Moves You? How SBAE Teachers Navigate Program Migration

Becky Haddad[1], Jonathan J. Velez[2], and Josh Stewart[3]

Abstract

Little data exists to examine the stigmatized phenomenon of program mobility within agricultural education. Our research starts the conversation through interviews with eight School-Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) teachers across the United States, using qualitative phenomenology, to provide a unique perspective of retention through migration. We define teacher migration as a program move while choosing to remain in SBAE. Utilizing the theoretical lens of expansive learning through activity systems (Engeström, 2009), *we present teacher migration as a means to learn and grow in the craft of teaching within SBAE, particularly among teachers with more than eight years of experience. Although additional efforts are needed to quantify migration within SBAE, and to examine the common narrative, our research reveals program migration to be a relational issue. In our study, participants expressed community, opportunity to learn, and time as functions of support through a career transition. They identified resources and expectations as challenges faced in the migration process. Our research provides a starting place for conversations around teacher migration through a focus on the assets of experience, viewing migration as a means of retention rather than as a function toward attrition.*

Keywords: program migration, program mobility, teacher mobility, migration process, program move, teacher retention, career transition

Introduction

Researcher Vignette 1: *I came into my first year teaching, and in fact, my third interview for my first job, knowing the high school classroom was not my career end game. I spent my entire five-year career as an agriculture teacher preparing my program for a successful transition; getting an alumni chapter started, empowering students to be proactive toward their own success, building community relationships, and developing curriculum so that someone could step into my program and be successful. However, as I watched the program transition unfold, a new teacher came in with her own agenda, her own version of time management, and her own expectations for students. Ultimately, she wasn't me. There was no smooth, well-planned transition as I envisioned.*

Within agricultural education, 33-38% of vacant programs are filled by migrating teachers annually (Foster, Smith, & Lawver; 2015 & Klapoetke & Buttles, 2016), yet scant literature exists validating the anecdotal, perceived challenge of starting over as a first-year teacher or exploring the motivations of migrating teachers. We define *migration* as a process of making career moves in a given

---

[1] Becky Haddad is an instructor and graduate student in the Department of Agricultural Education and Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University, 118 Strand Agriculture Hall, Corvallis, OR 97333, becky.haddad@oregonstate.edu

[2] Jonathan J. Velez is the Department Head and Associate Professor in the Department of Agricultural Education and Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University, 130B Strand Agriculture Hall, Corvallis, OR 97333, jonathan.velez@oregonstate.edu

[3] Josh Stewart is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Teacher Education in the Department of Agricultural Education and Agricultural Sciences at Oregon State University, 130A Strand Agriculture Hall, Corvallis, OR 97333, josh.stewart@oregonstate.edu

profession. We further define *successful transitions* as those that lead to a decision to remain in the profession through migration, despite perceived obstacles. Our current scope focuses on migrating teachers as they move between School Based Agricultural Education (SBAE) programs, but we acknowledge that migration could be considered more broadly in the context of both vertical and horizontal moves. We chose *migration* to define this phenomenon as other terms used in the broader education literature (*churn*, *teacher mobility*, and *movers*) often associate career transitions with issues of first-year teachers or attrition (Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary, Taie, & O'Rear, 2015; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001). We argue this unfairly stigmatizes migrators, and the processes they employ, as these terms fail to capture the healthy and natural process in which teachers engage as they work through career transitions. This failure devalues the experience and worth of migrating teachers and diminishes their work as they seek successful migration. We posit successful migration involves learning the norms and traditions of a school and community, a potentially heightened role for agriculture teachers compared to their counterparts.

We conceptualize this process as a difficult choice, or a *double-bind,* which teachers engage in as they navigate career transition (Engeström, 2009). According to Bateson's theory of learning, and in conjunction with expansive learning (Engeström, 2009), this study seeks to examine the *double-bind* in which agriculture teachers find themselves upon making the decision to change programs. A *double-bind* is a form of perceived impasse where the subject finds itself navigating a conflicting relationship with one or more system components (Engeström, 2009). This lens also assumes learning as an inherent piece of the process; an important consideration as we seek to credit teachers as autonomous and intentional decision makers who may migrate to refresh their teaching rather than seeking to abandon it.

