me more time."

Aaron took a longer view, considering the ways you *become* good at teaching:

> Eventually you'll be good, you'll make those connections, and you'll know who to call when you have a question. You can reach out to community members, you can build a program, and you can have those great interactions with kids, because really that's what it's all about.

For Aaron, a heavy emphasis fell on making connections and building relationships, with both students and the community, as the relational work of teaching. To Aaron *connectedness* and *good teaching* intertwined heavily, making *connectedness* a part of the job that goes beyond nice-to-have to integral to success.

**FFA Advisor.** Across the board, the teachers discussed how they were teachers first, but all the other pieces of the job made it difficult to do the part of the job most important to them. While being an FFA advisor fostered connections with students, it also took the teacher out of the classroom for several days a year. It felt elusive to maintain relationships with students and have a strong FFA program. In addition, beyond navigating the role of advisor, Aaron found himself navigating the role of *not the advisor.*

> [The other teacher] wanted to be the FFA advisor and there was only one position with it. That was okay with me. I wanted to be part of the program, and continued to be part of the FFA program, I just wasn't the official advisor. Ironically, that's how I got into coaching, because as an FFA advisor it'd be really hard to also coach as well. When I was NOT the FFA advisor, I then got into football coaching.

For Stephanie, being an FFA advisor was more engrained in her vision of the job. Stephanie said FFA advising was a key interest in her desire to pursue a career as an agriculture teacher:

> I grew up on a dairy farm. I was in 4H and FFA all the way through. I was a State Officer here in NA, in FFA, and all that stuff. Ultimately, FFA is what led me to that career…I think the FFA advising is what really turned me on to being an ag teacher.

A unique difference between these advisors is the institutional role they fill (FFA advisor), and the ways they position themselves. Aaron did not see himself as overworked, while

being overworked comprised a significant portion of Stephanie's recounting of her experience. Additional attention will be devoted to this difference in the conclusions.

**Up for a Challenge.** The ideas associated with learning to be both an *agriculture teacher* and an *FFA advisor* comprises difficult terrain in the first place. Understanding what this looks like in a migratory context necessitates reflection on the ways teachers are unlearning their former practice and reintegrating into a new school; balancing their systems and practices with student, community, co-teacher, and administrator expectations. This is no small challenge, and each of the teachers expressed several ways they were ready for the challenge of working with each new community they encountered.

Each teacher talked about the challenge of re-establishing expectations with students. They needed to be tough enforcers of expectations with rough kids:

> Aaron: Being an ag teacher, you deal with some of the rougher kids because that's who takes your courses. I connected with those kids better than some and I liked having that influence, you know seeing if I could get them to make better choices and be more successful and that kind of stuff.

> Stephanie: The stigma was definitely that it was the hard kids, the kids who couldn't do well in other classes. I didn't have a lot of people electing to be down there and it's fine. Eventually they figured out small engines is relatable or showing them there are other ways to get involved. Really, I think a big part of that, as much as I wasn't a fan of junior high, was getting to see those kids, because that became an opportunity for some exposure as well, so it wasn't just what they were hearing from older siblings about what goes on down there.

> Stephanie: …I think the social interactions with the kids and what the kids were going through. I was naïve on every single level about family struggles, family dynamics. Coming from a two parent household with two siblings, all of my friends were like that, and it sounds so weird to say, but I didn't know. I didn't know what these kids were going through. That was really hard to handle. They'd be like, "Has he told you that his mom has cancer?" And I'd be like, "WHAT?" You know, just really big things. On the other hand, it never occurred to me to bring alcohol to an event. Then I had that situation. I was just really dumb. I was like, "Why would people do that? I don't understand." So those were those kind of issues.

Stephanie: I just had to really decide what my couple of hard nose [things were going to be], and then just let the rest. At some point I was like, "Does it matter if the radio is on and blaring while they're working?" Nope. Doesn't affect me. Letting them have those small little wins helped build that trust. It wasn't just like, "No, absolutely not." Realizing too, different learning methods, and learning styles, and everything doesn't have to just be read a book and answer questions on it. They knew [learning] is still something that we do down here. Like, "We're going to be in the room for one week and then we will get out to the shop." But if you sprinkled [the book learning] in they didn't feel like learning, but they were.

**Imposter.** Being an agriculture teacher, FFA advisor, and enforcer of high expectations is a tall enough order, but in addition to a big job, the teachers in this study felt they were not good enough to do the job. These teachers positioned themselves as *imposters* as they reflected on their experience. They saw themselves and others as *not good, underprepared, naïve,* and *unrealistic.* However, despite these feelings of inadequacy, these teachers also discussed others around them as inept as well.

Apart from programmatic decisions, little exists to ensure continuity in the subject matter taught between SBAE programs, even within a state. This high diversity of course offerings make it difficult to take a position where one is comfortable teaching all of the courses, as Stephanie pointed out:

I did a class at the technical college about welding because I didn't feel comfortable teaching that. I got in there and went, "I know how to weld, but I don't know how to teach welding." So that was another thing, trying to figure out how to do these things. The kids don't care about what or why or how, they just want to go out there and make stuff hot…and it didn't matter because one teacher would be like, "This is how I do it all," and the next person would say something different. It was information overload because there were lots of resources and lots of people that would help you but it was hard to make it fit with what I needed.

Aaron mentioned the effect this newness and feeling of being an imposter had on his students:

I remember this girl was a top FFA kid. She was our secretary…a high flier, a great student. Her SAE wasn't that great, but she was involved in everything. She ended up not getting her state degree and she was very mad at me. I think if I were a more veteran teacher I could've fought the other teachers more for her because of what she put in. I just didn't know what I didn't know. So other kids got the degree who weren't as strong in

their FFA and leadership piece but they had a stronger SAE, so therefore they got a state degree and she didn't. That was one of those things that she was really mad at me… Did I fight as hard as I probably should've? That's one thing I look back and I should've fought harder for her.

These teachers quickly positioned themselves as imposters, but also recognized the ways those around them were not well equipped to provide support. Teachers mentioned the challenge of teaching content no one else in the school taught, administration not holding students accountable, the former teacher not having high enough expectations, and adjusting to working with co-teachers. As Aaron said:

It's a different experience working with someone in the same department, because you're used to being completely autonomous. The administrators don't know what the heck you're doing. Frankly, if you're not sending someone out of class, they don't really care. So if I wanted to try something or do something different, I could when I was in my own department. When I had someone to collaborate with, I had to run it past them, which I enjoyed, but I could see could be an issue for some.

In identifying the ways a principal failed to provide support, Stephanie added:

The first two years we had a pretty supportive principal. The kids didn't really like him. The kids knew he was a pushover. So it was hard to get that kind of support because I would be like, "Oh this is a problem, go to the office," and [the student would] be like, "Well, I'll just offer to fix his lawnmower for free and I'll get off."

Stephanie also had this to say about the challenges of following a teacher who did not enforce high expectations:

The person who had been there before me had really done a number on the ninth graders. He had ninth graders and Focus. There was just so much retraining for behaviors and expectations that it was really starting from the ground up. They had stolen tools from the shop; I walked into nothing and had to start over. It was the same with building relationships and bringing in new kids that didn't just say, "We didn't want to be involved with that."

Finally, for Stephanie, the workload brought ideas of comparison to a head. The level of community interaction with other agriculture teachers makes *survival* both a necessity and an expectation:

It's another thing with social media. Even without social media, ag teachers are still connected because we're always interacting. So it's really hard to not compare yourself to someone that's been in their same position for 20 years, and does all of the contests, and all of the science fair, and all of the things. It's really hard to see yourself at ground zero and think, "Well, why? Why can't we do that?" Or, "How are they doing that?"

**Survivor.** In addition to working a challenging job, even when ready for challenge, the perception of imposter positioning takes its toll. The final idea under this theme focuses attention on the ways the job, challenge, and feelings of inadequacy culminate in being overworked and stressed; in essence, *surviving* the job of agriculture teacher. For Aaron, surviving was an essential part of the practice; not an overwhelming idea, and an almost enjoyable prospect.

[I know] I've got to build these skills if I want to continue in this profession. It's that type of thing. I need to build that resource library. I was always trying to build that. So if I would see a book on horticulture, I'd grab it. Sometimes they'd send free samples; I'd grab if they were free. If they were offering some materials from Briggs or Lincoln welding, I would try to just grab as much stuff as I could. If there was a video out there, if there was a power point out there, it was, "Hey, could you send that to me?" I was always trying to build that stuff so that I'd have a bunch of resources that I could pull from to create what I wanted to do.

Stephanie explained the workload as something that prohibited creativity in her work:

Workload wise, I wasn't capable of changing. I couldn't reinvent the wheel because my daily workload was so high. I was just trying to keep up. I wasn't going to think about making new stuff. It was, "Sure you can run the class but you've got to pay for it." So we'll go find some grants. Like, "We're not going to buy your textbooks if that's what you're asking."

Despite it not being a bad experience, Stephanie talked about the ways the workload also took a toll on the students she was trying to teach:

You want the kids to be successful too and trying to help them do that while also maintaining your sanity [is tough]. Classroom wise, there are just so many different ways to do it. So if I sent out an email like, "Hey, struggling with small engines, you have any suggestions?" I would get ten responses, but it would be ten completely different things. And so then you'd be like, "Well, which one is what I want to do?"

I was trying to pick from each one, which then made more work. So I think that was kind of the challenge, was just wanting to do more and trying to fit it all into the time. Even

with grading, keeping up with that sort of stuff and making it seem like it had value and wasn't just like, "Oh, here's a worksheet."

**Summary: Other Duties as Assigned.** As these teachers deliberated their *Other Duties as Assigned*, they wrestled with the ways they positioned themselves and were positioned in their institutional roles. The differences in their occupation of roles seemed to pose greater challenge or support from their communities. Largely, support and challenge depend on the uptake of expectations by the SBAE teacher compared with the reified expectations of the community. Teachers perceived the positions they occupied as rejected by community members when they did not perceive support, were compared to others, or felt others were clueless about the work the agriculture teacher was actually doing.

### Theme 3: I'm the Real Deal

While participants devoted significant time to recounting the challenges of the job and feelings of inadequacy around coming out of teaching alive, teachers also positioned themselves as the right person, in the right place, at the right time. These teachers are scrappy; Give them a whiteboard and a marker and they will rule the world. They position themselves as being *considerate, builder, resourceful*, and *experienced*.

**Considerate.** The first group of positions clusters around setting oneself up as considerate of others. Teachers talked about this relative to their students and their peers. Aaron highlighted the ways being considerate of peers was a large factor in being successful during a programmatic move:

> As I'm leaving the position, I'm in contact with [the next teacher]. I left copies of anything I created during that short time. Right before I left we sat down and went through what I had done, what he had done, where I had taken the chapter, and where SAEs were and that kind of thing, so it was a good transition.

Consideration, for Aaron, was synonymous with being concerned for students, making sure there

was room for someone else to step in and be successful, and taking the time to ensure continuity.

Stephanie, instead, discussed the importance of knowing your students as being a considerate

teacher:

> …The other thing is trying to be more compassionate and understanding. Instead of, "Why don't they have this done," or "Why are they sleeping?" trying to understand more about where they're coming from. A lot of times they weren't saying anything so you wouldn't know. When it's just in your one random class, you don't know.

Stephanie discussed being sympathetic toward students as a site specific endeavor toward

connecting with her students:

> I just had to really decide what my couple of hard nose [things were going to be], and then just let the rest. At some point I was like, "Does it matter if the radio is on and blaring while they're working?" Nope. Doesn't affect me. Letting them have those small little wins helped build that trust. It wasn't just like, "No, absolutely not." Realizing too, different learning methods, and learning styles, and everything doesn't have to just be read a book and answer questions on it. They knew [learning] is still something that we do down here. Like, "We're going to be in the room for one week and then we will get out to the shop." But if you sprinkled [the book learning] in they didn't feel like learning, but they were.

> **Builder.** Apart from being considerate, each teacher saw himself or herself as someone

well positioned *to build* and develop a program, across the migratory context, not just at NPC.

Aaron reassessed his priorities between how he carried out his agriculture teacher role and how

he viewed that implementation as an administrator:

> [My former program] was heavy on the FFA/SAE. I was trying to build a program that had all three of those phases. Good strong FFA, good strong SAE, and to be honest with you, sometimes that classroom piece is the third part of that wheel. I look back on that experience as an ag teacher, but now as an administrator, I flip that around.

Aaron also discussed the ways he tried to build his program with students:

> I would, with CDEs and SAEs at that time, bring stuff forward, engage interest, and then if we had interest I would do my best to try to facilitate. State FFA Convention, National FFA Convention, that type of stuff. Getting kids on board, getting kids excited to go. We did a Conduct of Meetings team. That was the first time, too, they did that. I just kept

introducing them to those types of things. You know, "Hey, do you guys want to do this?" "Yeah, we want to do this." "Okay, let's see what you know." And again, the first time you go to Conduct of Meetings with your officer team, you're going to stink, and it'll be so bad. But you learn and hopefully, eventually, they could win.

Stephanie, meanwhile, expressed feeling a lot more opportunity to *build* in the interview than she felt granted during her tenure:

I was kind of hired with this promise of do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be. That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half the time I was teaching junior high, which was not my fave, and the other part of the time was the high school stuff. I did a variety of a lot of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff but was tied down schedule wise by the junior high electives and that wasn't something I was really into. They wouldn't let me do work-based learning. So that was another thing I didn't get to do that I had seen very successfully at other schools.

**Resourceful.** Especially important to this theme, is recognizing the ways these teachers see themselves doing a lot with not very much. A weighty position teachers worked to convey was being *resourceful*; that is, being able to perform their job well given limited resources. These teachers are *hard workers*, who put things in order for their department by securing resources their predecessor did not have. Aaron discussed his community as a resource:

Here, it's just about reaching out. When you're working with somebody who's already been here, you've got that built in. How do I do this or where do I go to get these? There's a little project where you can build an electric motor out of a piece of winding and I'm like, "Well, how do I get windings?" It's like, "Oh, you go up to the [family electrician in town] and ask them for some extra windings. They'll give you a bunch." To get metal I would go over to [local manufacturing company]; it's already built in. You talk to the people that live here, to know who to talk to about this or that. Make those connections. [NPC] was easier here just because of that.

Beyond supplying resources and providing support for classes, Aaron talked about starting early as one of the key ways he established connections and positioned himself as a *hard worker* in his community, particularly with his co-teacher:

I started early again…I did have a small extended contract…but having [another ag teacher] there was huge. We started a connection right away. The first day I was hired or whatever, I signed my papers and he was like, "Hey, I'm gonna go pick this up for the ag

program, you wanna come along?" So jumping in the truck and us talking about where the program has been, positives, negatives, things we want to do, community, that kind of stuff was good, and then continued throughout the summer and school year. I really enjoyed that collaboration piece. I think that's missing in a lot of programs. You feel like you're on an island. That was something I was looking for and found at Oakville.

Conversely, Stephanie discussed how it was incredibly important to be resourceful with students, showing buy-in to win kids over:

I tried to find ways to get kids to like me, but also find ways to relate with them. If I had one who was kind of a turd but he could be okay, I'd be like, "You should be my TA. I just need you to come down and cut up this metal for me and you get a credit for it. You wouldn't have to sit in a study hall, which you hate anyways, and your study hall teacher probably doesn't enjoy you sitting in there causing a ruckus." So that was kind of a way I would try to be resourceful. I would try to get people on my side.

Positioning oneself as resourceful also implies one may be *under resourced* in the first place. In other words, there is a specific need to seek out resources. Stephanie talks about something as simple as not having enough chairs:

The hard part was definitely teaching five different classes every trimester. Then, on the day you're supposed to be switching trimesters, they'd have us it in meetings all day. I'd have five new classes to turn over before Monday morning.

With Junior High I had the kids I saw every day, and one day that I saw band kids and one day I saw choir kids. There were 16 kids in the band class and 36 in the choir class. That was hard because that was basically two separate preps. I had to ask for more chairs. I don't have enough chairs for these kids and I don't know what you want me to do. So that was hard.

**Experienced.** Finally, *level of experience* came up as a way teachers reified their expectations of being the right fit for the job. They gave themselves grace reflecting on their time as young teachers but were harder on themselves in areas they perceived an expectation of greater expertise. Stephanie mentioned the difference in age changed the way her experience was perceived:

I felt like it was a little easier for me because I was a little bit older. I always wondered how fresh, new 21-22-year-old teachers can walk in when you're only 3-4 years older than the older kids.

Beyond age and look, taking up the position of *experience* meant reifying positions of confidence, competence, and maturity. Aaron even went so far as to associate being experienced with being a good teacher: "Getting that maturing over time, you get older and wiser and over time it gets easier. Knowing that eventually it will be easy, you just got to stay with it." It was interesting, as a finding, to recognize Aaron did not work to position himself as *experienced*. He recognized the ways he was young as an agriculture teacher, but did not specifically talk in ways that identified his negotiating a position of experience in that role.

**Summary: I'm the Real Deal.** Across the theme of being *The Real Deal*, teachers worked to position themselves with the dispositions to do the job well: *considerate, having a desire to build, resourcefulness*, and *experienced*. Within the differences of these teachers' experiences, there is nuance in positions taken up by these teachers or perceived as imposed by others. The take away, here, is the migratory context for SBAE teachers is varied, with many evidences present of the constant negotiation of establishing the position of the best person to do the job at that time.

### Theme 4: Everyone is Special

To conclude the discussion of research question one, I reorient the reader in the current findings. These agricultural educators define their migratory context as one that establishes positions of belonging, uptake of institutional roles in specific ways, and presents the teacher as the ideal person for the job at hand. The final theme around these SBAE migrators' context converges on these teachers as special. Specific to these two teachers, they work to position themselves as *unique, visionary, refreshed, autonomous,* and *lucky*.

**Unique.** As unique educators, these teachers see the job as very different compared to what their colleagues are tasked with. This poses an interesting challenge in expectation, both in

the flexibility an agriculture teacher may feel they should expect and the intense level at which

they perform their job. Aaron shed some light on the nuance of being in a different position than

his peers:

> I think I had a different attitude about my expectations with kids; what I wanted to get out of them. I always had the mindset, "This is an elective area. I'm trying to make this fun. I'm trying to make this interesting and worthwhile." I think that's a different mindset than let's say a math, or English, or Social, or Science teacher. You gotta take 12th grade English. So I think [the ag] position lends itself to that, which comes with different challenges too. Because you got to sell it or you're out of a job, so you gotta do that and it can't be fluff. It can't be just a fun and screw around type of thing.
>
> I felt like I was a strict teacher, but we did lots of cool things in there. That give and take that the kids would interact. I liked to talk to my students. I liked to banter back and forth; get to know them, them get to know me, be vulnerable…You know, if I screwed up, I screwed up. If I wasn't as prepared today it's like, "Oh man," I'd tell them, "Hey, I didn't have it together today," to be honest with them. Maybe that's the me part, but then it's the subject matter too, because the welding, the woods, the small animals, they like to take those.

In addition, he discussed key pieces of the benefits of being an agriculture teacher compared to

other areas in the school, particularly as it relates to establishing relationships with students:

> They take [agriculture classes] cause they want to learn something about that. I think that's a cool position to be in as a teacher. You've already got an intrinsic interest in your area. You just have to take that and move them forward. I always used to talk to Welding like, "Hey guys, we get to make sparks down here. We get to play with hot metal. We get to be loud and crazy down here. But with that comes being safe. We're going to wear safety glasses and we're gonna follow the safety procedures." So you kind of have give and take. You are in a unique position when you are in those types of classes.

> Along with being in a *unique* position relative to their peers, these teachers also discussed

feeling more capable than their predecessor or others they work with. Stephanie discussed it

particularly in relation to her predecessor:

> I feel like I walked into a different situation. I feel like a lot of times when teachers come in the community is like, "You're not the last teacher," and that's a big thing to overcome. I was lucky not to have that because the person before me was a long-term sub they let go halfway through the year. The community welcomed me with open arms. I think they were happy to have someone to have the place be stable again.

Interestingly, Aaron and Stephanie specifically discussed their position as *unique* compared to their peers. Stephanie even went so far as to talk about her migratory context as *lucky.* Aaron described it for a peer as a feeling of being refreshed or having a revelation*,* embracing the difference in the jobs they stepped into were part of fortuitous circumstance.

**Visionary.** Key to feeling different and unique, though, was taking on a position of being *visionary* in their program, school, and community. Teachers described themselves as *planners*, *change agents*, and being *future oriented*. Aaron discussed this as something that permeated many aspects of his life and subsequently transferred into his teaching:

> I was one of those kids that always liked to be in the know. I was interested in the whole of something. Even in football, I understood what needed to be done, not just with my position, but with all the positions.

Stephanie talked about vision specific to doing the job well. As already addressed, she was drawn to designing her own program, but expressed being interested in multiple avenues to offer big-picture opportunities to her students:

> I didn't throw anything away at first. Eventually I figured out what I wanted things to look like and I had to just start tossing. There was so much stuff, so much stuff. Another thing I really wanted to do was co-teaching. I wanted to make that connection with other classrooms and thought that would be beneficial. That was a big thing at the time. How do you implement the math standards into your class? Even with FACS. I really wanted to do partner work, but I don't know why it never really worked out; if there wasn't interest on the other end or if it was a scheduling thing. I guess I just kept going and tweaking as I went and found what I liked.

**Autonomous.** If being unique and visionary are key tenets to these teachers establishing themselves as special and different, perhaps even more important is teachers feeling like they have the autonomy to act on the vision and uniqueness they outline for themselves. *Autonomy*, for these teachers, presented as in control of one's situation and circumstance, and having the power to change. Being *limited* was an imposition on *autonomy* as an inability to progress toward a vision based on limits imposed by others or the system in which one operates.

Interestingly, *autonomy* was a significant focus for the women in the study; Aaron did not

mention seeking ownership, apart from discussing the differences of working with a co-teacher

at NPC. For Stephanie, though, being positioned as *autonomous* was an important piece of their

decision-making, both as a career choice and in making programmatic decisions.

For Stephanie, *autonomy* was a major factor in taking the job at NCP: "I was hired with

this promise of 'do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you

want it to be.' That was pretty appealing to me." She also discussed the ways she enforced her

*autonomy* with students in classes as she set expectations. Stephanie said:

> I got the junior high as eighth graders and I got to kind of pick and choose. I had kids that were really into it from the start, so I just set those expectations of, "If you're ineligible, you're not going to the contest." The [fundraiser] was the huge thing. They were really mad [when they couldn't go], but eventually it worked and it sorted itself out. They either got on board or went away. Once the juniors graduated it became a lot easier.

Yet Stephanie also saw significant *limits* on her ability to practice *autonomy* and

*ownership*. Again, this was not a concern for Aaron apart from recognizing the nuance of

working with a co-teacher and the issue it may be for others:

> It's a different experience working with someone in the same department, because you're used to being completely autonomous. The administrators don't know what the heck you're doing. Frankly, if you're not sending someone out of class, they don't really care. If I wanted to try something or do something different, I could when I was in my own department. When I had someone to collaborate with, I had to run it past them, which I enjoyed, but I could see how it could be an issue for some.

Stephanie also felt like she could not do her job well as limits were imposed on her autonomy:

> Obviously, it's very appealing [to hear, "Run with your vision of the program,"] because you want to teach what you like. I wanted to teach animal science. The problem was they would say, "Well, you have to have the numbers." It was like, "You can offer animal science, but that's two hours. If you only have eight kids is that worth it?"

> Then with the Junior High, that was really tough. There were no state standards. It wasn't like, "Here are the standards," because even then everyone is teaching small engines differently. Even with arc welding, you could do arc welding the whole time and how do you make that work?

I like a plan. I felt like, at first, I just did lots of stuff to try to figure out what I liked and the best model that worked for me. I was always so jealous; you teach the same math lesson five times in one day? That sounded horrible to me, but also, wow, that sounds amazing. And it's math! It doesn't change. Where I was doing something like wildlife where I had no idea about that either. So, first I have to teach myself and then I have to try to teach someone else. That was the hard part too. I couldn't just open the book and say, "Today we're doing chapter two and go from there."

Even more frustrating was feeling someone should have been on her side, as Aaron was a former agriculture teacher, now administrator:

I guess that's a spot where I really thought Aaron would back me up, specifically because I knew he knew the value of an [SBAE] program and we could easily identify students that would really benefit from work placement, and who were asking for it. Students who are sitting in my study hall seventh hour saying, "This is dumb," or they would just leave. They would get signed out to go. So I'm like, "Why can't they be getting credit for this?"

I could have done more on my end to get it going, but when they said, "Well, you have to have a study hall or lunch duty or whatever it's going to be," I had to say, "That's not how the program works. You don't just send them out." They were not willing to pay me for that to count as a class if I wasn't going to have a supervision period. I think that was probably the most frustrating one because I knew they knew the benefits. There were several kids we could identify that would have really benefitted from that.

**Summary: Everyone is Special.** Each teacher saw himself or herself as special, positioning as *unique, visionary, refreshed, lucky,* and *autonomous.* This broader positioning as *special* seems particularly likely to be impinged on by others. Simply, the ways a SBAE teacher practices autonomy may face significant logistical and relational challenges. Stephanie discussed these specifically in terms of schedule accommodations and available resources. Logistically, she was not be able to fully exercise her uniqueness in fulfilling ways because of limits on program vision by the schedule, enrollment model, or teacher contract. Relationally, holdover expectations strain relationships with feeling challenged rather than supported; they limit the ways a teacher feels like they can engage, working to reject a position of *limitation* rather than flourish in a position of *autonomy.*

**Summary: Research Question 1.** All told, these teachers positioned themselves and others throughout their migratory context. *This is Where I'm Meant to Be*, *Additional Duties as Assigned*, *I'm the Real Deal*, and *Everyone is Special* culminate to suggest these teachers position themselves as capable, well-disposed, visionaries who belong in their roles in their communities. They position others as available for support, but often as not doing enough to account for the unique roles required of being an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor. These SBAE teachers positioned themselves as expected to be all and then some. If a core area teacher is expected to be "all that," an agriculture teacher is supposed to be an FFA advisor, counselor, friend, recruiter, program advocate, community liaison, and expert visionary. These expectations go well beyond the contract and ask agriculture teachers to do significantly more with the same or less. Resourcefulness is abused as it becomes the *expectation* for agriculture teachers to chase grants, coordinate fundraisers, and provide countless opportunities to students with no additional resources or accommodations to their teaching load. For migrators, these expectations are magnified, especially if they are unclear when the job is accepted. Migrators are bringing the expectations from their former district and community with them. What a district gains in experience also brings the habits and expectations from a former way of practicing.

**Question 2: How do SBAE community influencers position themselves and others within their co-constructed context?**

Four themes emerged to describe the ways SBAE influencers position themselves and others in their co-constructed discursive context. Influencers, for the sake of this study, are those with close connections to the success of a SBAE teacher or program. I draw on tellings from co-teachers in Industrial Technology, an administrator, and the alumni chapter president to answer my second research question. Again, these positionings arose as SBAE influencers recounted

their experience. The positions identified reflect the ways SBAE influencers accounted for their experience in describing it back to a researcher. As such, I draw specific attention to the ways influencers were positioning themselves to me as the researcher. In a similar vein with the SBAE teachers, I discuss SBAE influencer positioning as both positioning self and positioning others in their co-constructed context. The four emergent themes, and their descriptions, include:

1. *We're All Doing the Best We Can:* This theme recognizes the ways influencers see the job of *agriculture teacher* as doing hard work in challenging situations. While influencers recognize SBAE teachers' job as difficult, this is not a conciliatory position; it does not excuse agriculture teachers from rising to the challenge. Influencers identify with the challenge in recognizing challenges of their own, captured in their positioning of themselves as familiar with hard work, long days, and challenging labor. This theme captures recognizing the work, but also sees the challenge as part of the job for which an agriculture teacher must be prepared.

2. *You Gotta Want It:* This theme encapsulates ideas of influencers positioning themselves as able to provide substantial support *if* support is received appropriately from the agriculture teacher. This theme recognizes the ways others, particularly administrators, may be perceived as unsupportive. However, the recounting influencer never describes himself as unsupportive. Influencers seek connection and ways to provide support, but have strong resentment around missed opportunities from those they are trying to help.

3. *Double Standards:* This theme captures the variety of expectations from SBAE influencers relative to the expected job and involvement of the agriculture teacher. Overall, expectations suggest agriculture teachers should be in a continuous state of

development while leaning on the community for program expectations and support. At the same time, teachers should operate autonomously as individuals.

4. *All or Nothing:* This theme recognizes an "all in" approach to reciprocal investment. For these purposes, *reciprocal investment* is an equal or greater display of commitment from those invested in those investing. Influencers position themselves as invested in the success of the SBAE program as a reflection of the community and the community as a reflection of the program. Partial investment from agriculture teachers is unacceptable as influencers feel responsibility for the continued growth of their investment (program, teacher, community, students, etc.).

In this section, I unpack each of these themes in relation to the positions recounted, similarities and differences in the ways community influencers engaged with agriculture teachers in this study, and evidence of the positions occupied within each theme.

### *Theme 1: We're All Doing the Best We Can*

The theme *We're All Doing the Best We Can* captures the challenges associated with the migratory context and the various ways they are dealt with by community influencers. It also focuses on the ways influencers position SBAE migrators as able (or not) to deal with these obstacles. Positions comprising this theme include *survivor, challenged by obstacles, overwhelmed, imposter, manager,* and *experienced.* In analyzing these codes, I start with the ways influencers position themselves or SBAE teachers as challenged and move to the ways they position themselves and SBAE teachers as tackling challenges.

**Challenged by Obstacles.** Several challenges comprise the migratory context at NPC. These challenges are structural, fiscal, and attitudinal; student or teacher related. Essentially, challenges are identified as not having the resources to occupy desired positions. As an

administrator, Aaron identified a particular challenge in not having the resources larger schools

have to hire additional staff to help handle challenging student issues (e.g. addiction, abuse,

homelessness, etc.). Caleb corroborated this challenge, recognizing the limitations on staffing as

affecting teachers and students:

> The problem at Oakville was you had very few people in departments, so by structure of the department I ended up being your [(Becky's)] mentor because I was older than you. I had more experience. I don't know who they would've given us for a mentor. They would've given us a mentor outside our department who wouldn't have had a clue what we teach. But it's up to leadership to figure out who is a good mentor for a new staff member, and they have to make sure they don't just pick someone because they need a body. They need to pick someone who's actually going to be effective, positive, and give constructive feedback.

Caleb continued to position NPC as justifiably negative, given the history of structural and

financial challenges at the school:

> With everything, it starts at the top down. I think when [the superintendent] started they had to make a giant cultural shift. They'd been a very negative community. They'd gone through years of turmoil through the budget situation. They'd had a turnover of principals every two years; there wasn't any continuity. I think he did a cultural shift that changed it for the better.

> We saw that as normal when we came in, but they came from a place that was much worse than where they were. Now to step in there from my situation now, I would say culturally they need a change. So when you don't know where they've come from, it's easy to look at a system as say, "That system is not so good. It's broken." But really, they're improving upon where they were. They're doing a cultural shift that's working.

Ben also recognized the larger structural challenges of the site citing budgets as limiting of

teacher time. However, John, the alumni president, went well beyond the structural challenges of

the school to address the attitudes of those placing students in classes, those charged with

scheduling, and historical challenges the community feels responsible to address.

John identified the stigmatized position of agriculture as remnant from the 1980s farm

crisis. While the farm crisis resolved, the stigma around the agriculture department continued in

pockets of the community. John cited the way students are placed in agriculture classes, as fillers

and last resorts, as a challenge perpetuating the view of agriculture students as less. John

positioned himself as frustrated, anticipating turnover, and as in charge of an organization (the

NPC Ag Boosters) ready to compensate for NPC's fiscal challenges.

Perhaps an even larger challenge for John, however, is the position of being "turned off"

on the current advisor. John positioned solutions to the structural challenges of the school as a

connected and reciprocal relationship between the agriculture teacher and the NPC Ag Boosters.

While recognizing the challenging work and position of a SBAE teacher, he positioned himself

as being able to preempt challenges for the teacher and program:

> I think knowing how it seemed to be comforting and welcoming to you [(Becky)] to have the connection and the outreach that I provided to you really tells you the importance of that. That's partly why I tried to do the same thing with [Jessie]. But that's the way I am with people…if they aren't responsive I'm not going to waste my time. Unfortunately, it's kind of way I got with [Jessie] after a little while. We tried working as a group, but as an individual I thought, "I'm not going to try to keep hounding and be met with awkward silence or awkward responses." I probably get turned off too soon. I kind of switched to, "Well, let's just go to survival mode and let's just keep the program alive." We were hoping it was going to be a one year deal. Unfortunately, it seems like it's not. I think that feeling of welcomeness and support is so important because being, an ag teacher slash FFA advisor is so much different than coming in as a ninth grade algebra teacher or something. There's so much more to it.

**Imposter.** Even amid challenges, at some level people are expected to rise to meet that

challenge. The second set of codes within this theme focuses on how influencers position

themselves and others as *imposters*; not cut out for the job or underqualified. The influencers

who were also teachers, Aaron, Caleb, and Ben, were quick to position administration as clueless

when it came to content and the workings of an agriculture program. Caleb put it this way:

> [Your mentor is] somebody you're not afraid to share mistakes with, to ask for advice, you need that person. You can't go to your principal every day and say, "Hey, I tried this out but it didn't work. Do you have any ideas?" Well, the principal's probably not going to have any ideas. They've probably been long-since removed from the classroom. They're less of a classroom expert than you are. You need to have somebody who's in the trenches, who knows what you're trying to accomplish, and can give ideas outside your box.

There was also a consensus of positioning a particular teacher as not up for the challenge of being an Agricultural educator. Teachers were positioned as *unaware*, *not yet a teacher*, *needing a mentor*, *laid back*, and *lacking people skills*. I will focus more on imposed positionality in the findings for research question three. For the intent of this research question, I focus instead, on positions community influencers subsequently took up. Aaron positioned himself as having missed something:

> I wish I would've known their challenges connecting with kids. I wish I could have seen that, because when you can't connect with kids and students, you're going to struggle in education. You gotta have connections with kids. I wish I would have been able to see that. But that's a challenge. And boy, we tried to try to help, we truly have. But it still is a challenge.

Ben echoed the difficult position of a teacher who does not appear to rise to the challenge of connecting:

> I think we were just self-absorbed into what we had to do for the next few days that we didn't pay attention to [making connections]. I'm sure the administrators didn't. It's a little bit of the sink or swim kind of thing. You expect the teachers to find their own mentors and if they don't have the people skills to get there, they kind of sink for a while.

While the connections to students are integral, John talked about taking connection a step further. A good teacher returned challenge to students as an integral part of being an agriculture teacher. If students were not challenged the SBAE teacher was not capitalizing on their role:

> I don't know the level of the program when Stephanie got there. I have to just take it the way I saw Stephanie going with it. She was quietly, "Okay, this is what we're going to do." Somebody else may have come to the spring banquet wearing dress shoes. I think she came in flip flops. It was a warm day; nothing wrong with flip flops, she was just laid back. She'd keep the kids involved, but they saw it as just a good friendly group. I don't know how much the students were challenged.

> We quickly saw with you [(Becky)] how the students were challenged every day and you challenged them on the level they were at. If someone was [at a mid-level], you challenged them to move up [to the next level]. If you could see somebody already started [at a high level], you'd still find a way to challenge them. You helped everybody grow where they were at. From the beginning to the end, they all gained something. They

didn't all end up at the same place, but they got to experience things in their own way and they all were given opportunities.

Now I feel we've regressed back to the point of getting a lot less of the challenges being given. You had enlarged everything so much and things are just pulling back in again. We're going to a couple contests, but we're not seeking to challenge students to do things. Then as the student numbers have dwindled some, you don't have the personnel to do all these things either. It's pulled back in again; back into the comfort zone. I don't think there's nearly as much creativity anymore.

**Overwhelmed Survivor.** The challenge expected with the job positions self and teachers

as imposters for challenges not being overcome. A clear *survivor* mentality presented as

influencers conquered, or saw teachers conquering, challenges despite being *overwhelmed.*

Being in an *overwhelmed* position identified the ways individuals worked beyond their capacity,

and *survived,* having outlasted despite difficult odds. Being in the position of being *overwhelmed*

was familiar to each influencer. They also positioned SBAE teachers, as a profession and

individually, as overwhelmed, stretched, and overworked. No one disputed the challenging role

agriculture teachers take up. Occupying the position of being *overwhelmed* is also linked to

success. Caleb puts it this way:

> Well, [the job is sustainable at a high level], but you can't be married. You can't have children. But you have to find that balance. You establish it and then you back off. Had I remained in Oakville, I would've backed off. I've been working at backing off. I got out of robotics a little bit at a time. I eventually would've let Supermileage go as well. You start doing those things that are important to you that you'll prioritize. I'm doing a lot more with the [state industrial technology teachers association] now than I ever did in my youth. I'm almost always doing sessions at conference.

Ben suggested SBAE teachers, and subsequently administration, were unaware exactly how

overwhelming the job is:

> What is the objective for all that extra stuff? Is it to have members or is it to make sure that we all remember that agriculture's important to our town and school? I think the teacher and the administration have to sit down and do some serious talking and say, "I want to be here a long time. I like this now, but if this is going to be the way it's going to be, I can't do this anymore." We have to find a point where this is how many activities I do. I'm not going to do this anymore. They have to be happy.

John positioned the agriculture teacher as overwhelmed, but specifically in terms of how an active alumni chapter is able to alleviate some strain:

> I think it's a hard job but you've got to pull all that together. I think having an alumni group is definitely a way the ag teacher can reach out to the community and say, "I'd like to have this or that." Can you as a group pull those people? As an individual teacher, you don't have to go find all those people. If you can talk to them, if you have a good connection with the administration, you can have a couple of key people you've talked to and not do everything on your own.

> I'm going use some of the things you [(Becky)] did because you did a lot of unique things. Some of the grants and stuff that you went out to solicit, you found some things that hadn't been done before and then helped the current facility move forward. You did a wonderful job of encouraging people to be involved…You have to meet people where they are and bring them along. If an instructor or advisor is not able to do that, they're going to just get a smaller and smaller pool of people that connect with them. Otherwise the rest are going to drift off. That's what I see happening now at NPC.

Despite the odds and challenges, community influencers position themselves and their SBAE teachers as *survivors*. They are *resilient*, bound in the *solidarity* challenge brings, and having weathered the storm. Particularly for the influencers familiar with challenge, they position their SBAE teacher counterparts as able to overcome the odds. Caleb said:

> Part of the reason young teachers leave the profession…is they are ill-prepared for what actually happens. They've been taught pedagogy and they've practiced pedagogy. They've been in the classroom a bunch of times, but their main experience is their own high school experience or their own elementary experience and that's it. I mean, they spent 13 years there. As much as you want to try to train them in four years to become a good teacher, they're relying on what their teachers taught them way back. If their teachers were using four techniques, they're going to emulate that. It takes years of training.

> I was lucky that when I came in I had a superintendent and principal who let me make my major mistakes without firing me. There were several times he could've fired me flat out. I think about that now and about how forgiving you have to be of new teachers to let them make their mistakes. If I made those same mistakes now I'd expect to be fired. You have to give them time to find their feet and make the mistakes and still encourage them to ask others for help. They don't have to be an island. Just because they graduated from college doesn't mean they know it. Pair them up with a good mentor who can assist them and not be an adversary, but someone who is a colleague who works with them.

Mentoring can formalize the process of finding someone with whom to overcome the challenges

of teaching. Aaron discussed the heavy reliance teachers needed to have on their co-workers,

informally, to weather the storm of teaching:

> Who do you rely on? Who can you talk to? Well it's got to be a staff member. They get it. They've been through it. If they haven't, they're going through it with you. Maybe it's going down and having the beer, or maybe it's just sitting and wallowing in it together. Maybe it's, "Hey, we're going to go out to a band tonight and we're going to forget about this, and things will be better tomorrow." That's the connection piece you need as staff members and you build that culture among you as a staff member…Those are the connections you need to be successful.

Beyond connecting with others to overcome challenges, John suggested still others are sustained

in their career by surviving a challenge:

> I've got a couple of college friends I stay in contact with a little bit that have been in ag programs for going on 30 years…In a case like that, where they been there that long, you need to ask at some point, "Are they doing the same things? What are their numbers? Are they just there because they're getting comfortable or are they always challenging themselves?"

> **Experienced.** Finally, how well equipped a teacher was to overcome challenge, despite

being overwhelmed by the job, was wrapped up in *experience*. Influencers were quick to position

themselves as experienced, and their agriculture teacher counterparts as less experienced. Caleb

posited it as a function of age, "just by structure of the department I ended up being your mentor

because I was older than you. I had more experience." While Aaron positioned one teacher as

less mature, as a function of classroom experience:

> Jessie struggles. She lacks the confidence that I think is needed. She does not connect very well with the community. She does not connect very well with the alumni groups. She doesn't communicate very well with those groups, with parents and students. She has conflict with FFA officers and FFA members. I would say almost on an adolescent level, like, "Oh, well she said something mean about me," and it's like, "You're the adult." That kind of thing. It hasn't gone great.

Caleb also discussed the ways experience level changed the conversation about being a

department:

I wouldn't say it fell apart. I think [Jessie] was just so young. It has nothing to do with young. She was so inexperienced, and so unsure of her own abilities that I think she had to prove herself each day to herself, not to me.

**Summary: We're All Doing the Best We Can.** Within the first theme, *We're All Doing the Best We Can,* community influencers identified challenges. Community members positioned themselves as experienced survivors while positioning successful SBAE teachers similarly. Even successful agriculture teachers, however, were identified as *overwhelmed* and up against significant *challenges*. SBAE teachers positioned as less successful were seen as *imposters*; not up for the task and underqualified to address the needs of the community surrounding NPC. I ask the reader to keep these challenges in mind, as they offer significant context for the ways community influencers engage, and expect agriculture teachers to engage, in their communities.

### Theme 2: You Gotta Want It

The second theme within the research question two focuses on the ways influencers can provide support *if* support is reified appropriately by the SBAE teacher. Codes within this theme include *teammate*, *supportive*, and *seeking connection*. By and large, influencers see themselves as *supportive*, but point out ways others may not be seen that way. Influencers identified the ways they *seek connection* with and *provide support* to SBAE teachers. However, they adopt positions of *resentment* and *frustration* when others miss the opportunity to accept their help.

**Teammate.** Influencers readily positioned themselves as teammates; on the same playing field and using their position to understand where people are based on prior experience. Ideas of being *united equals*, *collaborators*, *partners*, and *relators* comprise much of the substance of being a *teammate*. Aaron discussed the ways, even in a position of authority; he is concerned with still being a teacher as he helps his fellow educators grow in their career:

I had two post-observation meetings this morning. Both of them were first year teachers. It was interesting for me yesterday reflecting back on my earlier career and being a first

year teacher. I brought up some things to them as I brought up our interview yesterday and said, "You know, I know how tough it is. I know how it feels when you're going home at night and you think, 'God, I'm not very good,' and it's okay."

It was also important to Aaron that he was a *teammate* from a different perspective than the school principal, because of his prior background as a SBAE teacher, "I think [the current principal] would answer differently than I would because I'm a former ag teacher. I would think my perspective is different because I see [connectedness] as an important role as the ag teacher." Caleb also elaborated on the ways positioning himself as a *teammate* was an integral part of how he interacted with SBAE teachers. It was an overarching function of how he did his job:

> I took our department as a department. It wasn't agriculture. It wasn't industrial tech. It was ag/industrial tech. I thought our overarching goal was for students to see the career possibilities in our fields. It's skill based, knowledge based, and it can be very broad or very specific. I saw that as our main goal and I didn't see us independent. I saw us teaching different classes of the same career area: ag/industrial tech. I thought of you [(Becky)] as a co-worker.

Ben also echoed these ideas, highlighting the ways teaching circumstance made positioning as a *teammate* more feasible:

> 24 out of the 36 years, I was separated in the high school. I was basically THE industrial tech teacher in that building. There wasn't even an ag teacher in the building some of those years. I had a lot of freedom and a lot of responsibility. I basically had to do it all. I didn't have a cohort to complain to or to get help by. When you're working at the middle school, I connected less with other industrial tech teachers and more with the middle school concept that we worked as a team. There weren't so much areas and separated like the high school was.

Regardless of circumstance, Ben saw being a *teammate* as a part of the job, not an extraneous burden or assignment:

> I'm sure there's so many more things I could help her with. I helped the new Home Ec. teacher almost every day for the first two weeks to understand the grade program. Little things like that, the stuff you don't want to ask. They may not ask questions because it makes them feel stupid. But those little things are where you need the help, not with the curriculum. You just need to help with it. Knowing where things are and the procedures and things like that. Knowing how to discipline a student and make [the teacher] feel

comfortable to send that kid out if he's doing this and that. Say, "It's okay to discipline like that or not put up with too much." Give them some pearls of wisdom, as they say.

Outside the school setting, being a *teammate* went beyond supports and departments. Being a teammate meant stepping up when no one else wanted to and figuring it out together, even if it was going to be a challenge. John talked about it in terms of what it meant to be a team together:

> I was pretty green back then. I didn't really understand; it was more of a team effort, I think. You [(Becky)] were bustling with energy, and you seemed to be one step ahead of us already. You got after people. We were more interested in getting a group together to make use of some of that enthusiasm and help move things along as you saw fit. Had your type of mannerisms been in effect with the recent advisor that would have maybe been a little bit different too…I remember meeting with you, that happened to be to help somebody get going, but I know we never talked about setting up any kind of an expectation.

Beyond the importance of being a *teammate* and the ways this was enacted, it was important those to whom team membership was offered (SBAE teachers) accepted being part of a team. Caleb noted:

> I don't think [Jessie] ever actually bought into the fact we were a team. I think she was very nervous about what I thought. I think she saw me more as an advisor than she saw me as a mentor or a co-worker, and I think she was afraid that I was possibly running back and telling leadership how she was or wasn't doing, which, in fact, was not the case. In the end I don't think she thought I actually did, but I think that's what she was worried about at first, that I was not on her side.

> In the end I finally transmitted the information that we're together on this. We're a team. But we never had as strong a relationship as I had with you [(Becky)]. I mean that's part of it. Just relationships. That's always important. I have a very strong relationship with the two people I teach with, plus our long term sub. It makes all the difference in the world for our department. I think you could pair English and me, and if it was a strong relationship between the teachers I think you could have an awesome department that way.

