

"Final Report for the Teacher Retention Study"

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The study that assessed teacher retention among beginning teachers in Illinois has been completed. Data was collected on four specific dates from 31 participants. Data was collected from the participants who were enrolled in the AgEd 675 course during the 2005-2006 academic year. Participants were asked to assess their own confidence levels on 14 different variables during the months of October, December, January, and March.

Participants were asked to assess their confidence levels on the following variables:

- 1) Instructional preparation
- 2) Classroom management
- 3) Time management
- 4) Knowledge of subject matter
- 5) Classroom methodologies
- 6) FFA activities
- 7) Developing SAE's
- 8) Acceptance in the school
- 9) Acceptance in section
- 10) Acceptance in community
- 11) Confidence in signing a contract for the 2006-2007 academic year
- 12) Relationship with students
- 13) Administrative support
- 14) Safety

The variable that received the highest confidence rating at each data collection session was their ability to sign a contract for the 2006-2007 academic year. The variable that received the lowest confidence rating at each data collection session was their ability to develop adequate SAE's. The variables are ranked from highest to lowest:

- 1) Confidence in signing a contract for the 2006-2007 academic year
- 2) Relationship with students
- 3) Acceptance in community
- 4) Acceptance in school
- 5) Instructional preparation
- 6) Knowledge of subject matter
- 7) Acceptance in section
- 8) Classroom methodologies
- 9) Administrative support
- 10) Safety
- 11) Time management
- 12) Classroom management
- 13) FFA activities
- 14) Developing SAE's

The first seven variables deal with the agricultural education model, which deal with classroom, FFA, and SAE. The other seven items deal with other environmental variables associated with agriculture programs. The first seven variables all began with an overall lower variable means and slowly increased at each session when data was collected except for classroom management. This is a positive sign that the beginning teachers' confidence levels increased as the academic year progressed. The other seven

variables' means varied at each session when data was collected. The following illustrates the variability among items over each of the four data collection intervals.

Variable	October	December	February	March
Instructional preparation	7.22	7.74	8.05	8.45
Classroom management	7.26	7.52	7.36	7.84
Time management	7.26	7.37	7.68	8.07
Knowledge subject matter	7.26	7.59	8.14	8.45
Classroom methods	7.44	7.67	7.77	8.29
FFA activities	7.00	7.26	7.27	7.87
Developing SAE's	5.78	6.07	6.23	6.94
Acceptance in school	7.78	7.89	7.98	7.84
Acceptance in section	7.41	7.96	8.05	7.87
Acceptance in community	8.37	8.30	7.36	7.74
2006-2007 contract	7.78	8.11	8.32	9.23
Relationship with students	8.48	8.48	7.68	8.52
Administrative support	7.41	8.11	7.73	7.58
Safety	7.11	7.59	7.45	8.36

These are some interesting outcomes found through this study. However, there are some liabilities associated with this study. The study failed to collect data at the August session for the AgEd 675 course. It is speculated that the participants would have higher confidence levels at the beginning of the academic year and then quickly dissipate as the semester progressed and then peak back at the end of the academic year. The study also failed to have each participant identified, so it could track a specific participant through the entire academic year. It would be encouraging to continue to gather data on each beginning teacher class to see in there are trends beginning among classes.

The study definitely outlines specific variables that need attention when working with beginning teachers. These participants definitely indicate that they need assistance with classroom management, time management, FFA activities, and developing SAE's. Other items that are worthy of additional attention are finding ways for more administrative, section, and community support.