

# “Determining the Inservice Needs of Beginning Teachers in Illinois”

A research study conducted by:

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This study started in the 2001 fall semester. I began this research study even before it was funded through the FCAE Mini-Research Grant was approved. The reason for this decision was the amount of time needed to complete this study. The first round of surveys was distributed at the October Beginning Teachers Workshop in Springfield. The Mini-Research Grants were not approved until later that month. Return rates are much higher if you can distribute and collect the data on a specific date, instead of relying on mailings. I used the workshop to distribute and collect first round data to ensure adequate return rates.

### **Methods/Procedures:**

The research study design focuses around a Delphi approach, which means it consists of several rounds of surveys to collect the perceptual data. The target population is all of the participants enrolled in the 400T course offered by the University of Illinois. The completed research study encompassed 24 enrollees from the 400T course. These 24 participants completed three different survey instruments throughout the course of the year. The first round was distributed and collected at the Beginning Teachers Workshop in October of 2001 in Springfield. The second round survey was distributed and collected at various locations across the state when beginning teachers met for the 400T course. The third round was distributed and collected through a mailing in the spring of 2002.

### **Demographic Data:**

There were 14 males and 10 females that participated in this study. There were also 8 provisional certificates and 16 initial certificates issued to the participants.

### **Prior to Data Collection:**

The research study began with constructing seven open-ended questions for beginning teachers to answer. The questions were derived from a TEAM Ag Ed meeting in September of 2001. The approved seven questions included:

- 1) What local administrative barriers have you encountered as a beginning teacher?
- 2) What areas of classroom management do you feel needs improving?
- 3) What are some of your concerns in the area of instruction or teaching?
- 4) What are some of your concerns with advising the local FFA chapter?
- 5) What are some of your concerns with supervising local SAE's?
- 6) What are your greatest concerns in teaching this year that inhibits your success?
- 7) Any other concerns regarding beginning teachers?

### **Round 1 Survey:**

The above questions were administered to beginning teachers in October of 2001. These questions were developed to solicit responses from beginning teachers. All of the responses were transferred to the second round survey. The first round survey solicited 160 responses from

the 24 participants from the seven open-ended questions. Due to duplication or similar responses, 153 responses were included in the second round survey. This was the only manipulation of the data from the first round. All of the responses were duplicated verbatim to the second round instrument.

### **Round 2 Survey:**

The main purpose of the second round instrument was to eliminate responses that group agreed upon. The survey instrument listed all 153 responses and used a 5 point Likert-type rating. The number 1 represented “Strongly Agree” and the number 5 represented “Strongly Disagree”. All the participants had to rate each of the 153 items. Items receiving 60% agreement from the participants moved on to the third round. This means that 60% of the participants had to mark 1 “Strongly Agree” or 2 “Agree” to be included in the third round instrument. The items that did not meet this benchmark were eliminated. Approximately 37% (N=56) of the original responses were included in the third round and the other 63% (N=97) were eliminated.

### **Round 3 Survey:**

The main purpose of the third round instrument was to prioritize the 56 items. This survey instrument had two rating systems. The participants were first asked to rate each item on their “importance” level and then the participants were asked to rate each item on their “priority” level. The two rating systems were then analyzed to develop the MWDS rating, which is included on the attached document.

### **Results:**

The analysis documents the higher the MWDS rating, the higher the importance and priority rating of that item. In short, the highest MWDS rating indicates the greatest concern among beginning teachers, so **“Having time to teach and prepare lessons along with the extra stuff”** is the greatest concern among beginning teachers in Illinois. The first table on the attached documents outlines all 56 items from greatest concern to least concern among beginning teachers. It is important to remember that all 56 items are important to address, just the item with the greatest MWDS rating has the highest priority. The first table includes the item (as duplicated from the first round survey), the question number (as listed on the third round survey), the MWDS rating, and the number of participants that rated each item.

The second table outlines the items retrieved from the original seven open-ended questions. This helps in analyzing which group of items possesses the greatest priority. SAE’s appear to be the grouping that possesses the greatest concern followed by instruction and teaching. This table includes the items, MWDS ranking, MWDS rating, and number of participants. It also includes the ranking mean (average) for each group of items and the MWDS mean (average) for each group of items. The lower the ranking mean and the higher the MWDS mean the greater the concern among beginning teachers.