Ben elaborated how the SBAE teacher he worked with accepted his positioning as a teammate, "I appreciated helping Stephanie all the time. She was just great. She was so easy to work with and appreciative."

Across the position of *teammate,* community influencers expressed a desire to be in a position of being counted on to fulfill their role. Community influencers took up an ability to contribute to a team in a variety of ways. However, they saw the deposition of their desire relative to their efforts as either a major affront or a particular encouragement. As an affront, community influencers who felt rejected in their desire to be a *teammate* also took up positions of being *frustrated* and *resentful*, which will be discussed in detail in Theme 3. Community influencers who were validated in their position of *teammate* felt encouraged to continue in that role, eager to contribute and collaborate toward desired outcomes.

**Seeking Connection.** Tandem to being a positioned as a *teammate*, *seeking connection* was an essential component to the position of being on the team. These connections included being *relationship oriented*, *student focused*, and *engaged* with other staff. Overall, community influencers attributed *seeking connection* as a position integral to a SBAE teacher's success in both the classroom and the community. Aaron put it this way:

> None of that's going to happen unless you have a good relationship with those kids. There are certain ones that will do it in spite of you. Then there were certain ones that will do it along with you. You can see a ton of them have potential to do this or that. They're only going to do it if you could make that relationship with them. To get a really high flying program going it starts with the relationship you have with your kids. That's where it starts. If you don't have that, it doesn't matter if you have good relationships with the other staff members. It doesn't matter if you have good relationships with community members, it's got to start with the kids. You build that within your classes, within your FFA program, within your CDEs, your SAEs; that is the core of where it has to be.

Aaron also talked about where the connection seeking needs to begin:

> It's got to start there. It doesn't start from the community-in it starts from kids-out. That's huge. It's getting to know them, which is great with FFA because you have that kid in the classroom. You have already been out to their farm, or already been out to their house, or already talked about their family. You've been at the children's barnyard for three hours with them. So you talk about things. You were on a trip to Kansas City with them, or to Louisville, Kentucky; or Indianapolis, Indiana; FFA convention. You sat across from them at a McDonald's in Indiana. That's where it comes from. As an ag teacher, you gotta love those interactions. Sure, it's a pain in the butt. You're falling asleep on the way back

from National Convention, and you're away from your family, but it's worth it, you know?

Furthermore, Aaron put significant onus on himself as an administrator to make connections happen in his school:

> The conversations are important. Stopping in the classroom to say, "Hey, how are things going?" Having those conversations. There's the formal interview, there are formal observations that gives you an opportunity. A lot of times when I'll do a formal observation of a first year teacher, I don't spend as much time on the rubric…It's more of a conversation about, "How are things going?"

> I had conversations with my teachers today and yes, we talked about content, and we talked about pedagogy, and different ways of doing things, but it was a lot about, "How are things going? How are connections with your students? How are things going with your mentor teacher, your cooperating teacher, the person that you're teaching the course with? How can we support you? How are things going in general with you and your family?" That kind of stuff is a big part. I think having that conversation and letting them know you're a person too. I think our role as administrators used to be suit and tie, memos, that kind of stuff. That's really changed. It's a different type of leadership now. For us administrators, letting [teachers] know we are human and we do care about their success and we're not out to get them. It's not adversarial. It's mutual benefit.

Caleb piggybacked the responsibility of the administrator to facilitate connections with the responsibility of the whole school community to welcome new staff members and seek out connection:

> It is the entire community. When a teacher comes into a new school, it is the community's job to make sure the teacher feels as if they are a part of it. Not just the mentor. It is not the mentor's job to become a new teacher's best friend, having them over for supper and all that stuff. That's not what it's about. That can happen, but that's not what it's about. It's about being a good role model, a good person to bounce ideas from.

> But it's the rest of the building's responsibility to make those new teachers, those young teachers coming in, feel as if they belong to that community. It can be from inviting them to lunch in the lunch room, making sure they greet them in the hallway, going out of your way to stop by their classroom to say "hi" first, second, third, fourth period. Making points of connecting with them because new teachers are not going to have the time nor the energy to go around and meet current staff. Current staff has already developed and made their own cliques, and they have to be willing to get outside of those cliques and include new staff members. It's up to leadership to direct staff to do that. I don't know that gets done very much.

Ben reiterated the responsibility of the administration to make connections a priority for

teachers:

> I think the whole school has a little bit of a responsibility. I think the administration, the principal should connect, if they're doing their job right. They should be connecting every day. But do they? No. They're busy with other things. With that new teacher, that principal should be checking up on him to ask him, "Hey, what are you doing? Do you need some help?" Maybe delegate somebody. Then say, "She needs help with the grade book, come and help her with that."

John also saw being the alumni president as an important connection point for SBAE teachers.

John had a vision for what facilitating connections should look like:

> I had envisioned being able to go to the community. People could come in and have a chance to [introduce themselves], and make some connections…Maybe, the next time around, we could do something like that to help make those connections. It depends if someone comes to me who's new compared to somebody who has a couple of years of working with the program. I don't have any connections with FFA. I do with the state alumni association. But in terms of the ag program and stuff, that's beyond what I think [the alumni] would be involved with.

> In terms of the community connection and making them feel welcome, I think that's where we could stand a good chance. You also have your officers and your key junior and senior members or something like that come in and maybe give their two cents. Say, "This is what's working well and this is what we like doing." I don't think there were even any questions asked of the current students a couple years ago about what they'd like to see the program doing.

The rejection of his position as a *connection facilitator* made it difficult for future opportunities

to take up the position of being *connection seeking*:

> I like to think [I'm in a role to facilitate community connections]. But it's up to each individual. Who we have right now, there's no time to talk about anything. They're going to do it their way. We attempted to give them a heads up of how things had moved forward or some successful things they maybe want to take a look at and it was just like, "Fine, but I'm doing it this way." I still think that's important though. If I'd placed myself in their shoes, to walk in and have some ideas of what worked or what didn't work, it would sure be easier than having a blank slate.

Finally, John pushed back against Aaron's implications of "kids-out" connections and instead

suggests a "community-in" approach:

[The alumni's role is] to make a first impression before the teacher's overwhelmed with students. Especially if there would be a bad student, so the teacher wouldn't get to concerned with things, so they could hopefully call and say, "Geez, these kids just came in and overwhelmed me," or "They're just saying this or that." [We want to be a] comfort zone to hopefully avoid some of the unnecessary stress.

When it comes to *seeking connection*, community influencers concerned with positioning themselves in this way and that others are positioned to *seek connection*. The focus on being *connection seeking* permeates the discussion across the levels of interaction a SBAE teacher encounters. Program, school, and community desire a *connection-seeking* teacher. An interesting point remains, as the responsibility for providing opportunities to be *connection seeking* was variously placed. Administration (Aaron) took this position on, but others were quick to recognize this was not always enacted in ways that promoted the most valuable connections. The industrial technology teachers recognized the importance of being *connection seeking* as they worked closely with the SBAE teacher. Community members took a different approach as John conveyed a desire to be an early and constant connection in supporting the SBAE teacher.

**Supportive.** In addition to being *connection-seeking teammates,* community influencers identified themselves as being *supportive,* without exception. Aaron discussed this as facilitating connections with other staff members and students as specific displays of support, but beyond the relationships, discussed support as providing room for teachers to chase their vision:

When I'll talk to a new teacher, I want to convey I want you to have a vision for your program and I want to support you in that vision. Each ag teacher has strengths and weaknesses. Each community has strengths and weaknesses. What is our ag program going to be here at Oakville? It's going to be a little bit different if you're the advisor, compared to if I'm the advisor, compared to if [my predecessor] is the advisor. Each of us has different things. You also have to keep in mind what the community looking for in its ag program. What are the businesses looking for in the ag program? You've got to meld those together, and it looks different depending on who's running it.

Ben corroborated Aaron's efforts as helpful and supportive, and further discussed the ways support may be even better taken up:

We've got a new ag teacher coming in, what should we do? Well, we should probably go back in that store room and throw all that crap away so she has a new start. We'd start talking about, too often you go in a new ag situation and you have so much stuff. It's almost overwhelming. What do I do with this? I don't feel like I can throw it away because it's not really my stuff. It's almost like somebody else should take that on. That's what my principal did for me. He came in before I started this program. He had the custodians throw away all the crap that was in all the store rooms that they knew had been sitting there for years. They did that so I didn't have to deal with it. Some of those things would be good. Because didn't you find that every place you went to you just had stuff?

John added how important it was for him to be supportive of the agriculture program and be a program advocate:

I remember a couple times you [(Becky)] came and rode along with me when I was planting in the spring. You know, you'd call and say, "What do you think of these ideas?" We had a good two way communication going. I let you drive the bus…but that was what we talked as the group, "Let's just be here to support." We didn't know what direction we were needed, but we were here when you needed support. If something would have gone sour for you, I guarantee you, had you walked into the principal's office or they would've thrown some cutbacks at you or something, you would've called us and we would've said, "What can we do? We're here to help."

John went on to discuss the ways support was received as a major component of how support would be conveyed in the future:

I like [the program] to be something like you [(Becky)] were building. We talked about it as a group. We never wanted to have said, "Jessie, this is how Becky did it." That wasn't a great topic…[industry example]. But in your case, there was a high expectation. We were very aware of that, and we made it very clear to say, "Hey, everybody does things their own way, but this was nice. These are some of the things that were working. Maybe you want to consider it." We said it really nonchalantly. So my expectation, is what it was like, and it was really cool that my kids got to be part of that too, but these things that were happening…I'd love to use NPC as a model and say, "Look at what's happening here." But unfortunately, I'm not and we've seen some other programs, some other places, where they're able to tap into some of these other resources.

**Summary: You Gotta Want It.** *Support* rounds out this theme as the culmination of the actions associated with being a *teammate* and *providing support*. Contrary to anecdotal ideas of support being material (resources, money, etc.), these community members specifically discuss *support* as time, attention, mentoring, and friendship. Viewing support as relational is to see the

strings attached to support. Support, as a relational construct, is deposed, and the deposition is a highly personal interaction. Rejection of support implies the support is not good enough, is not needed, or in extreme cases, comes from a place of malice. Uptake of support authenticates the value people offer in positioning themselves as supportive. I will discuss these depositions of support further as they relate to findings for the third research question.

*Theme 3: Double Standards*

Expectations are a given in any job. Arguably, SBAE teachers bear a heightened expectation load given their visibility within their communities and schools. This sentiment is also reflected in the data as various and competing expectations of SBAE teachers. Codes within this theme include *change needed*, *expectations*, *dependency*, and *autonomy*. Overall, the expectations within this context suggest agriculture teachers should operate as autonomous individuals, in a continuous state of development, while leaning on the community for program expectations and support. While the position of having *expectations* far outweighs other ideas in this theme, *change needed*, *dependency*, and *autonomy* address specific perceptions of enactments of expectations, and will therefore be discussed here.

**Having Expectations.** *Expectations* of community influencers compile a significant list. After reverse coding for things SBAE teachers should not be, the list of things SBAE teachers should be includes:

- Student centered
- Willing to give time
- High potential
- Successful
- Confident

- Competent
- Program builder
- Opportunity provider
- Involving students in FFA
- Face of Agriculture

- Visionary
- Goal-oriented
- Leader
- Hardworking
- Catering to community

- Program advocate
- Smart
- Resourceful
- Challenging students
- Encouraging

Several of these terms appear across the education and SBAE literature. These terms, for this specific context, are outlined in the ways Aaron discusses his vision for the SBAE program at NPC:

> If it's your program, Becky, I want you to have vision, keeping in mind what the community needs and wants, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and then have a vision of where you want to be in two, and three, and five, and ten years. I want to help you get there. I want you to grow the program so I have to go to the superintendent and say, "I need another ag teacher." That would be fantastic. I truly believe that could be Oakville. With our student population, we could have two ag teachers here. I truly do believe that is a possibility. Depending on the courses we offer and whoever's leading. That teacher who's leading it is extremely important. They have to be the champion, trying to develop whatever their vision is of their ag program. I don't know if I did a good job with that or not, but that's what I want.

Aaron offers a few examples of ways expectations were appropriately enacted and an example where they were not:

> The home run, I think, was with you [(Becky)]. When we interviewed you, we had the opportunity to bring in somebody that had a little more experience. Our conversation when we hired you was that person coming in has more experience and probably could hit the ground running faster than you could. When you hire a brand new ag teacher, you know it's going to be tough that first couple of years because of everything [ag teachers] do. We said unanimously that in three years this person's going to be an all-star and is going to be a rock star. We're going to go through that process and we're going to get something fantastic, which we did. I don't know of any other ag teacher as good as you when you left. You were absolutely fantastic, and everything from the connections with kids, to how you grew the program, to your course offerings, to FFA successes, community involvement, managing classrooms, fundraisers, all that stuff was just fantastic.

> Jessie struggles. She lacks the confidence I think is needed. She does not connect very well with the community. She does not connect very well with alumni groups. She

doesn't communicate very well with those groups, parents and students. She has conflict with FFA officers and FFA members. I would say almost on an adolescent level, like, "Oh, well she said something mean about me," and it's like, "You're the adult." It hasn't gone great.

Caleb elaborated on the ways it is important for an agriculture teacher to cater to their

community while letting key stakeholders know how they, as a teacher, are meeting the

community's agricultural needs:

I think [CTE programs] are big everywhere because most schools have one ag teacher and they have to teach it all. Their area is as big as the industry. Teaching anything in the career and tech industry area is big. I think a successful ag teacher doesn't try to teach it all. I think they figure out what they need for their community, and teach to that, and then maybe some of their specialties. I think they have to become specialists in what's needed. [beehive example] They just can't teach to their strong suit or interest. They have to teach what their students will need.

[Our former principal] was really impressed by the fact that the auto tech teacher went to all the local auto dealers to get, specifically from them, what students need for skills when they leave the high school so they can get a job. I was impressed by it by the fact that Logan knew it. Many of us do that type of thing a lot. But the fact that teacher made sure to impress upon admin that this is why we do this. In our area it isn't just about conjugating verbs and the rules of English. We've got to prepare students for their careers. We can get them a career right out of high school as long as we meet these criteria. This is why I'm not teaching engine rebuilding…because this is not what they need. They'll get that elsewhere if they need that. So it takes some footwork.

Ben corroborated these community expectations, but was quick to offer the ways these

expectations are too much pressure for any one teacher. He pointed out the ways he saw people

moving specifically to find expectations that are more manageable:

An ag teacher just sees how overwhelming a job gets to be, and then the expectations of the town, and all the activities the previous teacher did. Then, suddenly they're saying, "I have no life." They say, "I'm going to go crazy," or "I need to get somewhere else to see if I can find something better." I see the same thing happening to a lot of special ed teachers. They keep moving, and moving, and moving to different locations until they find a situation that works for them. It might be the number of students they have. It might be the administrator. I'm not sure what it is, I knew a friend of mine's two girls; they just kept moving and finally one of them found a job that she really likes. She is staying there.

John, however, expressed the ways continuity plays into expectation, recognizing the goal of the

NPC Ag Boosters to maintain similar program performance as teachers move in and out. The

challenge in this expectation is in navigating the comparison underlying the maintenance of these

expectations.

> In a perfect world, I think there would be a longer time frame. In a perfect world, Becky Haddad would still be the ag instructor…I think [having an agriculture teacher for 20 years or more] would obviously provide the continuity more so than the turnover that's consistently happening here. I do think sometimes, "Is there something that needs to be done differently?" Our group is here now; that's going to help. Are there some other things that are making instructors not want to stay?

> There's never enough time. When I stop and think about it, maybe we should have been trying, as an Ag Boosters group, to do a little more homework to see if there's something else happening. The alumni group has some pull to be in constant communication with administration; to see if the administration has some red flags. Maybe they see numbers are down, or the school board members are having a challenging time hiring a sub. The ag teacher is gone on all the different events. Let's see if there's some things you do to solve the problem; at least to have open communication.

> The first couple of years you were maybe not as willing to go to bat for the program as you would have been after a couple of additional years. To sit down with the administration or say, "This is a direction, do you or don't you like the way it's going?" And then when a position turns over you have somebody starting fresh again.

It isn't surprising to note the ways expectations hold over and are enforced once a

program changes hands. Despite desires to let an incoming teacher be their own person, in

multiple speech episodes across each community influencer, the expectations advanced were

often set by a predecessor. While community influencers verbalized the ways they sought to

avoid comparison in their language, there is a tension in connecting expectations to a particular

agriculture teacher, namely, the researcher.

**Change Agent.** Community influencers placed additional pressure on their SBAE

teachers to be *change agents*. Where *change was needed,* SBAE teachers were idealized as an

actor in change. Community influencers focused on the ways change in their own lives was

instrumental in moving them forward as they sought change personally, professionally, or in

their industry. Aaron saw staffing changes as a way to better a school, a particularly relevant

finding for migrators:

> One of the biggest things that administrators can do is hire good teachers and try to keep those good teachers. I love interviewing; one of my most favorite things I do…It is a great time of year because you get the opportunity to get new blood into your school. Of course, if you're replacing somebody every year that stinks. But you get the opportunity to interview people and bring in new people…

> …How do you change a school? You do it one of two ways to get better teachers: either hire better teachers or make the teachers you have better. There's only two ways that you get better as a school. That's it. The teachers are the ones that do it. It's not administrators. It's teachers…

> … I see myself, as far as the ag program, number one, during the interview process, get good teachers in and do a really good job with trying to get those teachers here. Then once they're here, try to make them better each and every day. And, knowing how difficult being an ag teacher is, trying to support them.

In the same way, Aaron discussed the revitalizing effects of change in the direction of a school.

Community influencers, particularly the industrial technology teachers, discussed the ways

change played an important role in their careers. Caleb put it this way:

> [Change] does [revitalize] me! I need a new challenge…I challenged myself often. I had to. I taught with someone who taught the same curriculum all the way through and I couldn't do that. I had to come up with better and better ways of teaching what I taught. Then I think it was time for me to leave there, and when the opportunity presented itself I'm glad I took it. I thought I'd raised Oakville from here to here. There's lots of room to go yet. But when I left there, I left it in a good situation. Anyone could've stepped in and done well. There's just a shortage of teachers to replace. So, what do you do?

While Ben supposed:

> I think moving from one room or one building to another was good. Very good. There was a lot of work. When you pick up and move, you consider your surroundings and you consider what you're doing right down to the curriculum. You say, "I want to start new a little bit." That's an attitude, too, about starting new, trying new things, getting new ideas, and meeting new people. It was a refreshing to change my location, especially in 18 years in middle school there in Oakville, and then to Gold River.

John also saw himself as someone benefitting from change:

I'm active in areas in agriculture where I move the needle. I started with our County Corn and Soybean Growers Association and moved from there...I used that as a spring board to things at the state and national level. Now a lot of what I do actually goes way beyond what's happening here locally. The decisions they make at the state level, for example, come back to affect my fellow farmers.

John also saw the ways agriculture teachers can be ideal vehicles for change in their communities; serving as new thinking to push people forward:

[I want the ag teacher to be] a cheerleader/ringleader. That is, you need somebody to go out there, drum up support among community people, among school staff, administration, and then obviously the students too. We can sit and say all these kids should want to be involved, but with kids, most of them need to see something fun. You're gonna learn something and go, but don't tell them they're going to learn something in the process.

The ag teacher though, is a hard job. You've got to pull all that together. I think having an alumni group is definitely a way the ag teacher can reach out to the community and say, "I'd like to have this or that." Can you as a group pull those people? As an individual teacher, you don't have to go find all those people. If you can talk to them, if you have a good connection with the administration, you can have a couple key people you've talked to, and not have to go out and do everything on your own.

I'm going use some of the things you did because you did a lot of unique things; some of the grants and stuff you went out to solicit. You found some things that hadn't been done before and helped the current facility move forward. You did a wonderful job of encouraging people to be involved…You have to come and meet people where they are and bring them along. If an instructor or advisor is not able to do that, they're going to just get a smaller and smaller pool of people that connect with them. Otherwise the rest are going to kind of just drift off. That's what I see happening now at NPC.

**Dependent & Autonomous.** The *expectations* on SBAE teachers, particularly as it relates to facilitating needed change comes with the competing demands of being positioned as *dependent* and *autonomous*, simultaneously. Interestingly, *dependency* focused from one individual community influencer, the administrator. Aaron discussed the ways SBAE teachers *need* things like: community support, each other, logistics, school culture, and vision;

[You keep teachers by] helping them in their development as a teacher. We get them connected here to students, to staff, to community, all those different types of things; give them a reason to stay. The culture piece--trying to build positive culture within the school. I think that's how you do it. It has to be within them too, because there's a combination. It has to be within them--that's what they're like. There wasn't much [my

first two schools] could've done to keep me. I was doing something different in that case. Somehow Oakville kept me and I don't know how that happened.

This *dependency* from others was corroborated as Aaron discussed his own *autonomy*

compared to others, particularly *autonomy* in seeking connections with others:

I think this generation is looking more for that type of connection. Us old school, Gen Xers, are a little more autonomous. We tend to be more goal-oriented. We tend to be, "Give me my job and I'll get it done." I think for Millennials--and I'm not putting Millennials down at all when I say this--personal connection is more important to them. If we want to keep Millennials in the profession and at our particular school, we need to have some of those opportunities. That may be the mentor program, that may be setting up to say, "Okay, afterschool we're going to head to [a local bar] and go have a cocktail," or "Everybody's going to go to the homecoming game tonight. Afterwards, [another teacher] is having a get together." It doesn't have to be around partying or something, but opportunities for teachers to connect.

Caleb and Ben also pointed out the ways they acted with *autonomy* compared to their fellow

teachers. Caleb said:

We're a different world than all the other teachers. The CTE area--whether it's FACS, business, industrial tech, ag--we're all in it on the careers side. I can't imagine an English teacher figuring out where to go in the community to find out what kids need to learn. Good luck. The newspaper? We want kids to be able to spell? We teach kids specific skills.

While Ben shared the ways he took control of his own situation:

Early on, I realized my unhappiness with whatever was going on, if I had some unhappiness about something--because you do, as an educator; you get upset about how the day went or whatever--I never applied that to anybody but myself. If I don't like what's going on, I have enough freedom in this job to complete the objective in a dozen different ways; maybe a hundred different ways. If you didn't do it right and that makes you unhappy--whatever mess it turned out to be--whose fault was it? It's my fault. I didn't write the best lesson, so I learned from that. I think that's where I was a happy person at the time, because if I was disappointed in something, I could only blame myself.

Ben and John, however, also suggested ways they did not see the teachers they worked with as

having *autonomy*, and saw instead, things done to other teachers. Ben contemplated his

successor:

Caleb chose to--I think may have been pressured into--doing high mileage and robotics. I look at his situation now that he's taken a junior high position with fewer preps. All that extracurricular, along with all the coursework, [the NPC] job was making him spend too much time there. He couldn't keep that going….I don't know for sure, but I think they were looking for somebody to do those two curriculums, the extracurricular things along with the job. I wish they hadn't forced those on him.

John, other the other hand, spoke more broadly:

I like to think that [I'm in a position to facilitate connections], but it's up to each individual. Who we have right now, there's no time to talk about anything. They're going to do it their way. We attempted to give them a heads up of how things had moved forward, or some successful things, saying, "Maybe want to take a look at this," and it was like, "Fine, but I'm doing it this way." I still think that's important though. If I'd placed myself in their shoes--to walk in and have some ideas of what worked and what didn't work--it would sure be easier than having a blank slate.

**Summary: Double Standards.** The competing demands of being dependent and autonomous at the same time would pose a significant *double standard* on their own, but coupled with *expectations* and being a *change agent*, there is substantial nuance to expectations being shared and enacted between community influencers and SBAE teachers. These competing demands comprise a difficult landscape to navigate; as a brand new teacher or as a veteran teacher making a program move. Explicating these expectations before going into a job is nearly impossible, due to the multiple influencers holding them and the varied ways in which they unfold. However, greater clarity around expectations, and the subsequent action associated with expectations, are essential to being perceived as a successful agriculture teacher in the community.

### Theme 4: All or Nothing

The final idea encapsulated and addressed in this research question focuses around the concept of reciprocal investment. *Reciprocal investment* is similar displays of willingness to work toward a common goal. As already seen, these community influencers invest themselves heavily in the agriculture programs and the SBAE teachers with whom they interact. They are

happy to do so. However, if community influencers share their investment, they expect their

SBAE teachers to invest in similar ways. Positions within this theme include *lucky*, *responsible*,

*continued growth*, and *invested.* Partial or withheld investment from SBAE teachers is

unacceptable as influencers feel responsibility for the continued growth of their investment.

**Luck & Responsibility.** *Luck* and *responsibility* go hand-in-hand as community

influencers thought about the ways they were *lucky* in their own circumstance and acted with

*responsibility* to recognize luck was not their own. Ben said:

> Being a human is a pretty complicated thing. You make choices about where you're going
> to be if you're happy with the job. I was one of those guys that was lucky. I found a job I
> really liked. I wanted to stay with it, and that's why I stayed here. I improved what I did
> until I was done. Every day I was pleased I found the right things that seemed to serve the
> purpose.

More than lucky, however, is capitalizing on the luck of a situation. Luck transforms to

*responsibility* when the right things occur with the luck received. This was an important part of

community influencers' positionality in their communities. Aaron said:

> It's not any different here than it is in any other district our size in [the state]. It's the same
> thing. [As an administrator], you need to have more hands on deck to be able to do both.
> So you do your best, you prioritize, get into classrooms, do your professional reading,
> and do your research, and try to get initiatives moving forward that help students…You
> try to do all of those types of things, in addition to making sure everybody's safe and
> calm here at school.

Ben talked about the responsibility of his classroom, doing the right things so students knew he

cared about providing opportunities that prepared them for careers:

> You feel different when you walk in, and those new students walk in, and see the bench
> tops are all shiny with varnish…It's a little bit anal but it proved to be the right thing to
> do, because it stayed that way. I see shops people were willing to let go. If there's one
> hole drilled in the bench top, there will probably be three by the end of the semester
> because suddenly there's one and does it matter? It's definitely an attitude.

John talked about a higher responsibility and connectedness beyond classrooms and geographical

communities to encapsulate a responsibility to the agriculture industry:

The challenge is if we're only that specific sliver of the student population, we're not going to really move forward. We have to be all encompassing and let other people experience the love of ag. Bring their own family history along, which is totally fine. Keeping qualified people in ag careers to continue to grow it. That can be production ag, in technology and the input side. Or the output side. We can do more with these crops we produce and these livestock we produce every day…So if you want to look at being more sustainable it's only gonna grow if we can put the bug in some of these students ears. It'll be interesting what they may or may not do in their life.

That understanding of ag is just so important in having the ability to know the repercussions to what you do. I didn't grow up in livestock. I had a dog. But the responsibility of--if you don't feed your animal--it's going to die if you don't take care of your things. Some of these kids, if all they have to worry about is playing a video game after school because they haven't developed that sense of importance of what they have to learn. That's everything related to growing things. You screw up, and your plants die, and you have to understand working with Mother Nature how it all works. Those experiences are stuff you can't replace. You have to be able to offer those, and that's where the whole ag program comes into play.

*Responsibility*, as outlined by these participants, goes beyond a social construct to a way of life. It is a way of being, so engrained in one's operation, it is second nature. *Responsibility*, as conveyed by community influencers is not an obligation or question. Rather, it permeates everything with which these influencers involve themselves. As such, *responsibility* goes beyond an expectation to be enforced to being a courtesy extended as part of one's moral fabric. This makes responsibility a particularly slippery position to take up and reify, but a very easy position to appear to reject, as seen in addressing research question three. What is responsible to one (implementing research-based practices, for example) is not *as* responsible to another (e.g. as bringing others along on the initiatives already in place).

**Growing.** Part of enacting responsibility presented as *continued growth*. The Japanese term *kaizen* comes to mind; small, incremental changes for the better. Community influencers saw this continued growth in themselves. Caleb outlines it this way:

There's so much that has to go on behind the scenes. It proves time and again education is not having a document you can read to kids, or a video you can play, or a worksheet they're going to do, and they're going to learn. It's an art form. One person being

successful with a text and worksheets doesn't mean anyone coming after them is going to be successful. It's [in your head]. It's experience.

I thought I was a great teacher my first three years. I bet if I went back now and looked I'd say, "God, you were an awful teacher." Luckily I had a lot of experiences outside the classroom to bring in that helped, so I didn't have to learn all the skills I had to teach. I already knew those. I just had to learn how to teach. Even so, it took seven years before I really thought I was a good teacher. Until that time, a lot of teachers will go, "I don't know if this is for me." If you don't have someone sitting there going, "No, it is for you, you're okay. Everyone makes these same mistakes. Everyone has this concern about teaching. It's not uncommon. Stick it out again. Try it again. Try something new. Challenge yourself," [they're not going to stay].

Ben talked about the ways he enacted this throughout his own career:

I went out and got a grant. I got an idea for a technology lab. I pushed the school board to come up with $75,000 to build this computer lab, kinda like a STEM lab today. It would have been 1995 or something, for station learning computers and CNC mills…It was a huge thing and I was really excited about it…and they supported my ideas and it was a lot of work, but it was terrific. It was really terrific.

Ben also pointed out the ways he saw and valued continued growth in his successors:

I think you [(Becky)] and VanZee did some things when it came to the shops to move things around a little bit there. I think [Stephanie & I] may have talked about how we could use our rooms in a better way, but that's about it.

While John talked about the continued growth expected of students and the importance of challenge in continuing to grow. He focused on growth not occurring just for oneself, but as a responsibility to push others as well:

Students that were up for the challenge did a lot [when you were the teacher]. I look at the Rae Knights of the world. Rae Knight, maybe she's unique enough she could still be working with Jessie and still develop some of the same experiences. But unless you're a really strong willed person like her--there's others that you could have developed to her potential--no way in heck would have been able to do it under the current scenario. I think the challenges you [(Becky)] gave them were good, because that's the way life is. If you don't challenge yourself to get better, you're going to stay stagnant.

Personally, I liked the challenge part and I liked the progressive part. If you do what I'm comfortable with, maybe then I'd have answered differently and said, "Well, you push too much." But if a kid wouldn't do it, I think it was like, "Well, I gave you this opportunity but you chose not to do it. So we move on." End of story. It's not like they were penalized for it or anything.

*Continued growth* presents as a *unique responsibility* community influencers see in themselves and expect in others. *Growth* manifests itself in material resources (grant money secured, new equipment purchased, etc.) and the use of resources to challenge others, particularly students. A challenge to this position is recognized when influencers see growth unevenly distributed to those in one's charge, or not occurring at all. A particular challenge of the *growth* position notes the absence of growth rarely means stagnation, but implicates decline. This is a particularly challenging position for invested community influencers to reconcile; as any decline in an investment would be. With these ideas in mind, I turn specifically to the position of being *invested* to complete this theme. Community influencers see themselves as *invested*, but also expect *investment* from their SBAE counterparts. *Investment* implies belonging to a geographical location, earned through time, and a displayed commitment to a community.

**Invested.** Ben and John contributed heavily to the ideas comprising the position of *investment*. Both these influencers see themselves from the geographical area surrounding Oakville and having long-standing ties to the community. For Ben, he taught in the Oakville community for 36 years prior to retiring and still lives in the community. For John, his family has a 143-year agricultural legacy farming in the Oakville area. Interestingly, those most focused on *investment* had the greatest time investment in this geographical location. Ben specifically elaborated on the importance of physically being in and living in the community:

> In a town the size of Oakville, they really appreciate the teachers that live in town, go to their churches, are there for other activities, and they see go downtown to the parade, and all that stuff…When you have a smaller town, that's one of the things that has changed a lot. I don't know if it's right or wrong, but it has changed. I would say more than 50% of the staff [at NPC] live in different towns. It's just different. It's just the way things are now. But that is something we've noticed. People really appreciate if you're living in the town you work in, but it just can't work that so way much anymore.

He went on to discuss the benefits being in a community affords:

The same thing is true when you have your children in that same town. Then they're involved in little league, and you make connections. They're involved in Boy Scouts, and involved in all the other stuff. Then you're making connections. The more connections you make, the more respect you have in town…You're an integral part of that town and not just an employee of the school district. You're more than that to the community. So there's connections there, and that's different now. I think it's really hard when you have principals and superintendents that don't live in town. They still have a real hard time. I know that [Superintendent] James has moved to town. I'm sure that made a lot of people happy.

Apart from his time in the community, John focused on the importance of affecting continuity as part of his investment in Agriculture:

I had the desire to get an alumni support group going. One of the things we talked about in our initial group is we need to have a group there to have some continuity, because we know there's going to be turn over based on the past history. I took it upon myself [to make sure we had a group in place].

This desire for continuity intertwined heavily with legacy. *Investment*, in this context, is a position that goes beyond something from which return is expected--though it is certainly also that--to a higher calling of maintaining an industry and way of life. John puts it this way:

Because of the history of the last 30 or 40 years, we know we don't keep anybody in [the SBAE teacher] position for more than two, or three, or four, or five years. I am proud to say that we will be starting our 143rd year as the Shellums. The sixth generation is going to be back full time in three months. I take things with a little different perspective. I think--because of the deep ties--I can look at the ag program and think, "Well, what did my dad's program in the 60s look like," and some of those things. I think it's that inherent nature of the continuity of agriculture and the tie to the land. I'm wanting to keep it going.

FFA, for a lot of people, is still one of those things, if you're involved in production agriculture. I mean it's just kind of like getting confirmed, and graduating high school. You want to be part FFA. I hope it never becomes the nostalgic view, for those of us tied to agriculture. It's that kind of a view, but for a lot of the other students and a lot of the families that like to get involved, they may or may not have that same legacy. We still want to make sure--because the importance of keeping going--that we include as many people as possible. You need a broad base to be able to keep going forward.

*Investment*, for these participants, secures something for the future; for the participants' families, for their community, and for a bigger industry. As John offers:

I'm bias, but I know agriculture has been really good to me and my family. I guess I want to give back…It's sad when you see people are missing out. There's not a lot of careers anymore...where you can trace the family back to who started…Agriculture is still a place where you've got this lineage going along. Maybe that's the deep part. You sort of play off that. Agriculture is still the backbone of society as far as I'm concerned.

**Summary: All or Nothing.** Little can be done to recover a squandered *investment*. Communities take reciprocal investment as a serious charge issued to the teachers with whom they have entrusted the care of their students. *Investment* is the pinnacle of the *All or Nothing* theme in the ways *luck*, *responsibility*, and *continued growth* capitulate to identify how community influencers' position themselves and others as *invested*. *Investment* is a family affair, and must be taken up with extreme care.

**Summary: Research Question 2.** Across this migratory context, community members position themselves and the SBAE teachers with whom they work. *We're All Doing the Best We Can*, *You Gotta Want It*, *Double Standards*, and *All or Nothing* come together to describe the ways community members seek to be understanding and supportive of their SBAE teachers, but base these on their own experience. Community influencers specifically position SBAE migrators based on the ways they interact with support and understanding. If a community member offers support, an expectation of support being used follows. This is seen as a means of conveying investment in the community for the SBAE teacher, which is expected as a reciprocal process of engagement for community influencers in their interactions with SBAE teachers.

**Question 3: How are assigned positionalities deposed (taken up, rejected, or reified) by SBAE migrators and community members?**

To discuss Research Question 3, I must first clarify the ways I utilized the data to discuss position deposition. The interest now, is in the ways the two groups' desired positions take up, reject, or reify desired positions from the other group. To evaluate the deposition of

positionalities, I mapped codes, definitions, and aligning positions of each group against the

other. This regrouping condensed to three themes relative to the interactions positioning SBAE

migrators and their communities: *Conflicting Requirements*, *I Can and I Will*, and *All My Love*

*and Support*. I describe these themes as follows:

1.  *Conflicting Requirements*: This theme examines the ways SBAE migrators' and

    community influencers' expectations depose each other. *Conflicting Requirements* deals

    largely with assigning roles and responsibilities to oneself or others. It recognizes the

    ways people take up the expectations extended to them, reify expectations, or reject

    others' expectations in efforts to take up their own positionality. Under this theme, the

    following position alignments present, for the SBAE teacher and community influencer,

    respectively: *FFA Advisor/Teacher* and *Limited* with *Expectations*; *Resourceful* with

    *Responsible*; *Builder* with *Continued Growth*; *Visionary* with *Change Needed*.

2.  *I Can and I Will*: Under this theme, I present evidence of positionalities associated with

    perseverance deposing each other. *I Can and I Will* recognizes the ways people feel

    equipped to take on challenges with autonomy or feel the weight of other's positioning as

    an imposed limit on their ability to meet their goals. Position alignments under this theme

    include: *Survivor* (occurred in both groups); *Up for a challenge* with *Overwhelmed* and

    *Challenges & Obstacles*; *Autonomous* with *Autonomy* and *Dependency*; *Unique* and

    *Imposter* with *Imposter* for SBAE migrators and community influencers, respectively.

3.  *All My Love and Support*: This theme deals with the ways SBAE migrators and

    community influencers depose positions of support. Being in a position to support or be

    supported is an interactional endeavor showing investment in a person, location, program,

    or community. Position alignment encompasses *Supported* with *Supportive*; *Connected*

with *Seeking Connection* and *Teammate*; *Experienced* (occurred in both groups);

*Geographically bound* and *Committed* with *Invested*; *Considerate* and *Lucky* with *Lucky*.

I discuss each of these themes to identify the ways positionalities are taken up, reified, or

rejected between SBAE migrators and the community influencers with whom they closely

interact.

### *Theme 1: Conflicting Requirements*

**Expectations.** A significant challenge in any interaction is establishing, understanding,

and meeting expectations. This is no different in the positions SBAE migrators and community

influencers take up. In enforcing expectations, positions are taken up relative to the expectations

imposed. Before discussing the uptake, rejection, and reification of positions, I outline the

expectations in place for SBAE teachers conveyed within this particular migratory context:

- Content expert
- Student centered
- Putting in significant time
- Having potential
- Strong investment
- Competent
- Building/growing a program
- Providing student opportunities
- Involving students
- Being a face of Agriculture
- Visionary/Goal Oriented
- Leader

- Adaptable
- Learning
- Hardworking
- Catering to the community
- Successful
- Smart
- Resourceful
- Connecting to science
- Providing wins for students
- Ringleader/Cheerleader
- Challenge students

We note some of these expectations are tied specifically to an individual teacher (the researcher). This has implications for conclusions related to predecessors and successors in a migratory context moving forward, but is not, in itself, a finding. The subsequent discussion ponders positionality relative to the outlined expectations. No individual holds all these expectations for a SBAE teacher and this list could be open for broad interpretation. The intent of this list is less about establishing a set of competencies or success measures for incoming teachers, and rather, serves as a snapshot of the conversation to bridge the gap between SBAE teachers and their communities. I will discuss the implications of these expectations in detail later. Essential to understanding the findings is the cumulative expectation load, even from only four others, is substantial. The positions SBAE migrators attempt to occupy can be at odds with taking up expectations from community influencers, displaying as a rejection of particular positionings.

  **Ag Teacher.** The evidence of the high expectation load for SBAE teachers compiles into a job description. Being a *content expert*, *student centered*, *connecting to science*, and *challenging students* easily encapsulate a SBAE teacher's prime directive: being a teacher. Some expectations also center on dispositions of effective educators: *competence*, *adaptability*, *learning*, *hardworking*, and *resourceful* are things pre-service teacher educators hope for in effective teachers leaving teacher preparation programs. However, substantial evidence congregates around SBAE teachers' roles outside the classroom as well. Expecting *significant time*, *program growth*, *student involvement*, *program vision*, *catering to the community*, and *providing wins* goes beyond the usual contract day and expectations of most teachers. Expectations, then, are taken up, reified, or rejected by the SBAE migrators enacting them.

  SBAE migrators see themselves as teachers, but perhaps not as their primary role; at least, not while they are directly in the role of being a SBAE teacher. Aaron captured it as

follows, recognizing he would flip the emphasis to focus more on being a teacher now that he is

no longer a SBAE teacher:

> It was heavy on the FFA/SAE. I was trying to build a program that had all three of those phases. Good strong FFA, good strong SAE, and to be honest with you, sometimes that classroom piece was the third part of that wheel. I look back on that experience as an ag teacher, but now as an administrator, I flip that around.

For each SBAE migrator, being a good teacher meant being concerned for kids and

facilitating learning. This easily reifies the community expectation to be *student centered*. It is

less clear if the ways these SBAE migrators took up being teachers takes up and reifies

community expectations regarding *content expertise*, *connections to science*, and *challenging*

*students*. Teachers positioned themselves as *learning content* rather than having *content*

*expertise*. Community members reified this expectation as they discussed what a SBAE program

should provide students: *opportunities*, *challenge*, *wins*, and *involvement*, to name a few.

Both community members and teachers prioritized *connectedness* over other positions

associated with the role of a teacher. Aaron prioritized *connections* with students over *content*

*knowledge*, recognizing the seemingly insurmountable challenge of being a *content expert* for

seven different areas:

> [Content] is part of the position. You can't be knowledgeable about seven content areas. That's not how it's designed to be set up. I can walk into a classroom and I can see a good teacher. As an administrator, that's what I'm looking for; those good teaching techniques, good strategies, connections with kids, connections with community, reaching out to parents…that kind of thing. As an administrator, what I'm trying to oversee… is less about content. I'm expecting them to be the content experts.

Aaron, however, also pointed out the ways he was not a *content expert* as a SBAE teacher:

> State Wildlife challenged me to begin with. That was not my strong suit. You give me an engine, you give me a welder, a woodshop. Even natural resources or small animals, at least there's a curriculum to follow. State Wildlife was a little bit harder because you've got a lot of outdoorsy kids who probably knew more than I did. In fact, I know they did…I tell that story of [a student] not working with me because eventually he did work with me and was a huge asset. I learned a lot by that experience as a teacher to

understand that you don't know everything and that's okay. If you can build relationships with kids so they understand and know [you don't know everything], it can give you power. Don't fake it. If you fake it, you're going to be screwed.

Stephanie conceded some advantage of student interest in the content area, but she also rejected being an expert:

As far as doing it better than other teachers, I think it was the content area. If [students] were interested it was so much easier to connect with them. A lot of times--the kids that were having trouble connecting with other teachers—it was because they weren't interested, or they weren't good at it, or they didn't like it. Whereas in Ag, at least one was probably turned around.

Each SBAE teacher recognized the challenge of being a *content expert* and deposed of this position in various ways. These teachers emphasized content as a way to connect with students, and rejected the notion of *expertise* in favor of comfort with the content or ability to use the content to make connections with students. There is no evidence in the data to indicate the community influencers took issue with the ways these teachers positioned themselves in the content they taught. As an administrator, Aaron recognized content expertise as an unreasonable expectation, as did the industrial technology teachers and alumni. *Content expert*, then, appears to be a position most in this study are comfortable rejecting.

*Challenging students* and *connecting to science* were particular emphases from the alumni member; logical concerns as his children were students in the program under three agriculture teachers in this context. John emphasized the ways he was comfortable with students being challenged and saw science as something administration weighed in keeping a SBAE program viable:

If the instructor is demanding a lot of things, at some point the student's going to say, "This isn't for me," and either shape up or get out…[In the past], there may have been someone who wasn't real demanding…Then students say, "Well, let's just take that class because that's an easy class," and then it gets stigmatized by the others.

I think with what you [(Becky)] were doing with work release credits and different things--I know you were working on different classes--created a lot more enthusiasm. When a program can continue along the way you were taking it, in a fairly short period of time--assuming you could make the connections with the school guidance counselors—you made sure the science courses being offered through the ag program were offered.

Then the counselor's going to include those in the recommendations, to make sure you get enough students to be able offer the classes. I think that could definitely change the mentality others would have about the ag program and say, "Wow, look at the new and exciting things going on." It could quickly become--hopefully not a competition--a partnership with some of the other areas and the science department in the school.

Across the SBAE teachers, however, there is no clear indication of taking up this call to *challenge* students. This does not mean students in these SBAE teachers' classes were not being challenged, nor does it mean these teachers were not being intentional with their rigor. John worked in close proximity with the SBAE teachers as the alumni president. While a particular expectation of one [(Becky)], it is an expectation that cannot be discounted as the primary imperative for teachers is teaching. Teachers, instead, talked about the challenges they faced. The need to manage so many other challenges to time and resources, in addition to student and program management, made it difficult to facilitate challenge for others, particularly in light of the plethora of other expectations on SBAE teachers.

There are positions teachers can take up, however, that impact how they are perceived as *student centered content experts*, ready to challenge students and connect to science. These positions of personality include being *competent*, *adaptable*, *learning*, *hardworking*, and *resourceful.* While SBAE teachers often took up these positions, they tend to identify these positions as separate from their work as teachers or FFA advisors. In fact, taking up these expectations was generally associated by SBAE teachers with necessity. They *had to* take up positions of being *competent*, *adaptable*, *learning*, *hardworking*, and *resourceful* because they were *limited* by the system in which they were operating. Teachers discussed not having the

autonomy to progress toward their vision, the inhibiting nature of their predecessor's work with

students, being unable to meet expectations, and generally having to "make things work" as

driving deposition within the expected personality of a SBAE teacher. While Aaron and

Stephanie mentioned ways they were able to build on what their predecessor had or had not

done, but those working with Jessie, positioned her as held to her predecessor's (the researcher's)

accomplishments.

The challenge of the predecessor extended well beyond Jessie to her community

influencers. John was not sure how to offer advice based on his most recent frame of reference

and expectations for the agriculture program:

> Unfortunately, I like [the ag program] to be something like you were building there. We
> talked about it as a group. We never wanted to have said, "Jessie, this is how Becky did
> it." It wasn't a great topic…They say, quite often, the worst place to be is following a
> successful person…But in your case, there was a high expectation, so we were very
> aware of that. We made it very clear to say, "Hey, everybody does things their own way,
> but this was nice. These are some things that were working. Maybe you want to consider
> it." We said it really nonchalantly.