The problem, as we define it, is three-dimensional. First, little is known about agriculture teachers who migrate within the profession. While admittedly difficult to track, a lack of understanding regarding teacher migration is problematic for programs, students, and teachers. Second, when referenced, migrating teachers receive acknowledgement as *movers*, identified because of the program positions they vacate rather than the positions they fill (Feng & Sass, 2012; Gary, Taie, & O'Rear, 2015; Goldring, Taie, & Riddles, 2014; Ingersoll, 2001). Finally, anecdotal evidence exists that teachers view a program transition as "starting over." Inadequate research explores the challenges faced or supports needed to aid teachers in remaining in the profession through migration despite perceived obstacles. The purpose of our study was to identify the ways SBAE teachers navigate their *double-bind* in a manner that retains them in the profession and supports successful navigation of program transitions. With this in mind, we sought to examine why agriculture teachers move, the challenges they face, and the supports available to aid in successful career transitions.

Review of Literature

Researcher Vignette 2: *The idea of "starting over" was terrifying to me, even as someone who had spent a high school teaching career, albeit a short high school teaching career, preparing to transition out of the high school classroom. I wrestled with every professional option: Try for sabbatical and come back after three years, pursue an online doctoral program, "start over" in a new state for a year, continue teaching in my program until I knew for sure it was ready, or bite the bullet and make a career change, ready-or-not? I opted to live away from my husband with our two-year-old daughter for a year versus "starting over" in a new state or single-handedly maintaining the monster agriculture program we had created. While the personal struggles were certainly immense, it was nothing compared to what I perceived as the difficulty of changing programs.*

The following review explores the body of research relative to teacher migration through the investigation of three problems: The limited understanding of teacher migration relative to the scope of

the problem, the view of migrating teachers merely as *movers*, as well as the challenges faced, and personal and professional motivations regarding teacher program migration. Within the limited research that exists to understand the processes in which teachers engage when making career transitions, we note this work as largely quantitative. Literature for this study was identified through work in teacher attrition and mobility, in both agricultural education and the broader education profession.

Understanding the Scope of Migration

The broad education profession has a limited scope of understanding regarding teacher migration. In 2012-2013, the National Teacher Attrition and Mobility Survey identified eight percent of public school teachers nationally as *movers* (Goldring et al., 2014). Nationally and across disciplines, 10-16% of first through fifth year teachers changed schools in three sample periods over five years (Gary, et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014). This rate of migration has been stable (7.2-8.1%) as reported through seven surveys administered since 1988-89 (Goldring et al., 2014). Ingersoll (2001) noted demand for new teachers is not a function of increased student enrollment, but is a function of turnover before retirement. The rate of migration among early-career teachers (fewer than five years of experience) has historically been higher than the national average (Ingersoll, 2001).

Although exact data are not available for this study, regional estimates place early-career (fewer than five years of experience) SBAE teachers at approximately 25% of the SBAE profession (Haddad & Velez, 2018). Given the established tendency of younger teachers to migrate at higher rates than their more experienced peers (Gary et al., 2015; Goldring et al., 2014), it would not be surprising to see higher rates of migration among a younger subset of our SBAE teaching force. While only 4-6% of SBAE teachers move in a given year (Smith et al., 2017), program vacancies filled by migrating teachers outrank any other supply line by over ten percent. In a Wisconsin study examining the causes of position vacancy, migration accounted for approximately 33% of SBAE teacher vacancies from 2010-2015 (Klapoetke & Buttles, 2016). The 2015 National Agricultural Education Supply and Demand study identified approximately 38% of vacant SBAE positions as filled by migrating teachers (Foster, Lawver, & Smith, 2016). A similar trend was observed in 2016, with 36.5% of hires in SBAE sourced from teacher migration (Smith et al., 2017). Within SBAE, national and statewide data corroborate a migrating teacher hire rate of approximately 35% (Foster et al., 2015; Klapoetke & Buttles, 2016; Smith et al., 2017).

Although SBAE migration rates are not particularly alarming, the hire rate of migrating teachers warrants additional study relative to *mover* experience and successes. Unfortunately, teacher migration is viewed through the lens of teacher attrition. In terms of teacher attrition, losing the "moving third" as opposed to migrating this third would put SBAE at a significant and detrimental deficit relative to maintaining a strong presence for agricultural education in United States schools. While outside the realm of this study, research is both necessary and overdue to explore the experience demographics of migrating teachers and to examine time spent in individual programs between migrations.