Each SBAE teacher discussed the ways they worked to learn their job, find what they

needed, and make things work. It is difficult to ascertain whether the positions taken up by the

SBAE teachers relative to the expected positions of personality were taken up because of the

expectations of those with and for whom they worked, or if they were taken up long before, they

entered formalized teaching roles. While that is up for speculation, the evidence suggests these

SBAE teachers work incredibly hard to take up the positions of being *competent*, *adaptable*,

*learning*, *hardworking*, and *resourceful*. Unfortunately, these can often be moving targets, as

Aaron, Caleb, and John associate these positions with a particular SBAE teacher (the researcher)

rather than with the SBAE teacher as an institutional position:

> Aaron: The home run was with you [(Becky)]…We said unanimously, that in three years,
> this person's going to be an all-star and a rock star. We're going to go through that

process and we're going to get something fantastic, which we did. I don't know of any
other ag teacher as good as you when you left. You were absolutely fantastic. Everything
from the connections with kids, to how you grew the program, to your course offerings,
to FFA successes, community involvement, managing classrooms, fundraisers, all that
kind of stuff was just fantastic.

Caleb: You [(Becky)] were the first one who I actually had the experience where I could
be collegial and build something together…You were going to do the right course
regardless of who was there. It's like having a good kid in class…you could have trained
monkey here. [That student] was going to do well anyways…I think if Ben had been
there you would have done what you did. I don't know how much impact I actually had.
You're maybe looking back through rose colored glasses, but I think you failed to see
that you should have been wearing clear colored glasses, because a lot of it was just what
you did. You hunkered down. You worked hard. You asked for help when you needed it.
You weren't so stubborn in thinking that you knew it all and you couldn't ask for
guidance. You would have been successful there regardless of who was in my position.
Don't kid yourself.

John: In an ideal program, Becky Haddad would still be here. I mean that from the
bottom of my heart. We all understand, and we give you credit…But that type of long
term situation would really be one of the best ways to keep things going forward. If it
could be continued even half as much as what you had started, it would have kept
blossoming and growing.

**FFA Advisor.** This segues well into the position SBAE teachers are expected to hold

outside the classroom in managing a total program (i.e., classroom, FFA, SAE). Positioning the

job as something requiring *significant time*, *program growth*, *student involvement*, *program*

*vision*, *catering to the community*, and *providing wins* extend to occupy a substantial amount of a

SBAE teacher's time: being an *FFA advisor*. Contrary to anecdotal emphasis, these SBAE

teachers were primarily concerned with their classrooms over their total programs. While being

former FFA members themselves, these SBAE migrators recognized prospective opportunities to

advise FFA as drawing them to the profession. However, managing a total program was imposed

by others rather than something teachers took up on their own. Stephanie discussed the challenge

of managing the logistical load of a total program:

Having the classroom component, FFA, and then the work based learning, or SAE
component was really hard because there was no expectation before. [I spent a lot of

time] trying to get kids on board and trying to get them to think outside the box. The first
year I tried requiring [SAE] in every class and that was hard. It was a battle I gave up
quickly because I didn't see the value in it if they were like, "Oh, I babysat." I didn't feel
they were getting the purpose or the intent of the program.

Within this specific migratory context, Aaron did not take up the position of being an FFA

advisor—a role already occupied by his teaching counterpart--though Aaron did take up that

position at other schools. This has implications that will be discussed in detail in the conclusions.

For now, the important finding is not dismissing the logistical load SBAE teachers undertake in

their position as *FFA advisors*.

**Vision, Growth, & Responsibility.** The position of *FFA Advisor* would be enough on its

own, but community influencers and teachers add the importance of being positioned as

*visionary* relative to *community needs*. A certain expectation exists in this context for SBAE

teachers to occupy positions of *builder* and *visionary* to match the community's position of

*responsibility* and *growth*. Community influencers see themselves as doing the right things to

move their context forward and willing to grow while changing their situation for the better. The

matched uptake of these positions on the part of SBAE teachers comes to the fore as being a

*visionary builder*. John put it this way:

> VanZee brought opportunities with Supermileage and Robotics, for example, reaching
> students that probably would not have been reached. They had a liking to it, and it was
> fun to see the enthusiasm brought out. [It's the same] when I look at the students you
> were able to connect, and see where things ended up, and the experiences they had. The
> Rae Knights of the world would be extreme [examples], and she is doing other things, but
> there are others that didn't go to her level but still went beyond what they would've done
> otherwise…They quickly realized you guys [(Becky & Caleb)] were a force to be
> reckoned with.

As a SBAE teacher, Aaron took up meeting the needs of the community this way:

> In Oakville, it's a big ag community. You're trying to reach out to the local businesses
> and stuff…[my teaching partner] was already there and established…so I was *also* the ag
> teacher, not THE ag teacher. Everybody didn't want to come out and meet me like they

had done in the smaller communities. You were a member of the department. It was a little different.

Stephanie took up the position of someone with *vision* and ability to *grow* a program:

> Stephanie: We got FFA moving on leadership stuff that hadn't been a huge push in the past. Branching out and trying new CDEs, getting kids to start an SAE program; that had never really been a thing. [We were] changing the whole stigma around ag programs and around FFA. It was a slow process, but I feel like I started.

The SBAE teachers in this migratory context worked hard to take up and reify the ways their community positioned them to *enact a vision* and *grow* a SBAE program. However, the position of *visionary* and *builder* tended to be rejected by community influencers if what was enacted did not align with, or look like, the vision and direction sought. This is a particular challenge for uptake when the definition of these positions is not clearly conveyed. Aaron elaborated:

> A lot of times when I'll talk to a new teacher, what I convey is I want you to have a vision for your program and I want to support you in that vision. Each ag teacher has strengths and weaknesses. Each community has strengths and weaknesses. What is our ag program going to be here at Oakville? It's going to be a little bit different if you're the advisor, compared to if I'm the advisor compared, to if [my predecessor] is the advisor. Each of us has different things. You also have to keep in mind what the community is looking for in its ag program. What are the businesses looking for in the ag program? So you've got to meld those together, and it looks different depending on who's running it.
>
> If it's your program, Becky, I want you to have that vision; keeping in mind what the community needs and wants, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and then have a vision of where you want to be in two, and three, and five, and ten years. I want to help you get there. I want you to grow the program so I have to go to the superintendent and say, "I need another ag teacher." That would be fantastic. I truly believe that could be Oakville. With our student population, we could have two ag teachers here. I truly do believe that is a possibility, depending on the courses we offer and whoever's leading. That teacher who's leading it is extremely important. They have to be the champion, trying to develop whatever their vision is of their ag program. I don't know if I did a good job with that or not, but that's what I want.

While this may not appear as a challenging position to occupy on first read, in context, there is more to satisfactorily occupying the position of *vision chaser* than first meets the eye.

Aaron said, "I'll be honest with you right now, I probably could not tell you what the current ag

teacher's vision of their program is." John also saw occupying this position as an obvious

challenge for Jessie:

> John: I had envisioned being able to go to the community, and people could come in and
> have a chance to [introduce themselves] and make some connection. But I got so turned
> off from the start, it just never happened…Hopefully you have your officers and your key
> junior and senior members come in and give their two cents. Say, "This is what's working
> well," and "This is what we like doing." I don't think there were even any questions
> asked of current students a couple years ago regarding what you'd like us to be doing.
> The advisor didn't ask them what they thought was going to be something that would
> work.

**Summary: Conflicting Requirements.** Within the *Conflicting Requirements* theme,

interactions of attempt and intention seek to yield better programmatic results for all involved.

Unfortunately, lack of clarity in expectation challenges the uptake and reification of positions

allowing forward mobility through *vision*, *growth*, and *needed change*. Those involved can put

themselves in a position of *doing the right things*, but unless the right things are taken up and

reified by those with whom they closely interact, an irreconcilable challenge to positions occurs.

While not a surprising finding, it bears writing out empirically: Without all involved agreeing on

the "right things," it is difficult to find a way forward allowing SBAE teachers to position

themselves as *meeting expectations*.

*Theme 2: I Can & I Will*

Being in a position of *not meeting expectations* presents a sizeable challenge on its own,

yet community influencers and SBAE teachers expect some additional challenge and generally

position themselves as autonomous survivors. They are up for the challenge because they are

different from others. *I Can and I Will* considers the ways people position themselves as able to

persevere despite challenges and obstacles. This theme examines how people position

themselves as *well equipped* to tackle challenges with *autonomy*. Limits on *autonomy* impose

positions of *less*; lacking capacity, ability, or autonomy to accomplish one's desires. Presented

within the *I Can and I Will* theme, community influencers and SBAE migrators take up, reify,

and reject positions of *survivor, resilient, autonomous,* and *imposter*. Rather than conveying

competing positions in their individual interviews, both community influencers and SBAE

migrators conveyed very similar positions in carrying out their roles.

**Resilient Survivor.** Positions of *survivorship* and *resiliency* capture ideas of just getting

by, unable to keep pace with the demands of the job, having outlasted others despite difficult

odds, working beyond capacity, or not having the needed resources (material or otherwise) to

occupy a desired position. Community influencers appear to identify more strongly with the

positions of *survivor* and *resilient* than SBAE migrators do. In addition, more codes clustered

around these positions as assigned by community influencers to their SBAE migrator

counterparts than either party specifically identifying with these positions on their own. Though

limited emphasis was placed on this position, SBAE migrators positioned themselves as

survivors, as well. Aaron proposed:

> Especially in the first three years, you're in that little bit of a survival mode when you're
> trying to get good at [being an ag teacher]. You're always on edge, always wondering if that
> lesson you planned is going to be go well. Let's say you have a challenging behavioral class,
> is what you do going to do work? With the projects you plan, how long are they going to
> take?

While Stephanie suggested:

> I don't really remember what my expectations were, so it's hard to say what went well. I was
> just surviving, I think. It was hard. Then, my second year was when my first was born, so
> that was another big thing.

Remember, for Aaron, NPC was not his first teaching job. His individual migratory context

draws on experience from two other schools before coming to NPC, and these experiences

culminate in his positioning within the NPC context as well. The above recounting from Aaron

captures experiences outside NPC, but is still relevant to his learning to position himself as a

SBAE teacher.

Community influencers also positioned themselves as survivors. As an administrator,

Aaron pointed out he was only one of two from his graduating cohort still involved in education:

> I look back at my class because I graduated with ten. Of those ten, nobody is still an ag teacher. Two of us are administrators. The rest of them went to industry. From my group out of [university], none of them are still teaching ag. Two of us are still in education…I'm still [in education] and I'm the anomaly…There are obviously challenges to it, but it can be a good career in the end. It is challenging. It is difficult, but that's why it's rewarding. You don't go into this profession thinking it's easy, I can tell you that much.

Caleb talked about the ways getting by has changed, especially within his new teaching context,

noting especially his relief from extra duties because of his proximity to school:

> The young teacher needs to feel that connection. The beauty of coming here is I don't have to do that. I've got the excuse. Nobody says to me, "Oh, you can't come out tonight?" They're like, "Oh, you're 45 minutes away from here. See ya." They accept it. I build the relationships with the people I need. I am very accommodating and work with all staff members, but I don't have a big, tight knit, cliquey group that I'm with. I eat lunch [in my room], I eat lunch with [my co-teacher]. When [my other co-teacher] had the same lunch she ate with me too. We don't leave [our classrooms]. We stay in our silo. I've become a silo dweller and it's out of making my priorities right…I pick and choose for survival.

Ben also elaborated his priority shift later in his teaching career to keep him in the classroom:

> If you have children, you put your school curriculum on the back burner and you survive for a couple years until they're older, and then you come back. When you're coaching, you put your school classroom on the back burner and you do it all. You only have so many creative juices in one day, you have to spread them out. If you're coaching, you're using your creative juices there. It's just a matter of fact, unless we have some superhuman people. But I couldn't do it. When I was coaching, during my prep, I was planning a lot of the things I was going to teach in the coaching, because my curriculum had been built already. I wasn't thinking, "What I should do different than I did last year," though.

John, on the other hand, connected surviving to a bigger picture. First, what it means to *survive*

in the agriculture industry:

> This is a very strong agricultural area. We're just outside of [a large metro] area and getting a little bit closer….I graduated high school in 1986. That was probably the worst year of the farm crisis. Up until that point, our whole area was a lot of farms that were the traditional farms that had cows and soybeans. Beginning in the 70s, farmers either got bigger or quit farming. My dad and grandfather got into the crop farming more. We were a bigger operation that rose up quicker and we had further to fall when things got bad in the 80s. Because of that, agriculture was looked at somewhat negatively by others outside of ag. Not that they feel sorry for us, but more, "That really isn't a place to have our kids get into"…That mentality began hurting the ag program big time and numbers started falling back down.

Second, what it means to keep the Ag Booster program going at NPC and the politics of survival:

> We try working as a group, but as an individual, I thought, "I'm not going to try to keep hounding and be met with awkward silence or awkward responses." I probably get turned off too soon. I kind of switched to survival mode. Let's just keep the program alive.

> I think one of the reasons it's surviving is the majority of the school board members and the administration seem to keep getting the message it is still an important building block to the school. It's an important building block to connect to rural land owners who, by the way, have the controlling interest of property value. They're paying the majority of school taxes, whether they think about it that way or not. They have to stay supportive of the whole community, but you definitely have to keep support of those that are going to pay in the bills. That's probably one of the reasons they don't dare can the ag program completely.

John was particularly clear, however, that he does not expect the position of SBAE teacher to be

inherently challenging:

> [The job being challenging] is not an expectation I hold. Hard just to be hard is not it. Is it going to be challenging? I would say yes. If you'd compare the ag teacher's role to the math teacher--who has six sections a day and every single section you're teaching the exact same topic and the rules of the topic haven't changed for the last 50 years--teaching ag has to be a whole lot different. The technology we use is changing daily, weekly, yearly, and you've got to deal with FFA activities and other things going on throughout the day. You're trying to keep everything going. By nature of the job it can be more challenging.

> This is a key finding as participants in this context positioned themselves as a *survivor*.

Yet, only the influencers seemed to articulate the ways the other party (SBAE migrators) was

surviving as well. Aaron saw the ways being a SBAE teacher could be survival inducing, but did

not claim survivorship for himself:

I wouldn't say overworked. I wouldn't use that term. Even though, when you look back at the hours you put in, you're right. I guess I never really thought of it that way, of being overworked. I didn't. It's new. It took a lot of work to get good at it. Maybe feeling under-prepared…I was always looking for those resources to try. But no, I never really thought overworked. I could see how somebody could feel that way.

Caleb specifically called out the challenges of the job of teaching in CTE:

Well, it is [possible to manage a huge program], but you can't be married. You can't have children. You have to find that balance, but you establish it and then you back off. Had I remained in Oakville, I would've backed off. I've been working at backing off. I got out of robotics a little bit at a time. Eventually, I would've let Supermileage go as well.

Ben also echoed the ways the job itself was something to survive:

I think [Caleb] would still be around here if he had a load he could handle. That's the same thing with ag teachers with FFA. Those extracurricular things you're doing on weekends and all this stuff in the summertime; that's what burns a lot of teachers out. You're wearing too many hats and you're trying to do too much. There ought to be more like an eight hour day for ag teachers. I really believe that…I loved my teaching career when I wasn't in coaching, but when I had to do extracurriculars I wanted to go home with my family.

In addition:

Ben: An ag teacher just sees how overwhelming a job gets to be, and then the expectations of the town, and all the activities the previous teacher did, and suddenly they're saying, "I have no life," and they say, "I'm going to go crazy," or "I need to be somewhere else to see if I can find something better."

**Overwhelmed, but Autonomously Up for the Challenge.** The SBAE migrators in this study generally reify positions of *overworked* and *overwhelmed*. The job of SBAE teacher is a substantial load. However, SBAE migrators commonly rejected the position of not up for the challenge. These SBAE migrators positioned themselves with *autonomy* as they conveyed taking ownership of their SBAE program:

Aaron: It's a different experience working with someone in the same department, because you're used to being completely autonomous. The administrators don't know what the heck you're doing. Frankly, if you're not sending someone out of class, they don't really care. If I wanted to try something or do something different, I could when I was in my own department. When I had someone to collaborate with, I had to run it past them, which I enjoyed, but I could see could be an issue for some.

Stephanie: I was hired with this promise of, "Do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be." That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half the time I was teaching Junior High, which was not my fave, and the other part of the time was the high school stuff. I did a variety of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS Animal Science and Horticulture. I added some of my own stuff, but was tied down schedule-wise by the Junior High electives and that wasn't something I was really into.

Community influencers also positioned SBAE teachers as needing to be individuals:

Aaron: I want you to have a vision for your program, and I want to support you in that vision. Each ag teacher has strengths and weaknesses. Each community has strengths and weaknesses. What is our ag program going to be here in Oakville? It's going to be a little bit different if you're the advisor, compared to if I'm the advisor, compared to if [my predecessor] is the advisor. Each of us has different things…You've got to meld those together, and it looks different depending on who's running it.

Ben: [The program] changes based on what your skills are, where your enthusiasm is, and where your training is. For instance, for Stephanie, she was really into animal science…So she did more of that for the students.

John: [Community connections] are up to each individual. Right now, there's no time to talk about anything. They're going to do it their way. We attempted to give them a heads up of how things moved forward or some successful things they maybe wanted to take a look at, but it was just like, "Fine, but I'm doing it this way."

However, community influencers easily rejected this *autonomy* as they identified what

SBAE migrators might have needed when they came to a new community. Community

influencers positioned SBAE migrators as *dependent*. SBAE migrators were positioned as

needing something from their community influencers, and having this position of *dependency*

rejected posed a difficult challenge for community influencers who were just trying to help:

Aaron: When I'll do a formal observation of a first year teacher, I don't spend as much time on [the rubric]. It's more of a conversation about, "How are things going?" I had conversations with my teachers today and yes, we talked about content, and we talked about pedagogy and different ways of doing things. But it was a lot about: How are things going? How are connections with your students? How are things going with your mentor teacher, your cooperating teacher, the person that you are teaching the course with? How can we support you? How are things going in general?

Caleb: I probably could have approached [Jessie] more often to let her know I was there in support. I don't know if I did due diligence in that way. I often think, "Did I help her enough? Have I helped her enough?" Unfortunately, she's in a situation now where the other person in that department is not trained in that area and isn't a teacher by training. She really doesn't have a good mentor now. I've reached out a couple of times to see how things were going, and she just wasn't approachable.

Ben: I would try to connect with Stephanie for a short time, almost every day, to ask how things are going, see if she needs anything, see if she's pulling her hair out or not…but we can't really help them with too much to start. We have to get them comfortable, tell them where to eat.

John: When I look at the turnover consistently happening here, I think sometimes, "Is there something that needs to be done differently?" Our group is here now and that's going to help. But are some other things making instructors not want to stay? …Maybe we should have been trying to, as an Ag Boosters group, see if there's something else happening…maybe having constant communication with administration to see if they have some red flags they see. Maybe these numbers are down, or the school board members are having a challenging time hiring a sub.

Interestingly, SBAE migrators did not identify their community as *surviving* and did not

articulate any specific dependencies. Being able to do more with less is where SBAE migrators

in this study positioned themselves as unique from others in their context, particularly as it

related to being more capable:

Aaron: I did increase FFA membership, not by a lot, but I did. We did more activities than they had done in previous years. We started a couple teams, went to national and state convention. I didn't have any teams compete at that level, but we had membership at those conventions and stuff.

Aaron: I probably would've stayed [at my first school], because I laid down pretty good groundwork compared to the other teacher. There was negativity from the teacher side and negativity from the administration and community towards him. I recharged it a little bit and there was some positivity there. I got some kids involved that weren't before. I had a pretty strong officer team; fun, good kids to be around. I would've stayed if it wasn't for getting married.

Stephanie: I feel like I walked into a different situation. A lot of times, when teachers come in, the community is like, "You're not the last teacher," and that's a big thing to overcome. I was lucky not to have that, because the person before me was a long term sub they let go half way through the year. The community welcomed me with open arms, and I think they were happy to have someone to have the place stable again.

**Imposter.** Even with being more capable, these SBAE migrators also positioned themselves as *imposters*. Each SBAE migrator talked about times in their career when they were not good, underprepared, too new at their job, inexperienced, unsuccessful, naïve, or having something to prove. This theme focuses on the ways SBAE migrators and community influencers took on challenges to their roles. Nevertheless, depth and richness would be missing in the findings without conceding *taking on challenge* was not a position occupied with supreme confidence. Teachers doubted their abilities at times. Aaron put it this way:

> I wasn't [good]. I had to tread water all year long. That is where you're at the first year. At the time I was going through it I felt like a fake; someone is gonna know I'm faking it here. You try to be positive and you try to be good, but that lesson you prepared wasn't the greatest lesson in the world. But you had five other ones you had to do, and that was the best you could do at that time. I did have some realization I knew I wasn't going to be great right off the bat, but even today, sometimes I feel like I'm faking again. I think we all do.

While Stephanie said:

> I was really a fish out of water. I didn't know what I should be teaching because there was no curriculum to do it. It was like, "Do whatever you want." That's hard because the first year I was like, "Yeah! We'll build birdhouses." I didn't realize that's hard work to build birdhouses with 36 kids you only see every other day. That takes a lot of time! So I probably had to lower my expectations.

Regrettably, the *imposter* position was one the community influencers imposed, with none taking up this position for themselves.

**Summary:** The interesting finding within this theme is the not. There is a discrepancy between the ways SBAE migrators and community influencers position themselves. While both rely on similar positions, *resilient survivor*, *autonomous individual*, and *imposter* are taken up, reified, and rejected in ways that may incite conflict among the participants in this study. Both community influencers and SBAE migrators are *resilient survivors*, but only community influencers see their counterparts this way. Similarly, SBAE migrators perceive themselves as

*autonomous individuals*, a position reified by their community counterparts. However, SBAE

migrators do not give this same position to their community influencers. Both SBAE migrators

and community influencers position the SBAE migrator as an *imposter*. The implications of

these positions will be discussed in detail in the conclusions.

### Theme 3: All My Love & Support

I have given significant attention to the challenges imposed by particular expectations on

the participants within this migratory context. Without minimizing these challenges, the

participants in this study positioned themselves as *invested* in each other. Ideas of *support*,

*connectedness*, and *investment* expose the uptake, reification, and rejection of these positions. *All

My Love and Support* focuses on positions of investment in establishing oneself, or allowing a

new member into, a particular community.

**Supported.** The SBAE migrators in this study position themselves as *supported* when

they have others on whom they can rely, are not alone, and are able to draw on others to fulfill

needs of self and program. Each SBAE migrator positioned themselves as supported, though one

also witnessed a breakdown in this support. In feeling supported, SBAE migrators suggested the

following ideas:

> Aaron: [My predecessor at my second school] was more than helpful. He would never
> undermine. He was always positive and still an active member of the alumni chapter. He
> did a lot of positive things for me; gave me tips and things he did. It wasn't that he was
> telling me what to do, he was just telling me what he did and it was good. In fact, after I
> left, he replaced me. He went back into education.

> Aaron: That seemed like a positive piece [at NPC]. People were introducing themselves
> and saying, "Hey, do you want to do this?" "Do you want to do that?" That kind of stuff.
> You [(Becky)] were very open to that piece. I reflect back to look at Jessie right now;
> does that feel different to her? Does that feel like people are hovering or attacking or
> judging? I don't know the answer to that. When I was reading through [that reflection] I
> wondered that, because working with Jessie over the last several years and trying to help
> her [make connections], maybe it's just different personalities. Maybe it's just different
> ways of thinking about things. Maybe it's skill level. I thought that was interesting that

you felt supported. We're going to move and shake. I don't know if Jessie feels that same way with it.

Stephanie: [That community member] helped with the crops team. That was something we had never done before. Volunteering with coaching, working on alumni stuff, we had a couple meetings to try to get things going. When families participate in fundraisers, they're raising money because they know it's going to a worthy cause. That was one thing we always were so good at. Even the kids that didn't want to spend any of the money would sell the most fruit, which was awesome. Another great community person worked at [a local ag lending company]. He was great to make those community connections. [A local welder] was another one. He had no skin in the game at that time. His kids didn't go to school here. He came in and volunteered pretty much every day and basically taught welding. Those are just some specific ways I felt people didn't have to [express value in what we were doing].

Stephanie: Someone was in my class and was like, "I know this guy who knows a lot about welding." I was like, "Yeah, he should come in." Then he came in and talked as a business owner. Then he was like, "I can just come in every day." And I said, "Okay. That's awesome!" I did not approach him with the intention of him doing that, but it worked out great. Now it's nice to have someone on the school board in your back pocket.

Stephanie: I know in talking to other people they don't have the support we had [at NPC]. I think Aaron was always in my corner. I think Stewart saw the value. He was always suggesting more work for me to do. Like, "You should take this on," "You should do this." I'd be like, "Yeah, thanks for all the ideas. I've got my own ideas."

Community influencers positioned themselves as intentional about being *supportive* to

understand the reciprocal nature of support. Overall, the community influencers in this study

tend to see themselves taking up, and reifying, the position of *providing support*:

Aaron: A new teacher needs [school logistics] and maybe help on content. Maybe they're not strong in small engines, but they're teaching a small engines class. Maybe they're not as strong in horticulture-- you didn't have a lot of coursework in that or experience with that--but you've got a big horticulture program. Maybe it's welding, maybe it's woods, maybe it's whatever. Especially for ag teachers, content area help is important.

Then there's the actual teaching; what is good teaching practice? How do you control that classroom? What classroom management techniques [are most effective]? Transitioning, pacing, planning, assessment, communication with other staff members, communication with administration, communication with parents. We add FFA and all that stuff with community starts to add these layers…How does a new teacher do it? You dive in and swim. I wish there was a better way to do it.

Aaron: I think new teachers need a lot more support, because a veteran teacher already knows how to teach. They already know their content area…when they come into a new school, you have to figure out where the hardware store is, how you get metal, who we use for welding equipment. Who is a great FFA supporter? Who can you go to? What fundraisers do you do? Those logistic things that make the chapter Program of Activities.

John: I had the desire to get an alumni support group going, and one of the things we talked about in our initial group is needing to have a group to have continuity. We know there's going to be turnover based on past history. I took it upon myself…I probably should've put a little more time and effort into it.

John: The [booster] group is there to support the program and the students where needed. We have the two successful fundraisers we do, being our pork chop supper and the pork stand at [a local county fair]. Those are generating five to $8,000 a year. We use it to support going to state and national convention, leadership conferences, and so on. More importantly, though, is the continuity piece. There has not been a huge financial challenge within the district [recently]. That day will come again. I think our most important role is going to be to go *en masse* to the administration and speak up for the program to keep it from disappearing.

This reciprocal relationship of being *supported* and *supportive* compliment uptake and reification between SBAE migrators and the community influencers with whom they interact. To be *supported*, others must position themselves as *supportive*. However, the reciprocity of support was dissimilar across the SBAE migrators. Stephanie expressed ways she felt positioned as *unsupported*.

Stephanie: "Well, you can't do work based learning because you have to have a study hall." I was like, "I don't want to do a study hall." The school didn't see the value or try to find a way to make that work. They were just like, "Well, that won't work because you have to do a study hall." I never quite figured it out, because Aaron knows what this is. He knows I wouldn't just be sitting here twiddling my thumbs for an hour every day. But sometimes…the people doing the schedules don't want to figure out how to make it work.

Stephanie: That's a spot where I really thought Aaron would back me up, specifically because I knew he knew the value of that program. We could easily identify students that would really benefit from [work based learning] and who were asking for it….I'm like, "Well, why can't they be getting credit for this?" I probably could have done more on my end to get it going, but I kept getting, "You have to have a [supervisory]"… I was like, "Well, that's not how the program works. You don't just send them out." But they were not willing to pay me or for that to count as a class if I wasn't going to have a supervisory. I think that was probably the most frustrating one because I knew they knew

the benefits. There were several kids we could identify that would have really benefited. With the whole Ag Ed model, that should be a part that is included.

**Connected.** Community influencers continued to position themselves as *supportive*.

Across this theme are evidence of discrepancies between the uptake and reification of support

provided and support perceived. Positioning oneself as *supportive* or as *being supported* tied

closely with ideas of *connectedness*. SBAE migrators used terms like collaborator, department

member, partner, community member, and accepting to position themselves as *connected*.

Community influencers reified these efforts on the part of SBAE migrators with terms like,

engager, relationship oriented, appreciative, connector, teammate, and easy to work with. I will

start with evidence of the SBAE migrators' positioning themselves as *connected*.

> Aaron: That's what I was looking for when I came here. I wanted [the collaboration] piece because I wanted somebody to say, "Hey, what you're doing is okay or not." I wanted some feedback. Because a principal comes to that ag teacher and tries, but they know nothing about your content area. They can talk about how you're teaching and those different teaching techniques, as far as if what you're teaching is right and that kind of stuff? Yeah. They don't know anything…I was looking for feedback on what we're doing, how we're doing it.

> Stephanie: Just showing up at [students'] activities, and not saying no to many things. I would present them with the full gamut and they were like, "I want to run for region office." "Okay. How can I help you get that done?" Things like that. Letting them know the support was there, if they wanted it.

For community influencers, it was essential opportunities to connect were present, reciprocated,

and passed on to students and community members. As an administrator, Aaron starts the

conversation at the interview, "When I interview a teacher, I'm looking for them to be student-

focused. I want to hear how they talk about students, how they can connect with students, how

they can help students." Connectedness permeates the community influencers positioning, both

of themselves and their SBAE counterparts:

> Ben: The whole school has a little bit of a responsibility. The administration, the principal should connect, if they're doing their job right. They should be connecting every day. But

do they? No. They're busy with other things. With that new teacher, that principal should be checking up on him to ask, "Hey, what are you doing? Do you need some help?" Maybe delegate somebody. Then say, "She needs help with the grade book. Come and help her with that."

John: We attempted to give them a heads up of how things moved forward or some successful things they may want to take a look at. It was just like, "Fine, but I'm doing it this way." I still think [connection] is important though. If I'd placed myself in their shoes, to walk in and have some ideas of what worked and what didn't work would sure be easier than having a blank slate, I would think.

Yet, connectedness can be a rejected position. Once again, however, one SBAE migrator

was positioned as less connected, unresponsive, not a member of the community, unable to

connect, and unapproachable by the community influencers with whom she worked:

Aaron: Jessie struggles. She lacks the needed confidence. She does not connect very well with the community. She does not connect very well with the alumni group. She doesn't communicate very well with those groups, with parents and students. She has conflict with FFA officers and FFA members, almost on an adolescent level.

Caleb: When [Jessie] came in, I did my best to make sure she knew--and I repeated the mantra as often as I could--whenever there were concerns, whenever she was working on things, whenever she was frustrated, we're a team. We're a department together. You don't have to do this alone. I will help you in whatever way. In fact, there were a couple of times in small engines I went in, and she took my class in the woodshop, and I took her class, and I showed them how to use the valve grinders.

I straightened them up. There were some kids who were beings knots about her abilities to teach small engines. I pointed out to the students, "Well, you had a choice. You could have this teacher and be able to work in small engines. You could have no teacher and not have small engines at all. Put up or shut up. You can help out. She's young, she's new she didn't learn about this. She's doing the best she can." I probably could have heard that a few times in high school too.

John: We're in the third year of [the current instructor] already and the initial lack of follow through turned people off. Now, there does seem to be a little bit of an interest to be a little more responsive, but attitude is everything. The underlying message might show up in email; you can almost sense the attitude it was written with. I think it just gets under somebody else's skin. It's not a healthy relationship. You force yourself to get along but it's just not the same when it's not somebody who you'd choose to go along with.

**Invested.** Being *supported/supportive* and being *connected* go hand in hand with the

position of *investment/commitment*. Much of what leads to someone being positioned this way

appears as a function of how willing they are to accept support and how they embed into their

community. While geographical ties are important, John specifically mentioned how someone

can, "be in this community for forty years and still not be from here." This is not to imply the

Oakville community is cold. Instead, it reminds the reader *investment* is more nuanced than

being geographically connected to place. Ideas associated with *invested* include commitment,

involvement, enthusiasm, familiar, excited, and advocate. The SBAE migrators gave the

following evidences of working to take up a position of investment:

> Aaron: I got involved in a lot of different things. Through FFA you're involved in a ton
> of different things…[list of FFA and school activities]…I'd go to the school board
> meetings. Not in Oakville, but at [my first two schools], I was at most of the school board
> meetings, because that FFA program was a big thing in those small communities. Living
> there was an important piece as well.

> Aaron: I had students who were interested in a particular CDE I knew absolutely
> NOTHING about. But being prepared, I was going to do the research and figure it out, or
> I'm going to find other people to help out. You can't be everything to everybody. If you
> do, you're going to burn out and leave the profession. Giving up control is nerve
> wracking. Working with administration, budgets, fundraising…I did a lot. I'm sure I
> made mistakes along the way, they just weren't huge enough to get me fired.

> Stephanie: We joined a church in town. We got to know people, mainly through my co-
> workers at the school, because my husband works remotely. We didn't have kids, so we
> went to a lot of football games and a lot of activities that were part of the school.

Community influencers took up and reified investment efforts through acknowledgement and

praise, both in their talk with the researcher and their recounted actions:

> Aaron: I don't know of any other ag teacher as good as you [(Becky)] when you left. You
> were absolutely fantastic. Everything from the connections with kids, to how you grew
> the program, to your course offerings, to FFA successes, community involvement,
> managing classrooms, fundraisers, all that stuff was just fantastic.

Aaron: You [(Becky)] really took what I had and what Stephanie had and then it went off. With the FFA program in particular, with the alumni association, community involvement piece, student involvement piece. You really did a great job with that.

Aaron: You help them in their development as a teacher, get them connected here to students, to staff, to community, all of those different types of things. I think teachers here give a reason to stay. The culture piece, trying to build positive culture within the school.

Caleb: I was willing to share everything I had. I would've come into your [(Becky's)] classroom and taught lessons. I would've done whatever you wanted me to do to be able to make it go well for you. I knew a weak point for you, you said that day one, "Well I've never done this before." I'd be there to help you through it. At the same time, I didn't want to say, "Well I taught it before, why don't I just take it from here on out?" I thought it was great you were willing to learn it and now you're an engine guru.

John: You were bustling with energy, and you seemed to be one step ahead of us already. You got after people. We were more interested in getting a group together to make use of some of that enthusiasm and help move things along as you saw fit.

The investment, however, takes a different flavor when time is added to the geography equation. Investment goes beyond connections and attendance. Ben and John offer the depth of this investment as they position themselves as particularly invested in the Oakville community:

Ben: In a town the size of Oakville, people really appreciate the teachers that live in town and go to their churches, are there for other activities. They see him go downtown to the parade, and all that stuff…When you have a smaller town, that's one of the things that has changed a lot. I don't know if it's right or wrong, but it has changed. More than 50% of the staff live in different towns. It's just different…but we've noticed people really appreciate if you're living in the town you work at.

Ben: The same thing is true when you have your children in that same town. They're involved in Little League, and you make connections. They're involved in Boy Scouts, and then you're making connections. The more connections you make, the more respect you have in town. You're an integral part of town and not just an employee of the school district. You're more than that to the community.

John used his investment in the community to leverage the history of the agriculture program, but also to elaborate the lack of investment that has marked NPC SBAE teachers for the last thirty years:

John: I had a great experience…but [Mom] didn't really push me to get into Ag. There was already a bit of stigmatism. Back then the ag kids were the ones that weren't in band and choir, or already on some of the higher level classes…I don't think mom was going to encourage me to get into it, but I hate band. I never got into choir, so I joined FFA late… When I graduated in '86 they cut the program back so it was just one advisor after that. He was around for a few years, and he went on to be an electrician, and it was kind of a revolving door for a bit. Back then it was the lack of support from the community because of the challenges in ag.

John: Because of the history of the last 30 or 40 years, we know we don't keep anybody in [the SBAE teacher] position for more than two, or three, or four, or five years. I am proud to say we will be starting our 143rd year as the Shellums. The sixth generation is going to be back full time in three months. I take things with a little different perspective. I think--because of the deep ties--I look at the ag program and think, "Well, what did my dad's program in the 60s look like?" and some of those things. It's that inherent nature of the continuity of agriculture and tie to the land. I'm wanting to keep it going.

FFA, for a lot of people, is still one of those things, if you're involved in production agriculture. I mean you get confirmed, you graduate high school. You want to be part of FFA. I hope it never becomes the nostalgic view, for those of us tied to agriculture. It's that view, but for a lot of other students and a lot of the families that like to get involved, they may or may not have that same legacy. We still want to make sure--because the importance of keeping going--we include as many people as possible. You need a broad base to be able to keep going forward.

**Summary: All My Love & Support.** In these tellings, uptake, reification, and rejection turn to ideas of reciprocal investment. In essence, do community influencers position SBAE teachers as *equally invested* rather than merely *invested*? The implications of this commitment and investment will be discussed in detail in the conclusions, but the importance of this finding is the nuance of investment beyond ties to place. *Investment* is the culmination of, and is predicated on, *connection* and *support*, but goes beyond the provision of these positions to an expected uptake of connectedness and being supported. Anything less than uptake and reification is a slight to the investment of community influencers; a slight that will inevitably cause support and connectedness to crumble as available positions within the SBAE teacher's repertoire.

**Summary: Research Question 3.** In answer to the question, "How are assigned positionalities deposed (taken up, rejected, or reified) by SBAE migrators and community

members?" three themes emerged: *Conflicting Requirements*, *I Can and I Will*, and *All My Love and Support*. These themes come together to position SBAE migrators and community members in relation to each other relative to the uptake, rejection, and reification of positions. Taken together, these themes compile an interesting landscape for SBAE migrators and their community influencers to navigate. First, the expectations from community influencers on SBAE migrators are numerous and varied. Taking up positions relative to these expectations is an imperative for SBAE teachers. However, this can be a competing imperative with their own efforts of independent positionality. Second, survivorship and autonomy are at odds with each other. SBAE teachers and community influencers each take up these positions, but did not always extend the courtesies of these positions to others. By this, I mean these SBAE migrators positioned themselves with survivorship and autonomy and their community influencers saw them in that position. Whether for lack of opportunity in the interview or truly not viewing their counterparts this way, SBAE migrators did not position the community members with whom they interacted as surviving or having autonomy. Finally, positions of *support* and *connectedness* tied closely with *investment*. Community influencers reified SBAE migrators attempts at investment where support and connectedness were reciprocated. SBAE migrators took up support, but also recognized rejection in their investment efforts if they did not align with the community influencers' positions of being supportive and connected.

**Question 4: How does the uptake, rejection, or reification of positionalities influence the support and/or challenge perceived by SBAE migrators and their communities?**

The culminating question closely, and specifically, examines the last theme of the previous question. Impacts on perceived support serve as a means to understand what teachers seek in the migratory contexts they engage. This aids in understanding goals of retention sought

at the organizational level. Retentive outcomes are a nuanced construct. However, *support* is the

construct by which community influencers exert the greatest level of control. In articulating

implications of support, teacher educators, administrators, researchers, and other community

influencers can better understand the means by which teachers feel embedded in their

communities.

The evidence allows the discussion of the ways uptake, reifications, and rejections of

support influenced support and challenge perceived within this migratory context. To answer this

question, SBAE migrator positions of *supported* and *up for a challenge* aligned with community

influencer positions of *supportive* and *challenged.* This focused these positions in light of the

uptake, rejection, and reification of the same addressed in the previous research question. The

address of this research question occurs under the themes of *support* and *challenge*, and these

themes are defined as follows:

1. *Supported/Supportive*: Taking up a *supported* or *supportive* position is an explicitly

   reciprocal positionality. One cannot be supportive without someone else taking up being

   a supported other. The challenge implied in the deposition of this position is the means of

   support relative to what is perceived as needed by both parties involved.

2. *Challenged*: Being in the position of *challenged* highlights a nuance in desire. Some

   *challenge* is desirable, as it fosters continued change and growth, pushing an individual

   forward. Other *challenge* is rejected as an affront to autonomy or other attempts at

   desired positionality.

### *Theme 1: Supported/Supportive*

Within feeling supported, teachers recounted several episodes inducing this position.

Aaron discussed the ways he was able to rely on fellow SBAE teachers to take up positions of

being supportive in response to his uptake of needing support. He mentioned calling nearby

SBAE teachers and their uptake of being supportive by providing any help or resources they

could. Material resources also came into play; having community members visible in the school,

having his predecessor in the community, and taking advantage of social opportunities to connect

with administration. With these reifications, Aaron felt embedded in the community and

supported. This was an essential component of Aaron's taking up being supported in each of the

three districts he taught. Aaron went into detail about resource availability as he recounted

finding support at NPC; going to content workshops, having community members ask about his

connections to the area, and continuing to connect with mentors from previous geographical

locations were important resources aiding Aaron in reifying his position as supported.

Stephanie recognized her uptake of being supported seemed to come fortuitously from

the context she stepped into. Stephanie recognized stability as a key factor in the uptake of being

supported at NPC. She further identified the people available to provide support, specifically

noting Aaron's connections to the agriculture department and his availability as one of her

administrators. This was supplemental to the mentor she found in Ben. She said:

> One unique thing was the assistant principal was one of the former instructors, so I had him to help with onboarding. He was especially helpful with some of the discipline things I had because he already had relationship and rapport. Him being able to tell me, "This is who we use for welding materials," and "This is what we've done with whatever," was so helpful.
>
> At the time, PLCs weren't really a thing yet, but Mr. Meyer was a major veteran, so he was very helpful in that process. Other than that, they didn't have a formal mentor program, so there was no one helping the new teacher along beyond Mr. Meyer and Mr. Mueller.

Community influencers echoed their uptake of supportive positions of Stephanie relative to their

community roles. Aaron said, "I'm here to support you as an administrator to help you get to

whatever program you're raising. I want to help support that." Ben corroborated Aaron's desires

to be supportive as a former SBAE teacher:

> Ben: [Aaron] acted like a former ag teacher. He really showed he was wanting
> [Stephanie] to have a good experience and wanted help her. He was acting more like the
> ag teacher and helping her out.

Stephanie continued to reference drawing on the available human resources to reify her

position of being supported. These included administrators, parents coaching CDE teams,

businesses providing materials for classes, local experts coming in as guest speakers, and making

connections with school board members. She recognized occasional instances of lacking support,

but generally felt she had what she needed in supplies for students to feel supported in her job.

Stephanie also recognized, however, a tension between the support she desired and the support

she received, particularly as it related to course offerings, schedule, and the expectations of her

continued program growth:

> [They told me,] "Well, you can't do work based learning because you have to have a
> study hall." [And I said,] "I don't want to do a study hall." The school didn't see the
> value or try to find a way to make that work. They just said, "Well, that won't work
> because you have to do a study hall." I never quite figured it out because Aaron knows
> what [work placement] is. He knows I wouldn't just be sitting here twiddling my thumbs
> for an hour every day. But sometimes, I feel the people doing the schedules don't want to
> figure out how to make it work. Instead, they say, "Oh, we can't do that, it'll never work
> with the schedule."

The tension in occupying a position of *supported,* in this case, seems less about the

schedule--though that was also a notable frustration across the discussions with teachers at NPC-

-and more about the ways Stephanie saw Aaron rejecting a position of being *supportive*. As

someone who should understand what it takes to run a total program, Stephanie implicated

Aaron in rejecting his position of *supportive* by not allowing a continued reification of *supported*

through schedule accommodations. This challenge to support is more nuanced than adjusting the

schedule, but recognizes expectation playing into the construct. If one takes up being *supported*,

but the position of *being supportive* is rejected, there is little reconciliation available to restore

positionalities associated with support. John expressed similar concerns regarding administrative

approaches to logistical support. By his estimation:

> I was too young [when I was in school] to really know if they left because they just couldn't handle [the job], or the kids, or what it was. It just seems as though they'd get going a little bit, then they left. There was a lack of support with the other school administration. They probably thought they were not going to stick around and build something up if they were just going to have the rug pulled out from under them anyway.

John also addressed his own work to be supportive of the SBAE teacher and program at NPC,

actions reifying his position as supportive:

> The [booster] group is there to support the program and the students where needed. We have the two successful fundraisers we do, being our pork chop supper and pork stand at [a local county fair]. Those are generating five to $8,000 a year. We use it to support going to state and national convention, leadership conferences, and so on. More importantly though is the continuity piece. There has not been a huge financial challenge within the district [recently]. That day will come again. Our most important role is going to be to go *en masse* to the administration and speak up for the program to keep it from disappearing.

The very position of being *supportive* induced a position of being *challenged* for Jessie.

This challenge was not one pushing her forward, but rather positioned her as inadequate. I will

not dwell on this position as earlier discussions outline how it was perceived as taken up and

reified. However, community influencers reified the challenge Jessie faced in taking up a

position of support. Aaron talks specifically about these challenges:

> Aaron: I wish I would've known [Jessie's] challenges connecting with kids. I wish I could have seen that. When you can't connect with kids and students, you're going to struggle in education. You've got to have connections with kids. I wish I would have been able to see that challenge.
>
> Aaron: Sometimes the positioning of community members involved in the FFA and ag programs can have a big effect, both positive and negative. It's not been very positive [with Jessie and some of the community members]…Then on the other side, there's been

some very positive interactions with some movers and shakers in the ag world. It can go both ways.

John reifies Aaron's ideas regarding the necessity of community support:

John: I like to think [I'm in a role to facilitate community connections]. But it's up to each individual. Who we have right now, there's no time to talk about anything. They're going to do it their way. We attempted to give them a heads up of how things moved forward or some successful things they maybe want to take a look at and it was just like, "Fine, but I'm doing it this way." That's important though. If I'd placed myself in their shoes, and to walk in and have some ideas of what worked or didn't work, it would sure be easier than a blank slate.

John: We're in the third year of [the current instructor] already and the initial lack of follow through turned people off. Now, there does seem to be a little bit of an interest to be a little more responsive, but attitude is everything. The underlying message might show up in email; you can almost sense the attitude it was written with. I think it just gets under somebody else's skin. It's not a healthy relationship. You force yourself to get along but it's not the same when it's not somebody who you'd choose to go along with.

Yet, significant attention was devoted to the ideal way the position of being *supportive* would be

occupied. While Aaron focused his efforts in on-boarding and connection facilitation for new

staff, John looked ahead to how he would work to position the Ag Booster program in the future:

John: I'd like to be able to make contact before there's any interaction with students. Just to provide some insight as to who [the Ag Boosters] are and what we do as a resource is extremely important. The first few weeks of school can be overwhelming. You've almost got two roles. You've got your day to day classes you have to deal with. But then, the advisor, building up the FFA part. The alumni support group ties in more what happens before eight o'clock or after three with the FFA side, more than with the day to day classes. That's up to the teacher.

John: I think knowing how it seemed to be comforting and welcoming to you [(Becky)] to have the connection and the outreach I provided you really tells you the importance of that. That's partly why I tried to do the same thing with [Jessie]…That feeling of welcomeness and support is so important because being an ag teacher slash FFA advisor is just so much different than coming in as a ninth grade algebra teacher or something. There's so much more to it.

John: If there'd be a change in instructor and it'd be somebody with more enthusiasm and interest in working with our group, it'd be easier to get a couple more active people. Right now, we don't have new people. It's the current ones sitting around the table and have frustrations on how things are going. We just try to do what we can to keep things holding together until the change happens.

**Summary: Supported/Supportive.** The intent of this study is not to compare the SBAE teachers, despite the differences in SBAE migrators positions of *supported* were taken up, rejected, or reified by their community influencers. No one is in a position to place fault or blame on anyone in this migratory context. I recognize positions for what they are and look to offer implications in the conclusions that will assist the stakeholders in this study in reaching their desired positionalities in the future. As a finding for this study, the way support is perceived can impose a significant challenge to the occupation of such a position. However, being supportive is a significant undertaking. The reification and uptake of occupying a position of *being supportive* is a significant investment. If not returned, it will quickly be withdrawn while subsequent position occupation efforts of *being supported* are rejected.

The debate of fault implies a need to understand which position was rejected first, and the data do not support such speculations. As such, the imperative instead lies with SBAE migrators and their community members to think about what support looks like. From these findings, the occupation of a position of *being supported* consists of the following:

- Regular check-ins from administration

- Support from the district to grow in content understanding and teaching

- Strong mentoring relationships within and outside the school

- Having the supplies to carry out the job description

- Schedule accommodations

- Follow through on classroom management issues

- Autonomy in the classroom

- Regular connection with fellow staff members

Outside of the school, community reifications of *being supported* included: conversations

regarding personal interests and background beyond the role of a SBAE teacher; community

members serving as guest speakers, hosting field trips, or coaching CDE teams, and showing up

for FFA and other SBAE events and functions. This list is minimal in comparison to the support

community influencers seek to provide. Community influencers, by their actions, take up being

supportive by serving as guest speakers, hosting field trips, and coaching CDE teams. But their

desired positions of support also encompassed financial stability, continuity of institutional

knowledge, content expertise, facilitation of community connectedness, support of challenging

students, and providing direction and input for the forward progress of the total program.

### *Theme 2: Challenge*

Breakdowns in support impose significant challenge on the uptake of desired

positionalities among SBAE teachers with community influencers. The focus now shifts from an

emphasis on support to defining *challenge*. In recognizing the nuance of challenge, several

instances of SBAE teachers feeling ready for the challenge present themselves. Aaron elaborated

healthy challenge as a "thrill of the chase" mechanism of becoming a good teacher:

> Aaron: Getting to know what it takes to be good and really spending some more time with those instructors who were good at particular events you wanted your kids to be good at. Say, "What do you do? How do you prepare?" so when you get to a region contest you have a good shot.

> Aaron: State Wildlife challenged me to begin with. That was not my strong suit. You give me an engine, you give me a welder, a woodshop, even natural resources or small animals, at least there's a curriculum to follow. State Wildlife was a little bit harder because you've got a lot of outdoorsy kids who probably knew more than I did. In fact, I know they did…I tell that story of [a student] not working with me because eventually he did work with me and was a huge asset. I learned a lot by that experience as a teacher to understand you don't know everything and that's okay. If you can build relationships with kids so they understand and know [you don't know everything], it can give you power. Don't fake it. If you fake it, you're going to be screwed

While Aaron and Stephanie expressed being up for the challenge, they also recognized specific

encounters in their jobs challenged their uptake and reification of the position of teacher (let

alone some of the other desired positionalities discussed):

> Aaron: I came to [my first] job with the framework of my experience in high school and FFA and ag…It was very eye opening; the poverty, the abuse, interactions with different races...there was tension between races and so it was very eye opening. I'm trying to be an ag teacher, trying to learn what to do to be a teacher, to be an FFA advisor, that stuff. It was a challenge.
>
> Stephanie: We got FFA moving on leadership stuff that hadn't been a huge push in the past. Branching out and trying new CDEs, getting kids to start an SAE program; that had never really been a thing. [We were] changing the whole stigma around ag programs and around FFA. It was a slow process, but I started.
>
> It was just not a great…The person before me had really done a number on the ninth graders. He had ninth graders and Focus. There was so much retraining for behaviors and expectations it was really starting from the ground up. They had stolen tools from the shop. I walked into nothing and had to start over. It was the same with building relationships and bringing in new kids.
>
> Stephanie: I was really a fish out of water. I didn't know what I should be teaching because there was no curriculum. It was, "Do whatever you want." That's hard because the first year I was like, "Yeah! We'll build birdhouses!" I didn't realize that's hard work to build birdhouses with 36 kids you only see every other day. That takes a lot of time! I probably had to lower my expectations.
>
> Stephanie: The workload alone was a challenge, with the uniqueness of no two days ever looked the same. One of the biggest challenges…is the more your FFA chapter grows and your chapter is successful, the more you're gone. That was a huge challenge, not only because its more work to be gone than to be there, but as we were still working through these discipline and expectation issues, no one wanted to sub for me because they'd been ruined. We had a reputation. That was definitely a big challenge to get people to come in and sub for me, and getting the kids to not scare them away so they could come back.

John was the only community influencer to address specifically some of the challenges,

particularly with students, identified by the SBAE migrators:

> There was a stigmatism put on in the 1980s during challenging economic times. Probably not anymore because of the economic reasons--maybe for other reasons--but back then it was just due to the economic conditions. What may or may not be continuing would be because of tough schedules, and kids needing to have college level classes. If the ag class offerings aren't counting for those required science courses needed for college enrollment, consequently students that need those classes are getting them from other

parts of the school. Those students remaining to take the ag classes are not the same caliber as those going to college…I mean, they're good kids, but then you've got some of the troublemaker ones that look at shop classes for an easy credit or something like that.

Beyond the challenge of setting high expectations with students, community influencers saw other significant challenges to SBAE migrators' ability to do their jobs. Some of these challenges included budget constraints, staff negativity, school culture, shifts in administrative direction, stigmatization of agriculture students, program turnover, and lack of communication. These challenges directly connect to positioning between SBAE migrators and community influencers, and are the focus of this theme. While the positions assigned to the school provide challenges to the uptake of positions, additional data collection and research would be necessary to delve into the subtleties of these areas.

In addition, community influencers did not specifically position themselves as challenged. They recognized challenges in their context, but limited the positioning of *challenged* to their SBAE migrator counterparts. Community members see stigmatization of SBAE program students, program turnover, and lack of communication as key points in reifying a SBAE teacher's position as *challenged.* Lack of communication seems to be the greatest barrier to a SBAE teacher's option to reject being *challenged*.

> Aaron: Lack of communication really starts it. When you don't have good communication, relationship dives. That's when the feelings of inadequacy or not being heard will start to get in. Then there's animosity built, and then negativity.

> Ben: I would try to connect with Stephanie for a short time, almost every day, to ask how things are going, see if she needs anything, see if she's pulling her hair out or not…but we can't really help them with too much to start. We just have to get them comfortable, tell them where to eat.

> Ben: There's the proximity of our classrooms versus the rest of the building, and that makes a little bit of a difference...The proximity is one issue that, for Stephanie anyway, she's not going to get the help she could have if she were closer. She has to actually decide to seek somebody out if she needs help. She would seek me out if I can help her, because I'm just a hop, skip, and a jump. But she probably had a different prep time. She's probably having five preps a day too…The schedule probably didn't help us at all.

John: We're in the third year of [the current instructor] already and the initial lack of follow through turned people off. Now, there does seem to be a little bit of an interest to be a little more responsive, but attitude is everything. The underlying message might show up in email, you can almost sense the attitude it was written with. I think it just gets under somebody else's skin. It's not a healthy relationship. You force yourself to get along but it's not the same when it's not somebody who you'd choose to go along with.

John: I think knowing how it seemed to be comforting and welcoming to you [(Becky)] to have the connection and the outreach that I provided to you really tells you the importance. That's partly why I tried to do the same thing with [Jessie]. But that's the way I am with people…if they aren't responsive I'm not going to waste my time. Unfortunately it's kind of way I got with [Jessie] after a little while. We try working as a group, but as an individual, I'm not going to try to keep hounding and be met with awkward silence or awkward responses. I probably get turned off too soon. I kind of switched to, "Well, let's just go to survival mode and let's just keep the program alive." We were hoping it was going to be a one year deal. Unfortunately, it seems like it's not. That feeling of welcome and support is so important because being an ag teacher slash FFA advisor is so much different than coming in as a ninth grade algebra teacher or something. There's so much more to it.

**Summary: Challenged.** The needs of a community influencer to position themselves as supportive, places heavy emphasis on lack of communication in their positioning of SBAE migrators as *challenged* when this skill is lacking. As much as these SBAE migrators look for support in their communities, their community influencers seek to provide it. Challenge, collectively, seems to be less about ability to do the job, or even will. The community influencers recognize more challenges for their SBAE teacher because they are better equipped to see them. Influencers have been involved with these challenges before the SBAE teacher came to the community and will deal with them long after the teacher leaves. These SBAE migrators, however, made little acknowledgement of the challenges the community recognized. Aaron and Stephanie seemed to be in touch with the challenges of the students and need to communicate. However, none of these teachers are able to acknowledge the challenge of program turnover as articulately as their community influencer counterparts can. The teacher does not have to pick up the pieces dropped when they leave. These ideas made cross-mapping *challenge* a particularly difficult construct to ascertain. There is substantial depth with which a community can identify

challenges to a teacher's success and the subsequent ways they are eager to help a teacher work

around and through challenges. Interestingly, the community influencers see communication as

the way around imposed challenges. They are not asking the SBAE teacher to take on these

challenges for themselves, they are simply acknowledging they exist and they are in a better

position to aid in rejecting positions of challenge than the SBAE teachers are.

**CHAPTER 5: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, & CONCLUSION**

*"Being a human is a pretty complicated thing."* –Ben Meyer, data collection 2020

The overarching purpose of this study was to unfold positions of support and challenge for SBAE migrators. This aids in understanding the retention of mobile teachers to teaching as a profession. I assumed SBAE migrators and community influencers navigate a social discourse; one imposing support and challenge as constructs to be taken up, reified, or rejected. By identifying positions occupied by SBAE teachers and their community counterparts, I explored discrepancies in position deposition and outlined support and challenge as key areas of community influence in retaining SBAE migrators.

Several assumptions ground the conclusions. First, I am not outside the analysis of compiled data. A co-iterative analysis puts the researcher into the analysis with their participants. As such, my own confirming experiences in this context may be brought in as concluding examples. Second, in taking up a co-iterative analysis, participants engaged in the process of generating conclusions from the compiled findings. Their thoughts are shared here as concluding implications of this study rather than findings. Third, participants also shared thoughts during interviews as they navigated into metalanguage (Patel Stevens, 2004) on the bigger picture. These thoughts captured participants' negotiation of teacher migration. They are shared here-- having been backgrounded as findings--as they provide highlighting examples of participants processing teacher mobility. Finally, all data collection, analyses, and interpretation occurred against the backdrop of existing discourses around the roles of SBAE teachers and effects of teacher migration. Tellings are repeated in the conclusions to ground implications and propose recommendations.

This study captured the multi-voicedness inherent in positions (Davies, 2000; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). As such, relevant conclusions must be explicated for several audiences. First, general implications for a broad audience of readers relate to the expectations, power dynamics, and operation in positions of imposter and survivor. Second, there are implications for SBAE teachers coming to a new school, including the job search process, navigating the workload, identifying influencers, professional courtesy, responsible autonomy, and community embeddedness. I also suggest implications and recommendations for administrators, co-teachers, alumni, and state staff. Fourth, I discuss the groundwork for developing a theory of teacher challenge and support and the need for a unifying theory of teacher migration. Finally, this study concludes with recommendations for policy, both at the local school board level and for the educational policy landscape more broadly.

**Implications**

Across this migratory context, people expressed similarity in their situation. Each participant outlined being overworked and getting by with less than they needed. Perhaps the most unifying implication of this study is everyone expressing similarity in experience. Knowing others are navigating similar positions better enables solidarity in negotiating and reconfiguring the social structures in which teacher migration occurs (Davies, 2000). Considering structures in light of the data captured for this study, my general conclusions focus on expectations, power, and positioning as an imposter and survivor.

*Implication 1. Expectations*

A substantial list of expectations was generated from the four community influencers in this study. As noted in the findings, no individual held the full list on their own. However, knowing the variety of expectations from four may implicate an even greater expectation load

when influencers outside this study interact in the context. Despite some expectations

intertwining (e.g. student centered and challenging students, willing to give time and

hardworking, program builder and opportunity provider, among others), the expectations on

SBAE teachers, even outside teacher migration are substantial. For teacher migration, the

expectation load and variance thereof in individual communities, imposes a heightened

challenge. This challenge suggests these teachers navigated more than new geography, co-

workers, and logistics in moving schools. They also needed to identify community influencers,

elicit their new community's expectations of an agriculture program, and begin acting on them.

The literature positions SBAE teachers as daring, diligent, and devoted (Roberts &

Montgomery, 2017), and the SBAE migrators in this study are. However, care must be taken not

to take advantage of SBAE teachers positioning to take on more (Traini et al., 2019). In aligning

expectations with the socialization of teaching as an individualistic, conservative, and present

focused profession (Lortie, 1975), we must be willing to question what the positions in this study

exposed. For SBAE teachers, but especially migrators, positioning allows questioning the

exposed constructions of this migratory context. Namely:

- What do we expect of SBAE teachers and migrators?

- Where do those expectations come from?

- Which continuous expectations are held across teachers and which are released when new
  teachers enter the context?

- How do we engage in discourses to clarify expectations for all involved?

In the current study, Aaron outlined his own expectations:

> I have high expectations for ag teachers because [I was one]. It's probably not fair. It can
> be so cool. It's such a great opportunity for kids. It can be a shining star of your
> community. I really think of a lot of it. My expectations are pretty high of what that can
> be. Also, I come from [a town in this state], which is good or bad, but it is a pretty strong

ag program in the state; probably in the nation too for how well they represent down in nationals and stuff like that. I come from that type of mentality. Ag should be pretty cool and so I have high expectations for that. I know what it can be. Maybe isn't fair to the people coming in. But especially here in Oakville, I think it's one of the things that makes us, us is having a strong ag program.

The expectations outlined here and in the findings are not generalizable, but align with expectations already identified in the Agricultural Education literature. Teachers fill multiple roles (Robinson et al., 2013), are uniquely agriculturalist and teacher in their identity (Shoulders & Myers, 2011), are overworked (Traini et al., 2019), and interact with broad communities on a variety of levels (Phipps et al., 2008).

This study cannot identify the origin of the broader professional expectations, but participants navigated expectations particularly as they are imposed from someone no longer in the community: their predecessor. This is relevant to multiple new-teacher contexts as they contemplate the person, rather than the program, they must build. While the program is certainly what is being built, evidence from this study is clear: the expectations set by the predecessor contribute substantially to the success and challenge the new teacher perceives. The following recommendations suggest means to identify which expectations should be held with continuity and which must be rejected with program turnover.

Positioning exposes discourse. It is the role of the participants and those engaged in reading this work to identify the best ways forward. As I constantly reminded participants, positioning is neither good nor bad. It is not a duality (Davies, 2000). Positions merely locate people in relation to others through their interactions (Davies, 2000; van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). It is essential to ponder how the exposed location in interactions clarifies expectations. Arguably, the participants provided little evidence to express alignment with expectations was

sought before expectations of vision, goal orientation, or change were imposed. This yielded a

breakdown in position alignment, and subsequently support, in this context.

### Implication 2. Power

Positioning theory deals significantly with the construct of power as it relates to dualities

and desire (Davies, 2000). I would be remiss in failing to provide conclusions in this vein.

Exposing power dynamics was not an explicit intent of this study, however, numerous instances

of power imposition presented in the data. These included recognition of alumni appeasement,

differences in male experience with the program compared to female, and ability across

community influencers to leverage connections.

This is not to imply power abuse. Power, as with other positions, is not a duality, but

rather a gradient in use (Davies, 2000). The data were not collected to expose and discuss power

dynamics. Nonetheless, power came into the conversation, almost entirely implicitly. More

important than specific presentations of power in the data is the recognition power did not seem

to be explicitly enacted. Power, as a tacit force, bears greater explication in future study. Power

exposure aids influencers in understanding the power they hold in their communities. This

exposure aids in greater attention to power influencing positions and echoes this recognition

from the state supervisor:

> In every school and community there are gatekeepers, people who can help you get what
> you want. Part of it is you have to figure out who the gatekeepers are. Once you figure
> out who the gatekeeper is, you have to make the idea theirs. Once you do that, suddenly
> the doors are wide open. But if you try to make a change and people aren't understanding
> of the changes, they're not willing to step out of their comfort zone to help you get there.

Equally important may be the recognition that, despite tacit implications of power, many

feel powerless to affect retentive change in their organizations or with their teachers. There is a

difficult balance in recognizing teacher migration as valuable for teachers while detrimental to

schools. Aaron reminds us schools often have minimal retentive strategies to employ:

> Sometimes there is very little you can do in a school because there was nothing [my first school] could have done to keep me. There's nothing [my second school] could have done to keep me. There wasn't much we could have done to keep you [(Becky)]. Our personal paths were to move on and do something else.

### Implication 3. Imposter & Survivor

Broadly, the conclusions focus on solidarity across this migratory context. SBAE

migrators and their community counterparts conveyed positions of *imposter* and *survivor*.

Neither party felt fully in command of the knowledge, skill, or connections needed to perform at

expectation. Both recognized they were getting by as an industry (teaching or agriculture) in

their respective professions or personally.

To change the broad discourse, greater attention must focus on choosing language to

bring people together in acknowledging mutual struggle. The nuanced picture of the challenge

construct, suggests one person's challenge does not make another's any less challenging. The

challenge is, instead, very different between those experiencing it. Not only is the challenge

different in presentation based on individual backgrounds and current systems of operation, but

challenge, as a construct, positions individuals differently based on the other positionalities they

take up and reify.

Acknowledgement, here, means grace across the discourse to remember each starts where

the last left off. No one in this context felt they were doing all they could with their position.

Acknowledgement extends in embracing nuanced experience. Aaron put it this way:

> It's very individualized. A certain person needs something. When you talked about your experiences, the difference between feeling supported versus watched over or smothered. I look at my experiences and I thought back to my [first school] experiences, when I got there [my predecessor] was so absolutely negative about the community, the kids, the

program, the administration, and the other teachers. But it was very different. My experience was very different than his.

It also could be personalities. I'm not one that needs a lot of external back patting. I understood that's what he needed and I don't think he got that. I don't know if he was as successful in that position because he needed the principal to come in and say, "Hey, you're doing a great job." Maybe it's my arrogance. Obviously everybody likes that, it just wasn't necessary for me. He brought that up several times, "They'll never tell you you're doing a good job and they'll never be supportive of you." It was different, you know? And I did see that in the administration.

## Recommendations

Given conclusions focused on expectations, power, and solidarity, there are several implications for each group (SBAE migrators, administrators, co-teachers, alumni, and state staff), and those outside this study (teacher preparation programs, educational researchers, and those connected with school policy). Before outlining these recommendations, I return to the conceptualization of discursive positioning outlined in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Conceptualizing the discursive position of SBAE migrators



*Note.* Migration can be conceptualized as a cyclical positioning phenomenon. Davies (2000) positioning theory can be operationalized for migration to identify the trauma (Sparley, 2019)

associated with mobility. There is a specific break in the cycle where the community's

assessment of compatibility yields retention rather than a *revolving door* (Ingersoll, 2001).

The incoming teacher fills the vacancy the outgoing teacher left. The community positioned the

previous teacher and positions the incoming teacher in the previous context. The incoming

teacher repositions themselves in their own context through various uptake, rejection, and

reification of their community's positioning.

Earlier, I posited the compatibility of the teacher's positionality against the desired

position from the community as determining the potential for positive reflection on the decision

to migrate. This study explored the choices migrators make between contradictory demands to

the weave together of available positions in broader discourses (Davies, 2000). Discursive

positioning accounted for the personal experience and stories through which individuals made

sense of the categories assigned and the emotions experienced (Davies, 2000). In accounting for

this experience, a substantial aim of this study was to embrace mobility as a means of retention

to the teaching profession as a whole. Embracing mobility as a vital function of the teaching

career is a substantial paradigm shift both warranting support and imposing challenge on a

variety of levels. The recommendations toward to enact this paradigm shift will be discussed

here relative to various stakeholders, educational research, and educational policy.

### *Recommendations: SBAE Teachers*

The SBAE teachers aligned with their positioning in the Agricultural Education

literature: diligent, daring, and devoted (Roberts & Montgomery, 2017), filling multiple roles

(Robinson et al., 2013), having unique identities (Shoulders & Myers, 2011), being overworked

(Traini et al., 2019), and connected with a broad community network (Phipps et al., 2008).

Participants used positions of being capable, well disposed, visionary, and resourceful to reify

what a SBAE teacher should be. Migrators, however, were not able to start fresh at a new school

in establishing positions. Rather, they navigated their predecessor's occupation of roles. They did

this in addition to the new teacher load of identifying expectations of the position. Migrators'

former habits and expectations did not stay with their former district and posed a heightened load

to navigate a new program. Key implications and recommendations center on the job search,

workload, responsible autonomy, professional courtesy, and community embeddedness.

**Navigating the Job Search.** Primary on most new teachers' minds is securing a job

teaching high school agriculture. For migrators, there was greater reflection in subsequent job

searches to values: collaboration, school culture, and opportunity for growth, among the key

deliberations discussed.

> Caleb: There are plenty of teachers who want to get their first job and don't want to ever
> move again. I hope they challenged themselves and make good decisions and teach
> what's right for the kids.

> Ben: Then if you get two or three years of experience, you'll get a job in a better school, a
> bigger school, or a nicer community. I'm sure that takes place; you get some experience
> and go from there. But if after those first years of experience you were ready for the next
> job, try to think about what is it you're looking for and be a little more selective. There's a
> better chance this is going to be the right job.

For both the new teacher and the migrator, however, the key consideration seems to be

geography, as identified by several of the participants and corroborated by the state supervisor.

> One of the things I see, especially with first year teachers, is everybody wants to go
> home. I always advise them you can go somewhere, you can go anywhere, you can
> always go home, but you can't always start. Sometimes it's good to go somewhere else,
> cut your teeth, learn the profession, and then that opportunity will come to go home. I
> don't know how long that'll be. It could be one year, it could be 15 years before you get
> there. I think that's the context I look at it in…but there's also part of it that says if I go to
> a really small community and I have to travel half an hour to get groceries, or if my kids
> have to travel to get the fine arts experiences or athletic experiences they want, those
> come into play.

The essential concern for the SBAE job seeker is weighing having a job against working

in their ideal situation. Teachers weighed desperation against hope in evaluating geography and

teaching situation. Specific to this study, however, are implications regarding support,

connection, and commitment. These mutually influencing positions were key to teachers finding

their ideal career where they are, in this study and others (Haddad et al., 2019). Teachers must

question the founding of their desperation, particularly in light of the current SBAE teacher

supply and demand (Smith et al., 2018). Teachers must be clear in the support they desire,

connection they are willing to maintain, and level of commitment they seek to position

themselves in their new community.

**Workload.** Aaron said, "You don't go into this profession thinking it's easy." As SBAE

teachers drew on examples of their former teachers, the state supervisor corroborates, "A lot of

high school students pursue Ag Ed, because their FFA experience was what it was. If you didn't

have that FFA experience, then the likelihood of you going into Ag Ed is probably lower."

Stephanie adds, "I don't think I could have done [teaching] without [FFA], but I don't think I had

realistic expectations of what being an FFA advisor entailed. I thought [FFA] would be the fun,

easy part." However, even with former teachers as examples, the influencers expressed their

SBAE counterparts being unaware of just how difficult the job of SBAE teacher would be. Caleb

put it this way:

> Part of the reason young teachers leave the profession…is they are ill-prepared for what
> actually happens. They've been taught pedagogy and they've practiced pedagogy.
> They've been in the classroom a bunch of times, but their main experience is their own
> high school experience or their own elementary experience and that's it. I mean, they
> spent 13 years there. As much as you want to try to train them in four years to become a
> good teacher, they're relying on what their teachers taught them way back. If their
> teachers were using four techniques, they're going to emulate that. It takes years of
> training.

The greatest challenge perceived in navigating workload expectations was managing

FFA. Both SBAE migrators and community influencers perceived this challenge. For this site,

the teacher who rejected the position of being overworked (Aaron) was not the FFA advisor at

NPC. While Aaron coached football, there are some distinct differences in the logistical load and

assistance SBAE teachers have at their disposal, resources being a primary disadvantage of the

SBAE teacher. SBAE teachers are expected to maintain their own booster club (separate from

athletics) despite heavier travel loads over a greater portion of the school year (Phipps et al.,

2008). FFA advisors received less compensation than their athletic coach counterparts (NPC

teacher pay scale, 2019-2020), despite coaching and traveling activities occurring year round. In

addition, the FFA advisors were responsible for acting as their own Athletic Director, scheduling

busses, securing career/leadership development event (CDE/LDE) coaches, and coordinating

judges and scorers. Certainly, a football coach has a growth expectation on their program, but the

number of people allowed on the playing field limits it at any given time. An FFA advisor's

program growth is limited only by their imagination. Exponential growth is not only possible,

but also expected, as FFA advisors engage in their local community, FFA district or region, and

at the state or national level, as Aaron corroborated as an administrator:

> If it's your program, Becky, I want you to have vision, keeping in mind what the
> community needs and wants, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and then have a
> vision of where you want to be in two, and three, and five, and ten years. I want to help
> you get there. I want you to grow the program so I have to go to the superintendent and
> say, "I need another ag teacher." That would be fantastic. I truly believe that could be
> Oakville. With our student population, we could have two ag teachers here. I truly do
> believe that is a possibility. Depending on the courses we offer and whoever's leading.
> That teacher who's leading it is extremely important. They have to be the champion,
> trying to develop whatever their vision is of their ag program. I don't know if I did a
> good job with that or not, but that's what I want.

 The challenge for the SBAE migrator is clearly identifying, for themselves, what they

are moving for (Haddad et al., 2019). In so doing, they can better articulate how they are able (or

not) to meet the expectations of the various community influencers they will engage to develop a

program. If teachers are moving to better their situation (Peterson, 1978) they must be intentional

throughout the search process about what constitutes a better situation.

**Responsible Autonomy.** Notably, community influencers recognized the difficult role a

SBAE teacher occupies. The also offered substantial help and support to aid in managing the

work load, and in fact, positioned themselves as rejected if the assistance was not accepted.

Importantly, SBAE migrators must find clarity, as they step into new communities, regarding

their responsibilities. Only with clarity in responsibility can teachers act with their desired

autonomy.

A major component of responsible autonomy is working with influencers to facilitate

support. Caleb's example of his former principal knowing how the auto tech teacher engaged

local businesses to determine his curriculum is telling for a few reasons:

1) It identified the teacher as engaged in what the community needs

2) It recognized the responsibility of the teacher to remind necessary stakeholders of their

efforts

3) It provided an example of reducing a teacher's workload while capitalizing on

community interests.

Researchers must be cognizant of proposing solutions adding to a teacher's workload, given the

implications of workload in this study and others. Caleb's example identified a teacher sharing

the workload of developing relevant curriculum with an industry partner who already had the

pre-requisite expertise, reducing the research workload on the teacher, and establishing a

community influencer in the process. The greater work transitioned to communicating this

connection to those with decision-making power regarding the program. As a recommendation,

teachers (migrators or not) can act in their communities by asking of any task:

- Who else could aid in delivering this service to students?

- How do I communicate to others this partnership has been established?

The first question lightens the teacher's workload for the long term while still allowing

autonomy to direct their program. The second question establishes institutional knowledge aiding

in inevitable transition in the long-term and program promotion in the short-term. This

implication insists the teacher makes things happen rather than allowing things to happen to

them. This is not to say the teacher must be the sole facilitator of a program's activities.

However, as the teacher practices responsible autonomy, they direct their program as a facilitator

rather than a dictator; an important distinction in maintaining support with their community.

The assumption underlying this implication, based on the data presented here, is

community members seek engagement. Despite being busy survivors themselves, they are eager

to be involved. Teachers identified asking community members to be guest speakers, field trip

hosts, and CDE coaches, but the data here suggests they were asking too small. Community

influencers were willing and able to provide much greater leverage to a total SBAE program

including financial stability, institutional knowledge, content expertise, facilitation of community

connectedness, support for challenging students, and input and visioning for forward progress of

the program. If this appears overzealous, I ask SBAE teacher readers to keep in mind a

community's investment in the success of local agriculture.

It is much easier to assume the best intentions of community influencers when the teacher

clearly communicates what assistance is needed. Teachers, however, conveyed naivety in

knowing what they needed. If this is the case, a teacher can instead communicate what they do

not need. Enforcing boundaries may be a helpful first step in navigating overbearing support

(Cloud & Townsend, 2019):

- "I appreciate the offer, but we're not there yet."

- "I don't have the capacity to implement that now, but can I put down a reminder to call

  you when I do?"

- "That's a great idea. Are you and a few other alumni members able to run with that?"

- "Thanks for bringing that up. Can you make sure it gets on the agenda for our next

  alumni/advisory meeting?"

- "That's a great place to start, but I don't have enough experience with that to make a

  decision right now. Can I bounce that idea off my mentor and revisit this with you in two

  days?"

This type of language positions the teacher as conscientious without agreeing to something for

which they do not have capacity. It allows a shift in the discourse to empower teachers to reclaim

their responsible autonomy.

SBAE teachers, especially Stephanie, discussed working to be responsible in her content

by drawing on others. Yet, the available resources overwhelmed her. Resource availability, in the

conventional sense, does not seem to be the issue many suggest when examining teacher

mobility. In this study, opportunity cost was the bigger challenge. In any prioritizing, something

else must be put on hold. For teachers, this recognition may provide some validation in

investment. Opportunity cost implies a teacher can only be vested in so many areas at a time.

Teachers cannot return alumni's investment while developing curriculum. In addition, the

resource search led teachers down a rabbit hole of competition:

> It is hard because it's the comparison. The comparison is the thief of joy. And we have
> that here [at my current job]…You can't live in that space. But it's hard when kids are

very like, "This is how we've always done it." And they probably feel a little bit, not let
down, but a little bit. Abandoned.

Stephanie specifically cautioned against comparison in different career stages. The guilt

associated with someone else providing better-developed resources felt substantial. However,

both teachers reiterated the comparison should not outweigh the value of collaboration and

capitalizing on others' wisdom and experience.

Community influencers were very aware of their legacy and investment in the success of

local agriculture. They expressed engaging with the local SBAE program as carrying out a

mission for local agricultural success. For the SBAE teacher, implications regarding audience

suggest a reminder for SBAE more broadly. While SBAE teachers focused on being student

centered, attention back to power reminds of the voting base maintaining rural schools. As John

outlined, in rural agricultural communities, the majority taxpayers are also heavily invested in

SBAE programs. This requires a recognition from SBAE teachers of serving a community well

acquainted with hard work. While community influencers did not expect anything to be difficult

for the sake of difficulty, they expect others to rise to the challenge for which they were hired.

SBAE teachers' willingness and ability to return others' investment was essential to establishing

a position of support.

**Professional Courtesy.** Exiting a given program is inevitable. Whether from retirement,

migration, or other measures, mobility permeates the teaching profession. Given this

inevitability, what follows contemplates the roles of predecessor and successor, professional

expectations upon vacating a position, and the broader "work cycle" in which teachers operate.

Predecessors played a significant role, both tacit and intentional, in establishing

expectations for their successor. Aaron discussed engaging with his successors to include leaving

copies, meeting to discuss goals and directions for the program, and working to enable a smooth

transition. He also identified this as something extended to him; teachers met with him and were

available to aid his transition. Stephanie, on the other hand, discussed her shop being pillaged

and starting over in building facilities and student expectations back to a manageable level.

Arguably, her efforts paid dividends for me in stepping into a recently resourced program. The

efforts Stephanie expressed in diminishing the stigma on the ag program were immensely helpful

to me as an incoming teacher, and provided groundwork allowing me to start in a better position.

That is not to say my experience was without challenge; the desk was not cleaned out and I spent

every summer throwing things away.

Ideally, vacating SBAE teachers would be available to answer questions, provide some

sort of onboarding, and serve as community resources to establish the new teacher in desirable

positions. However, that is often not an option. Little exists to understand the expectation of

vacating teachers as it varies by district. The teachers here discussed leaving copies, access to

transition guides, binders, meetings, and gradual transitions as components aiding their smooth

transition. However, these ideals do not happen in every setting. This necessitates a professional

imperative to understand what is most helpful to incoming teachers relative to what their

predecessors are able to leave behind.

Caleb, while not a SBAE teacher, discussed the "build to leave" mentality:

> Well, [the job is sustainable at a high level], but you can't be married. You can't have
> children. But you have to find balance. You establish it and then you back off. Had I
> remained in Oakville, I would've backed off. I've been working at backing off. I got out
> of robotics a little bit at a time. I eventually would've let Supermileage go as well. You
> start doing those things that are important to you that you'll prioritize. I'm doing a lot
> more with the [state industrial technology teachers association] now than I ever did in my
> youth. I'm almost always doing sessions at conference.

Others (e.g. administrators, industrial technology teachers, SBAE teachers, and alumni) also

expressed a professional imperative to build a program. However, if the primary expectation is

building, it is difficult to ascertain the bounds of employment.

These ideas culminate in an interactional "work cycle" of a person who will one day take

the place of another. The predominant discourse reified here tells SBAE teachers they owe it to

themselves to put in the extra work now, to be compensated for it later. It will get easier if they

can power through, particularly surviving inherited upperclassmen. Aaron, Stephanie, and Caleb

all corroborated this discourse in the current study. Teachers across SBAE engage in this cyclic

mentality to find little reward at the end (Traini et al., 2019). Teachers put in the extra work to be

compensated, but have been doing it free for so long they just find more hours to work (Traini et

al., 2019). This is not to say, "don't do it," or "don't love being a SBAE teacher this way," as

Aaron took up:

> We all had similar experiences, but the outcomes have been vastly different. I still feel it
> really comes down to each teacher, their ability to work through the hard times and
> persevere. In education, I think they are calling this "grit." The first few years as an
> Agricultural Education Instructor are going to be hard, but if you put in the time, reach
> out to people around you and learn what you need to learn you can come out of that a
> very successful instructor. Sometimes I feel new teachers come into the profession
> thinking they are going to be good right away. That is simply not the case…This thing is
> hard, but it's worth it.

However, it is essential SBAE teachers consider the "work cycle" in terms of what they leave for

the next person. Can someone actually replace you? What is the community going to expect of

the next SBAE teacher based on the job you are doing?

Asking these questions elevates replaceability to a measure of success. Entrepreneurs are

experts of exit, building in an exit strategy to their business plan. While many of the exit

strategies available to entreprenuers are unavailable to teachers (e.g. mergers and acquisitions,

selling, and liquidating), developing exit strategies for teachers allow them to "optimize a good

situation rather than get out of a bad one" (Zwilling, 2011). The idea of exit brings the previous

recommendations together to consider how clear expectations and desires, workload

management, and responsible autonomy culminate in identifying success as having established

something that outlasts the individual.

**Community Embeddedness.** Lastly, for the SBAE teacher, a notable deliberation may

be the expectation of the community regarding presence. In light of earlier implications of

moving specifically for geographic location, this may seem like a lower-order concern at first

glance. However, this data suggests forty years may not be enough for someone to be *from* a

geographical area. Therefore, in contemplating a program move, how important is it to live in the

community to which you migrate?

Ben and Aaron mentioned the importance of being in the community in which you teach

as a means to build connections and be more than an employee of the school district. However,

teachers must ask these questions:

- Do you want to be more than an employee of the school district?

- How feasible is a given level of community embeddedness given other personal factors?

- What does the community expect?

- What does housing location say about where engagement occurs and how often

  individuals should attend school functions?

- How "in the community" is reasonable?

In an era where jobs are more than jobs and have become ways of life, this is a necessary

consideration. Furthermore, if we ask community influencers to invest and engage, on some

level, SBAE teachers must be prepared to return investment. It is beyond the scope of this study

to determine at what cost this investment occurs, but should be a weighty evaluation for mobile

teachers as they seek to relocate based on geography.

*Recommendations: Administrators*

Administrators were positioned by others, and positioned themselves, as having

significant influence on school culture. Aaron reified this position in hiring teachers and

continued facilitation of teacher connectedness. In addition, teachers focused on administrators

affecting support; material, time, and emotional. The implications and recommendations for

administrators focus on these two areas.

**Hiring & Onboarding.** Aaron emphasized his role as administrator allowed him to

improve his school through teacher hires. He saw himself as a key facilitator of teacher

connectedness. For administrators who desire to secure this position, one must ponder the means

by which teachers connect. Aaron was adamant about this in co-generating conclusions:

> As an administrator, I feel I need to do more to reach out to the instructors and be the one
> who initiates the contact. I have always been very cautious about not wanting the teachers
> to feel like I was "telling them what to do" or "I did it this way." I think I will be more
> apt to facilitate the connections needed for that teacher to be successful. I will stop in
> their classroom more, ask questions, offer advice, and generally make sure they feel
> supported in what they are doing. I still feel I need to make sure I am not pushy or come
> across as a know it all, but that is the challenge.

The connection expectations must be clear for teachers throughout the hiring process.

Developing interview materials that demonstrate connectedness and clear expectations

throughout the hiring process, should aid in connection being demonstrated in onboarding. It also

establishes the expectation to continue throughout employment. In forming this connectedness,

intentionality in mentoring programs should be maintained. Mentoring teams, more broadly

envisioned, may be an essential component to introducing teachers (even beyond CTE) to

communities. Administrators must be diligent to establish what may become obvious community

connections. This will be more important if they have been in the community for a sustained

period. While emphasizing the importance of connectedness, the community connections came

second nature to Aaron. Having taught and served as an administrator, he did not have to think

about with whom to connect. An essential role of long-standing administrators is community

resource continuity to maintain and share institutional knowledge.

SBAE and industrial technology teachers discussed the challenge of managing facilities

in first entering their new setting. Administrators are well equipped to alleviate or reduce facility

concerns by clarifying facility management and acceptable facility starting points for new

teachers to their school. In core content classrooms, this is likely as simple as cleaning out a desk

or removing decorations from the wall. In the context of this SBAE program, however, there are

more facilities with which to contend. Additional facilities make a lack of room preparation

overwhelming and send a clear (though unintended) message about program expectations.

Helping the teacher start fresh by delegating facility management and having a new-teacher

room-preparation plan is essential to communicating building culture to new staff.

If SBAE teachers are to be intentional about understanding expectations, administrators

should be clear in their desires and expectations for total program management. This is important

to program growth and available resources to grow a SBAE program. Aaron said, and teachers

repeated, "Run with your vision of an ideal program." However, throughout the findings,

misalignment in vision between administrators and SBAE teachers, and a lack of alignment in

available resources challenged the opportunity to carry out the "ideal" vision.

Finally, teachers expressed several desires in connection from their administrators,

validating connection already occurring and seeking additional points of support, including:

regular check ins, support for continued development of pedagogical content knowledge,

mentoring relationships, supplies to do the job, schedule accommodations, follow through on

classroom management issues, classroom autonomy, and time to connect with fellow staff

members. Aaron emphasized these as important to his role as administrator, in his context as a former agriculture teacher and being a humble mistake maker. The reminder for administrators is to maintain accountability in mistakes. Allow them, but enforce clear, reasonable, and consistent expectations at all levels.

**Resourcing.** Aaron identified a substantial challenge for small, rural schools, in balancing the needs of SBAE teachers with the needs of other programs. In general, these schools do not have access to the CTE directors, grant writers, school psychologists, mentors, and other staff comprising larger districts. In this context, a smaller student population meant needing to capitalize on available staff. A key challenge for administrators, as Aaron pointed out, is mitigating the lack of personnel and budget to retain and support staff.

Resource availability, though, does not seem to be the issue for these teachers. Provided enough chairs, teachers suggested they had the material resources they needed to perform the tasks of their job. The biggest resource they were lacking, however, was time. Stephanie identified time to collaborate and plan as two foremost factors inhibiting program growth. Stephanie expressed the challenge of implementing resources when she was too overworked and stressed to sort through them. Aaron and Stephanie both expressed the overwhelming nature of sorting through available resources to find what would work for their program. The limit, rather than resources themselves, is in the cost, time to implement, or time to secure funding to cover the cost, particularly for resources to expand program offerings. Caleb mentioned time as a specific constraint prompting a move:

> I did not receive the needed support when I was looking at improving my own education through a sabbatical opportunity. I think my knee-jerk reaction was "Well I'm good enough for filling in a position and trying to establish greater opportunities for students, but not important enough to invest in making a better teacher." I think the school board viewed it as a year off they had to pay for. They looked at it in a short-minded way. I

really don't know that I would have applied at [my current school] if administration and perhaps the board chair would have sat down and talked with me about their decision.

Since school budgets are unlikely to see immense or sustained growth, moving forward, creative opportunities to relieve the workload of high-content-capacity teachers is a more palatable recommendation. Administrators may have options to coordinate schedules to allow coordinated planning time, team teaching, team planning, or blocking to accommodate the time constraints on certain classes and teachers. This could also increase student services, including greater intention in planning for differentiation, integrating core content standards, and connecting with the community, imperative expectations conveyed in the data for this study.

### *Recommendations: Co-Teachers*

**A Force for Grounding.** Unfortunately, co-teachers and others are not well equipped to provide support to SBAE teachers, migrating or otherwise. Often, other teachers were as overworked as the SBAE teacher was, especially the partnering CTE teachers. Perhaps co-teachers can only do what Ben said: "We can't really help them with too much to start. We just have to get them comfortable, tell them where they have to eat." However, the SBAE migrators mentioned low input ways their co-teachers provided immense help. These included providing an ear to listen, subject matter expertise, and mentoring. Interestingly, co-teachers mentioned very little about seeing themselves in these positions. Mentoring may require relatively little time on the part of the co-teacher to aid an incoming teacher. However, this low-level of perceived input may also indicate needed intention in implementing mentoring programs for others to see themselves as helpful in these roles.

A recommendation requiring little time from co-teachers is to lead by example. Caleb talked about, "you go and then back off." In a social profession (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978), the system is strained when some consistently and significantly outperform others. This is an

interesting paradox as teachers have also been socialized to be individualistic (Lortie, 1975).

Conversations about balancing doing a good job, doing enough of a job, and doing the best job

an individual can acknowledge and validate differences in how teachers enact their practice.

There are even simpler, less time intensive means of being a grounding force for fellow

teachers. Ben asked, "Why are you doing all the extra stuff? What's the goal and point?"

recognizing SBAE teachers and administrators may not be aware of how much the SBAE teacher

is doing. Yet, evidence from this data and my own experience would suggest co-teachers are

keenly aware of the situation. In my own examples from this context, the math teacher joked

when I visited at Christmas the year after I left the classroom, "It didn't even strike me as weird

that you're here. This is about when you'd start showing up to lunch any other year." A Spanish

teacher would also check in on her walk past my room at the end of the day and remind me to

leave at a decent time. She was vocal in expressing her disappointment if I could not come to a

social gathering because of an FFA event. While small, these reify positions of support and

connection, consistently expressed as vital by teachers in this study.

By seeking belonging and connection, co-teachers ground their SBAE counterparts in the

things making teaching survivable. For migrators, establishing connections is equivalent to

identifying and maintaining realistic program expectations with the broader community.

Teachers with longevity in the community hold key insight regarding expectations, and afford

much needed reality checks preventing their co-workers from taking on too much.

### *Recommendations: Alumni*

FFA and agriculture program alumni saw themselves as integral to the local SBAE

program's success. In fact, a successful SBAE program validated agricultural legacy. There are

implications for alumni in the personal level at which they engage, serving as a resource, and being clear in expectations.

      **It's Personal.** "There's just so much more to it." John's comment about the role of an agriculture teacher speaks to the personal level of engagement for alumni members. This is relevant as "so much more" in the initial comment implicates engaging with the agricultural community. Engagement is reciprocal, and SBAE teachers seek this connection on a personal level. Conversation regarding personal interests and backgrounds were essential for Aaron to feeling supported and welcomed in a new community. In addition, teachers mentioned a willingness to share expertise, hosting and coaching, and showing up to FFA events (e.g. fundraisers or chapter banquet) as means of community engagement.

      Given the personal nature on both sides of the relationship, it is essential for alumni to develop their connections with the teacher outside their role as program manager. Friendship is not the key aim, but when a relationship is expected, starting from a place of task orientation may yield a strictly transactional relationship. John expressed this was not an acceptable or sustainable approach to interactions in this context. Many state-level programs already exist to develop relationships between alumni and their SBAE teachers. This study emphasizes the importance of continuing these efforts.

      **Resourcing.** New teachers in communities may not know how to capitalize on the resource alumni chapters provide, as support levels vary by program. Aaron and Stephanie both expressed the value of a community liaison (e.g. former teachers, co-teachers, administrators, or community members) who acquainted them with key influencers. It is essential to balance being supportive without being overwhelming. For example, teachers identified things their alumni members provided: coaching, expertise, and field trip hosting. There was only one ask not

already fulfilled by the alumni: aiding with equipment checks and upgrades. Alumni, though,

suggested they could provide much more.

Alumni expressed being more than a SBAE program resource, acknowledging the job is

too big for just the agriculture teacher. Identifying approachable opportunities for new teachers

to receive support is essential. This means calibrating members of the alumni chapter and

broader community to the same message of resource availability. Keep in mind, these SBAE

teachers already had a high logistical load to manage, as do other SBAE teachers (Traini et al.,

2019). This is a key reason for the existence of alumni chapters. Therefore, presenting assistance

to reduce SBAE teachers' decision load is essential to accepting offers for help.

On a final note, communicating the importance of agriculture is not solely a function of

isolated events of a SBAE program. Members of this migratory context placed heavy emphasis

on the importance of agriculture to the community. To ensure true continuity, it is essential the

alumni chapter advocates for agriculture throughout the school, not just as a function of the

SBAE program.