Deficit View of Migrating Teachers

Apart from our understanding of teacher migration resting primarily in quantitative work around teacher attrition, teacher migration is studied in terms of teacher quality and the student achievement gap. Ross et al. (1999) posited teacher mobility was higher among less effective teachers and first-year teachers compared to their more effective or experienced peers. Feng and Sass (2012) proposed teacher mobility as an "exacerbation" of "differences in teacher quality across schools" (p. iii). In particular, Feng and Sass identified that teachers tend to move to districts reflective of individual teacher quality; high quality teachers move to work with other high quality teachers, and low-quality

teachers tend to move to work with "low-quality" colleagues (2012). Teacher migration has also been shown to have a significant negative impact on student achievement (Feng & Sass, 2012; Ronfeldt, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013).

Feng and Sass (2012) identify teacher mobility as a trend contributing to the achievement gap. Teacher mobility accounts for 12% of all teacher vacancies and 7.2% of turnover in both urban high-poverty public schools and small private schools nationwide (Ingersoll, 2001). Others note particular harm to achievement of students in schools with large populations of low-performing and Black students (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Additionally, New York schools have seen extensive "within school 'churn'" correlated with a negative impact on reading and math testing scores (DiCarlo, 2014). However, only evaluating the impact of a career transition on student achievement in challenging and high turnover scenarios unfairly stigmatizes the choice and fails to recognize the thousands of teachers who also choose to teach at these schools. Although migration may be exacerbated in urban schools, focusing a snapshot of mobility on urban, high-poverty schools lacks consideration of broader generational trends that impact every career.

Personnel psychology and the military are the primary fields investing in professional migration research. In her book, "Lean In," Sheryl Sandberg discusses a younger generation's (Millennials) career trajectory as a "jungle gym," rather than a "ladder" (Putter, 2019). This visual provides some additional context in recognizing migration is not unique to the SBAE profession but is a common phenomenon amongst an increasingly Millennial workforce (Putter, 2019). To view teacher migration as a unique professional phenomenon or only in terms of its deficits fails both the profession and individual teachers. Teacher migration within underserved settings is on par with national averages for the broader education profession, and framing teacher migration in terms of program vacancy, teacher quality, or the achievement gap present a deficit view of individual teachers contributing to a professional stigma regarding migration. Instead of defining teacher merit by migration it is time for educational research to clarify and develop the supports necessary to retain educators through migration.

Teacher Perceptions of Migration

Understanding migration factors is key to understanding the potential for migration to serve as a professional benefit. Goldring et al. (2014) noted 22.7% of *movers* change schools voluntarily with "school" being the greatest factor in migration (22.6%). Ingersoll (2001) notes broad, national justifications about turnover among *movers*. We offer the distinction that *turnover* is limited to the school and not necessarily the profession, in this case. Associating *movers* with *turnover* implies a focus on the vacated position, rather than recognizing the experience a migrating teacher brings to their new school. However, we also recognize the value in identifying potential motivations for migration as a function of the vacated school. Within the school system, justifications include school staffing action, dissatisfaction related to administrative support, salary, lack of faculty influence, lack of student motivation, large class sizes, inadequate time, unsafe environment, low opportunity for professional advancement, interference in teaching, lack of colleague professional competence, and intrusions on teaching time (Ingersoll, 2001). External to the school, Ingersoll (2001) identified personal reasons, other jobs, and lack of community support as motivations for migration.

For SBAE, Ruhland (2001) identified a positive teaching experience, administrative support; recognition by supervisors, administrators, and students; pleasant working conditions, and available resources as factors influencing the choice of agriculture teachers in Minnesota to remain in the profession. Perceived obstacles and incentives to agriculture teacher migration corroborate the above findings as both personal and professional, as described by Clark, Kelsey, and Brown (2014). Personal obstacles included lack of support from significant others, life crisis or a health imperative to reduce

workload, and poor life balance. Professional obstacles comprised disagreements with administration, unmotivated students, and time commitment required for the job. Incentives in the moving process involved finding a more supportive community, both financially and in terms of volunteer support. Another incentive involved the perceived transition to *maintenance mode*. In *maintenance mode* SBAE teachers are no longer building their program and career-striving, but focusing on well-being and life balance (Clark et al., 2014).