**Expectations.** Lastly, a clear plan for transferring institutional knowledge is integral to

SBAE teachers' long-term success. The perception of shifting expectations incited positions of

challenge for teachers. Having a manifesto-type document, beyond the alumni constitution,

aligns program mission, vision, and goals with the actions and activities in which students

participate. This type of statement takes minimal time to generate relative to the clarity provided

to all interacting with the organization. Subsequently, alumni support serves as institutional

knowledge as programs transfer leadership.

In addition, a manifesto-type document clarifies the level of investment given and

expected. As discussed in the findings, investment is reciprocal, and wanting the best return on

investment is only human. As an alumni chapter, it is worth the time before welcoming a new teacher to assess the fair and necessary investment expected from the SBAE teacher. Ideally, this should be communicated well before the teacher is hired. In addition, gauge the workday the expectations mirror. Relative to the agriculture workday, remember the SBAE teacher is still a teacher; their workday is concentrated around a school schedule. SBAE teachers, largely, are not production agriculturalists, despite many having this background. They are teachers who love agriculture.

### Recommendations: State Staff

The implications for state staff focus on broader discourses around SBAE and those perpetuated at teacher meetings across the country. These largely deal with broader messages about agricultural education, recognizing state FFA staff and departments of education have little direct influence on the day-to-day happenings of a SBAE program. This recognition drives implications for the Agricultural Education profession at large, namely dealing with the purpose of agricultural education and the *intra-curricular* program model (Phipps et al., 2008).

**Purpose of Agricultural Education.** The four purposes of agricultural education, currently comprising the broader professional discourse, include SBAE being for agricultural literacy, career exploration, career preparation, and preparation for further study in agriculture (Phipps et al., 2008). These present a specific challenge for the SBAE migrator related to positioning. A SBAE teacher's vision of enacting a purpose of agricultural education must align with their community influencers' if it is to be positioned as supported. Having multiple, and often conflicting purposes, makes the profession difficult to navigate across schools.

To ease this at the state level, state directors are strongly encouraged to communicate a clear, single purpose of agricultural education and structure messaging, policy advocacy, and

program implementation around the key purpose for the state. Multiple purposes enacted in a single state position teachers as catch-alls and saviors. SBAE teachers, here, did not have the facilities, resources, or time to fulfill so many varying needs for their school districts, and many of the tensions in position alignment align with competing purposes of Agricultural Education.

  **Agricultural Education Program Model.** Secondary to clarity in purpose, is clarity in enacting the three-circle model (Phipps et al., 2008). FFA and SAE as intra-curricular activities are helpful in theory, but in this context, were not enacted as intra-curricular components of a total program. In addition, school structures in place do not account for and recognize FFA and SAE as integral to a SBAE program. For FFA and SAE to be truly integral parts of the SBAE program, systemic change is warranted in how FFA is integrated into the school day and SBAE teacher contracts. This substantial paradigm shift moves from teachers tracking hours outside the school day to teachers engaging in creative incorporation of the three-circle model within the school day.

  In supporting migrators, this shift eases the learning curve by ensuring continuity across programs relative to integration expectations. Rather than navigating new workload expectations, teachers can more easily transition between programs as they identify similarities in the workday rather than trying to navigate unspoken expectations.

### *Recommendations: Teacher Preparation Programs*

  Given the early-career stage of most teachers in this study, preservice preparation may have been a mitigating factor in classroom success and perceptions of support. Notably, this was not a key question of the study, and data only show what teachers described needing in their early careers as they sought a program fit. Recommendations are not judgements on the institutions that certified these teachers. While the context of this study focuses on support and

challenge for migrating teachers, there are transferable conclusions and implications for new

teachers as well. This study helps those involved with teacher preparation develop teachers to

engage human resources, frame employment conversations, and incorporate opportunities to

build resilience and networks.

      **Engaging Human Resources.** Teachers expressed concern over knowing how and who

to ask for help. Employing opportunities to grow preservice teachers' comfort in asking for

assistance could be an essential skill as early-career teachers seek program fit. Apart from

seeking human resources, deploying human capital and delegating were vital tasks for teachers'

success. However, teachers had limited capacity to organize resource deployment, despite

available assistance. Integrating opportunities for communication and public relations plans, or

community engagement plans in preservice programs, provides a starting point for early-career

teachers to capitalize on and secure resources in their communities.

      Engaging a culture of questions continues work already in progress to build a culture of

learning in pre-service and early-career teachers. This further acknowledges teaching as a

learning profession (Darling-Hammond, 2000), and confirms the advice from community

influencers regarding the practice needed to become a good teacher. As Aaron pointed out:

> I wasn't [good]. I had to tread water all year long. That is where you're at the first year. At the time I was going through it I felt like a fake; someone is gonna know I'm faking it here. You try to be positive and you try to be good, but that lesson you prepared wasn't the greatest lesson in the world. But you had five other ones you had to do, and that was the best you could do at that time. I did have some realization I knew I wasn't going to be great right off the bat, but even today, sometimes I feel like I'm faking again. I think we all do.

      **Reframing Employment Conversations.** Perhaps one of the more stressful times of year

for those involved with teacher preparation is interview season. The conversation regarding

migration is incredibly relevant as preservice teachers weigh their employment options, post-

preparation program. Perhaps greater intention in employment conversations aids in greater

career satisfaction, especially as teachers navigate their early career. However, additional

research is needed to determine this empirically. Again, with teacher mobility occurring at much

higher rates for early career teachers (NCES, 2013), conversations about engaging in career

decisions must occur before teachers start their career.

This starts with engaging teachers in a process of categorizing their ideal program and

establishing expectations to which they are willing to be accountable. It involves discussion

regarding the challenge of moving, not only to the school, but also to the individual teacher. As

the state supervisor outlined, teachers seem to leave programs with the false sense that

geography will remedy any challenges they experienced with their previous program. We see

this in others' perceptions of Jessie's experience. Despite previous practice, a move closer to

home failed to alleviate challenges in relating to community members and engaging with

students. Other research on SBAE teacher mobility corroborates this idea (Haddad et al., 2019).

Teachers must be well equipped to weigh their career decisions, given how teachers operate in

the system to improve their career status (Peterson, 1978).

**Building Opportunities.** Continued opportunities to build resilience and networks as a

function of preservice programs should continue. Pre-service teachers gain valuable coping skills

when failure is allowed, models of reflection are engaged, and mistakes are capitalized on as

processes of future improvement (Vagi et al., 2017). As it relates to migrators, it is essential for

teachers to reflect on their career choices to alleviate pressures from prior programs. They must

act with autonomy in acknowledging previous mistakes (Haddad et al., 2019). Finally, migrators

must resolve toward greater responsibility in the interactions allowing programs to be successful

and teachers to be positioned as supported (Haddad et al., 2019).

Additionally, teachers relied on networks to foster resilience. Teachers expressed challenge in managing resources given the heightened logistical load they were trying to coordinate. For preservice programs, developing teachers' networks aids in career induction during preservice. Providing many opportunities to grow a network of support proved essential to Aaron and Stephanie as they relied on fellow SBAE teachers to provide resources and encouragement. In addition, preservice teachers should have opportunities to use their network prior to needing their network. Practice engaging with other teachers and mentors, coupled with evaluating the types of responses they receive may aid early-career teachers in capitalizing on available support through human resources.

*Recommendations: Educational Researchers*

While many educational researchers are also involved with teacher preparation, there are implications of this study specific to the research appointments of university faculty. Deriving a theory of teacher support and challenge and the need for a theory of teacher migration are key recommendations to unify the study of teacher mobility and migration. Both are lacking in the current literature, not only in the migratory context in which mobile teachers operate, but also in the support and challenge SBAE teachers position themselves as taking up in their communities.

**Toward a Theory of Teacher Support & Challenge.** The data identified teacher support and challenge as nuanced, relational constructs. Challenge and support, as identified by participants, are relational, reciprocal, and intertwined. Conceptualizing a theory of teacher support and challenge necessitates attention beyond logistics. Challenges often associated with changing schools, as addressed by some community influencers (e.g. using the copier, submitting grades, or school policies), posed much less challenge to participants than their relationships did. The findings outline teachers were challenged in being limited in their autonomy to take up

desired positions. Schedule, workload, and content expertise are components of challenge

applying to teachers, regardless of their mobility status. Depending on the interactions engaged,

these were also integral to teachers' positioning themselves as supported. A simple

conceptualization contextualizes the support and challenge constructs in Figure 4:

Figure 4. Conceptualizing Teacher Support & Challenge
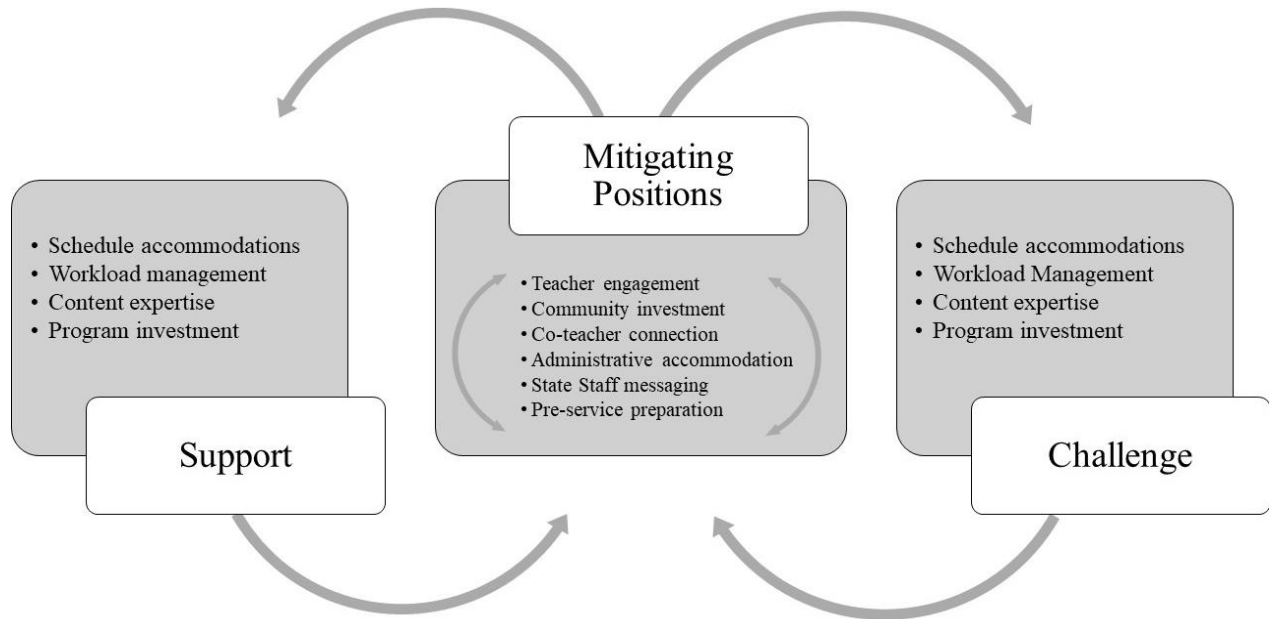


*Note.* This initial conceptualization provides a framework to continue the discussion of

representing the interaction of support and challenge and the positions taken up to mitigate each

within the migratory context. Within this study, the constructs of support and challenges were

discussed in reference to similar experiences, but were mitigated differently depending on the

interactional positioning among SBAE teachers and community influencers. This representation

seeks to capture the cyclical nature of these constructs and their mitigation as discussed in this

context. Namely, while the manifestations of support and challenge are similar, they can be

mitigated by different uptake, rejection, and reification of positions to impose different

perceptions of similar interactions.

As outlined above, support and challenge reciprocate on each other as breakdowns in support instigate challenge, while alleviating challenge renders support. While this is not a surprising conclusion, and is certainly oversimplified given the nuance of challenge and support outlined in the findings, little exists in the current literature to conceptualize support and challenge as constructs in school contexts. Undoubtedly, this conceptualization can be expanded and additional items add nuance to the constructs, but for this study, participants highlighted the needs related to schedule, workload, content expertise, and program investment as imposing challenge or support.

Positioning allows support and challenge beyond the duality of *have* or *not* and *are* or *not* (Davies, 2000). Support and challenge, through this lens, are navigated and renegotiated as various mitigating factors dynamically interplay. In this study, support was mitigated as a challenge for the participants depending on the navigation of engagement, investment, connection, accommodation, messaging, and preparation. Seeing similar instigations of support and challenge denote the importance of mitigating support and challenge relative to supporting teachers through challenge, positioning them as supported, or perpetuating the challenges they face.

**The Need for a Theory of Teacher Migration.** The intent of this study was to understand teacher support and challenge. These constructs enable the view of teacher mobility as a retentive outcome for the SBAE profession. The data collected do not lend well to advancing a comprehensive theory of teacher mobility and migration, recognizing limits on generalizability and a focus on support and challenge. However, this development is warranted if teacher mobility is a retentive outcome. Based on the work done thus far to embrace mobility as retentive, a beginning conceptualization of a theory of teacher migration is outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Toward a Theory of Teacher Migration
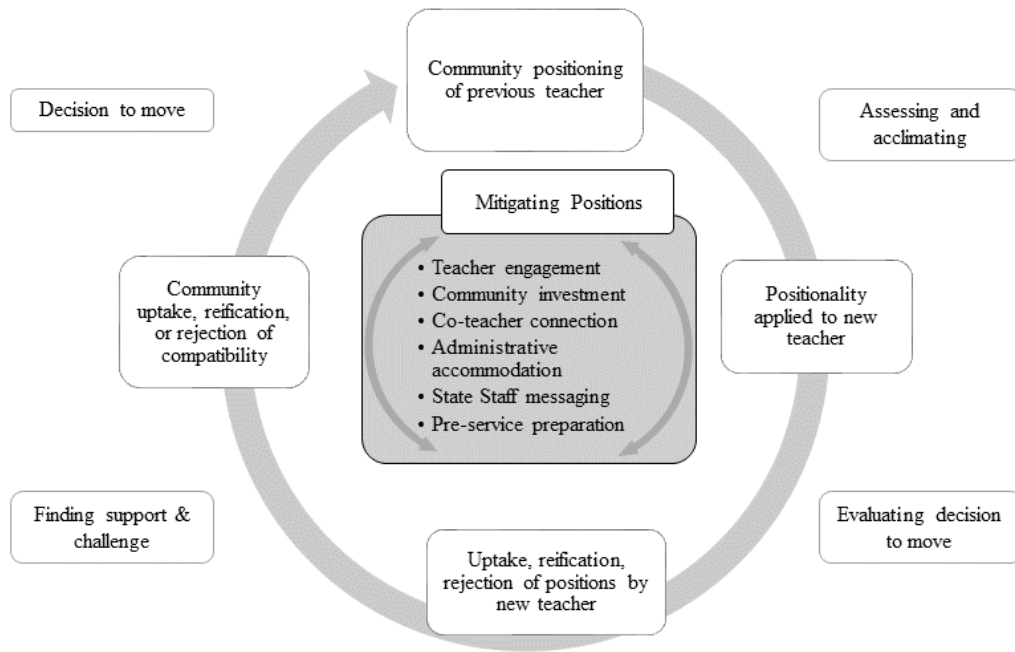


*Note.* Teacher migration is a complex series of choices that vary highly by individual, context, and interaction. This conceptualization recognizes the discursive positioning of migrators within community contexts, identifying the interactions (mitigating positions) that influence the positions available to the migrator. Within the context of Ochs (2012) model for international migration, this conceptualization focuses closely on the teacher within the *local expressive order* (Davies, 2000). This elaborates local context, relative to the teacher, school, organizations, and departments of education with whom they interact. Further exploration is needed in the outlying areas, particularly related to understand the decision making process engaged in mobility, processes of assessing and acclimating within teacher career choices, the ways teachers evaluate their decision to move, and continued replication and validation toward understanding support and challenge and constructs making positions available to migrating teachers.

Understanding support and challenge aids teachers across SBAE, but specific attention must be directed to the challenge of mobility, and the uptake of challenge to better employment

situations while *remaining* teaching. Evidence from this research suggest, rather than borrowing

from a variety of approaches, teaching, particularly in SBAE, is unique enough to support its

own theory of mobility outside traditional social, organizational, developmental, or achievement

based approaches. The proposed theory of teacher mobility must account for this phenomenon as

a retentive outcome at the professional level while working within the constraints of teacher

socialization (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978). Theory development should ground mobility as a

relational phenomenon, recognizing teachers intentionally move to accommodate relationships at

home, but determine success and worth of a move based on professional relationships (Haddad et

al., 2019).

### *Recommendations: Educational Policy*

Given the varied interpretations of the purpose of Agricultural Education (Phipps et al.,

2008), a challenge exists in proposing policy recommendations for schools boards or broader

educational policy in the United States. In illuminating the varying purposes of Agricultural

Education, the following considerations seem apparent for the migration context:

1.  If the goal of SBAE is agricultural literacy, additional attention needs to be devoted, at
    the local and national level, to scale back in the breadth of content and facilities
    encapsulated in SBAE programs leading to positions of being overworked for teachers. A
    scaffolded Ag 1, 2, 3, 4 model should be adopted.

2.  If the goal of SBAE is career exposure, additional community engagement is strongly
    encouraged. Much heavier reliance on advisory boards and greater intention in program
    planning must be engaged. Communities must engage in helping students explore careers
    preventing rural brain drain by highlighting opportunities in the community. This also
    necessitates greater community involvement in program transition and continuity

processes. Communities serve as program owners, preparing students for work in their home communities.

3.  If the goal of SBAE is career preparation, teachers, as evidenced here, do not have the time, nor the expertise to prepare students adequately for careers when teaching in multiple content areas. If SBAE teachers are to take up this position, attention must be given to the SBAE teacher's contract to increase planning time according to number of different content areas, reduction in the number of different content areas they are being asked to teach, or an increase in the number of available teachers.

4.  If the goal of SBAE is readiness for continued study in agriculture, greater emphasis and time need to be extended with core subject areas in conjunction with teaming (to allow legitimate collaboration) and scheduling (to have student groups take similar blocks of courses). This aids the integration of a liberal arts focused education and acclimates students to the synthesis required in further preparation for study in agriculture.

The debates over the purpose of Agricultural Education notwithstanding, there are additional policy implications regardless of continuity of SBAE purpose, including resource availability, attention to *stagedness*, accommodating mobility, combating rural brain-drain, and teaching contracts.

**Resource Availability.** Resource limitation imposed significant challenge throughout this study. Resources of time and money were difficult to navigate as one often enacted the other. While imposing constraints on each other, there is also potential for time and money to offset each other. Teachers in CTE areas spent additional time writing grants to secure available money to secure available resources. This situation, anecdotally, is not unique to this study, though

continued study may seek to ascertain how CTE teachers structure their time. This is a vicious cycle of making money available without alleviating time constraints.

The larger issue is time to implement. A teacher cannot use available resources if they are overworked. Plenty of resources exist, but teachers in this context were limited in access based on cost, time to implement, or time to secure the funding to cover costs. Those in positions of teacher support were quick to generate and supply missing resources, but teachers indicated resource saturation. They did not have time to search and sort. Even among free resources, there is a cost of time in assessing quality. Caleb suggested this conclusion:

> Unless there is a change in expectations of CTE curriculum offered and a downsizing of the teacher expectations both in and out of the classroom, school districts of medium to smaller size will be seen as a training site for new teachers to garner experience and then move on to another district.

In addition, teachers were asked to add tracking and communicating their workload to an already full plate. Apart from securing resources, teachers were asked to run their own public relations campaign to keep administrators and community members informed. SBAE teachers took up and reified the expectations imposed by communities. School boards and educational policy lobbyists would do well to remember principles of opportunity cost. Any time a teacher prioritizes something outside their job description is time that cannot be devoted directly to students. Additional staff, delegated support, or compensation for the added logistical load SBAE teachers carry is necessary.

**Stagedness.** At its base, this study operationalizes teaching as an unstaged profession (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978). Unfortunately, much of educational policy and research does not. Even in approaches to mobility, the career ladder is discussed to suggest incentives unavailable to teachers (Lortie, 1975; Peterson, 1978). Breaking the cycle of unstagedness to elevate teaching to a legitimate profession has the potential to continue retaining teachers to the classroom.

Legitimating progressions of expertise within teaching may also alleviate challenges in identifying mentoring connections at the school level. Ben mentions the "sink or swim" approach currently employed in socializing new teachers to a district. I argue teachers are not required to sink. Rather, various supports can be employed to setup teaching as staged and move teachers through a continuum of development with appropriate supports. After all, student success is on the line. If the focus in education remains teacher recruitment and retention, it will not matter what progress is made in pedagogy, curriculum, and teacher development. Teacher recruitment and retention currently diverts attention from issues of student success, learning, and the art of teaching.

The call is to clarify and incentivize teaching as a staged profession to acknowledge and validate the challenges of being an early-career teacher, the proficiency of mid-career teachers, and expertise of late-career teachers. Compensating teachers for accruing experience, and accommodating less experienced teachers as they develop, provides benefits across the spectrum of teacher experience. "Apprenticeship" allows the expectation for early-career teachers to learn a profession and mitigates challenges regarding professional entry induced by varying routes to certification. Apprenticeship allows time to "get good" (as Aaron phrased it) by assigning "tradesman" (mid-career teachers) or "master teachers" (late-career teachers) as a team focused on teacher development. Using language to ease identification of pursuing expertise is essential to supporting successful teaching careers.

**Accommodating Mobility.** As seen, even those not directly involved in SBAE teaching moved. Moving is a distinctly human phenomenon, noticeable in centuries of nomads. Critical, especially if staging teaching is not an option, is reducing penalties on teacher mobility. If mobility remains the only means by which teachers are able to better their situation, greater

attention must be given to accommodating moves. Caleb, who has moved multiple times over his

career, made these observations:

> The one problem that needs to be solved in education is it is difficult for teachers to
> move. I think it is beneficial for teachers to move. It's damn stupid that if I were to go
> back to Oakville, they might hire me at year-step seven, because that's what they do.
> Here, I had to bargain to get to where I needed to be to even get here. I should have been
> there [on the pay scale]. I took a little less, but I still made more. Statewide, you shouldn't
> have to go backwards. You've got all this experience and you're good at it. If they need
> you and they want you, you shouldn't have to go backwards. It's dumb. That's why so
> many social studies teachers [don't move]. Once my son gets a job, he's never moving.
> He'll never get hired again. You have to wait for somebody to die in your hometown,
> because they knew you and if you were good they'll hire you. I'm lucky as industrial tech.
> I can throw a dart and go wherever I want, but even then you need a change.

> Seven years. I made it six at Oakville. I could've gone another, but I was looking for big
> changes too. I needed something different. If they had given me my sabbatical, I'd still be
> there. I definitely would've given them two more years. Probably would have given them
> a lot more than that. The funny thing is in the end, if they'd given me a sabbatical, I
> actually wouldn't have taken it because they didn't open the position…But they didn't see
> the value in what getting me more education would have done for them. They just looked
> at it as, "Well, he's going to cost us this much money."

> It's a dumb system. I mean really if it were just one big statewide [system] like the
> university system, so if they cut a program those teachers have rights to be pushed to
> jump in anywhere else they want them. They have seniority if they want to keep doing
> their job. If they want to get out and do something else they can, but that's a closer step to
> what I'm talking about. Imagine if it was not just all these independent districts. You can
> still be independent districts, but if the seniority list was just, "Hey, here you go. There's
> an opening coming up," so I'll say, "Logan, would you like to move there instead?"

The impacts of teacher mobility on student achievement are statistically clear in the

literature. While this is certainly not a call to incentivize teacher mobility, greater attention needs

to focus at the policy level not to punish it. Contracts must be clarified so teachers do not "lose"

experience between schools, particularly penalizing losses of experience on the pay scale,

disproportionate to the "loss" in onboarding a new teacher. Otherwise, cycles of mobility will

continue to impact the hardest hit students if salaries do not reflect a value on teacher experience

at the school district level.

**Rural Brain Drain.** Even for the international community, teacher mobility is implicated in issues of brain drain, as well-qualified teachers move from developing countries to developed ones (Omolewa, 2012; Penson & Yonemura, 2012; Vigilance, 2012). This issue is also present in United States schools. As teachers use mobility to better their situation, the hardest hit schools are those already disadvantaged (i.e. large urban schools and small rural schools) (Atterbury et al., 2017; Balaz, 2015; DiCarlo, 2014; Gibbons et al., 2018; Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013; McKinnon et al., 2018).

This study implicates powerful coalitions between schools and communities to keep students coming back. Engaging community influencers capitalizes on student engagement in a career exploration model of SBAE (Phipps et al., 2008). Community engagement serves to revitalize rural communities as students come back to relevant and interesting jobs and continue to work with their local school systems to promote jobs in their community (Phipps et al., 2008).

**Teaching Contract.** Finally, data present several instances of teachers working well beyond their teaching contract. Teachers and community influencers positioned SBAE teachers as overworked. However, the expectation for robust FFA programs and continued growth of the SBAE program was also present, particularly from community influencers, but also from SBAE teachers as they discussed desires to grow programs as visionaries in their field.

For school boards and policy more broadly, FFA and SAE must be identified as integral parts of the SBAE teacher contract. What SBAE teacher's (and many CTE area teachers) are asked to do looks different from their core area counterparts, and SBAE teachers are not compensated for this difference. This is striking given the value community members placed on the legacy and success of local agriculture. If SBAE teachers are to continue serving as a source of stability for local agriculture, they must be compensated, much like the varsity football coach.

SBAE teachers' "season" is year-round. If program growth is an imperative, teachers must be compensated appropriately.

Additional compensation is not the only way forward, however. Clarity in expectation serves an equal purpose in managing SBAE teacher workload. As those tasked with implementing the good of the community in the school, school boards must be contractually clear with the SBAE teacher relative to the job they are to carry out. School boards are uniquely positioned as *in the community*, and clarity in contracts aids community influencers in appropriately grounding expectations against what growth will be supported in the school.

**Conclusion**

The context of teacher migration presents positions within the constructs of support and challenge. Most importantly, as Ben said, "Being human is a pretty complicated thing." Outlined here is only the start of exploring a small facet of the complicated nature of being a human, SBAE migrator. SBAE teacher migration, through a positioning lens, exposes a pinch point of school challenges and the broader system of education, as communities work to position someone new. Teacher migration exposes expectations, power, and imposter/survivorship as SBAE teachers take up, reify, and reject positionalities, and communities position new teachers according to how they depose positions. I conclude with a challenge to those in positions to influence the support of mobile teachers. This study exposed positions related to workload, responsible autonomy, professional courtesy, and community embeddedness. What will you do with the exposed positions in teacher transition?

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**Appendix A: Terminology**

*Accrued experience:* the compounding effect of years of experience gained by a school district, discipline, or country as teachers are retained (Rudder, 2012)

*Activating component:* the piece of the educational system attributed with determining whether or not student learning is initiated (Morgan & Shackelford, 2018)

*Annual turnover:* short term measure of turnover; Measured by the proportion of staff in year ($t$-1) who left the school by year $t$. Identifies the proportion of teachers who leave from the end of one school year to the beginning of the next school year (Holme et al., 2017)

*Anticipatory socialization:* a process of doubting, decision making, and disengaging from an array of obligations and expectations associated with a present role (Ebaugh, 1988)

*Attrition*: Leavers at any given level of education leaving the profession. Calculated from administrative data from schools and human resources record on educational personnel (UNESCO, 2019)

*Brain drain:* loss of the best and brightest from areas that may struggle to recruit top talent (Vigilance, 2012)

*Career:* sequence of defined steps which offer an individual progressively more responsibility, authority, challenge, and financial reward within some sort of occupational structure. Sequence of job statuses or job titles which reflect an upward mobility pattern (Peterson, 1978)

*Career teacher:* individual who spends all or the majority of his or her working life in the classroom (Peterson, 1978)

*Career trajectory:* individual mobility considered over a long-term view (Biemann et al., 2012)

*Churn*: a term describing new, new-to-school, new-to-grade, or new-to-subject teachers (Atterbury, et al., 2017)

*Chronic Instability:* Long term measure of turnover. "High" annual turnover, measured both by absolute and relative rates, for a certain number or percentage of years in a given band of years. Identifies schools that perpetually struggle with high turnover (Holme et al., 2017)

*Communities*: broadly defined for this study to encompass the many and varied people that SBAE teachers work with in their district (Haddad, et al., 2019)

*Continuous career:* Permanent and early commitment from an individual toward an uninterrupted teaching career (Peterson, 1978)

*Cumulative instability:* Long term measure of turnover. Proportion of staff lost over time (e.g.,

20% each year, totaling 60% of original staff in 3 years). Identifies the schools that lose the

majority of their staff over time and those that lose few staff over time. (Holme et al., 2017)

*Double-track career:* Female teachers who work in the classroom as teachers and at home as

mothers and spouses (Peterson, 1978)

*Effectiveness*: variously defined. Includes determinants such as student achievement on

standardized tests, teacher observation scores, teacher performance on value-added assessments,

scores through state accountability systems, and qualifications of the teacher (Jackson &

Bruegemann, 2009; Ross et al., 1999; & West & Chingos, 2009).

*Episodes of instability:* Long term measure of turnover. "High turnover" status temporarily (e.g.,

two or more consecutive years of turnover) but return to stability. Identifies schools that

experience relatively short bouts of high turnover. (Holme et al., 2017)

*Ex:* one who has vacated a former role (Ebaugh, 1988)

*External career events:* Events during a career that chronologically influence the individual's

career development (Peterson, 1978)

*Hangover identity:* the retention of role-identity from previous socializations (Ebaugh, 1988)

*Horizontal mobility:* movement from school to school in a progression of desirability (Peterson, 1978)

*Identity merger:* the adoption of the practice of one's role into one's identity (Ebaugh, 1988)

*Impacts of remittances:* economic benefits to countries supplying migrating teachers (Vigilance, 2012)

*Instability entry and exit:* Long term measure of turnover. Low turnover one year but move into high turnover status another year or vice versa. Identifies the schools that are more likely to fall into or recover from a period of high turnover. (Holme et al., 2017)

*Interrupted career:* Individual who left or was forced to leave teaching for five or fewer years before returning to the classroom (Peterson, 1978)

*Involuntary move:* teachers being reassigned by their administration; right of assignment (West & Chingos, 2009)

*Matching*: an economic approach to educational effectiveness focusing on the similarity of students to their teachers (Morgan & Shackelford, 2019)

*Migrant Teachers:* teachers em/immigrating to the United States from other counties (AFT, 2009)

*Migration Work:* the intentional choice on the part of individuals to engage in a career transition

as a process of choices, consequences, and navigation of experience (Haddad, current document)

*Mobile students:* students who change schools (McKinnon et al., 2018)

*Mobility:* local or district moves (Ross et al., 1999; Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017)

*Negative effect:* low student Math & ELA achievement scores (Atterbury et al., 2017)

*Multiple career:* Person having two different jobs in their occupational history related or

unrelated to classroom teaching (non-simultaneous) (Peterson, 1978)

*Organizational careers:* a shift from long-term full-time employment to greater mobility in the

workforce (Biemann et al., 2012)

*Organizational turnover:* loss of employees from a particular role or job within an organization

(Biemann et al., 2012)

*Program Migration:* a programmatic move while choosing to remain in a given *professional

component* (Haddad, et al., 2019).

*Pull Factors:* items from a new setting encouraging or inciting a move to that setting (Ingersoll,

2001)

*Push Factors:* items from a current setting encouraging or inciting a move from that setting (Ingersoll, 2001)

*Readjustment:* a period of realigning norms and expectations from a prior socialization to the current socialization (Ebaugh, 1988)

*Reduction in Force (RIF):* any measure to decrease the payroll capacity of a school district through staff elimination measures (Goldhaber et al., 2016)

*Revolving Door Effect:* the ways teachers move into and out of positions interchangeably (Ingersoll, 2001)

*Sorting*: allocating students to teachers based on achievement level (Kalogrides & Loeb, 2013)

*Spell of instability:* Long term measure of turnover. The number of consecutive years schools experience high turnover. Identifies the average length of time that it takes for schools to stabilize once they experience high turnover. (Holme et al., 2017)

*Stable career:* long-term stable employment with one firm (Biemann et al., 2012). Variously defined as settled, an end point, and springboard for further career development (Draper et al., 1998)

*Stability:* year to year measure of teachers remaining in the same district (Holme et al., 2017)

*Teacher Effects*: characteristics and qualities of teachers that influence their ability to impact

student learning (Morgan & Shackelford, 2019)

*Teacher effort:* the quality and effectiveness of the teacher (Ross et al., 1999)

*Turnover:* teachers leaving a school or district (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017)

*Unstaged career:* a career with no clear ladder or progression resembling an upward trajectory

(Peterson, 1978)

*Upward mobility:* a career trajectory encompassing moves that garner greater responsibility,

status, and compensation (Biemann, 2012)

Additional terminology occurring throughout the literature include ill-defined and assumed-

understood terms such as *challenge*, *environment*, and *support*. Researchers often cite these

terms as evidence for teachers' justifications toward mobility with implied and convoluted

meaning.

**Appendix B: Recruitment Materials**

**Appendix B1: Recruitment Email**

Dear [Participant],

At NAAE a year and a half ago, I heard a teacher say, "I'm a first year teacher with twenty two years of experience." As I discussed this with others, I started getting frustrated that no one really seemed to know why it was so hard for teachers to change schools. As I dug into the existing research, there's very little that credits teachers with making tough choices and engaging in a difficult process.

My intent with this research is to work with you to understand the ways migrating School-Based Agricultural Education teachers and influencers in their community impose, take-up, reify, or reject positions. My hope is that this research aids in understanding the ways teachers perceive support and challenge within their school district to better work toward retentive outcomes.

You've been identified for this study as someone who has interacted with a program having a new agriculture teacher every five years for at least the last twenty. The purpose of this study is to examine the ways people position themselves and each other within their communities to better understand the ways SBAE migrators feel supported in their role.

Participation in this study involves:

- Multiple video and face to face interviews (30-60 minutes each in October & November)

- Some reflective writing regarding your experience (in November & December)

For more information about this study, please contact me by phone at (612) 612-8771 or email at becky.haddad@oregonstate.edu.

Thank you in advance for considering participation,

Becky Haddad

Study Team

Study Title: Discourse Analysis Study of Teacher Migration and Community

**Appendix B2: Consent Document**

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

**Study Title:** Discourse Analysis Study of Teacher Migration and Community

**Principal Investigator:** Josh Stewart

**Study team:** Becky Haddad

**Version:** 10-09-2019

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We are inviting you to take part in a research study.

**Purpose:** This study is about the ways School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) teachers work with their broad community as they change schools. We hope to learn more about the ways SBAE teachers learn and find support in order to aid school districts and teacher preparation programs in onboarding processes and retention strategies.

We are asking you if you want to be in this study because you are or have worked with a migrating agriculture teacher. You should not be in this study if you have had minimal interactions with agriculture teachers.

**Voluntary:** You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. You can also decide to be in the study now and change your mind later. If you decide to be in the study, you are free to stop at any time without penalty. We may keep and use information that we collected about you while you were in the study unless you ask for that information to be destroyed.

**Activities:** The study activities include video interviews, face to face interviews, and some reflective writing.

**Time:** Your participation in this study will last about six months, but your active time in the study will take four to six hours over that time period.

**Risks:** The possible risks or discomforts associated with the being in the study include uncomfortability due to raised consciousness or difficult recollections regarding your experience. We will provide ample time for reflection during interview sessions, and participants may skip questions or stop the interview at any point. In addition, a breach of confidentiality may expose potentially identifiable information.

**Benefit:** We do not know if you will benefit from being in this study. However, we hope this study helps current SBAE teachers, administrators, and those who interact with SBAE teachers as they navigate program migrations.

**Confidentiality:** Audio/video recordings will be made and transcribed from each interview. The principal investigator and study team will have access to recorded materials for the duration of the study. Following the study, recordings will be destroyed after transcripts have been coded using pseudonyms. Pseudonyms will be used as identifiers in subsequent analyses and reports from the data collected.

Other people may learn that you participated in this study, but the information you provide will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Research records will be stored securely. Regulatory agencies and Oregon State University employees may access or inspect records pertaining to this research as part of routine oversight or university business. Some of these records could contain information that personally identifies you.

**Payment:** You will not be paid for being in this research study.

**Future Use:** Data from this study may be used in future analysis. Consent will not be sought prior to future analysis.

**Study contacts:** We would like you to ask us questions if there is anything about the study that you do not understand. You can call us at (612) 619-8771 or email becky.haddad@oregonstate.edu.

You can also contact the Human Research Protection Program with any concerns that you have about your rights or welfare as a study participant. This office can be reached at (541) 737-8008 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

**Verbal Consent:** Your verbal agreement indicates that this study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form. Do you have any questions regarding this study? Do you consent to participate?

**Appendix C: Researcher Routines**

Data collection and analysis occurred in three, semi-overlapping phases. Each phase required particular routines on the part of the researcher to identify speech episodes, "detach" from the context, and re-construct the context with participants.

**Pre-Phase: Selection & Recruitment**

The initial phase of the study identified participants based on their contextual history with migrating SBAE teachers. With IRB approval, those teachers were asked to participate in the study via email and to subsequently schedule an initial Zoom meeting to provide an overview of their experience with migration. Initial Zoom meetings took one to two and half hours.

**Phase 1: Data Collection**

The first phase of the study focused on data collection. For each session, the following routine was employed:

- Greeting and appreciation for participation

- Reminder of purpose of the study

- Review of consent

- Address of questions

- Participant questioning and follow up questions (semi-structured interviews)

- Address of participant questions

- Wrap up and appreciate for participation

- Record reflective observation

**Phase 1a: Rough Analysis**

Given the quick turnaround between initial interviews and follow-up interviews (2-4 days), an

initial analysis of transcribed interviews identified speech events and positions. The routine for

initial analysis included:

- Transcribe interview

- Re-listen to interview to ensure accurate transcription

- Identify speech episodes as events accounting for context relative to:

  o History of prior episodes (how participants discuss the migratory context in light

    of specific events that have occurred)

  o Interactions (others who were involved with the participant in the prior episode)

  o Relationships (identification of the ways participants were involved with those

    with whom they interacted)

  o Knowledge (what participants share based on historicity, interactions, and

    relationships, that has been constructed as true)

- Identify positions for follow-up discussion

- Record reflective observations

**Phase 2: Co-Analysis**

In-person interviews focused on the co-analysis of the initial interviews, including my personal

reflections. Specific follow-up focused on the interpretations of positions relative to uptake,

rejection, and reification, and developed the metalanguage the contextualized the study. I

employed the following routine:

- Greeting and appreciation for participation

- Reminder of purpose of the study

- Review of consent

- Address of questions

- Follow up questions using "softening phrases" (Patel Stevens, 2004) to engage

  participants in conversation around the positions that arose in the initial analysis:

  - I noticed that you discussed [X] repeatedly. Tell me more about how that

    influenced your interactions.

  - You mentioned that [Y] provided particular support in [Z] area. How did that

    affect your relationships?

  - I heard you discuss [W] as a source of challenge. I've heard teachers talk about

    challenge in two ways, as something they seek and something that's not worth

    fighting. Do these resonate with how you talked about challenge here?

  - You seemed to put yourself in the position of [V]. How did you identify that

    position as one you belonged in? What did this position mean for how you

    fulfilled your role?

  - It sounded like [U] made things more difficult. Why was this something you

    rejected about this situation?

  - I heard you talk about [T] as though it resonated with you. How did you further

    that "self-image"/"position" with those around you?

- Address of participant questions

- Wrap up and appreciate for participation

- Record reflective observation

**Phase 2b: Coding and Analysis**

Phase two will be the most extensive analysis phase, adhering to the protocol outlined in the

methodology section. Phase 1 was a means toward Phase 2, but the analysis focused more on

Phase 2 to understand those positions participants identify in addition to their deposition of the

position. This phase will employ the following routine:

- Transcribe interview

- Re-listen to interview to ensure accurate transcription

- Identify speech episodes as events accounting for context relative to:

  o History of prior episodes (how participants discuss the migratory context in light

    of specific events that have occurred)

  o Interactions (others who were involved with the participant in the prior episode)

  o Relationships (identification of the ways participants were involved with those

    with whom they interacted)

  o Knowledge (what participants share based on historicity, interactions, and

    relationships, that has been constructed as true)

- Analyze speech episodes via the following protocol (example):

| | |
|---|---|
| - **Speech Episode[1]:** *I was hired with this promise of do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be. That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half of the time I was teaching junior high, which was not my fave, and the other part of the time was the high school stuff. I did a variety of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff, but was tied down schedule-wise by the junior high electives. That wasn't something I was really into. They wouldn't let me do work based learning. That was another thing I didn't get to do that I had seen very successfully at other schools. Obviously FFA advising took up a lot of time as another role. Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee because they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.* | |

| Position[2] | Order[3] | Type[4] | Deposition[5] | Metacomment |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Evidence:** *I did a variety of a lot of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff but was tied down schedule wise by the junior high electives. That wasn't something I was really into… Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee because they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.* | | | | |
| Overworked | Second | Self | Uptake (added to program/growing program) | Workload wise, I wasn't capable of changing. I couldn't reinvent the wheel because my daily workload was so high. I was just trying to keep up there. I wasn't going to think about making new stuff. You can run a class but you've got to pay for it, so we'll go find some grants. We're not going to buy your textbooks, if that's what you're asking. I don't want it to come off like it was a bad experience because it was not a bad experience. |
| Unsuccessful | First | Self | Reification (less successful than other schools) | I think it was unrealistic expectations on my part to think that I could just come in and change whatever I wanted. There were these parameters like, "you still have to teach junior high and you're still going to have to do this." |
| Limited | First | Other | Reification (no schedule | Workload wise, I wasn't capable of changing. I couldn't reinvent the wheel because my daily workload was so high. I was just trying to keep up there. I wasn't going to think about making new stuff. You can run a class but you've got to pay for it, so we'll go find some grants. We're not going to buy your |

| | | | change/addition of WBL) | textbooks, if that's what you're asking. I don't want it to come off like it was a bad experience because it was not a bad experience. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Evidence:** *Obviously FFA advising took up a lot of time as another role. Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee because they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.* | | | | |
| Committed | First | Self | Reification (engaged in school committees) | I'll find the kids that really want to do it and work on them. You always have the lens where you're doing some really cool stuff. We really need to keep track of it. |

*Note.* Table 5 modifies Ash's (2003) coding structure to account for constructs of positioning in the SBAE migratory context. For the sake of space, the table only provides a sample of positions derived from the initial speech episode.

[1] *Speech episodes* account for historicity, interactions, relationships, and knowledge (Davies, 2000). Speech episodes may encompass evidence of multiple positions.

[2] *Positions* are conceptual repertoires locating persons in the structures and rights of those using the repertoire (Davies, 2000)

[3] *Orders of positioning* include *first* (self-location), *second* (negotiating first), and *third* (other imposing location) (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999)

[4] *Types of positioning* focus on intentional self and other positioning. I identify multiple positions to recognize the ways others were positioned based on self-positioning (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999). All positioning in this data set was intentional, accountive positioning.

[5] *Deposition* identifies the uptake, reification, or rejection of the identified position (Davies, 2000). Depositions were derived from evidence in the speech episode.

- Open code positions to identify themes

- Draft findings

- Record reflective observations

**Phase 3: Iterative Analysis**

Following the second analysis, I will engage in iterative analysis conversations with my participants toward understanding the representation of their experience and their interpretation

of that representation. Having much of my own analysis (the findings) written, I will work with

participants to unpack the interpretation (what does your recounting of experience in this way

mean). This follow up occurred via the following email:

Good Morning, [participant]!

We're almost there! Thank you, once again, for participating in my study on teacher mobility. I am grateful for your investment of time, candor, and willingness as we processed NPC as a migratory context.

I finished drafting findings last week and am in the process of continuing to edit and revise the drafts (bear with any errors you see in the drafts you're receiving). You'll remember an important piece of the approach I'm using involves coming back to you at each step of the process. In the attachments, you'll see the findings that include thoughts from you. Your pseudonym is [First Name, Last Name].

Our purpose, at this point, is to understand how you're making sense of the findings. I would appreciate a follow up email from you that answers the following questions:

- What do the findings mean to you now that you've read them?

- How do you process your experience in light of these findings?

If there are other items you would like to clarify or would like to reflect on further, I would welcome the opportunity to participate in that conversation and make whatever feasible changes are necessary to best represent your experience. Remember, positions change, and we're constantly negotiating them. If something sparks a clarifying thought regarding the positions you occupy, I'm happy to incorporate it if I can.

This is not a request for testimonials regarding participation in the research process. ☺ Rather than writing the book jacket, we're thinking about the "now what" of where we go with these findings. With your permission, I will incorporate your email responses into the conclusions. As always, I'm happy to follow up with you further to talk more about the findings.

Thank you in advance for your prompt reply. I would appreciate your response by March 20th so I can begin writing the conclusions. Thank you again for your investment in this study. Let me know what questions you have and enjoy the rest of your week!

It bears reminding that this is not a member checking response. While this interaction certainly

facilitates a more trustworthy representation of these individual's experience, the goal of this

third phase is toward further interpretation based on the interpretation started in Phase 2.

**Phase 3a: Incorporation**

Incorporation of the third iterative phase was the basis for writing the conclusions of this study. Backgrounded thoughts from the initial interview phases, coupled with responses regarding meaning making comprised an iterative process of concluding this study with participants rather than on.

**Appendix D: Proposed Interview Protocol**

| Research Question | Audience & Question |
|---|---|
| | **SBAE Teachers** |
| | Tell me about yourself |
| | <ul><li>Growing up</li><li>How you came to ag Ed</li><li>Pre-service program</li><li>Ag programs where you taught</li><li>How you came to your current program</li><li>How do you see your role in your community?</li><li>How do you see your role in your program?</li><li>How do you see your role in agricultural education more broadly?</li></ul> |
| | Program: |
| How do SBAE migrators position themselves and others in their co-constructed discursive context? | <ul><li>What drew you to NPC?</li><li>Follow up: Was there anything that pushed you away from your previous role?</li><li>Follow up: What considerations challenged you during that choice to move?</li><li>Follow up: What does it mean to be challenged?</li><li>What does that challenge look like?</li><li>What does it mean to be supported?</li><li>What does that support look like?</li><li>Why did you leave the NPC ag Program?</li><li>Follow up: What drew you to that role?</li><li>Follow up: What considerations challenged you during that choice to move?</li><li>What would you do differently if you were to start over again at NPC?</li><li>Is there anything that would've made you stay in your role as an agriculture teacher?</li><li>What do you wish you would've had stepping into the program?</li></ul> |
| How do SBAE migrators position themselves and others in their co- | **SBAE Teachers** <ul><li>Thinking about your "induction" at NPC, how were you "welcomed?"</li></ul> |

constructed
discursive context?

- Follow ups: Who was involved with the induction and what was their role?
- How did you work to "embed" yourself in the community (broadly defined)?
- What challenged you about stepping into the ag Program at NPC?
- What things went "as planned?"
- How did your plan change?
- What things were unexpected?
- How did you make sense of what the previous teacher left behind?
- Is there anything you wish the former teacher would've done differently?
- What did you do to setup the next teacher for success?

**Administrators**

Tell me about yourself

- Growing up
- How you came to your admin role
- Preparation for admin
- Schools where you've been an administrated
- How do you see your role in your school?
- What is your role in the community?
- What is your role relative to the agriculture program?

How do community
members position
themselves and
SBAE migrators
within their co-
constructed context?

Program:

- How do you "induct" new teachers at your school?
- Follow up: What are the strongest parts of that process?
-

**Broad Community**

- Thinking about the ag Program at NPC, how many agriculture teachers did you hire?
- Follow up: What did you look for in those teachers?
- What changes did you see in the ag program during your time as admin?
- How did the agriculture program change with each teacher?
- What "agenda" did you have for the ag program?
- What is challenging about "on-boarding" new teachers?
- What do you see as the role of agriculture teachers relative to the school and community?

- How do you help ag teachers understand their role relative to the school and community?
- What do you wish you would've known when you hired the ag teachers you hired?
- What do you feel was the programmatic effect of hiring the teachers you did?

## Administrators

Tell me about yourself

- Growing up
- FFA experience
- Ag program experience
- Recent roles with the ag program
- How do you see your role in your school?
- What is your role in the community?
- What is your role relative to the agriculture program?
- 

Program:

How do community members position themselves and SBAE migrators within their co-constructed context?

- How did you make yourself available to ag teachers as they came on board?
- Did you have an "agenda" for the ag program? What was it? How did you enact it?
- How have you been involved with "inducting" new ag teachers to the school and community?
- Follow up: What do you think has gone well in that process
- Follow up: what would you have changed?
- What would you have done differently to help "on-board" a new ag teacher?
- What do you wish you would've known about helping a new teacher step into the community?

## Broad Community

- Have you been involved with any of the ag teacher hires at NPC? In what capacity?
- What changes have you seen in the ag program during the time you've been in the community?
- How did the ag program change with each teacher?
- What is the most challenging part of having a new ag teacher?
- What do you see as the agriculture teacher's role in the school and community?

- How do you help ag teachers understand their role relative to the school and community?
- What do you feel was the programmatic effect from multiple ag teachers/lack of continuity?

**Study questions 3 & 4 are components of the iterative examination. As such, review of responses to the above questions will need to occur before additional questions can be written

# Appendix E: Codebook

## Appendix E1: SBAE Migrators

| Code | Definition | Aligning Positions | Opposite Positions | Example |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Geographically bound | Identifying oneself as from a particular geographic area (state, county, region) | From MN; rural; family oriented; stable | | *Aaron (0:10:00)initially I just looked for several types of ag/ffa types of programs. I applied at several in State; I just thought I'd always end up back in State. I applied to several in South Dakota, and actually never applied at Waubay. I applied at Webster and one of my classmates got that job. So the superintendents talked to each other and the superintendent at Waubay called me and asked if I wanted to go teach there.* |
| Desperate | Needing something more than that thing needs you | Desperate | | *Aaron (0:11:36) I think when you first come out of college you're looking for that first job, so you'll kind of take anything. It ended up being kind of a challenging job. It was right off the Sisseton Indian reservation…so we had a large population of native American students there. Lot's of poverty, gangs, drugs, that type of stuff…12:37: lots of almost inner-city type problems, almost trial by fire* |
| Up for a challenge | Entering a position with the expectation/knowledge of the associated challenges | Up for a challenge; community as strict; learner; tough; seeking variety; enforcer; hard ass; ag kids as rough; kids as troubled; strict; students as complaining | | *Aaron (0:11:36) I think when you first come out of college you're looking for that first job, so you'll kind of take anything. It ended up being kind of a challenging job. It was right off the Sisseton Indian reservation…so we had a large population of native American students there. Lot's of poverty, gangs, drugs, that type of stuff…12:37: lots of almost inner-city type problems, almost trial by fire* |
| In demand | Desired more than what you desire | In demand; essential; valued | | *Aaron (0:13:14) similar to now, back then there weren't many ag teachers out there…13:39: when I canceled the other interviews they wanted me to give them a chance, but I felt committed and said we're going to give this a try.* |
| Committed | Obligation toward a position | Committed; Involved; Supportive; Helper; resource; enthusiastic; committed to students; kids committed to a person | Short timer; uncommitted; students as uncommitted; NPC as rival | *Aaron (0:13:14) similar to now, back then there weren't many ag teachers out there…13:39: when I canceled the other interviews they wanted me to give them a chance, but I felt committed and said we're going to give this a try.* |
| Resourceful | Not having access to the necessary material items to perform well, but performing the job anyway; finding a way; having what is needed | resourceful; hard worker; prepared; putting things in order; community as service to the department; better resourced | Underresourced; contract bound | *Aaron (0:15: 37) I knew the name of the course I was teaching. I knew the list of the resources I had there. So I had to figure out how to teach with what was there.* |
| Builder | Working toward individual vision/ideal of what could be | Building ideal; opportunity provider; more capable; program as better; developer; students as needing changing | Others as less capable | *Aaron (0:16:12) It's heavy on the FFA/SAE. I was trying to build a program that had all three of those phases. Good strong FFA, good strong SAE, and to be honest with you, sometimes that classroom piece is the third part of that wheel. I look back on that experience as an ag teacher, but now as an administrator, I flip that around.* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Connected | Working to build community connections; plugged in; in touch with what happens outside the classroom | Connected; celebrity; community as social; fitting in; department member; collaborator; In sync; partner; communicator; Becky as rock star; member of the ag community; community member; connected to students; outreach expert; calculated connections; in the community; accepting; finding loyalty | Disconnected; needing to be more connected; expected to be prompt (in communications); expected to be responsive; not a member of the community; community as losing faith; kids as non communicative | *Aaron (0:17:13) I spent two months getting to know families, getting to know kids, going to FFA activities; I knew most of my kids before school started. It's almost backwards to a math, or science, or social studies teacher* |
| Unique | Differentness associated with being set apart/operating differently from the rest of the system in which one operates; set apart from peers | Different; more capable; well-educated; administrator | Conflicted | *Aaron (0:18:14) it's very different than being a math/social teacher. people in that community…in those small ag communities, the FFA is kind of what draws everybody in. So you are the face of that. What's interesting is, especially with the FFA program, you want the kids to do that. But in the beginning, you're the face of that. I'd walk into businesses and [people would know me]. I'm not gonna say you're a celebrity, but you're well known. It might scare some people off, but I tried to embrace it. It's a good position to be in. Everyone knows who you are.* |
| Visionary | Having and acting on ideas beyond what currently exists | Big picture oriented; goal oriented; change agent; calculated; planner; future oriented | | *Aaron (0:21:33)When you first jump in you want to see the lay of the land. I always want to increase enrollment in the program. I wanted all of the kids that took my classes to be FFA members (of course, you're never going to get 100). You want to show them what FFA can do. What career development events are out there. What had they been successful in the past? Maybe sparking interest in something they didn't have previously. My goals were to increase FFA participation and see if we could get kids to go to contests.* |
| Imposter | Not doing the job well; underperforming; outmatched by expectations | Not good; troubled by lack of success; parents as nervous; underprepared; newbie; silenced; principal as clueless; others as disorganized; young; inexperienced; unsuccessful; former teacher as lax; naïve; insignificant; others as incompetent; unrealistic; others as better fit; something to prove; needing backbone; hated; others see as lacking; unsure; community as clueless; content as unfamiliar | | *Aaron (0:24:11) just the whole organizing piece, supervising piece, and what does it take to be good; it's very overwhelming and you're not going to be good right away. And that's troublesome to a lot of new ag teachers. I relied a lot on fellow ag teachers in the region, which SD did a really good job with.* |

| Supported | Having others on whom you can rely; not alone; able to draw on others to fulfill needs of self and program | Supported; superintendent as straightforward; better resourced; others as helpful; community as welcoming; others as supportive; others as helpful; mentee; others as mentor; others as liasion; other departments as welcoming | not supported; solidarity with staff; other schools as less concerned with students; others as negative; others as cliquey; Belle Plaine as prioritizing athletics; school as not holding students accountable; annoyed; community as needing to reach out; alumni as negative/mean; disheartened; positioned as terrible; community as critical; admin as inconsistent | Aaron (0:24:11) just the whole organizing piece, supervising piece, and what does it take to be good; it's very overwhelming and you're not going to be good right away. And that's troublesome to a lot of new ag teachers. I relied a lot on fellow ag teachers in the region, which SD did a really good job with. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Survivor | Just getting by; Unable to keep pace with the demands of the job; consumed by demands | survivor; fighting/flailing; | Others as burning out; overwhelmed; overworked; victim; stressed; pitied; program as high logistic load; depressed | Aaron (00:26:31) I had students who were interested in a particular CDE that I knew absolutely NOTHING about. But being prepared, I'm gonna do the research for you and figure it out or I'm gonna find other people to help out. You know, you can't be everything to everybody. If you do, you're gonna burn out and leave the profession. So there that giving up that control that's nerve-racking. Working with administration, budgets, fundraising. You know, just all that stuff. You look back at it and think, holy cow! I did do a lot…I'm sure I made mistakes along the way, they just weren't huge enough to get me fired. |
| Considerate | Keeping others in mind as one considers how they go about their work | Considerate; student as deserving; conscientious; listener; understanding; compassionate; flexible | others as inconsiderate; | Aaron (00:32:23)He took a lot of his stuff with him, which is fine, but he didn't leave a lot of stuff. In every position that I've left, I left all of my stuff there. I also took a copy of it for myself, but you also, you know, this is what I did last year, but he didn't leave a lot of stuff for me. It was just kind of a here you go type of thing. |
| Refreshed | Having a clarifying moment toward renewed dedication | Others as having revelation | Losing interest | Aaron (00:58:26) as I'm leaving the position, I'm in contact with him, and so he got out of it for two years and kind of figured out boy, the grass is always greener type of thing. He thought getting out and doing industry would be easier, but he missed the kids and connections with the community. So you know, anything I created during that short time, I left copies. Right before I left we sat down and went through what I had done, and what he had done and where I had taken the chapter and where SAEs were and that kind of thing, so it was a good transition. |
| FFA Advisor | Identifying self beyond classroom teacher to student connection, leadership focus, and out of school obligation | Others as FFA advisor; advisor > teacher; FFA > 4H; better face; others say need to be better face; community as professional responsibility; program as good; organized; ag teaching as madness | coach; not the FFA advisor | Aaron (01:07:53) I was not the FFA advisor at that time, which was interesting. There were two teachers here before I came here. The first was John Smith and the second was Lonnie Otterson. Lonnie Otterson was leaving which opened up the position for me. He went to south east MN. I think he became a welder or something like that. So he was the FFA advisor. So when he left, John Smith wanted to be the FFA advisor and there was only one position with it, and that was okay with me. I wanted to be part of the program and continued to be part of the FFA program, I just wasn't the official advisor. Ironically, that's how I got into coaching. Because as an FFA advisor it'd be really hard to also coach as well. When I was NOT the FFA advisor, I then got into football coaching because of that. |
| Teacher | Identifying self within the classroom relative to classes taught and building student relationships | Teacher; concerned for kids; teaching as always on work; Rada as true ag teacher; organized; kids as trainable; learning facilitator; teacher first; THE ag teacher; kids as good | grads as not teachers; | Aaron (01:09:24) I had a set of classes I taught. They also wanted me to teach a computer's course [CCNA]. They sent me to training in July in Marshall. It was like a three week training. It was actually pretty intense to teach that particular class. I taught some woods classes, I taught a welding course, small animals,NAwildlife, a technology course. That was the weirdest course I think I ever taught. How do you teach technology? What are you supposed to teach? You're teaching a course in technology. Okay. What does that mean? Of course, the principal has no idea. I don't know! So I only had to |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *teach that one semester and then we got rid of that the following year. I had courses to teach and helped a lot with the FFA, driving here and there, and coaching football as well.* |
| Limited | Unable to progress toward vision based on limits imposed by others or the system in which one operates | Lacking autonomy; NPC as tough; bored; setup/let down; admin as unwilling; lacking leadership; stuck; afterthought; others as not seeing value; wanting more responsibility; Becky as a challenge; disliked; underperforming; needing to meet an expectation; kids as confused; students as proud; not meeting expectations | | *Aaron (01:19:46) It's a different experience working with someone in the same department. Because you're used to being completely autonomous. The administrators don't know what they heck you're doing. And frankly, if you're not sending someone out of class, they don't really care. So if I wanted to try something or do something different I could when I was in my own department. When I had someone to collaborate with, I had to run it past them, which I enjoyed, but I could see could be an issue for some.* |
| Autonomous | Operating as an independent contractor; in control of one's situation and circumstance; having the power to change | Seeking ownership; owner; in charge; needing control; dictator; alone | Needing help | *Stephanie (00:08:22) I was kind of hired with this promise of do what you want. It will be your program and you can turn it into whatever you want it to be. That was pretty appealing to me. The reality was half of the time I was teaching junior high which was not my fave and the other part of the time was the high school stuff. I did a variety of a lot of shop type classes. Over time I added in CIS animal science and horticulture. I added some of my own stuff but was tied down schedule wise by the junior high electives and that wasn't something I was really into. They wouldn't let me do a work based learning. So that was another thing I didn't get to do that I had seen very successfully at other schools. Obviously FFA advising took up a lot of time as another role. Outside of the classroom too, I did the mentoring committee cuz they were just starting that at the time, and the Junior high leadership team as well.* |
| Lucky | Stepping into a fortunate circumstance; fortuitous situation; recognition of forces beyond ones control contributing to success | Lucky | | *Stephanie (00:10:19) I feel like I walked into kind of a different situation. I feel like a lot of times when teachers come in the community is like you're not the last teacher and that's a big thing to overcome. I was lucky not to have that because the person before me was a long term sub that they let go half way through the year. And the community kind of opened me with welcome arms and I think they were happy to have someone to have the place be stable again.* |
| Experienced | Older; having more time in a particular place or situation | Experienced; competent; qualified; good teacher; good; gaining competence; gaining confidence; mature; content competent | Perceived by others as young; unprepared; | *Stephanie (00:23: 05) I felt like it was a little easier for me because I was a little bit older. Like I always wonder how fresh new 21-22 year old teachers can walk in when you're only 3-4 years older than the older kids. Yeah. That was definitely a challenge as well.* |

| Mom | Having kids; obligations to family > obligations to career | Mom | *Stephanie (00:35:33) So when I was pregnant with my second then that when it really started to get overwhelming and the thought of all of these nights, all of these weekends. Just for the things that were needing to be done and that didn't include curriculum or the actual paid work this was like the extracurricular stuff was when it really got overwhelming. And my husband was traveling a lot for his job and his heavy travel time was like December through March or April. So I just started looking at like I can't do all of this. Something's gotta give. And yeah. I think that's what it was. I didn't feel like I could keep putting in that amount of time. And teaching you can't just show up like the baby didn't sleep and I'm extra tired I'll just work at something that's like mind numbing and not a priority, but with teaching there was no oh I'll just take it easy today or whatever. So that was my fourth year when I was just like I don't want to do this. January and February was ag tech and then leadership conference, and then state degrees. And state degrees was like two nites of driving to NLS. And I was just like there's gotta be something. Like yes. I have to find something else that gives me more time.* |

## Appendix E2: Community Influencers

| Code | Definition | Aligning Positions | Opposite Positions | Example |
|------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Teammate | On the same playing field; using position to understand where people are based on one's own prior experiences | Equal; relator; Becky as growing/developing; patient; human; former ag teacher; partner; teammate; united; learn from/with; war buddy; collaborator; ag teachers as people people; Stephanie as easy to work with; Becky and John as figuring it out together | Jessie as not bought in; Caleb as tattle tale; no one else wanting to step up | *Aaron (00:06:19) Um, um, no, not really. It was interesting cause I had, uh, I had two, uh, observation, uh, post observation meetings this morning. And I thought it was just interesting to, and both of them are first, were first year teachers. So yeah, reflecting, it was just interesting for me yesterday reflecting back on, you know, my earlier career and being a first year teacher, whatever, um, you know, I brought up some things to them, you know, and you know, brought up our interview yesterday and just said, you know, I know how tough it is and really reliving that is, you know, I know I feel, you know, when you're going home at night and you think, God, I don't, I'm not very good it's okay.* |
| Survivor | Having outlasted others despite difficult odds | Lone survivor; resilient; solidarity; teachers as bound in solidarity; ag program as surviving; survivor; sustained by challenge; surviving | | *Aaron (00:07:45) Um, just that, uh, especially, uh, ag education instructors. Um, I, I look back back at my class cause I think, I had, I think I graduated with, I want to say 10, but maybe it was nine and maybe it was 11, but it was right around 10. Um, and I'll those 10, nobody is still an ag ed teacher. Two of us are administrators. The rest of them went, the rest of them went to industry. So my group out of South Dakota state, none of them are still teaching ag. So, and two of us are still in, in education. So it's, you know, your study is very interesting to me because, um, I'm still still doing it and I'm the anomaly. You know, so that I think that's why, you know, I'm still, I'm still doing this, this deal and I think it's a pretty good deal. I really do. I, you know, there's obviously challenges to it, but you know, it, it can be good career in the end. It is challenging. Um, and it is difficult, but that's why it's can be rewarding. You know, you don't go into this profession thinking it's easy, I can tell you that much, or at least, or if you do, you find out real fast.* |

| Challenges and obstacles | Not having the resources to occupy a desired position | School as shorting; school in trouble; underresourced; other schools as better staffed; students need to take the reins; Oakville as structural challenge; NPC as justifiably negative; absolved of responsibility once it's handed off; admin as changing direction; budget as limiting teacher time; under the gun; staff as unable to help; Sue as seeing the ag program negatively; ag classes seen as a last resort; anticipating turnover; not putting in enough time; frustrated; NPC as fiscally challenged; teachers as turning over; turned off; Jessie as off-putting; Jessie in tough spot; students as out to cause trouble | Funding source; | *Aaron (00:10:59) Yup. Well, so, um, yeah, I spent three years at in South Dakota and I spent three years at Oakville as the ag teacher and I moved into Dean of students for three years and then I was back into the classroom for two. So moving into this position, I had been in, in the, um, position as, uh, as the ag teacher. Um, and uh, of course still had my administration licensure, so still had that license. Um, we went through a big huge round of budget cuts here and that's when we moved from semesters to trimesters. And, um, actually for, for those two years that I was back in the classroom, I was 14/15, so I wasn't officially a full time teacher. I was was 14/15. I was one class less than full, which is, you know, whatever. But that's how they were cutting. That's how they were cutting the budget. And we were in statutory operating debt as a, as a district. And then we were coming out of that. So they had cut everything basically down to kind of bare bones. And they had cut administration very drastically. So, um, there were two principals in the entire district and we had four different buildings, um, like workshop week. So I'm going to say August 28th. Okay. So here's, you know, I'm moving into my now, my third year back in the classroom, ag teacher ready to go. Um, they go ahead and they figure out. When I say they, the administration, um, district administration figured out, Oh yeah, we need some more help on administration. So they, um, they opened up a Dean of students position, um, and I applied for it along with several other people. Um, interviewed and got that position as Dean of students. Well, that Dean of students position wasn't full time. It was half time, Dean of students and halftime ag teacher. So I would have taught like three hours of the day and then the other half would have been Dean of students. So that's how it was set up.* |
| Lucky | Finding oneself in a fortuitous position of circumstance in which one feels very little control over the ideal outcome received | Lucky; ag program experience as great | | *Aaron (00:10:59) And that was right before school started. So during workshop week, like literally I'm in meetings, uh, you know, bloodborne pathogen meeting and uh, James, superintendent James pulls me out, brings me into his office and says, Hey, we figured out that we can't do it with just a halftime Dean of students position. Would you be interested in a full time assistant principal position? I said, well, yeah, I would be. So we talked about it and I had then I literally that day moved from a teacher to a assistant principal. And um, yup. And that was a K-12 assistant principal position. So I was in all four different buildings, um, for one year, which was nuts by the way. Yeah. But, um, again, in those situations, again, when you're, you know, w is a new, uh, as a new administrator, you're looking to get experience. So if you wanna if you want a career in something like that, you're not going to get a golden job right away. You gotta you, you better be willing to do some, some grunt work first. And that first year as assistant principal was grunt work. Uh, it was just trying to maintain stuff. So I would spend, like for example, my day would be, uh, one full day at Helen Baker, which was the K one two building. Okay. Um, the next like Tuesday I'd spent half the day up at Lakeside, which was a three, six building. Um, then, and then half the day at the high school Wednesday. And I would spend all day at again at Helen Baker, the K one, two, and then Thursday all day at the high school, junior high, which were at that time, you know, the two separate buildings. And you were here when that was the case. Um, and then, um, and then Friday I'd spend half my day at Lakeside and half my day at the high school, junior high.* |

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| Overwhelmed | Doing more of a job than you have resources to do; working beyond capacity | Overwhelmed; job as overwhelming; ag teachers as stretched; ag teachers as overworked; FFA advisors as overworked; Stephanie as overworked; ag teachers as unaware of their workload; admin as unaware of teachers workload; Stephanie as going crazy; ag program as challenging | *Aaron (00:16:06) It was, it was crazy. And he literally was, you were just looking for coverage, you know, for somebody there in case something happens. So you were, it was like juggling 50 different things. So, um,* |
| Imposter | Not cut out of the job; underqualified for the job; in fear of being found out | Not an elementary principal; Jessie as having made the wrong choice; Jessie as not a teacher; admin as content clueless; Randy as band-aid; missed something; Jessie as lacking vision; Jessie as unaware; Jessie as not a teacher yet; Randy as not prepared; Jessie as needing a mentor; admin as naive; self-absorbed; unsuccessful teachers as not having people skills; stigmatized; instructors as not up for the students; Stephanie as laid back | *Aaron (00:16:24) And then something else would come up and something else. And that's what your day was. And again, you had dealt with the situation that let's say at Helen Baker, you know, on Monday, well you weren't going to get back to Helen Baker until Wednesday. Another administrator was there trying to deal with it, but they didn't have the background you did. And you were trying to communicate that you weren't getting together and we'd never see each other because we'd never be in the same building at the same time. And it was just, yeah, it was crazy. So, um, but again, great experience. I learned that I was not an elementary principal. I learned that quite quickly. Um, so, uh, I, I learned a lot that first year again as administrator's, almost like having my first year as a teacher again because it was just crazy. So the second year they hired another assistant principal, so then I became a seven 12 assistant principal and then they had a K six assistant principal, so they added another position. And then that's currently what we have right now.* |
| Manager | Coordinating the actions of others; focused on dealing with the issues of others (time, behavior, paperwork, etc) | Manager; disciplinarian; principal as building culture lead; admin as needing to bring people together around initiatives | *Aaron (00:18:47) Um, um, I, I would love to tell you that I am the instructional leader of the, of the seven, 12. Um, that's what I really strive to be. Um, and, and try to help teachers be better teachers in their profession and that kind of stuff. I wish that was my, my main focus is what it probably should be. A lot of times it isn't, a lot of times is management. Um, dealing with a lot of times is dealing with student issues. Um, and you know, as assistant principal you're dealing a lot with um, um, discipline and attendance, which takes up a lot of my time.* |
| Responsible | Working to do the things perceived as right to ensure a particular course of action toward bettering a situation | Doing the right things; responsible for teacher quality; teachers as responsible for connections; proud; teacher of respect; someone who cares; opportunity provider; hands on teacher; accountable; admin as able to spot/share red flags; principal as responsible for student connections | *Aaron (00:21:24) Um, but you know, I kid him, I'm like, what the heck do you do all day? You know, what do you do? And he, he laughs, he goes, well, I do what a principal should do. You know, I get into classrooms like that kind of stuff and, and, yeah, he knows, he knows what it's like here. And it's not any different here than it is in any other district of our size in the state of State. It's the same. It's the same thing. You would need to have more hands on deck, um, to be able to do both. So, um, but you do your best and you try to prioritize and, and, and try to get into classrooms and do that more and do your professional reading and do your research and try to get initiatives, uh, moving forward that help students, um, whether that be, you know, our ICU program or RTI, RTI or MTSS, um, interventions, um, those different types of things, creating new, different grading policies and stuff to move us forward. Um, you know, you, you know, you try to do all of those, the types of things in addition to making sure everybody's safe and calm here at school.* |

| Supportive | Doing work in the foreground OR background to ensure the success of others | Less visible; teacher developer; connection facilitator; helper; safety net; supportive; teachers as learners; business community as interested/supportive; Aaron as helpful; principal as helpful; admin as supporting science; Becky as encourager; Helper to understand community role; program advocate; GAP as buffer for student expectations; early community connection | Admin as unsupportive; tentative of offering help | *Aaron (00:23:07) you know, people know who I am and that kind of stuff. But it isn't as if, um, I'm, I'm not as, even though I've been here now, this is my 24, 21st year here at NPC. Um, I would say, you know, as an ag teacher, I think you're maybe more of a face of the, of that now it'd be different if I was head principal. I think, you know, they're, they're out there more, but as assistant principal, you know, I, I'm, I'm not as, I guess, well known is the right, right term. Um, is, you know, I do a lot of those, more of the behind the scenes types of things. Obviously I talk to parents constantly. Uh, I, I, there's never a day that goes by that I haven't had three or four or five or 10 or 15 connections with parents. So your phone, uh, emails, uh, in person, you know, today I've talked to one, two, three, four, five different, five different parents have been in my office today. So, you know, in different situations. So, you know, there's all of all of those, uh, connections that you do, but those are more individual than broader community types, types of things.* |
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| Seeking connection | Finding ways to impact and connect with others | Coach; needing connection; students as center/anchor; ag teachers as enjoying work; ag teachers as connected; co-workers as key connection; teachers as connection seeking; millennials as connection oriented; engager; teachers as needing opportunities to connect; connected; relationship oriented; relationship builder; building leadership as mentorship facilitators; staff as responsible for welcoming; staff as community; Stephanie as appreciative; connector; in touch; in the know; Becky as able to connect with kids; community connection; attempting connectedness; facilitator of community connections; Becky as connected | Jessie as unable to connect; Jessie as unapproachable; staff and admin as not connecting teachers; lacking mentorship; Jessie as unresponsive | *Aaron (00:24:53) Well, I think I referenced it yesterday, yesterday. You know, you asked what, you know, what, uh, what do you miss about, um, what do you miss about being in a classroom? Well, it's those connections with those kids. It's those positive interactions and that kind of stuff. Um, you know, you talked about your FFA officers, you really get to know your FFA officers really well. Oh, you, you get invited to their. Uh, um, o their graduation parties. They're former FFA officers that I still, that are now adults that I still am in contact with. You know, you get to build those types of relationships with those types of kids. As an assistant principal. Unfortunately, a lot of times you're, again, you're dealing with conflict a lot, right? And so you're building relationships, but it's different than building those positive relationships, um, in, in other venues. So football to me, is that That, uh, where I can be different. Um, I'll give you an example here. Two years ago we, we, we lost in the section finals for football over time loss. Mmm. One point, you know, this kind of deal and you know, you come back to school that next Monday or whatever, and your kid, you know, we're cleaning out lockers or whatever and I'm walking in the hallway and I have my tie on, you know, you know, and that kind of thing. And, and I had one of my, one of my, uh, defensive tackles, he looks at me and I'm like, Kyle, you know, I just wish I could have get got you at least one more, one more game, you know, and just, yeah, he worked hard. You know, you guys did a great job. It's just, you know, it didn't work. And he said, I'm just really gonna miss practice. And he, he kinda turns me and he says, you know what? He says, I like seeing the other side of you too, Mr. Mueller, Not this side. You know, in pointing at my, my tie is an assistant principal. You know, it's different than me as their coach and that relationship you build with them. And so, um, just that, that the banter that goes back and forth the joshin' and that goes back and forth, that relationships you build, the, the, the fun, the joking, that kind of stuff. You know, you build that same kind of thing with a lot of times with your FFA. I, I kinda I needed something. I had FFA for a while, but I needed something else other than just the classroom to, to connect me with the kids and football is my, is the one that keeps the thing that keeps me doing that. So yeah. So those positive interactions that you look for. So,* |

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| **Change Needed** | Able and intentionally seeking to facilitate change to bring about a vision of the ideal | Change agent; teachers as school improvers; gatekeeper; admin as building school culture; goal oriented; strengths oriented; admin as needing to move on; improver; mover; revived; move as a way to better situation; teachers as moving for pay; Becky & Caleb as fresh perspective; mover of the needle; Becky as moving forward; Becky as building | Jessie as needing improvement; | *Aaron (00:27:53) Mmm, okay. One of the biggest things that that administrators can do is hire good teachers, um, and then try to keep those good teachers. I love interviewing. One of my most favorite things I do. And I heard, you giggle because well, on the other side would go, are you kidding me? I hate it.* |
| **Expectations** | Holding expectations of others in consideration of the job you would like them to do and the vision you have for the program | Teachers as content experts; teachers as student centered; ag teaching as demanding a lot of time; Becky as high potential; we as investing; Becky as successful; Stephanie as competent; Becky as builder; ag teachers as opportunity providers; ag program as growing; FFA kids as involved; ag teacher as face of ag; Ag/FFA as community driven; ag teachers as needing to be visionary; ag teachers as needing to be goal oriented; ag teacher as leader; Stephanie as status quo; Becky as visionary; Becky as goal oriented; Becky as adaptable; Becky as learner; Becky as hard worker; ag teachers as catering to the community; teachers as program advocates; Becky as successful; communities as having expectations; Stephanie as smart; Stephanie as resourcesful; Becky as easy choice/hire; Becky as connecting to science; others as providing wins; Becky as ringleader; Becky as ideal ag teacher; Becky as challenging students; having big goals for the program; program as needing strong willed teacher | Jessie as struggling; Jessie as unconfident; Jessie as needing to fill big shoes; Jessie as challenged; Jessie as lacking vision; admin as forceful; Jessie as reducing program; Jessie as unenthusiastic; not pushing expectations | *Aaron (00:30:20) When I, when I interview a teacher, I'm looking for them to be student-focused. Um. I want to hear about them and how, how they talk about students and how they are connected or how they can connect with students, how they can help students. Um, it's everything about, um, when you go through an interview, I mean, we can, um, and it was the same with, uh, Logan's as it is with Josh is with me. We're looking for that, you know, how do they talk about students? Did they talk about students in a positive way or a negative way? Do they talk about how they can connect and how they enjoy students? How, um, you know, it's all student centered. So I'm looking, I'm looking for that. Um, I expect them that they know at least something about the, you know, the content and pedagogy.* |

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| **Experience** | Identifying as having years of age or experience contributing to maturity | Gen X; Better with age; Stephanie as animal science; Aaron as assistant principal and former teacher | Becky as young; Jessie as immature; Jessie as not growing/improving; new teachers as unprepared; Jessie as young/inexperienced; Becky as developing | *Aaron (00:33:45) Um, the, the home run, I, I, uh, I'm, I'm to still say, I think was with you. We said that, and I'll be honest with you, Becky, we said that we, you know, when we interviewed you, um, you know, we had, uh, we had the opportunity to bring in somebody when we interviewed you that had a little more experience. And, um, our, uh, our conversations when we, when we hired you was, you know, what, that person coming in has more experience. Um, probably could hit the ground running faster than you or Becky could. Um, knowing when you hire a brand new ag teacher, it's gonna be tough, you know, that first couple of years just because the of, everything you do, but we said and unanimously that, um, that in three years this person's going to be an all star and is going to be a rock star. And, um, we're going to go through that process and we're going to get something fantastic. Um, which we did. So that was, yeah, I mean, I, I don't know of any other ag teacher that was as good as you when you left, so, um, you were absolutely fantastic and just everything from the connections with kids to how you grew the program to your course offerings to all that kind of stuff. FFA, uh, successes, uh, community involvement, all the stuff that, that just, you know, uh, you know, managing classrooms, fundraisers, uh, all that kind of stuff was just fantastic.* |
| **Dependency** | Needing someone or something in order to meet an expectation or need | FFA chapters as dependent on communities; teachers as reliant upon each other; veteran teacher in need of logistics understanding; teachers as needing culture; teachers as needing desire; needing more clarity around vision; ag program as community supported; ag teachers as needing longevity; young teachers as needing mentorship | | *Aaron (00:49:58) That you gotta you gotta you gotta enjoy that. You gotta like that. So it starts there with those connections with kids. Then from there, um, you know, when you're talking about FFA programs, you want to get opportunity. These four kids, you can't do it alone. You're only one person if you don't have those connections with your local, uh, businesses. Uh, you know, like I said, my florist in town in Bridgewater, that team was only successful because of that connection. I didn't have that connection. Those kids would have never gotten because I didn't know it. I can't give them knowledge, I don't know or help them with that. So, um, that those are those connections, what and whatever, whether it be a CDE that they're helping with, whether it be a project that you're doing, um, you know, uh, you know, a school garden, a greenhouse, uh, maybe, you know, there's FFA chapters or ag chapters that do build houses or mini homes or whatever it is that you are doing within your, uh, your program. You got to have those connections with the community, um, and the businesses and the ag, uh, your, your farmers, your corn and soybean growers, they're the ones that are going to be supporting you and giving you a $500 check so that you can go to the national convention and the kids only have to pay 10 bucks, you know, that's, you know, that's that.* |
| **Autonomous** | Able to take control/ownership toward a desired outcome | Autonomous; ag teachers as needing to be individuals; different; having options; successful admin as giving ownership to teachers; empowered; able to prevent turnover | Moving done to you; out of control; admin as not taking teachers seriously; Caleb as pressured; Jessie as going own way; Jessie as not working with students | *Caleb (00:41:24) He was really impressed by the fact that the autotech teacher went to all the local autodealers to get specifically from them, what do the students need for skills when they leave the high school so they can get a job here. And I was impressed by it by the fact that Logan knew it. I mean, many of us do that type of thing a lot. But the fact that that teacher made sure to impress upon admin that this is why we do this. In our area it isn't just about conjugating verbs and the rules of English. We've got to prepare students for their careers. And we can get them a career right out of high school as long as we meet these criteria. This is why I'm not teaching engine rebuilding…because this is not what they need. They'll get that elsewhere if they need that. So it takes some footwork. You did that with Tangletown.* |

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| Continued Growth | Working to get better through incremental changes | NPC as making huge strides, artist; learner; growth oriented; in need of challenge; creative; experimenter; go getter; pusher/mover & shaker; mover as someone doing hard work; moving as bettering situation; Becky and Caleb as movers & shakers; move as an opportunity; Becky as go-getter; Becky as creative; Becky as challenging students; comfortable with challenge | Jessie as not developing students | *Caleb (00:17:11)With everything, it starts at the top down. And I think when Stewart started there they had to make a giant cultural shift. They'd been a very negative community. They'd gone through years of turmoil. Through the budget situation. They'd had a turnover of principals every two years, there wasn't any continuity. So I think he did a cultural shift that changed it for the better. Our coming into it, we saw that as normal, but they had come from a place that was much worse than where they were. Now to step in there from my situation now, I would say culturally they need a change. You know? So when you don't know where they've come from, it's easy to look at a system as say ooh that system is not so good. It's broken. But really, they're improving upon where they were. They're doing a cultural shift that's working. But many times, it's just like with a sports team, sometimes it takes a new coach. I'm a religious person and I also believe that a pastor is good for about seven years and a pastor has used up their tBens and needs to move on to revitalize themselves and revitalize the congregation. And I think the same thing happens with leadership in buildings. I think there's very few buildings where an administrator can stay in that building for a long time and keep a culture positive. That being said, it still can be done. There's plenty of school districts that have a principal they love and it's a strong positive culture and they've been there for twenty years. It can happen. But I think sometimes it also takes, I would imagine that leader is constantly changing though. You can't stay stagnant. If you were to stay for twenty years and stay stagnant it breeds negativity. So I think, culturally, a leader who will constantly change for the better, change for the positive and make changes for the positive, you're gonna see that culture develop. The number on driving force has to be a belief that your students can learn. That kids are good and students can learn. I joke about KAD but I don't believe it. I believe we're all AD. We all do dumb things. But realistically, if you didn't believe kids had the ability to learn you shouldn't be in there. That's where it starts.* |
| Invested | Someone who belongs in a geographical location; has earned a say through time in the community; geographically bound | Geographically bound; familiar; excited; believer; love where you are; respected; bought in; member of the community; community influencer; family man; Becky & Stephanie as excited and enthusiastic; from Oakville; strong ag area; strong ag ties; accomplished FFA member; Becky as long timer; MARL Participant; GAP instigator; invested in continuity; ag program advocate; community legacy; tied to agriculture; connected with industry; advocate for fellow farmers; Becky as support solicitor; Becky as invested; ag stakeholder; benefitting from ag | Admin as community outsiders; ag teachers as high turnover; ag program as revolving door; instructors as not committed to teaching; ag teachers as not up for the challenge; Stephanie as short timer; others without ag legacy; general public as disconnected from ag | *Ben (00:05:09) Yeah. And then come spring time, uh, of my senior year, um, Oakville had an opening, I took, there weren't a lot of openings at the time of Watertown. There was an opening in Oakville or there was an opening. And so I came like early in may and I got this interview and I liked the town and it was only, you know, 50, 60 miles from Bloomington where I'm from. And I thought, wow, it's a good location, you know, so, so I decided to take it right away and so, and never looked back, you know, thirty-six years. Yeah.* |

**Epilogue: Reflecting on the Process**

Throughout the dissertation process, starting with pilot interviews and continuing through the co-iterative generation of study conclusions, I wrote reflective memos capturing my process. These addressed the ways I found myself interacting with participants, how I reconciled my new role with the study site, and initial takeaways post-interview. They are shared here to provide additional context and clarity regarding the process of the co-iterative analysis employed, and the challenge of engaging in a community engaged research model. I include brief notes regarding the reflections, having now had some separation from the process. I titled the reflections based on the event or larger concept addressed. By way of reminder, participants had access to reflections as far as confidentiality would permit, and referenced them in the construction of the meta-language produced as an analytic tool for this study.

Notably, a very human process occurred as I negotiated my own interactions with the site, its participants, and this study. Little has been changed in these reflections (except to correct major grammatical errors and use pseudonyms in place of participants' names). The most significant change has been the removal of any reference to Jessie's data. As in the rest of othe document, any reference to her here reflects others positioning her. The reader will note challenge, negotiation, doubt, and angst throughout the process, both as a result of the process itself, and as a result of navigating my own positioning in reconciling the context. A similar process, though I was less privy to it, presented for the participants.

**Pilot Interviews**

In order to prepare and test an interviewing protocol prior to defending my comprehensive exams and proposing my dissertation, I engaged in pilot interviews with two special education teachers who had engaged in program moves during their career. I also

conducted a pilot interview with a community member who coached a CDE team while I was at NPC. Based on the types of interviews I would be conducting, it was essential these interviews occurred with individuals with whom I had similar relationships to the study participants.

The process of the pilot interviews began impressing upon me the importance and difficulty of a community-engaged approach. There was a heightened level of responsibility for me toward my participants to get their experience right, but also to present it in a way that did not paint NPC or the participants in a negative light. In addition, the pilot interviews began raising my own consciousness to the community's impression of the comparison challenge Jessie was in.

Having conducted the pilot interviews, I asked three faculty in my department to each review an interview. They received transcripts, video, and reflection, much like the participants would receive back. In addition, I also asked pilot participants for their feedback regarding the interview process itself. Little feedback came from the participants, but the faculty in my department provided substantial insight into the process prior to proposing my study to my committee.

### Pilot Interview 1

Man, was I nervous! I expected this to be hard, but not THIS hard. I really don't want to let my former community down, but talking with Jill about migration ended up also being cathartic for me. It was clarifying in where I made assumptions based on my own experience, but also validated a few key pieces of my own experience. Namely:

- NPC operates as a broken system
- NPC has resigned itself to being a broken system that teachers operate in as transitory unless they are from the community
- NPC, as a community, tends not to embrace outsiders

Keeping these in mind, I have to wonder how many teachers come in with the idea that they can fix something; or how many are seen as saviors (or not) because of their experience (or lack thereof). Can a broken system really be repaired and what does it take? How do you attract

people to that kind of system and what kind of resources are needed to make people feel supported and able to stay (and continue to be challenged)?

Interview wise, Jill didn't have to think too much about the questions, but some of the order felt awkward. It was a comfortable conversation, but I found myself having to be really conscientious about asking her to elaborate some of her phrasing or community assumptions (I may think I know, but I know from my experience, not hers). I think this will be important moving forward; asking participants to explain their own language, in addition to using their language to continue the conversation.

### *Pilot Interview 2*

This interview felt really forced. I think some of that was her self-consciousness as an interviewee, being concerned about providing the right answers. I think some was also my engagement in the interview. I had trouble focusing at the end of the day, we were rushed in the process, and I provided a little too much context. I went beyond the enough needed to be an ally in migration into setting the stage for expectations and things I might be looking for. I didn't do a good job of putting Carly at ease and meeting her where she was.

I also struggled with my friend as an interviewee because we didn't share any similar contexts. While a friend and having discussed her teaching and career woes (and my research) many times before, I was an outsider. I didn't share any ordeal with her. No sense of community or common purpose in our teaching. We were never colleagues, at the district or profession level. The ordeals we shared we're very separate, geographically, discipline, and experience. This may have been the biggest hurdle in an organic conversation and feeling like the questions were highly mismatched with the purpose of the interview and the responses received.

Her interview validated my selection of site and interviewees. I'm a little concerned now about going all the way back to Aaron's predecessor. He's no longer a member of the community (geographically) and he is far removed (by time) from his experience in the "shared ordeal."

If I'm honest, I wasn't actually all that interested in my friend's experience; at least not researcher interested in it. Why not? I didn't have a connection to her place or her people. I didn't know what it was like to teach in her district and got distracted that I couldn't associate stories with the price they were being told about. Is that bad?

### *Pilot Interview 3*

This interview went pretty much as planned; it was disappointing we had to cut it a little short. I think I would've gotten a lot of responses from him that would've helped inform the additional questions for the actual interviews.

Part of my conundrum at this point is that all the people I'm bringing in possess a lot of similar characteristics (in my positioning of them). They're helpful, willing, go-getters. Are they similar enough to SBAE migrators, administrators, and community members across the US? I've already been compared to some of my other potential participants. Am I an outlier for my own study? Should I not include myself?

I'm really self-conscious about the pedestal I've been put on. He brought it up quite a bit; I want to make sure the point of the interviews doesn't come off as "Becky was so great, Jessie really messed this up." But as much as I want to believe this isn't about me and her anymore, that's my most direct tie to the situation. How do I keep the conversation focused on each individual's experience (or do I need to) so it doesn't come back to "when you were the ag teacher, you did this?" How do I avoid being flattered as the interviewer to keep the data true to the situation?

I feel kind of guilty about something he mentioned. He said something to the effect that it hurts communities when teachers leave. But not the hurt or inconvenience currently discussed in the literature. More like a trust broken. Someone you relied on and thought would be there for a while goes away. You counted on them and they're gone.

This is probably the first thing that has REALLY made me second guess my site selection. Are people going to be too hurt to talk to me? I left on good terms. Several of the people I'm going to talk with aren't there anymore either. But those embedded in the community; left, as it were, what about them?

People move for all kinds of reasons and should be allowed to do that. I still think I taught my students something by leaving: you're made to make the world better. Go where you need to be to do that. Is the pain and hurt just part of the process? Is a healing community a factor in the incoming teachers reception or is that overstating the attachment to the previous teacher?

### *Pilot Interview Feedback*

One of the faculty said something on Wednesday during our feedback session for pilot interviews that's had me thinking since. In his feedback, he offered, "If you're not that interested in your friend's story, what does that tell you about your attachment to your site? I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing to not be interested, it's only human; but you need to think about if that tells you anything about your bias or attachment."

One of the things I've come to after about a week away is wondering if part of my detachment (apart from it being the end of the day towards the end of the week) was that I didn't feel attached to a solution to my friend's woes. I have relationships with administration at Oakville and while I think it's rosey to think that I'm going to change anything at NPC by drastic

measures, I think the raised awareness among some is a step. I don't have that sway at either of my friend's districts.

That leads me to wondering if I'm only concerned with "fixing" Oakville, or if I think awareness for Oakville means awareness for others too.

Beyond that, the faculty mentioned some concern about "rose-colored glasses" from my committee regarding my site. Maybe I overstated my position in my response or maybe I didn't account well for the fact that at one time I could do no wrong, but since that time, I've done the ultimate wrong and left just like everyone else. Like another pilot interviewee said, that hurts people.

I'm really far from where I started. This started as a case study with Oakville being a case of consistent migration. I pitched that to my advisor a year and a half ago and the study has morphed a lot since then. At the time, I think I was still trying to figure out what was going on with migration, but I'm not sure I have any better handle on it now than I did then. I'm really struggling with whether or not I think the relationships are the most important piece to be tacking right now, but we also don't seem to be getting anywhere beating the organizational aspect into the ground.

## Literature Review

While drafts of the Introduction, Literature Review, and Methodology were compiled at the time of my defense, substantial revision occurred between passing my comprehensive exams and conducting interviews. In this time, several thoughts occurred from my own experience as I reviewed the literature and the framework for this study. These largely had to do with connecting the literature to my own experience and site.

### *Disenchanted*

I'm just really disenchanted with education right now. In fact, the more I learn about the socialization of teachers and teacher attrition, the more pissed I get at the whole thing.

On one hand, the madness is motivating. I'm in a position of moderate power. I'm somewhere I can help people, hear concerns, and effect change on a bigger level than a school district. I could be the difference maker. But I lose my steam a little bit when I think about the how. By writing a book? Certainly journal articles and conference presentations. Presenting PD? Consulting? Does my work in teacher prep affect the systemic change in education that is so desperately needed? I'm not concerned enough about the politics of the whole shit show to know.

On another, it's incredibly anxiety inducing. What if I made the wrong choice? What if I don't like academia? What if the research I'm doing isn't actually good for anyone? Where can I be that what I'm doing in my corner makes a big difference for teachers across SBAE, the US? What if I let everyone down?

And on the other, it's just plain frustrating. I feel helpless. What could I possible do to change the way society views teachers? I played with the idea of what school COULD look like this afternoon. I don't even know where I would start because I only know what I know. Where would we get the money? The stupid thought that goes against what I believe about economics said that the lowest paid teacher in the school should be making as much as the highest paid parent. It's not a shortage of teachers, it's a shortage of willing enthusiasm to support teachers in their livelihoods, with our kids behavior, and in their choices.

And what does all this have to do with migration? Unfolding positioning, explaining my methodologies and the idiosyncrasies that separate social psych from communities of practice, from positioning, narrative methods from discourse feel really unimportant relative to the challenges teachers are facing in their classrooms NOW. Right now a teacher is debating whether or not they want to stick this year out, whether they'll come back from maternity leave, whether this year will be their last in the classroom, and their train of thought is completely different from the ones who just need to see some different challenge, support, or setting. What do migrating teachers know about school and students that makes them stay? What makes them keep looking for the right fit? Finding ways to keep teaching? What do they love so much that they keep trying? And why do I feel like it's something incredibly relatable, simple, and something I can uncover because I know what it is to move?

### Short Timer Syndrome

Does it make a difference if you know someone is leaving?

Two of my office mates and I were chatting after brunch about the difference in migration if you know you're going to move. Considering professional migration, I'm a migrator. I knew I was moving out of my high school. I know I'm moving on from OSU. How does that impact my relationships and where I find support? How does that impact the ways people do or don't connect with me? What kind of vulnerability, transparency, and willingness to hurt goes into relationships with people you know will move?

I have to think that on some level people reserve themselves from giving everything over to their situation, regardless of their intentions for their future career. It would be interesting to see how attachment/detachment from the get go factors into the ease of mobility across those involved. Some of this comes from my own experience. Some of this goes back to something Jill said in a pilot interview. NPC has resigned themselves to mobility, so they're just going to take what they can get, knowing their going to leave, for however long they can have them. How does this manifest itself? How does this intention manifest in impact? Are students aware of the

intention? Are those making the decisions aware of the intent conveyed? If yes: why do they opt for particular impacts? If no, why should they be aware of the impacts and what their decisions convey to those affected by them?

## *Replaceability*

We're all replaceable.

I've heard it before. We're just a hand in the bucket. Our presence only holds so much together; the situation is fluid. Our absence ripples, but the bucket returns to still once the ripples have reverberated back on themselves. Another hand goes in the bucket, causes ripples, but at the end of the day is only holding so much. We're all replaceable.

Then why do we treat this as so much more than a job? Why, when deep down we know that regardless of how long we're there it's all temporary do we invest so heavily? Why sacrifice mental health, family, marriage, for A JOB? This isn't unique to SBAE; why does anyone commit to a job? Surely you can't actually compensate someone for that, so WHY?

Why do we give our workplaces so much more loyalty than we will ever receive? If we leave, they'll find someone else. They may mourn the personal loss (briefly), but professionally, they move on (make a new job posting, make a new hire, go through the on boarding process), and they move on over and over and over again. Why don't we (as employees) treat our companies as disposably as they may treat us? Where does that loyalty come from? Does everyone have it? What instills a sense of loyalty or sense of concern (or lack thereof) for a legacy. How do teachers account for legacy? How does legacy change when positions change? Is legacy the problem?

## *Cafeteria Girls*

"Oh. It must be one of those 'mix it up days.' Whatever."

"No…Actually, I'm new."

High schoolers are mean. I don't think this girl meant to be at all, but high schoolers aren't the only mean ones when it comes to welcoming someone new to a peer group. And how many of those newbies, rather than say anything, simply pick up their tray and go sit at another table if they don't feel welcome?

It seems like such a simple thing, but it's obviously about more than just being nice. It would've taken about half a second of thought to say, "Hi, my name is...what's your name?" Even a softer, "You don't usually sit here." But instead, this seventeen year old knew, before she even sat down with her tray that she didn't belong (and had no trouble letting me know that I wasn't welcome there).

What does it take to move our response toward greater understanding and empathy? Where does it start? Why is being new stigmatized even at an early age? We were all new at everything once. Why does our "nature" not validate the bravery over scorning the change?

## Interviews

The most substantial number of reflections occurred during the interview process. Since

interviews, with the exception of the alumni member, occurred in the span of about two weeks, it

is bizarre to go back and review what I was thinking when my brain was mush. The interviews

themselves were a highly charged and emotionally draining process of reconciliation and

negotiation.

The most salient reflection, particularly in focusing on the process of community engaged

research, is the idea that it is not meant to be this way. The natural order of the migratory process

was disrupted when I returned to NPC as a study site. Barriers of respect and separation that had

been so carefully maintained were smashed. While this lent well to transparency and

vulnerability through shared ordeal, I am grateful that I have few sites with whom I could engage

in this research capacity again. While principles of community engagement are certainly

something I intend to take into my research career, I am grateful I will not have to engage in

negotiating this type of reconciliation in the near future.

### *Aaron Initial*

The conversation with Aaron really felt like we got somewhere today. I think there are a few parts to that. First, I don't really know that I anticipated certain answers to Aaron's questions from an administrator perspective; there were more things Aaron said that I had to intentionally ask about. As I scroll through/edit the transcripts from yesterday, I'm seeing things that a co-author might say, "Why didn't you follow up on that?" I need to be conscientious, especially with the agriculture teachers that I don't assume I understand their experience because I was one.

Aaron mentioned several things that have my mind spinning. First and foremost, I appreciated Aaron's consistency. It made Aaron and Logan easy to work for when I was their employee and it's made them easy to talk to about this over the last three years since I left the

classroom. I don't hear differences in their expectations of me compared to what they expected of Jessie or Stephanie. Still, I can't help wondering how my alignment with their program goals impacted any success Jessie could have anticipated. That has me wondering about support and what support means to different people. When is support perceived as "just what is needed" and when does that shift to people feeling like they're being watched over/smothered?

There's also some added pressure relative to Aaron's goals in managing staff (holistically, from a recruitment and retention standpoint) and my research goals. I think we can work in tandem to unpack some ideas around how teachers move to help Oakville be more successful in their retention efforts, but at the same time, I've heard a lot of stories over the last few days that suggest maybe there isn't that much we can do to prevent teacher's from moving/leaving. Part of my argument has been that we can't prevent the move, so what do we do in the onboarding and in the time we have teachers to show that we value them and make them want to stay?

In this way, this is once again really personal. When I claimed to have some expertise on this topic, having never moved myself, Hannah said, "Alright, lady. Explain yourself." And that's totally fair. When I think about my experience as a professional migrator (secondary to post-secondary) there was nothing Aaron and Logan could've done to keep me in the classroom. I enjoyed working for them. I enjoyed the people I worked with. I adored my kids and loved my community. Being a high school teacher just wasn't what I had planned to do forever. I still think I'm lucky to have started there. I had the perfect storm to walk into and be successful, but not everyone has that (or not everyone sees it?). Why was it so different for me? I still think I was hitting into the wind (and had some bomb batting coaches and a killer team cheering me on).

But maybe that's what that support is all about. No one gets up and hits a homerun on their first try. You start off hitting off a tee. Then maybe coach pitch. And then kid pitch is a whole new game of everyone being awful. Maybe there's something to everyone being awful together for a while. Then, as you keep playing together, you keep getting better and better. You develop team spirit and camaraderie until winning is just something nice that happens; now you really enjoy playing the game. But the question remains: How do you stick it out through the yuck long enough to get good? How do you know when you've acquired a lemon that you should trade off and when, with enough coaching and the right support, they'll get there?

Part of the challenge with this is efficiency. Of course we want to individualize plans for onboarding, welcoming, and embedding in the community, but with multiple new teachers in any given year, that's a huge challenge. How do you balance the efficiency of helping people connect to a community with the need for an individualized approach that gets each person the level of support they need? How do you help people learn to ask/advocate for the support they need if they don't naturally seek it out?

Finally, is a 20 year teaching career in one place a realistic goal? Do people stay in careers that long? Is it just a generational thing? How does the desire of employees to feel

connected at work change the paradigm of what it means to work? Do we commoditize work and emotion differently based on what we seek in employment (pay/completion of tasks vs connection)? It's interesting that it goes back to a generational thing. That certainly correlates with the data.

I'm nervous about going into the unpacking piece. I don't want to be accusatory in processing the data; I don't want some positions to be validated based on how positively their received/how they come across versus rejected because they come off as negative. They're something we constantly negotiate; I really want to believe that the more aware we are of the positions we assign and take up, the better able we are to advocate for ourselves in recognizing what we need, in addition to pushing back on the ways others position us.

### *SBAE Teachers Initial*

Wow. I kind of can't believe I got all of the ag teachers interviewed today. There were a couple of interesting things that really stood out.

First, I thought it was interesting that we were all agriculture teachers at some point, but since only one is an agriculture teacher now we were all approaching from pretty different places. It's just different when you're in it. Even my first year of this program, doing a pilot interview with Haley, there were different things ag teacher Becky would've said versus what PhD student Becky would've said, and I'm sure they're different now in terms of what ABD Becky would say.

This makes thinking about agriculture teacher identity a little tBeny. What parts of being an agriculture teacher stick with you after you've left the classroom? What parts of you are still an agriculture teacher? Is that different for you compared to what others see? For example, regardless of the other roles she was in, Stephanie was always the former agriculture teacher. When she'd come to our end of the building (bringing her own kids or ECFE kids to barnyard or donkey basketball or ag Olympics), she wasn't just another community member. She was the former ag teacher. On some level these were her kids, her facilities, her program. When does that changing of hands actually occur? What did she still see as hers, even after she was no longer the formal ag teacher?

On the other side of it, I didn't want Jessie to have to feel like someone was always looking over their shoulder (though I don't know that I think Stephanie was intending to look over mine?). There were ways, because of the work I had moved into, that I had to pretty quickly disassociate and leave my ag teacher self behind. I wasn't having that daily interaction with kids anymore. I wasn't a point person toward helping facilitate their success. I ached when they were prepping for convention (national and state), but I had chosen not to be there anymore. On the flip side, I also had more time to think about teaching now and being GOOD at teaching, rather than flying by the seat of my pants. I wanted to maintain my connection to being an ag teacher without being in the classroom. Is that even possible?

I can't imagine anyone ever feels like they were setup as well as they could've been. After all, it's not like you're setting things up for you to walk into. Is there any ideal way to leave a program for the next person or should you just make sure the desk is clean and hope for the best? How do you plan for traction between teachers so each teacher is starting off where the other left off rather than having to back up again? Can you?

I also need to circle back around and ask for how agriculture teachers see themselves positioned by others? How does the community see you? How does the admin see you? How do your students see you? Who else "sees" you? How do you think you meet the expectations of these different groups?

### Principal Encounter

*Do you want to come back and be our ag teacher?*

Some of me knew that it was only a matter of time before someone would ask, particularly if I was coming back to NPC as my research site. I think most of me expected to at least be on campus when someone popped the question, not in my second day of interviewing.

I think I figured that after three years there wouldn't be much hope of me coming back. Though that definitely isn't what I would've said four years ago. Four years ago we were weighing if coming back/sabbatical/position holding might be on the table. I left on good terms. I'd done good things. If the whole doctoral thing didn't work out or there wasn't a position for us to come home, I could go back to the classroom. Always be my maybe, right?

*How long do I have to think about it?*

*As much time as you need.*

I can't tell how serious these requests are. Do they want me back or do they want the idea of me back? Am I flattering myself to think that they actually want me back after three years away? It's not like I'd just pick up where I left off three years ago. In fact, I'd be a VERY different (hopefully better) teacher now, but there's no way I could put in the time like I did before. I've also gotten really used to being able to pee when I want, eat when I want, take my kids to appointments, actually go to the doctor myself, go on VACATION, take sick days without feeling guilty, heck, take sick days without taking sick days because the work is still getting done. Would I actually go back to the high school classroom?

Honestly, I don't know if Joe would let us go down that road again. Over the last three years, he's talked with other ag teacher spouses in interviewing people for graduate school. He saw so much more of what I/we were doing when I was an ag teacher than I did (I was just doing my job). But he saw even more when he found people who'd had similar experiences. Spouses

that were NEVER home. Vacations that meant going to lock-ins or banquets or officer retreats (you know, vacations where you're at work).

At the same time, I LOVED being an ag teacher. I didn't dread coming to work (unless Stewart told me no on something that I was gonna have to pass on to the kids). I LOVED my kids and felt fulfilled in my job. Fulfilled, but maybe not challenged. Challenged to keep being better and keep up with what I thought a program should be, but I didn't have/make the time to challenge myself to be a good teacher, to question my practice, to think about what worked or didn't and why. Just challenged to make sure I got through the next 50 minutes on a prayer and my personality (as Doug so graciously put it). I loved it. If you asked me, I would've said I was thriving; others probably would've said I was thriving, but I'm not so sure I was.

Do you want to come back? Sure. Do you want me back? I don't know. You wouldn't be getting back the teacher you had three years ago and I'm not sure you'd want her or the teacher she is now. And that's kinda scary to me.

### Site Connection

If anything has been validated for me this last week (and let's be real, we need to validate SOMETHING here; the more I reflect the more I question my choices) it's been my site selection. I cannot imagine doing this work without some connection to the site. The ways my participants discuss NPC with me reflect a shared experience. Some hesitancies do dig into tougher ideas seem to be slightly alleviated when participants can say, "You know how it is," or "I'm sure you experienced," rather than having to elaborate and explain details that may seem to throw others under the bus.

Apart for the contextual knowledge we share, my connection to the participants also seems more important than I anticipated. So far, this has been most evident in my conversations with Aaron, but has also been evident across my participants as I outline the challenges with confidentiality given the site and the profession. No one has hesitated; whether or not they think the work is important, they're in. They recognize the local challenge migration seems to have brought, and they have some skin in the game relative to their own experience.

In my conversations with Aaron, I find myself being much less mechanical in my interviewing (though I have my moments; I'm still following a semi-structured list of questions). However, I'm much better able to anticipate how questions may be received and where I can potentially go. I think I need to be careful that I stay aware of this so I don't gloss over points and ideas or lose my focus.

There had been some concerns from my committee that I would easily "fall back" into this site, approaching again as an agriculture teacher rather than a researcher. While I think the connections I have with this site are important, these early interviews have alleviated some fear of feeling like I need to be back and embedded in the site as a teacher. In unpacking stories of

my former colleagues career moves, I'm validated that mine was the right one. Even driving from the airport today, things felt unfamiliar; I've been gone long enough that I'm not driving these roads (both literally and figuratively) every day. In this way, while we've shared the context, I need to be conscientious to dig into the "You know how it is," or "I'm sure you experienced." Even if I have, and even if we share a perception, their experience of that perception is highly dependent on what was happening when they were in the program and their current position.

### *Fortuitous Support*

If I have seen further it's because I stand on the shoulders of giants.

No one is successful on their own, and when I reflect on my time in Oakville, I know that I arrived with the perfect storm of support. This has been confirmed in the interviews I've completed thus far. When I came to NPC, I was taking over after a long term sub. The community was eager for stability and growth in the agriculture program. This was evident across the broad community.

First, alumni would ask to meet with me. The soon to be alumni president was in my office the second time I'd ever been to Oakville to see how we could get an alumni chapter started. Extension agents shared grant opportunities to get our school garden started. Local businesses started asking how they could help with National Convention or other projects the ag classes might be doing. People approached me at lunch during in-service week to introduce themselves and offer expertise. All I had to do was say, "Sounds great! Let's do it!"

There were certainly drawbacks to this attitude, but by and large, the more support I accepted the more I got. Eventually we had an assistant FFA advisor so I wasn't out of the classroom so much. Parents would take kids to State Fair. Kids started leading the way on projects and activities for our chapter.

While all this was really cool, how much of the support that you get as an agriculture teacher (or any teacher) is just fortuitous? How much of it happens just by being in the right place at the right time? All of these people are/were phenomenal, but would I have gotten that same support if the program had been consistently stable or if I had replaced a long-time, well-loved, agriculture teacher? Can you actually grow that support or is it something that is completely organic? Apart from the fortuitousness of it existing in the first place, how much of it has to do with the incoming teacher? What does it look like for a community to feel like that support is accepted so they want to continue providing assistance? Are there ways you can instigate that support and maintain that support for the people who are there?

As Joe and I chatted about this the other night, we talked a lot about the challenge of doing this in schools. It's one thing in a private company that has been owned by the same family with consistent messaging. Even a company with turnover can get their bearings. But a

school isn't a company. It's a bureaucracy. It's a government entity with no opportunity for upward mobility for the employed and little mission and vision from the very top (ie: what is the purpose of education?). Even universities fall outside this public school structure as they have the benefit of prestige and tuition from students who want to be there. Communities have public schools, but they fund them whether or not they like them or want them. How then, do you connect people when community doesn't exist? In a perfect world, schools are FOR communities and communities should be IN schools, but they're not. If a parent comes to school there's a problem. Schools are places for students, not for parents and families. Until this changes, do we really have ways to build community toward connecting and retaining people?

### Aaron Follow Up

Through the interviews today, my big question is: Are we trying to replace the person rather than the position? Is there enough clarity around the position that anyone could come into that job and be successful? Yes, education is in the business of relationships, but if understanding your position means showing up in a community, assessing your community, and THEN being successful, we've got a pretty tall order in place for our teachers. Someone can do everything "right" to make sure the next person is setup for success (aka: they have all my stuff), but that doesn't mean they'll do what I did.

The question then remains, who holds the responsibility for the success of the incoming teacher? On one hand, shouldn't the hiring committee be so well versed in the culture of the school and community that they can identify personality fits? On the other, should you hire for personality? Are we hiring someone to deliver content or connect with people? Is it an either or situation?

In this way, anyone could walk into a great program and blow it. Anyone could walk into nothing and make it great. If it's all so situationally dependent, are we really doing the necessary work in individual situations to help ag teachers understand their job, the culture they're entering, and what it will take to be successful in a given setting? Can you successfully recruit with this type of transparency?

Is it enough for a teacher leaving on good terms to help identify community people, identify community resources, and assess faculty dynamics? If the relationships truly are the key, are there "go-to gatekeepers" in these communities that help us better understand what success means in that community? Is the ag teacher just a puppet of the community then?

In the end, is a teacher's perceived support or challenge in a community just at the tipping point of their alignment with their community's vision for their program? After all, the community is the consistent player in all this. Admin move. Teachers move. Students move on. Should those consistent members of the community really hold significant sway over the outcomes delivered by the agriculture program?

*Stephanie Initial*

If I've heard it once since I started interviewing, I've heard it a million times: education is about relationships. You can't be successful in this profession without relationships. Great. That's what I'm focusing this study on. Tell me all about the relationships. But that's not what we talk about when we talk about changing schools. At least, not right away.

We talk about the curriculum we don't have. The mess we need to clean up. The expectations we need to set. The rules we need to learn. If we're leaving, we talk about how we left those things well in order. If we're entering, we see the disarray. And there's certainly something to that; it's hard to come into someone else's organizational system and try to pick up all the information they left. One, there's probably a ton of it. And two, there's not enough time.

And we don't spend a lot of time there. Eventually, we get to the support we find in our community. The ways our community validates that we're doing the right things and that they're in it with us. But when it comes to the students? They're a mixed bag of setting expectations, building relationships, and finding ways to connect.

We don't talk about how to actually facilitate passing on those relationships. And is it any wonder? That's probably the thing we're least ready to give up. We don't want to part with our kids. We love OUR kids. We call them OUR kids. After all, it's OUR kids that we messed with leaving soils, acting like we were mad they bombed and then smirking when we got to lunch telling them they won the contest. It's OUR kids that make us cry when they say profound things at the most unexpected moments to the audiences most in need of their message. It's OUR kids who make us feel included when we dress up for homecoming and they take pictures with us. It's their parents who check in on us when something terrible happens at home and you're away with YOUR kids on an FFA trip. It's OUR kids who crash their snowmobiles, and cars, and run their tractors into ditches. It's OUR kids that call us when these things happen (after their parents, of course). It's OUR kids that we help put cows back in. It's OUR kids who smile and wave when we pass their tractors. It's OUR kids whose dogs leave muddy prints on us when we go on SAE visits. It's OUR kids who get excited about paper towel dispensers the first time you take them out of town.

You can't just pass that off. While you can make the introductions, someone else doesn't just take your place when you go. They make new memories, connections, and inroads with kids in ways you couldn't and that's a fantastic thing. But that's also the thing that makes this so hard. These moments are where community is built. You can't just hand someone your community and say, "here you go, you got this." But certainly there has to be something to soften the blow. Ways to ease in and ways to learn from each other that bring people together rather than pitting the former against the current?

They're all going to graduate. In the end, they weren't going to stay my kids (or anyone else's kids) anyway. So how do we take good care of them while they're ours to get them ready for someone else?

### *Ben Initial*

I feel like I trampled through sacred ground today. I didn't mean to, but I did. Part of me believes that if you leave big shoes to fill you don't get to go back and ask someone how the walk is going. Even with the best intentions, you're in the way. You're not in a position to offer encouragement (as much as you want to). I feel guilty for not having another pair of shoes to offer. Just a smile and a sorry as someone trips around.

The process was just heavy today. Unpacking positions and treading in ways that felt both accountable and real was as much a challenge as accounting for the emotional labor of recounting connection to the site or feeling wronged by the community that should be supporting you.

A lot of this was really uncharted territory. There's nothing out there to talk about the positions SBAE teachers occupy. Some work on identity calls them daring, diligent, and devoted, but that doesn't get us far in five hours (and counting) of interview transcripts. How do you ensure you don't weaponize someone's words as you try to understand them? My participants were gracious, engaged in the conversation, and worked through the process of uptake, reification, and rejection of positions with grace. But it feels kind of cheap to reduce the work they're doing and have done to these describing words. I think about the richness of how they've described their context, experience, and processes and wonder how I'm going to present it in a way that still holds any meaning and depth. I really hope that some of this is because I'm so in it right now I'm not seeing the full pictures of what these positions provide in leverage toward understanding experience. I hope.

Today hurt and I felt a little empty when it was all over. Not empty like gassed. Empty like I missed something. Empty like something didn't resonate. Empty like I left someone sitting in their classroom to cry while I got to hop in my research mobile and drive away.

*I was born for this right here*
*Say it 'til the doubt disappears*

*I feel like an imposter, yeah*
*Ain't nobody caught me yet*
*Playing hide and seek, yeah*
*Hoping you don't see that*
*I'm making this up as I go*

I'd like to think I was really prepared to get knocked of my pedestal with this project and this trip. I really expected that at this point someone would've let me have it with how I wasn't

all that. Because I wasn't. By all validated measures of success, I was fine. I was okay. I was doing my job. I think I did a good job doing my job, but I wasn't awesome. I didn't coach a bunch of kids to region and state office. We didn't have state winning teams; heck, we barely made it out of the region in most contests. We didn't even DO the National Chapter App until my third year and we didn't get on the board for doing it "well-ish" until my last year. We were always just getting by with money, but we got by.

I didn't do anything crazy in the classroom either, but I did what was comfortable and what I thought was right for kids. In fact, the more I learn about good teaching, the worse a teacher I was. And I didn't have any boundaries. I worked around the clock. I answered texts and emails at all hours, traveled like a crazy person, missed as many days of school as I taught, and scheduled everything else after I had my POA set for the year. I was concerned with the transition and I wanted to be available, but I didn't have whatever was needed for success.

And SAE? That was a computer lab day with agri-science fair so I could say we were doing it. A lot of the projects weren't that great, but they were projects. We had a handful of traditional SAEs that we nurtured, but only one American Degree. Only one state proficiency. And I don't mean to say only to diminish the work of those kids, but I feel like I should've done so much more. Because I didn't know what I was doing. I didn't have an ag teacher to tell me what it was supposed to look like. I didn't have my own FFA experience to emulate. I had what I inherited and what I had been told it should look like.

Instead of a pedestal crashing to the ground, I got hugs when I came in the building. People interrupted interviews to come say high or hug me when I was at school or the coffee shop (so much for confidentiality). There's a levy vote tonight and the superintendent literally said, "Now I've got a good feeling about tonight! It must be a good omen! I mean BECKY HADDAD is sitting in your office!" I'm a freaking good luck charm! I've been welcomed back and welcomed into people's experiences and processes. People literally taking HOURS to talk to me about their experiences with moving schools and with the ag program at NPC. I'm a little concerned about the expectation to "fix" things with this work. And man, I hate letting people down.

When I left NPC, my "retiring address" told my kids, "you are good enough." I joked about how many times I'd heard, "Hey-dad, is this good enough?" But went on to talk about how good those kids were. How many cool things they had done over our time together that I was so lucky to be a part of. Then we talked about how they were enough. Whatever they could bring that day we'd work with. You are good. You are enough. I guess maybe more than anything tonight, I'm a little confused. What does it mean to be good? When is it enough?

### Transcription

It just kind of feels like another day gone. The curtains were pulled back all day, but I feel like I barely saw the sun as I generated the growing stack of paper on the footrest. Whew.

A few key take aways from today and a few things I've just been chewing on. First, it's getting easier and easier to pick out speech episodes. I'm finding my biggest indicators to be the relationships/interactions piece. There's lot of talk that accounts for historicity without the other three. There's a lot of talk in there that sounds like good advice that might be helpful at another time, but it's not directed at anyone; it's just musing on what could and should be. Positions have been helpful to identify as well as I pull myself out of pitying and focus on where people are. I've really found myself valuing the ways positioning assumes agency for people in positioning themselves and positioning others.

I feel like the interview tomorrow is going to push Aaron a little more. Since the ag teachers are my focus, his first follow up interview was all about how he saw himself. In his current role as admin, there is a lot more talk that positions others and positions specific others that I'll need to approach gently so it's not received as accusatory. I'm a little concerned that I'll have to be firm with Aaron on the point of positioning. I can already hear, "Yes, because of the choices *she* made." No no. These are the words you used to position her. The historicity is already accounted for. Where did you position her? It's a little weird how subjectification and agency collide in this theory. I think sometimes we see ourselves as subjected to positioning others in particular ways because of their actions, when really, we have the agency to decide how we're going position them.

In that same vein, I've noticed a definite difference in how "successful/good" teachers (ag and industrial tech) talk. They see themselves as agentic. They have responsibility and ownership around their choices. They are autonomous in their classrooms and decision making. They position themselves as responsible owners of outcomes. Things don't happen to them. They make things happen.

On an unrelated note, it was so cool to dig back into Ben's interview. Everyone should get to sit down for coffee for a few hours with someone who taught and enjoyed teaching for 36 years. If you ever get the chance to talk for a long time with someone who will say, "The kids are better than ever because I'm better than ever," take it. I wish some pre/early career teachers had the enthusiasm and zeal for teaching that Ben has in his little finger. It's a lot like how people describe what happens when you've loved someone for a while; it's not hot anymore, but it's persistent and it's going to do what it takes to keep on going.

Also, my body hurts from sitting.

### Ben Follow Up

I didn't want to go do data collection this morning. I was kind of dreading it. But as I think back on today with only one interview left for this trip (tomorrow), overall this is a cool project. Some amazing people have trusted me with their stories and that's really humbling. I've gotten to talk to some wonderfully passionate educators this week and even when they're not talking about people moving or specifically positioning people, I enjoy listening to them. I'm

energized by their hope for the future. I want to be able to look back on a 36 year career in education with happy tears knowing that I worked with cool people, made a difference for kids, and got to enjoy it.

The positioning follow up interview is incredibly demanding. Apart from all of the analysis beforehand, it's little wonder why researchers are accused of going to schools and then saying "see ya" to write their papers. It's just really hard work. The cognitive demand to turn around a rough analysis is one thing, but it is incredibly emotionally demanding to make your work (your judgements) vulnerable to someone else. I'm only doing a fraction of what Lisa Patel-Stevens did with her one teacher, but it's still a lot. People have been so gracious in unpacking those things with me. Several participants have hugged me when they say, "everyone should get to reflect on their career like this."

Sharing my reflections with went a long way toward productive conversations. It put us on the same playing field. They say things like, "You get it." "You hit the nail on the head." "This is exactly what it's like." There's a lot of validation in this work to that. That's not just me talking; that's a whole bunch of ag teachers (current study included) who have done the tough work of moving.

Ben got emotional twice today, but I'm a little worried that Aaron is the one I broke. Several of Aaron's comments made it sound like he works to position himself as "human" with his staff; someone who makes mistakes, someone who was a former teacher, someone they can connect to. Even my friend Aaron (not just my former administrator) turned a little bit in that moment and he reflected on his identity as a principal, as an ag teacher, and as guard-down Aaron. It may have been one of the more real things I've heard in these interviews.

Those raw things make me think this work matters, but those real things are incredibly humbling to witness and be part of. All my participants know that I'm here as a researcher, I don't think they trust me fully; there were definitely some areas we left alone (Ben wasn't going to talk about administrator's he didn't get along with, Aaron wasn't going to get into the ways he personally positioned anybody, but they trust me enough.

It's funny. Every single participant in this study is a migrator. I've heard a lot of common positions among them: owner, accountable, learner, supported. But there's one they all use that they're all hesitant to own in the follow up: survivor. The number of times they've talked about just getting by, being under resourced, taking the tough jobs, getting through the challenges. They talk like they survived something. They say, "I survived." But when you ask if they were a survivor, they balk a little. That seems too strong. Surely, "survivor" is saved for the champions, those crawling across the finish line battered and bruised. But aren't they? Aren't they survivors in their own right? Those who refused to be beaten down by situation or circumstance for the love of the game? Those who got by on what they had in the name of student success? It's like they think that word needs to be saved for the warriors and they can't see all that they've just told me they've done.

Questions from today:
- Would I have gotten to be better friends with my colleagues at NPC if I hadn't been the ag teacher?

*Caleb Follow Up*

"So have you ever thought this week, 'Oh shit. What did I get myself into?'" Every day.

It feels a little like I just finished a marathon, but I know I'm really only at the second water station. It's a big relief to be done interviewing (for this trip), but the question that's beating my brain is, "now what?" I knew coming into this that people hadn't positioned Jessie positively. I knew she was aware of that. Amid everything else, how do I write this up in a way that doesn't drag anyone through the mud but is honest about unrealistic expectations and the challenge of having someone else's position applied to you?

I'm struggling with the accountability piece. On one hand, positioning theory is about agency and autonomy. On the other, agency and autonomy without responsibility is anarchy. Subjectifying positions put people in tough spots. Does the position render the action? Does it justify it? What about the other way around? Does the action on someone else's part justify the way they're being positioned? The autonomy piece is really weird to me. You don't just randomly put someone in a position. Their actions usually drive it. So who's really accountable to the positions into which people are placed? And at what point are we responsible for shifting our framing toward understanding/renegotiating positions?

I think about one of Davies' examples as she worked with students. A student was on the roof, shouting threats, yelling, and where others may have chalked it up to the student being deranged, the product of a rough upbringing, or just flat out defiant, she said, "That must be really hard for you." She validated. The situation diffused, and everyone moved on. She positioned him as justified in his response. She positioned him as someone who was taking the only reasonable line of action they saw given his experience. Part of me feels like that's what I'm supposed to be doing here. Providing the justification. The key is to bring people together toward understanding, right?

How many times did I hear the words, "I told her she couldn't be Becky." Probably as many times as I heard all the ways Jessie was expected to be where I was in year five in year one. Who's job was it to tell Jessie about me crying in a corner during Ag Tech my first year because I felt like I didn't fit and was way in over my head? Who was going to make sure she knew about the fights I had with senior boys my first year? The number of kids I sent to the office? The stupid, stupid, stupid things kids did in the shop because I didn't know to see it? The yelling, poor classroom management, and losing my cool? The boys who would hang on to the garage door while four others threw the door up because I was helping someone in a welding booth? The times I let kids drive themselves places? The forms I didn't have or releases I didn't

get? The lack of productivity and direction and having any clue what was going on? The pissing off parents? The kids who weren't in FFA anymore because I wasn't Stephanie. The setting up our alumni, calling it a booster program, and then getting slapped when the name was on our adopt-a-highway sign because "there's only one booster program in Oakville." The low, and I mean LOW scoring CDE teams. The lack of relationship with the science department because I didn't consult them about adding food chemistry to my registration guide. This disappointment in the 5th grade teachers voice when I mischeduled something. The times we didn't have busses or subs lined up. I literally didn't schedule a sub until two days before an event because I didn't know the process (I thought submitting my absence request triggered the sub call). The money we didn't have come national convention time. The times I probably let things happen on cafeteria duty because I was too naïve to know the kids who came to chat were actually distracting me. Those initial observations that just went poorly. My TIP mentor telling me it was a good thing I had my personality to get me through teaching because my content knowledge definitely wasn't there. All. The. Fumbling through. And that was just the first six months. Maybe it wasn't something to tell Jessie. Maybe Jessie didn't need one more thing and someone needed to check everyone else to remind them how awful I was when I first started. There are parents I'm still scared of.

I don't think Jessie was doomed to fail, but I have yet to hear that she was extended too many favors or an abundance of grace. I don't think everyone was out to get her either though. Aaron and Logan like to credit themselves with taking a gamble on a young teacher with me. Slogging through for two years so I could be great. While I appreciate the opportunity and would like to think I eventually thrived given that chance, did they ever see Jessie as having that potential? Was Jessie really ever given a shot to be her own good?

We can't do this to teachers. We don't have enough of them to not take care of the ones we've got. If you're going to position someone as young and immature, you've got to recognize that they don't know what questions to ask yet. You want everyone to credit you with trying to do the best you can with where you are, but can't extend that to someone else? Maybe more than anything at this point, I'm frustrated. More than anything I wanted to believe that Jessie had the people in place to be successful. Maybe even a little personally hurt (hurt's not quite the right word) that the folks who contributed so heavily to my success jumped ship the instant something was a little different. Probably frustrated with myself for being naïve enough to think that people were loyal to the program (as a whole thing, not just what it was while I was there).

The other thing I've had a hard time capturing is the politics of small ag communities. There gets to be bad blood when a bunch of people have lived and worked together for multiple generations. Who bought what land out from under who? Who's the richer farmer? What church do you belong to? Do you go to the Plato VF or the Oakville VF? Who tiled something that messed up drainage for someone else? Who's pocket is the permit issuer in? Do you live on the east side or west side of town? Are you FROM here? If the community is so influential, how do you make sure the ag teacher doesn't just get bullied by whoever ruffles their feathers the biggest to say, "This is how we do things around here."

I don't think I've uncovered anything new. The people I talked to knew all these things about where they stood already. They knew what they thought of the situation. My job wasn't to bring that awareness to any of us. Now the real work begins of figuring out what we can learn from this situation. This isn't the first time this has happened to a moving teacher. This is what people mean when they say, "I wasn't supported." This is what people mean when they say they were challenged to the point that they didn't want to be there anymore. I'm not here to fix it, but I really hope I can write this up in a way that brings us together toward avoiding doing this to someone else.

Tread lightly.

### John Initial

It was a little weird to get back into interviews tonight. I was very aware of the ways John used present tense verbs while he was talking. He's still really in this. In different ways, maybe, from the other participants; he's invested in the legacy of the ag community in ways I haven't heard others talk about yet. And I think that matters a ton. It also felt like each of us maybe knew we were poking around in something we needed to be careful with.

One of the things I got from my conversation with John that I haven't really heard others discuss is the turnover that has marked the ag program at NPC for a long time. Another participant talked about NPC as a stepping stone for administration, but NPC (at least in the eyes of this community member) is also a stepping stone for teachers, particularly in the ag content area. Some of that might be proximity to the Twin Cities, some of that might be pay; we're not really sure what it is, but it came up over and over that the community expects turnover. One of the goals of establishing the NPC Ag Promoters was to provide continuity because the community knows there will be turnover.

The agriculture program at Oakville has been "surviving" since the farm crisis in the 80s. For the community, there was some hurt if you were in agriculture. For those who weren't directly involved or got pushed out by the farm crisis, agriculture wasn't something you would especially encourage your student to go into. So in that regard, the agriculture program not being somewhere to place the "smart" kids has been a stigma at NPC for a long time.

Another thing that struck me that John put into words was the need for a catalyst. For the NPC Ag Promoters, that was John going through the MARL program. What happens in communities that don't have that catalyst? Can we assume that people still want to be involved? All the reactants were in place. Businesses were there, support was present, but until someone made it their project, there was no alumni chapter in Oakville. Along those same lines, reactions eventually run out and quit. There's a limiting reagent and the reaction stops unless you continue adding more of the limiting reagent or add something else (even heat or pressure) to change the direction. Once the reactants are in, you can't really take anything out. It's changed the

molecular structure of the initial reactants. They're something new. The new compound won't react the same as the individual elements. And that's HUGE!! It can be painstaking and slow to separate those reactants again. By the time I came to Oakville the reaction was already well underway. All I needed to do was keep it going; I was willing to challenge students and show them it was worth it. We kept adding and adding to the reaction to keep it going and it kept going. But it wasn't going to keep itself going. Eventually, something was going to run out. And if nothing replaced the reactants as they "expired," nothing was going to happen. But some reactions are harder to keep going, and some reactants are more volatile or extinguishing than others. As John said, "It's harder to follow someone successful." That happens everywhere.

John's commitment to the ag program caught me a little differently than the other community influencers. Where some influencers were very quick to say, "That's on the ag teacher." John repeated again and again, "What can we do to help?" and "How can we support what's going on?" Asking questions about what needs to change or be done differently to keep a teacher in that program, what are the red flags that a teacher is struggling and needs some additional community support, and finding ways to work with the admin to buffer reactions for the teacher are things no other influencer has talked about in terms of being able to work with the ag teacher.

While I thought John's choice of "ringleader" for the job of the ag teacher was ironic (it's definitely a circus), that's not a crazy logistical expectation for a program (at least, not in my processing). John's expectations for the ag teacher boiled down to two words: Cheerleader and ringleader. The expectation isn't to coach all the winning CDE teams, have all the State Degree and Proficiency awards, be a rock star teacher every day and in every lesson. It's not to have the biggest chapter, the strongest alumni, the most money, or every college alumni of the program cross the stage for their American Degree. It isn't labs every hour and every grant dollar you can find. It's someone who will cheer for my kids and make sure the right people are in the ring when they need to be. Perhaps, where it becomes a challenge is the "could bes." But shouldn't a community have those? They're there. They might be invested more than anyone else. Their kids go through that program. For many, they went through the program. I keep going back to something Roxanne Stensvad told me my first year teaching. I don't remember what frustration we were talking about, but she said, "I have to remind myself that everyone is coming in with the best intentions." I'd like to think that I didn't really see anyone as out to get me anyway, but if I did, that turned me around a little bit. The "could bes," the hopes and dreams of ag communities can feel like a pretty tall order on an ag teacher's full plate, but if the support is there, it's pretty fun to get to be part of those. To have the most invested people in the community share their hopes and aspirations for a program with you is a huge responsibility. Shouldn't it be an honor?

### John Follow Up

"I'll give you two answers and the first one will be kind of tongue and cheek, but it's true. To have the model ag program that I could hold up in my stakeholder meetings would mean Becky Haddad is still the ag teacher. I mean that from the bottom of my heart."

When I was warned about how hard this would be, I thought it would be hard to be knocked off a pedestal. I thought it would be hard to hear that I wasn't as good or as well liked as I remembered being. I thought it would be hard to hear all the things I should've done differently to make things go more smoothly. But I haven't heard any of those things. The hard part is that the only way to "fix" this would be to go back, and that's not happening. To take it to the $n^{th}$ degree, the only way to "fix" this would've been to not use NPC as my starter school.

And as much as it hurts, I'm also a little numb to it at this point. Not so much to folks wanting me back in the community. That cuts like a knife every time. But I'm much more numb to the frustration and anger that I felt during data collection in November. Some of it is being really familiar with what's coming (so I guess there's some data saturation and that's good). Some of it is knowing that it's out of my control. But I let people down when I left the classroom and there's a reminder of that let down every single day someone doesn't respond to a text. Everyone understands. Everyone is gracious about it. But that doesn't change that I let them down.

There seems to be a certain symbiosis to ag teachers and the communities they serve. An ag teacher needs the policy connections, funding, community connections and support communities (specifically, alumni chapters) provide. Communities need the ag teacher growing interest in local agriculture, preventing brain drain, and being a public face/cheerleader for agriculture in communities. But the ag teacher needs the community more than the community needs the ag teacher. I think deep down, both parties know it. But ag programs owe their survival to the rural communities that provide both material and immaterial support, so when I talked about how much an advisor should cow-tow to their community, I think I found my answer. Ag teachers owe their community everything. Even if you can't give it to them, they should know that you're aware of the situation. I guess that's what they call power.

There's still this perfect storm that seems to just fall into place. I don't really believe in luck and fate. I think things happened for a reason, our paths are measured and planned, and you end up where you're supposed to be. Call it faith, luck, fate, work ethic, perseverance, internal locus of control, optimism, whatever. At some point, the people who are successful say you make your own. But that's bullshit. Nobody makes their own. You're not able to do anything apart from what came before. Whether it's how you got to work that morning or what you do while you're there, there's nothing you do that isn't supported by someone else. If you can't see how much you've been given to know how lucky you are to be where you are, you're going to have a hard time getting along with those who were there before you.

**Analysis**

It was interesting to me that it was almost easier to separate myself from NPC when I

went back. As good as it was to see people, my first visit back the first Christmas after we left

confirmed NPC wasn't where I was supposed to be anymore. Initial reactions during the

interview process were one thing, re-reading, formatting, mapping, typing out positions, and

aligning meta-comments was entirely another. When spending time with the data that way, there

was a different picture. I was not operating in interaction anymore. I found it much easier to be

sympathetic during the interview process than I did in the analysis. I found myself with much

more describable emotions during the analysis; it was easier to be mad at the words in front of

me than the person behind them speaking.

Sticking with me from this stage is, post-analysis, there is no going back. Once through

the analysis you know too much. What's more, it is too much to share with anyone else; even

someone within that context. It breaks people to know the things they couldn't get from

individual interactions. There's no seeing NPC as a collection of people I once knew anymore.

As a study site, NPC is a context whose positions have been exposed. All that's left is to

question; things don't feel like they can just "be" anymore.

### *Initial Formatting*

12:37 PM-No revelations yet. This coding is a bit of a slog. Definitely some questions though:
- Can a position be "fact?" Can it be something you *are* because of your circumstance (e.g: Underresourced, married, etc)?
  - If yes, what do you *do* with that position? Is it really something you can reify? Can you reify something that you didn't really have the choice to take up in the first place? Could you just as easily argue that you took up marriage as you did being supported? Can you take up being resourced/not based on the job you took?
  - If no, are we looking more as systemic positions? There may not be a specific individual to point to as putting you in a particular position but there may be an institution (government, school system, broader community, etc).
- Can you take up a position in which you put yourself or do you only reify it?
  - For example: I want to see myself or position myself in a particular way (successful). I can't just take up success as a persona. I have to daily reify that I am successful in the small things I do.
- I'm seeing a lot of the negotiation. Individual speech events playing out multiple positions and depositions of the positioning. The same speech episode can be indicative

of a reification of one idea. And in some ways, despite the push back against dualisms in positioning, to take up one thing may necessarily reify it while rejecting another.

- How many first order positionings can occur in a given speech episode? On one hand, wouldn't the rest of the episode be navigating/negotiating the first order position? On the other, multiple positions may be at play in any given event.
- I need to add a clearer definition of uptake, rejection, and reification to the methods section. As I understand it:
    o Uptake accepts the position (therefore must be an imposed position?)
    o Rejection (rejects an imposed position)
    o Reification (makes a more solid position, self or other imposed?)
- What do the different branches of positioning tell us:
    o First/second: autonomous or victim
    o Type: how it came to fruition
    o Deposition: what we did with it (once we were aware of it?)

5:08 PM-Things I'm noticing:

- I'm amazed at the amount of institutional knowledge that died with each successive teacher. I had no clue why Stephanie didn't do lock ins—I knew they hadn't been done in a while, but I didn't know why. Stephanie didn't seem to have much of a concept of how far the program had come with Aaron. Where'd it all go? Especially when all the people were RIGHT THERE!
- Cleaning the room comes up a lot in conjunction with ownership; I wanted my room to be a certain way. Is this something that should get more attention from admin? What does it mean to come into a clean room? What about clean facilities if you have multiple rooms to manage?
- I'm also amazed at how often "underresourced" is followed by "supported" or vice versa. Like teachers are trying to justify one with the other. It was okay that I didn't have what I needed to do my job because the admin had my back. I didn't have [x] that I needed, but it was okay, because I had other things I needed. Like teachers have learned that they can't/shouldn't/don't get it all.
- Teachers all had geographic ties; but that wasn't enough to keep them there. It's kept them in the area, but not necessarily at the school or in the ag program. We often dismiss the move as a geographic choice; people go where they want to be. But they don't stay there if it sucks. Moving somewhere to be closer to family doesn't mean the job will be great. It doesn't mean the teacher will be successful. Just because we can't prevent the move doesn't mean we should be making efforts to be supportive. The leverage of being "from here" only gets you so far.
    o Are there people who feel like they have to make a geographic location work? For some, they go wherever and stay because that's where they want to be and what they want to be doing. For others, they go where they want to be and tough it out because they feel like they have to?
- I kinda wanna ask Aaron if he was a home run, base hit, or foul ball

I'm so freaking distracted. I stare at my data and think about what a hypocrite I am for analyzing people's words and positionality while my own have been driving a wedge between my husband and I.

### Aaron Data Mapping (SBAE)

It's very interesting to me that boredom is something several teachers in What Moves You cautioned against as motive to move, yet for Aaron, it came up again and again. It goes back to a conversation I was having with my mentee from Penn State yesterday. We were talking about the things we find fulfilling. I offered that I didn't know until I was out of it, but I wasn't fulfilled being a high school agriculture teacher. I loved it. I really did. Even without being completely fulfilled, I truly believe I loved that job. However, since high school (and maybe even before), I equated successful with busy. I thought I needed to have every minute full. Really, what I was lacking in cognitive and emotional challenge I was compensating for my physically occupying my time. In my career moves, I've come to chalk part of the move up to boredom, or not being fulfilled cognitively and emotionally. Now, I'm doing work that fulfills those, so I don't feel the need to occupy every hour. Is this what migrators (or teachers in general) are searching for?

The conversation with Ryan then moved to passion. Identifying the things we find fulfilling about the things that bring us joy are really how we bring our passion with us everywhere we go. My belief in human autonomy (not operating solely on the whims of society, culture, or other constructs) tells me that we can find and create fulfillment in whatever it is we choose to do. However, we're going to have to work at it. Sometimes the challenge of the work to get to fulfillment is enough. Sometimes, we get so bogged down in creating what we want that we never get there. So the question becomes, how do we hang on long enough to create fulfillment in what we do? Does everyone have access to creating the world they want to be in? Certainly not equal, but are there ways to get people there?

Which brings me to my second "concluding thought" for the day. When we think about how to get people there, Aaron *should* get it. He's been there and he's in a position that allows him to see a bigger picture toward helping others find fulfillment in their work. Do you have to *desire* fulfillment to find something fulfilling? Is it enough to just bring passion with you? Based on this site, I would argue not: "this is just a place. I could do this anywhere." So why not *here*? What clicks (or doesn't) for people to decide on a particular geography and group of people with whom to build their lives and structure their careers?

### Stephanie Data Mapping

Huh. What a weird day. It's really strange to try to wrap my brain around the way four people processed the same program and community so differently; or maybe how three

processed it so similarly while one didn't. Or even how the one who didn't REALLY resonated with the ways the other three were processing, but it manifested SO differently.

I was mildly amazed at the number of times Stephanie said, "It's hard." Or "It's just hard." She's not wrong, but nothing in the way she talked showed any hope that it would get easier. She wasn't looking to take any blame. She just knew she was working in a system that expected it to be hard. Aaron reinforced that in his expectations of ag programs and the way he approached his early teaching career. It's supposed to be hard, and we're okay with this. We don't have any other brand of initiation, so we can have a few really shitty years for our new teachers to see if they can hack it. WTF?

There's a lot of this, though, that comes from processing with my mentee about how hard teaching is. While there's been a lot of conversation, I was grateful for this little piece mattering (at least a little) today:

> **R** Anything you've learned that might give me some guidance when searching for a new program in the future?

1:55 PM

> I think (not having completed analysis) one of the biggest things I hear is between the expectations of the admin and the teacher. I don't know that admin know what they're looking for when they try to hire an AG teacher, but they know really quickly if they didn't get what they wanted. It's seems similar for the teacher. The idea of "building the program you want" sounds great, but whether admin can articulate it or not, they have a vision. If your vision and theirs don't match, it's gonna be a rough go. Same thing if your vision isn't logistically possible. It's not really an interview question, but you have to work within a schools schedule. If there's no wiggle room, you may not be able to deliver on the vision you share.

> But knowing the admins program vision and if you can deliver on that is huge.

2:02 PM · SMS

Can you actually take ownership on someone else's terms? If the ways you find and seek ownership (as these ag teacher do) is at odds with what the community and admin are willing to give you the reins on, can you be successful? Probably not without some extensive frustration.

It's also interesting to note the difference in how Aaron talks about support compared to Stephanie. Stephanie notes specific people and connections. Aaron notes resources. Despite talking about collaboration, the places from which he derived support are discussed broadly. I'm not sure if this is a function of the type of conversation had with the different participants, Aaron's distance from the situation, gender differences, or some mix thereof.

Today really has me turned around on what to do with Research Question 4. Can I go back and ask teachers if they felt positioned in a particular way and what they did with that position? On one hand, I really feel like that's not my glass to break. But if not, am I really being authentic in my representation of my participant's and their experience? I haven't heard anything that the rest of the participants didn't know, but is putting it all in one place raising too much

consciousness, particularly given the tricky balance of one of the former ag teachers being the current ag teacher's boss?

### *Aaron Data Mapping (Admin)*

Most of today was spent working through Aaron's admin interviews once I got through a few formatting things. I don't really know what to do with how much all this feels like it makes sense/fits together. I feel like it mostly comes down to what you're able to read between the lines about what administrators want when they tell you to "build your ideal program" based on how well you align with what the administrator values. That's not earth shattering news. The better you can work around people, the better you get along. I don't, however, know what to do with the conflict within individual tellings. Some in Aaron's and a little bit in Stephanie's.

I find myself wondering about connections between responsibility and autonomy. Do people see themselves as needing to take more responsibility for something if they want to be autonomous? Do others see that? Does it go back to alignment as to whether the responsibility demonstrated is seen as autonomy or sabotage?

I had a harder time teasing out parts of positioning again today. I had to remind myself that I'm specifically trying to understand the positioning of the ag teachers. I need to be intentional in the write up about the backgrounding of "irrelevant" positionings. It's not that they're irrelevant, they just weren't what I was looking for. And what I was looking for (positioning of ag teachers) heavily influenced what I coded for and what I ignored. It feels yucky to write that because I don't want to miss anything.

I'm starting to find patterns in the way I identify types of speech as orders and types of positioning. Today, it was the idea that will/should phrases seemed to denote reifying speech that was negotiating (second order) positioning. Seeing these differences definitely sped up the process, but wasn't a fool proof approach either.

I'm also curious about the positioning in perception of potential. How much can we really judge/gauge potential anyway? Can we have both? People performing to meet expectations and people having certain "innate" potential? Either way, are people doomed from the start? You're setup as not having the same potential so our expectations aren't as high, OR our expectations are particularly high, but we know you won't meet them?

Aaron used "connection" a lot throughout his interview as an admin. But when he talked about facilitating connections, he talked about coaching, engaging in other school duties, and service to the school. At what point are these "connection points" contributing to burn out or teachers isolating themselves more in attempts to untangle their personal lives from the school in which they suddenly find themselves embedded?

Is there a vision for a SBAE program in which program growth isn't key? On one hand, if it's not growing, it's probably dying. On the other, definitions of growth can have a major impact on what those outside the program see as success. I grew the chapter by about 30% in membership and grew active membership (ended at about 75%) each year. Stephanie spent a lot of time re-establishing facilities and cleaning up. I still had a lot to do, but not as much as she did. How come she isn't hailed with getting things in order? When is it morphing/changing/being adaptable and lauded versus being seen as not having a plan?

### Aaron Data Mapping 2 (Admin)

As I processed through the last of Aaron's interview this morning, it was interesting to note the shift in Aaron's meta-language. For one, he cussed a lot more as an admin than he did reflecting on being an agriculture teacher; maybe understandably so. After all, he's still in it as an admin, dealing with the same frustrations and concerns he's sharing, where he's out of the agriculture teacher realm and far enough removed that much of his retelling is nostalgic. The other difference comes in his growing awareness of his own positioning. This was his second interview to work through the positioning. Necessarily, he was asked questions and gave responses that elicited more positioning of others. As we moved through the follow up interview, he was much more aware of how his perceptions of people put them in particular positions. This seemed to make him a little hesitant; not really unwilling, but more aware of what he was saying relative to those he was positioning. His metalanguage reflected a lot more on how his perceptions of actions or inactions yielded the "consequence" of a position. He was more concerned with "good" vs "bad" positioning.

One of the things that struck me in processing Aaron's admin interview was the difference in teachers who see themselves as lucky to be there. Aaron, Stephanie, and I all use a lot of language that describes our situation as fortuitous; we owe much of our success to those who were around us and the state of the program when we started. That leads to some questions about how luck and autonomy fit together. On one hand, my theoretical framework focuses on the autonomy; the decisions you believe you have access to act on. Autonomy seems to suggest a certain operation *beyond* luck or fortuitousness. Autonomy would almost necessarily suggest taking luck out of the picture. But positioning doesn't operate in that kind of dichotomy, and I don't think it has to be luck OR autonomy. I think there's something to being able to recognize what you have around you and being grateful for it. Without that, you lose some of your autonomy to act on your situation, because you don't have all of the information to capitalize on available resources.

Right now, I'm pretty weighed down by the responsibility of what I'm doing. On one hand, the responsibility of becoming an expert in this facet of workforce development. Suddenly my opinion is backed in data and I'm "charged" with using that toward bettering the situation of those I serve (first, participants in this study, second agriculture teachers and teachers more broadly, third those influencing agriculture teacher careers, and finally, the system in which these all converge). And maybe more so, feeling the immense weight of the responsibility to handle

people's experience gently. People were more open than they needed to be, and oddly grateful for the experience/opportunity to be. I want to make absolutely sure that the way their experience is shared back to them conveys the utmost care, conscientiousness, and concern for representing them well. That translates to the sharing out as well; I'm very concerned that those in the study don't feel their experience is used to attack, demean, or discredit their best efforts. I firmly believe everyone is acting with the best intentions, desiring the best possible outcomes both for themselves and those around them, but I'm not sure everyone feels like they understand the best way to get there, or that their actions have been perceived/positioned in that light by others.

### *Caleb Data Mapping*

A week away (Christmas) was definitely the right choice. I'm definitely coming at the data refreshed and ready to look at it again rather than dreading it. I'm sure part of this is moving on from the ag teacher data into the community member data. While close to many of the community members and sensitive to handing their experience gently, I'm not a former member of this group, so there seems to be less negotiating of my own experience within theirs. It's less personal than the ag teacher interviews; a welcome relief!

I became very aware of the interruptions that occurred during interviews today and have to wonder how the timing of the interruptions (and content, and individual) impacted the response of the participant. It happened in several of the interviews; people coming into Aaron's office, people stopping by Caleb or Stephanie's classroom, being at a coffee shop or a restaurant. Is this just the cost of doing interviews on the participant's turf? Is this something welcome as a natural part of the participants' day or is it an issue relative to the efficacy of the interview process?

One of the things that struck me today in Caleb's interview is how we see some people as needing us and others as not. In general, the one's we seem to see as not needing us are those we consider ourselves lucky to work with. Does this change our perception of the ways we feel we need those others as well? For example: there was a specific difference that Caleb didn't put into words per se, but expressed in his distinction between working with Jessie and I; I would've been successful no matter what. Jessie needed mentoring, experience, self-awareness, a more approachable demeanor, a willingness to ask for help. BUT, I saw myself as needing those around me; Caleb as a mentor, Aaron as someone who had experience in the area, John as a community liaison. Does this impact our success? Something as small as an attitude of gratitude for those we work with and those around us?

I'm less sure that my assigning of depositions is based on what my participants said compared to what I "know" about the situation. I'm a little concerned that I over-inserted my own experience in working with these individuals as a co-worker, and hope the member checking sorts this out.

Once again, challenge comes to the fore. Caleb was constantly looking for a challenge, but I have yet to have gotten to a point that I feel comfortable defining that challenge as part of this project. For Caleb, it seemed to be program growth, but I'm not sure what the driver was behind that growth. Without further digging, someone could probably say the same for me. But from where I am now, looking back, the challenge was on my time (that's evident in the way Caleb talks about the change he saw in my priorities after I had Anara). I tell our grad recruits all the time that what I enjoy about what I'm doing now is that the challenge is on my cognition and intellect rather than my time. There's an emotional challenge associated with each as well, and I would argue that's where you find/define fulfillment, but I don't have the data to support that yet.

Once again, we came back to survival. This has been a component of each interview. Everyone is surviving something different; tough kids, a tough situation, crappy jobs, the career to get to the next stage. It's interesting to me that we often talk about survival for young teachers/early experience teachers in terms of the profession. We don't often talk about what survival looks like later in a career. We assume that if you've made it that far, you're stable and comfortable. But maybe comfort is the exact thing we're trying to survive. We picture a daily rock in a comfy chair as we think about the end of a career that is positively terrifying to those wondering what's next. That begs the question (for me, anyway): Is survival really what we're striving for or are we aware that we're not thriving the way we want to be so we seek a change?

### Ben Data Mapping

Ben's interview is definitely taking some work to get through. I'm grateful to have the first positioning already done. I'm not sure if it was my line of questioning (in some ways, I'm glad that he wandered as we got more to mobility and the way NPC works) or a 36-year-teaching career to draw on. Maybe a little of both.

One of the things that struck me both in the initial interview with Ben and again listening back through is the ways that the work of being in the community isn't really apparent to him anymore. He's been embedded in the community for so long he can't really see the work it takes for someone else to enter. He talks about his crew of teachers being at the middle school together, transferring to the high school, seeing changes in admin, going through statutory operating debt, seeing all the ebbs and flows and changes of a 30+ year teaching career that bound those teachers together. Most of them still live in Oakville or Silver Lake. The longer you're in a community, the less work you have to do to be in that community. It's not really surprising, but your role in the community is clarified by taking kids to little league and scouts, by going to church, being at parades, being a coach. There's a difference between Ben walking into the coffee shop and me walking into the coffee shop. Even though we both know the same people there, the relationship is very different. And it's the difference between being embedded and a member. The difference between being a member and an outsider.

I'm also really interested in the content perceptions. Ben seemed much more aware of Stephanie's content strengths (and Caleb much more aware of mine) than Aaron seemed to be of either of ours. Aaron lumped all of us (Stephanie, me, and Jessie) into our content strength being in Hort. Jessie's content strength/comfort zone is definitely horticulture, but Stephanie and I were both much stronger in Animal Science and Leadership.

I thought it was really interesting to review the flow of Ben's interview. Teaching was fun once. Once he was at the end of his career it wasn't really fun anymore. He was still invigorating/energizing his craft four years before he retired (taking new classes). But in the last few years he focuses on survival, needing to get by. Being really into it on Then What right now, it's interesting to me that the teacher career cycle doesn't have a period of tension, frustration, or survival. Stability moves into wind-down and into exit. Frustration comes before those. Maybe the "error" or missing piece is that the graphical representation of the Teacher Career Cycle has each piece the same size (which, as a generalization, makes sense), but most don't move through with the same speed or in the same order; maybe not even in the order they're offered.

I had to wonder as Ben wandered in and out of talking about the administration when he discussed the changing admin and direction admin would take the staff he offered that they lost sight of the mission and vision of a school. The way he talks, I'm curious if they lost sight of the mission and vision or didn't really have one in the first place OR if they just didn't have a mission/vision that was evident to or in alignment with everyone else. This "lack of direction" seemed to coincide with the type of leadership exhibited by the administration; whether Ben viewed them as controlling or not. He seemed to talk about them with a greater sense of direction, purpose, and sincerity toward education when they let the staff lead. On the flip side, when admin dictated more of the work of teachers, especially relative to their free/social time, Ben thought admin were less effective and didn't show clear vision in their interactions with the staff.

Finally, luck and gratitude keep coming around. The erring philosophical for today is the idea of "what is luck?" It seems that people who don't believe that luck exists in the ether (but is something you create), have much more of it and are more successful (or perceived by others and themselves as more successful) than those who believe luck comes to those who wait. Luck also seems to generate gratitude (or gratitude generates luck). If you see events and happenings as things to be thankful for, you see yourself as lucky that those things happened to you. If you see things coming to you in ways that you had little or no control over (God, right place at the right time, fate, luck), you're grateful for those things, recognizing that you had very little to do with that coming to fruition. So in that regard, what is luck? Does it matter how you define luck and how you see luck when it comes to setting your path for success?

*Ben Data Mapping 2*

It's a little bizarre to only have one interview left to map (and to have the last interview be focused largely on context rather than specific positioning relative to this site). A few final thoughts as I've wrapped up the interviews relative to those closely tied to the site.

Schedule is a HUGE beef. Across the site, particularly for the teachers involved, schedule comes up multiple times in every interview. The idea that we could do something with the schedule to give agriculture teachers fewer preps or more time to prepare (for example, block scheduling for ag lab/shop classes to reduce the number of preps and the amount of time to plan) was not lost on any of the teachers as a missed opportunity. Teachers voiced this area as somewhere the admin could've showed some support or willingness to flex, but they wouldn't. This seemed to coincide with feelings of helplessness, lack of autonomy, or feelings of reduced support.

There's also a bit of resignation to "what NPC is." I hesitate to throw this one out there, because I hadn't thought much about it before pilot interviews, but one of the teachers in the pilot interview specifically brought it up. NPC is a small district. NPC is a stepping stone. NPC is a district that has budget trouble. NPC is a place where people don't stay. NPC is a place where we get by. Maybe not always, but across interviews, that seems to be where people are now. As a former teacher, this isn't hard to see in the ways staff are welcomed; this is who we are and we're probably not going to change. Or this is who we are, we've survived this and stuck it out so we're justifiably soured on education. If you can't tough it out, tough shit. Not in all cases, but there's a bit of a sense that teachers who made a career at NPC were resigned to it rather than really autonomous in their choice.

That is in no way to say that I have any doubt these people LOVE teaching. I think they were all, once, really phenomenal teachers. I think they had a deep love for their job and for being the best teacher they could be. I have no doubt from what they said or my former interactions with them that they do (or at least did at one time) enjoy teaching. There are also strong messages of loyalty to education as a profession and to kids.

That loyalty seems to give people a sense of mission. The idea that "this is what I was put on earth to do" isn't a new idea for why people enter teaching. Lortie talks about it too. People don't consider whether or not teaching fits with their skills or what the realities of teaching involve because they believe they were born to do this. It's their mission. I wonder if that sense of mission sometimes gets in the way of seeing teaching for what it is or if it's coupled with what may come off as resigning yourself to a specific career or location.

Regardless, there seems to be a tipping point between loyalty/mission/love of teaching and resignation to the way things are. That tipping point seems to come in when autonomy has been compromised to the point that teachers no longer feel agentic to affect change in their classrooms and schools. This idea that we'll eventually break them down so they quit fighting doesn't seem to be an intentional motive of anyone involved, but it doesn't take this study to know that once you've heard "no" enough times you're not going to keep going; unless you're

crazy (which, let's be real, some teachers are). I'm more convinced that when autonomy is compromised, teachers see a lack of support an insurmountable challenge. This isn't particularly novel, but I'm pretty sure it's an important piece of the puzzle.

### Aaron SBAE Follow Up

Can responsibility and autonomy be used interchangeably? How similar are these concepts? Literally speaking, their definitions aren't that similar. Autonomy is a freedom from external control or influence; independence. Responsibility is the state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone. Responsibility is listed as similar to authority, control, power, leadership, even culpability or liability. In the similar definition, responsibility is defined as the opportunity or ability to act independently. Is autonomy the state of independence while responsibility is the opportunity to use that independence? Aaron specifically tied these together in our confirmation follow up today. When I asked about the lack of autonomy he offered in coming to a multi-person department, he talked about autonomy as an opportunity. Responsibility came with more weight to it; he felt responsible to his students and to the job to have things ready. It seemed less about the autonomy to do the job and more about the choice to engage in the work.

The work, on the other hand, seemed to be something tied to the responsibility of taking care of something or someone. We both seemed to chalk that up to our farming backgrounds, but I would think there are plenty of people outside of agriculture that engage in work that they enjoy to the level of feeling responsible to it. It's half the reason we have work-life balance conversations in the first place, isn't it? The feeling of responsibility to the job outweighs the feelings of responsibility to other areas of life, so we feel chained to whatever we're doing vocationally.

There's something to the framework with which we approach that work as well. For farm kids, the work has always been there. One of the challenges we discussed is the expectation of work that accompanies those who have been involved in direct agricultural production. This isn't to say that others can't or don't have a work ethic, but there's a badge of pride that's carried with the farm kid work ethic, regardless of the ag sector you work in. However, that direct production involvement is becoming less and less common. Is there a difference between agriculture teachers who have production involvement versus those that have FFA involvement? What about those that have both? Neither? How does their framework for what is an acceptable level of work/responsibility/autonomy/commitment vary?

In a lot of ways, I hate to throw that question in. Yet, throughout my conversations with Aaron, he's come back to this idea of what it meant is what it means. I don't know that Aaron would say this out loud, but it seems a little that there's some level of fairness associated with this idea. Aaron will talk all day long about how hard the job of the ag teacher is. It's a badge of honor and source of pride to be able to do it all AND be GOOD. The job is supposed to be hard. You're SUPPOSED to have to do a lot of work, especially as an early career teacher. I'm a little

concerned about the sustainability of that perspective. I don't doubt Aaron's ability to empathize; he is very clearly aware of how hard the job is. However, we don't seem at all at the point to discuss whether/if the job SHOULD be that hard or if there are ways to shift how difficult the job is, especially as a new teacher to the profession or the district. Do you have to WANT a tough job to be an ag teacher?

### *John Coding*

What became much more apparent as I worked through John's transcript, and especially as I reflected on our conversation from the ways I was welcomed into the community, was how what we offer matches our expectations. John reiterated again and again the importance of an agriculture teacher coming to the Ag Promoters for support. The offer of support comes with the expectation that the support is used. This ends up acted upon in a variety of ways: someone takes up the offer in the expected way, someone seems to reject the offer, someone takes up the offer with caveats, but one way or another they do something with the offer and expectation.

Something else that struck me was the idea of the challenges in agriculture, particularly thinking about the ways an agriculture program reflects the state of the agriculture community. I had to wonder a little bit if there's a bit of an expectation that the job of being an agriculture teacher is challenging; that the job itself is a reflection of the community being served. The hard work of agriculture translates into the job of being an agriculture teacher, so if an ag teacher isn't seen (positioned as) a hard worker, will they be seen as successful?

I'm also wrestling with how much influence a community should have on the agriculture program. On one hand, I had a veteran agriculture teacher once tell me, "Who's going to be here after the kids graduate? Us. The teachers. We can't cow-tow to their every whim because we have to deal with the fallout long after they're gone." It doesn't seem like much of a stretch to extend that logic to the community. Who will be there long after the migrating teacher leaves? The community. Generation after generation.

I think there's also an "ag culture" that we forget to account for. Chris Emdin calls students from the inner-city the "neoindigenous." We call people on reservations "indigenous." It's probably a little blasphemous, but what about the "ag culture" that gets at the stigma of the ag students John kept bringing up?

A different idea regarding connectedness came up in John's interview as well. It's almost like there's CONNECTED and connected. Big connected is big picture thinking: how do these actions have impact on the broad community, region, state, and nation? Little connected is "community thinking:" How do these actions impact my closeness with those I work with most closely. I think they can influence each other, but if there's a mismatch in how/where you're trying to connect, there are going to be challenges in feeling supported.

As we think about the community support piece I'm more and more curious how others would assign positions based on the interview. Would someone who didn't have as positive experience see things the same way I do? Almost certainly not.

Finally, at the end of our conversation, John talked a lot about how vital agriculture is to our communities, and well beyond to being the "backbone" of society. There's a lot of conversation about the legacy, tradition, and values of agriculture throughout our conversation. I wonder if there is something to a mismatch in the "reverence" held for agriculture (or anything, really). If we aren't showing respect at the same level or in the same ways others do, does the mismatch change the way we're able to be in a given community?

### John Data Mapping

Wow. I'm not really sure where to start; I have two full pages of notes from going through John's interviews over the last three days. I definitely feel like I messed up the graceful respect that was extended when I left. We had done such a good job of giving each other space; not interfering in things that weren't ours anymore (not our ag teacher anymore, not my program anymore). That's gone with John now; there's no longer a graceful separation from our previous roles.

*We assume everyone has equal skin in the game.* And that's just not true. Everyone has different skin in the game and different attachment to the expectations (and different expectations of) the ag program based on their connection to the community. The alumni is invested on a much different level, and I don't think we often give alumni credit for the level of investment they have in their local agriculture program. We dismiss alumni as overbearing, unsupportive, or simplify what they do as "supportive" or "great." This greatly reduces the nuance of investment from community members who choose to show up for the ag program again and again. John literally talks about himself *as* the alumni chapter; not a member of, not the president of, *as the*. It's THAT personal. The community's "skin" carries the scars of a hard industry and very personally carries the challenges agriculture has faced. In that way, it comes off almost as personal embarrassment when the ag and alumni programs aren't doing well. It's embarrassing to the highly invested community to have an advisor that isn't capitalizing on the available support. The community is more invested than the teacher.

*I was so naïve. So, so naïve.* I had no concept of the significance of what I was doing for (to?) those around me. I knew I was doing a good job, but I really thought I was just doing my job. It has become more and more evident in my community influencer interviews that I did much more. The example that comes to mind is John's dad coming up to me, specifically seeking me out, at my last banquet to shake my hand. He came to most of our FFA banquets since his grandkids were active in the chapter, but it always seemed pretty clear that he was there for them. My last banquet, he specifically sought me out (despite my usual routine of hiding in the clean-up), shook my hand, and told me how much he appreciated what I'd done for the program. I know I didn't know how significant that was at the time, and I'm not sure I even completely

comprehend it now. It was the same with the partnerships with band. By having kids in their FFA jackets playing in jazz band and by having an event that was equally represented by band and FFA, we were challenging a stigma. I wasn't out to do either of those things, but people who were more invested than I was knew the significance of what was happening at the Pork Chop Dinner. We can't devalue the level at which the community is invested. There is a huge expectation for the ag teacher to garner community pride. John specifically said, "You can be here 40 years and not be a member of the community." But even with that legacy (that's definitely there), there is immense hurt when the advisor chooses to throw that community pride away. The challenge for the ag teacher is that they can't really discard it; it doesn't go away, it just rechannels itself into resentment, frustration, and survival.

*It's so personal.* Apart from John talking about himself *as* the alumni chapter, there's also something personal about how he talked about the teachers. When John talked about the "ag teacher" he referenced things I did. Apart from repeatedly holding me up as the ideal ag teacher, he consistently talked about his expectations for ag teachers and how he sees the job as what I did. Not once did he reference Jessie as the "ag teacher." He consistently references Jessie as the "current instructor," or when talking about the "instructor" and less positive or desirable ways of carrying out the job, talks about ways Jessie has done the job over the last three years.

There's also a really interesting negotiation happening in John's interview that I can't quite put my finger on. There's a little bit of a "what's wrong with us" that he's trying to negotiate and reckon with. Within the community there is a deep connection to and reverence for agriculture that seems to translate into program expectations and connections. Ag teachers are expected to match the reverence of the community, and since the connection of the community to agriculture is personal, a misplaced or mismatched display of reverence is a personal attack.

And still, *no one expects the teacher to be perfect*. Everyone, and I mean EVERYONE, knows the job is hard. Everyone wants to support the teacher in that hard work. What they expect is vulnerability. They want someone willing to learn. Willing to attempt investing at the same level they're invested. Willing to grow with them. Willing to listen. Willing to make a visible effort. Willing to connect. Willing to share the joys and discomforts of agricultural life. Willing to be as all in as they are. When I left, one of the dad's hugged me and thanked me with those exact words, "Thanks for being as all in as we were." The community has to be more invested than the teacher; they've been there long before the teacher showed up and will be there long after they leave. They want what any "indigenous" population wants (yes, I'm aware this is blasphemous); not to have their traditions and values stomped on and to have a seat at the table.

Over the last few days, as I've been processing aloud with others, it was pointed out to me (by KJ) that I discount the ways my 4H background contributed to my success at NPC. She pointed specifically to asking last year's cohort why they don't find volunteers to do the ridiculous amount of stuff ag teachers do and was told, "because that's just not how it works." But that's the ONLY way it works. If you come from a 4H (rather than or maybe in addition to an FFA background), you see that. County agents manage volunteers to coordinate programs and

run individual projects. I was really fortunate to have mentors in my FFA region and model programs close by who informed that in my "blank slate" ag teacher brain. When I'd visit the successful programs in the area, there were always parents present. I saw those parents at events (CDEs, camps and conferences, conventions). Those parents were running their chapter's fundraisers. The ag teacher was always present, and absolutely coached a team here and there, but their job focused much more heavily on managing volunteers than it did on performing every little task by themselves. It comes back to pride; how much of that kid on stage is a team accomplishment versus "my" program and a vicarious accomplishment for the instructor? How much you're willing to let someone else help seems to be a major factor in whether or not the community sees you as a successful ag teacher.

### *Mark Data Mapping*

In the middle of sixth grade, my parents sold the cows, moved us 45-minutes north, and we started a new chapter. We'd already been attending church at the parochial school we would be attending for the last two years, so arguably, the transition should'nt've been that difficult. We already knew the people we'd be most closely connected with in the community. But there were big changes. We moved into town; and a not particularly nice part of town, at that. Selling the cows was supposed to give my dad more time with our family, but that wouldn't be realized until a few years later. In fact, he was on the road way more the first few years we were in Fond du Lac, as my less than astute sixth grade self was none too shy to point out at a late dinner one night. I didn't know it at the time, but the move brought so much stress in terms of my family's financial situation. I skipped the last two weeks of basketball "back home" because I didn't want to move and I didn't want to say goodbye to my friends. Suddenly my mom, who was dealing with some other mental health stuff, didn't just need to get us on the bus, but out the door and across town. We had to ask to be outside. Our classes were suddenly much smaller with a much more palpable gap between the haves (them) and the have nots (us). It wasn't all bad, of course, but I couldn't believe when, playing basketball with one of the boys in my grade one summer, he full-on yelled at me, "You don't even understand! You came here and had all the friends right away! You had it SO EASY!" I don't know if I'll ever forget his face when he was yelling that. I don't remember what dumb comment from me sparked the outburst, but I guarantee I thought he had it easier than I did. He had moved from Alaska three years prior; if anyone had some idea of what I was going through, he probably did (though on a much bigger scale). But looking back, it's still astounding to me how little anyone validated either of our challenges. We made it look like it was okay, so to everyone else, it was. We were good, oldest-child, soldiers.

I couldn't believe how many times Mark said, "The challenge is," or "that's part of the challenge." Writing it here doesn't sound like as much, but 5/35 (15%) speech episodes started that way. One challenge would be plenty, but there are at least five, and those five are interconnected, both to each other and the system of community members in which they occur. Mark's interview zooms the conversation out; and it is so much more validating of everyone else's experience (or everyone else's experience validates his) than I could've anticipated.

The other thing that struck me in Mark's interview is how long everyone thought I was in Oakville. Apart from some seeing five years as a long time anyway, when people would guess/speculate about how long I was in Oakville, five was the low guess. People would even go so far as to say things like, "when someone's in a program, six, seven, eight years, like you were." Wait…what?! Is that really the impact of working to understand your community? It accelerates your embeddedness and the perception of how long you've been invested in an area?

Joe also mentioned something last night as he was talking through the challenges of onboarding a few new folks at work. He said something to the effect that someone coming in with experience should be better at their job than somebody fresh out of college. I don't think that expectation is uncommon, but that expectation puts another layer on the challenge for a migrating ag teacher. If a teacher comes in with experience, they're expected to be better at the job. But the comparison may not just be with a new teacher; the comparison is with the last teacher, the historicity of the program, and the previous expectations of what the program was and what it could be. They don't just need to be better teachers, they need to be better community participants, more invested and engaged in long-term success, but they don't get to start from where the former teacher left. At best, they're starting at the former teacher's year three. Even then, they're practically restarting at their own year one. Unless they are geographically tied to that community (having grown up there or living there and commuting to a different school), they are starting at square one for the relationships that are so integral to the success of the program. They are picking up in the middle of a community's legacy, repairing the hurt caused in either instance. If the community had a long-time ag teacher, they are hurt by the loss experienced when that teacher left. If they had a short-time ag teacher, they are hurt that it didn't work, picking up for the pieces from a job poorly done, mulling the ways they came up short, or some combination thereof.

We sorely underestimate the impact of mobility and the understanding needed on both sides (ag teacher and community). Mark specifically commented on how few teachers move out of dissatisfaction. This goes back to Katie's encouragement in What Moves You: "are you moving because you're bored?" and Ben's ideas of, "you are the one with the power in making your teaching a great situation." Moving out of dissatisfaction almost doesn't seem to be an option. We talk about the positives of moving somewhere else, but rarely do the ways we were frustrated with the previous experience surface until we stop to consider how much better it is where we are.

### Drafting Findings

Coding done and research question one draft. 28 hours, over 40 pages later, and it barely feels like a dent. I still need to organize the coding into themes, but data analysis is almost done! These ideas have almost no continuity, but considering I've gone through over 150 pages of data *again* since Saturday, there's a lot just floating around.

This morning a Facebook memory popped up from Shawn's class: "If you look where the light is best, rather than where you dropped it, you may never find what you're looking for" (Maxwell, 2013). It's been in my head all day, but I kind of feel like this project is picking up something I dropped and the light happens to be pretty dang good; almost like I've got eight spotlight holders shining a light on this issue.

In reflecting on the SBAE teachers and wrapping up RQ 1 it was interesting to me how all of them felt they started in a tough spot; almost like they'd built to this (NPC). Aaron started teaching right off an Indian Reservation, Stephanie came in after a tough sub. It's really interesting how differently each of them felt prepared to handle NPC's "tough kids" despite their "training" from previous experience.

It was also really interesting that Aaron didn't discuss autonomy. AT ALL. But it was a big theme for Stephanie. I haven't quite figured out if they felt a need to position themselves as autonomous where Aaron didn't or if Aaron saw fewer limits/impediments on his autonomy so it wasn't something he needed to discuss. So much for no gender/power issues. ;-)

It also came up again and again how resilient teachers need to be. WHY THE *&@# DOES TEACHING TAKE SO MUCH?!?! (Sorry, Velez). Is it a badge of honor? Is the system THAT poorly equipped to take care of teachers? Are teachers "lacking" that much to be able to do their jobs well?

Not once did an ag teacher talk about a NEED to understand logistics. Where the copier is, how to setup field trips, how to enroll in benefits or get paid, where to find x, y, z were either well covered in on-boarding or not seen as essential to doing the job. AND YET, it was the number one thing Aaron seemed to think veteran teachers needed as they came into their new school.

More importantly, seems to be this idea that you can't be part of something you haven't weathered: statutory operating debt, the farm crisis, building something together, if you weren't there, you can't just reach out and take it.

I'm amazed at everything else everyone else thought we did. Aaron thinking the girls were all about the horticulture (when Stephanie and I were much stronger in animal science); everything Caleb and Ben credited Stephanie and I as successful with; all the outreach and connecting John thought I did. It's amazing how four different people can have such different takes on what actually happened in the ag program at NPC.

Potential themes for the community influencers:
- You gotta want it
- Double Standards
- Everyone's doing the best they can
- All In/All or Nothing

Potential theme for combined questions:
- Give me some credit

## Participant Withdraw

During the process of sharing the draft of the discussion of findings back to participants,

my successor withdrew from the study. The challenge to maintaining study integrity in a

community based approach is, of course, ethically, I had to allow her withdraw, but the loss to

the study resulted in other participants sharing their experience with her without the opportunity

for her to share her experience toward conclusions that support teachers in her situation.

### Request & Decline for Additional Data

I got an email from one of the teacher participants last night that said, "Based on what
was said about me from the ones you did share, I would like to know what else was said about
me from the community." This isn't entirely unanticipated, but I definitely have that punch in the
gut feeling.

My initial reaction is that the study isn't about her. While community members were
talking about her, where things stand with the findings aren't about her. The findings are about a
picture of positioning within a migratory context. She represents teachers across the US. This
isn't a "lay blame" or "air the dirty laundry" thing. This is a "you're not the only teacher who has
had this experience, and we can all be more conscientious; this study helps us be more
conscientious" thing.

That also feels a bit impersonal, and part of me says that if I shared Q1, Q3, and Q4 back,
is it really an issue to share Q2 back too? Most of me says, at this point, that it isn't a productive
share, particularly if she's already taking it personally. It doesn't seem like a healthy thing to go
back and read it if you're already approaching it from a "what was said about me" standpoint.

As I continued to process this exchange this morning, I caught my thoughts drifting to
what the actual challenge is at this point. She voiced several of the things the community
reiterated in her own interview and has been adamant throughout the process that her experience
has been accurately captured. Did she think the community would suddenly start singing her
praises when they were being interviewed? It sounds incredibly callus, because I'm sure it did
bring bad blood back, but seriously?

The other thought was that she may be legitimately surprised. There were multiple
discrepancies in her interviews that would suggest she maybe doesn't have the self-awareness to

know where she stands. That doesn't really feel like my place to decide or even voice, but it was noticeable enough in her interview findings that I'm kicking myself a little for not being more prepared for this response. She really may have been THAT unaware.

In some ways, I feel like I rushed the sharing of the findings a little bit. It's coming with bad timing anyway with the heightened anxiety around COVID-19. I've been replaying over and over how I could've been gentler in handing this back (pretty much since I sent the emails, not just with this response). Should I have sent one at a time? Should I have provided additional context? Required a Zoom follow up meeting? I haven't exactly been dicking around. There just wasn't time. And in favor of time, I'm worried I didn't do the right thing for my participants.

Here's my response, but I'm still having major doubts about how I moved forward with the co-iterative analysis.

*Good Morning,*

*Thanks for your reply. While I understand your desire to see the other section of the findings, I can't share it right now. As I said in the initial email, positions aren't good or bad (though they can certainly feel that way). I'm hopeful we can use these positions to have a productive conversation about what it means to be a conscientious community member. A lot of that will come in as you consider these findings as a whole picture relative to your own experience, and I'm looking forward to that response from you.*

*Everyone experienced ag teacher moves differently and that is what this study intended to capture. While it may feel personal right now, the way your experience fits into this picture is vital. I know there are teachers who have had experiences similar to yours, and I appreciate your continued work to bring those to light. I also recognize this may be incredibly difficult, and will work with you in whatever ways I can to ease the process.*

*Please let me know what questions you have. If you would rather continue this conversation "in-person," I can certainly setup a call.*

**Participant Withdraw & Follow Up**

It's been about five days since I got the email that one of the participants wanted to withdraw from the study. I got sick twice that morning at the thought of where we go from here, and have spent a lot of time wrestling with how complete this study can be without her perspective. I want desperately to be able to justify myself to each of the items she addressed, explaining the ways I think she is unjustified in pulling her data at this point, but I know (not even deep down, right on face value) that I need to respect her desire to leave the study.

I wanted to tell her the findings aren't an open and honest conclusion; we aren't there yet. I want to tell her that I can't offer solutions in the findings. I want to scream that people

experience the world differently and I can't control that. I'm just the messenger. But I can't. I need to let her go.

I want to remind her that we talked about the within-study challenges for confidentiality, and she consented aware of that challenge. I want to tell her that this isn't going to be published in the Oakville Chronicle. A little of me wants to shake her and ask what part of the findings caught her by surprise. From my side, everything that was shared across the participants aligned, knowing I've had the benefit of time and all the information. But I can't. I need to let her go.

I want to re-explain my purpose; why I chose positioning, why I think the nuance of relationships is an important piece that hasn't been discussed in the research, why perceptions regarding individual performance and personality are exactly the criteria of the study. Relationships are built in perception of performance and personality. THOSE ARE POSITIONING. Now is the time to figure out how those positions can be navigated toward improving onboarding and retention and SBAE teachers work in their communities. But I can't. I need to let her go.

**Monday, March 23, 2020. 10:09 AM:** *Thanks for your reply. You are completely within your rights as a participant to withdraw your data from the study.*

*I want to respect your desire to be done, but also would really appreciate the opportunity to have a final conversation with you. The study isn't done. What you received are not conclusions. That is the piece we're trying to work through together. We're trying to figure out now, from everyone's experience, what can we recommend to move forward? Knowing how everyone experienced this differently, what can we do to make sure what happened to you doesn't happen to someone else?*

*I would hate to conclude without you and would like to have the conversation about remedying some of the issues you discussed. This is still a draft, and if there are ways I can improve it I would like to know. I think your experience is an integral piece of this picture, but again, I understand if you would like to remove it.*

*If you are open to a conversation, I am available most days between 11:15-1:15 CST and 3:15-5:15 CST. Please let me know what works best for you.*

*Thank you for considering a conversation, your participation thus far, and your willingness to exercise your rights as a participant. I will do everything I can to respect those rights.*

I don't want her to stay for my sake anymore. For me, it's inconvenient. It changes very little except that I need to reframe how I present this as I try to ignore her experience. And that's where it hurts. I can't ignore her experience. I can't pretend like I didn't hear what she shared. I can't take her out of this. And now, I'm just going to be sharing everyone else's perceptions of

her story. How many other ag teachers feel this, are this, and don't have anyone sharing their experience? We were so close.

*Thursday, March 26*[th]*, 2020. 7:58 AM. I'm writing to see if some additional time has allowed any reconsideration of your participation in the study. It's unconventional for participants to opt out at this stage, though you are certainly allowed to. I want to see if there is anything we can do to retain your participation. I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss the ways the findings and conclusions are presented so they more accurately share your experience.*

*The findings change very little with removing your data. While we can't control or change the ways others experienced a situation, we can influence how people think about this situation moving forward. I would hate for others' side to be the only side of your story that gets shared. I know other teachers have had similar experiences to yours, so while others' opinions don't represent your experience, your processing is very much missing from the current research.*

*Thank you in advance for considering. I would appreciate your prompt response either way.*

I'm trying to process this in a way that doesn't paint her as the bad guy; as less for opting out. I'm trying to figure out what I can include. What's my data and what's hers? What did I miss? How could we be so "aligned" until now?

One of my top strengths is responsibility…If you don't see yourself as making things happen, everything happens to you and everyone is out to get you. I'm not a self-righteous helper here. I knew the potential burden I was laying on by going back into this. I knew the hurt I was going to be dragging up. And while I hoped to get knocked of my pedestal in the process, even breaking the barrier of responsible separation wasn't enough to demote my hero status. The principal is already reassuring alumni about the new ag teacher by telling them "She came highly recommended by Becky Haddad." I was the good luck charm for the referendum they were trying to pass when I was doing data collection.

In the end, I can't imagine seeing all of that compiled together when you're still so in the setting. When, in the middle of this study, your replacement was hired, and now everything those interacting most closely with your success thought of you is laid bare and all in one place. I doubt she expected glowing reviews, but I think just one person saying something good she's doing would've helped. Despite acknowledgement that she was in a tough spot, there was nothing to validate any of her work through the hardship, and I have to imagine that was hard to see.

I keep replaying what I could've done differently. I say I was blindsided, but I wasn't. I think I let myself be a little blindfolded, though. Could I have shared with her first? Her track

record of communication doesn't tell me I would've had time. Could I have gotten things done sooner and made the time? Probably. Could I have shared back the findings more gently and in smaller increments? Probably. Could I have written this to paint her in a more positive light? Positivity is a major strength, and my checks said I was as factual as possible, but I'm not sure there was a way I could've written this up in a way that retained her to the study. We were concerned about power dynamics and who would know what. I didn't give enough thought to what it would feel like to see everything compiled.

I have to wonder a little about the integrity of the study at this point. She's still very present, but her side of the story is gone. The matching of positions occur for people in the context at different times, but are what they are. The positions, regardless of timing, still align for those within the context. There is still a breakdown in the way the community perceived Jessie's positioning against her predecessors.

The process I engaged was designed to make sure this didn't happen. Not that participants couldn't leave; they do that all the time (sort of). But it was supposed to be their experience, their interpretation, and their ways of being and moving forward in light of the findings. And now that's gone. The biggest implications of this study were probably going to come from her response, and now that's gone. The nuance of someone having a hard time, of aligning with positions or taking them up differently, is gone. And it feels so selfish to mourn that, but it's a loss, and I need to let her go.

**Concluding Thoughts**

*Your study isn't about being good.*

I finished writing the conclusions yesterday. I'm not really sure what I wrote, but they're written. I'll know tomorrow when I go back through to revise before sending them to Velez.

A lot of my conclusions are about being good and what it means to be a good ag teacher. When I was collecting data, a faculty member left the above comment on one of my reflections. My study isn't about being good. But no one else in this study knew that. What I heard again and again from people is what it takes to be good. What it takes to follow someone else who was good. What it means to follow someone else if you're not. This study is ALL about being good.

And I'm just so distracted by this. Migration is a pinch point. Teacher migration exposes the other challenges with support within a system, because the challenges and supports need to be relayed to someone new. Migration is a pinch point for expectations, positioning, power, and bigger issues with education because they become so much more evident when a teacher tries to change schools.

If seven told this cohesive and congruent a story, how many more mobile teachers will identify with this? Even outside SBAE, I still hold that everyone moves. The intended audience for this study (university faculty and educational researchers) have moved to be where they are. Moving is as natural and normal to human existence as working, or learning, or interacting.

Entropy is in our biology. So why do we spend so much time trying to fight it? Haven't we seen, even in nature, where embracing entropy works? Controlled burns for wildfires are the first example that comes to mind. It's not that wildfires won't happen, but they'll be fewer and farther between if we're managing our forest system. How do we do that? Harvest when things are ready, clean up by regularly burning off, and allow the forest to serve a useful purpose in a variety of industries. Teachers can't be the forest and the management system. Arguably, they do these things on the micro-level in their classrooms; they harvest when students are ready, clean up, and send their students to serve a useful purpose in society; but a controlled burn isn't maintained. Teachers are lighting themselves on fire without anyone to help fight the consuming blaze. What can those in positions to support teachers do to manage the forest, embrace the entropy, and control the burn?

When I took this study up, people told me it would be hard. I don't know that I didn't believe them, but I certainly did not know what hard meant. I assumed the dissertation process would be hard. I knew a study of this scale would be difficult. I did not understand what hard meant until I completed this study, because there is little out there in the education literature, and especially in the mobility literature to talk about working with people's experience on this level. My sincere hope, if no other recommendations are adopted from this study, is that others better understand the value and importance of community-based research, but also enter that research setting with greater preparation, understanding what it will mean for it to be hard.

I've been feeling the need to write a final reflection since I defended my dissertation a week and a half ago, but nothing felt right. Passing the defense wasn't really the goal of doing this work or this research, but it was a really important step. What is important was what a colleague told me today when he told me he wasn't coming back next year: "If I've learned something from your work, this work you're doing with migration, it's that you don't need to justify the choices you're making for yourself to anyone else. Looking out for everyone else isn't necessarily your burden to bear. We can't live our lives and make our choices based on what we think others need from us."

And that was it. This whole thing culminates in someone feeling heard. In the process of talking about this with people, knowing that someone else will extend a listening ear and a hand in support is what this world needs more of. Knowing that someone felt empowered to make the next right choice for themselves is exactly what this work is about. It's not the outcome I expected. We don't like it when people leave, but I'm not mad. I'm not resentful. It sounds cheesy to say "I'm at peace," but I firmly believe each of our experiences interacts with others to get people where God wants them to be. I got a little glimpse into why my work matters in validating the decisions people make. And *that* is the goal of this work.