Taken together, teacher migration is not viewed as a potential benefit to the broader teaching profession or to SBAE. Current research suggests teacher migration causes vacancy rather than viewing migration as an act of retention or means of filling program vacancies. Migration is also deemed the result of school environments and personal factors. It is time to begin examining teacher migration in terms of its benefits to the broader profession and individual teacher rather than merely by its detriments to school systems. As such, our study provides a starting point toward the additional research needed to identify the ways in which SBAE teachers navigate their *double-bind* in a manner that retains them for the profession and supports successful navigation of program transitions. In this light, we focus our current study on the school as the activity system (Engeström, 2009) rather than the individual teacher relative to their personal circumstance.

Purpose and Research Questions

Against the backdrop of the challenges discussed, our purpose is to begin understanding the supports needed and challenges faced by migrating SBAE teachers. The research questions guiding our study are as follows:

1. Why do agriculture teachers migrate between SBAE programs?
2. How are agriculture teachers challenged by the migration process?
3. What systems aid agriculture teachers in successful program migrations?

These questions align with AAAE Research Priority 3, Question 2: "What methods, models, and practices are effective in recruiting agricultural leadership, education, and communication practitioners and supporting their success at all stages of their careers?" (Roberts, Harder, & Brashears, 2016).

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Researcher Vignette 3: *I didn't know it at the time, but I was caught in the double (triple) bind between three choices: Stay at my current school, start teaching at a new school, or begin a doctoral program. I had yet to accept an assistantship when I told my students in January that I was submitting my letter of resignation. One of my greatest comforts, after I told my students that I would no longer be teaching in the high school program I had nurtured for five years, was the idea that I didn't have to leave teaching agriculture. I was one of the lucky ones. I didn't feel forced out or harbor hate for my job. I loved my school, community, students, and most of my colleagues. I was nervous about starting over in a "new career," in a new place, sans husband, family, and other support structures we'd built. However, I had known since my junior year of my undergraduate program that a PhD was in my future and that a professorship was my long-term career goal. While I was not able to give it structure at the time, this entire process encompassed a navigation of activity systems, seeking to relieve a double bind through expansive learning in my career.*

Unique to our study, is an approach to teacher migration that assumes learning on the part of the teacher, recognizing migration as a potential asset to teachers' career processes. Thus, it is necessary to employ a theoretical framework that accounts for the learning nature of teachers. Engeström (1982, in Illeris, 2009) proposed a third generation of activity theory by which to examine learning in a variety

of systems. The unit of analysis of third generation activity theory focuses on the "meaningful object constructed by the activity system (Object 2, *Figure 1*)" (Engeström, 2009, p. 56). For our study, the object is the career decision derived through consideration of two program options. Five principles summarize the third generation of activity theory. First, the main unit of analysis is the system's interaction with an object. This system is collective in terms of being mediated by artifacts and oriented around the object, and the object is studied relative to its relation within and among networks (Engeström, 2009). In our study, schools are the objects considered as a system comprised of mediating artifacts, resources, division of labor, community, rules, and subject. Second, activity systems have an implied *multi-voicedness*, and as such account for a broader community with all its norms and structures. Our study seeks to identify the *multi-voicedness* at play from the various interacting system components. The third principle addresses the element of time, usually extensive periods, defining the shape of the activity system. While implicit in the model and our study, we recognize migration occurs as an intentional process, rather than as an isolated event. Fourth, it is the tensions or binds in the system that serve as sources of change toward the development of the system in terms of the object. Thus, a primary objective of our analysis is to uncover the *binds* teachers identify as part of their migration work. Finally, activity systems conceptualize the possibilities of expansive transformation (Engeström, 2009). Expansive transformation is Engeström's description of the emergence of the individual on the "other side" of the *double-bind*. Having successfully navigated the *double-bind* individuals learn, grow and utilize the expansive process to find themselves in a state of reduced conflict (Engeström, 2009). This theoretical framework allows us to take an asset orientation, recognizing migration as an asset to career development, and account for the learning nature of the teaching profession.
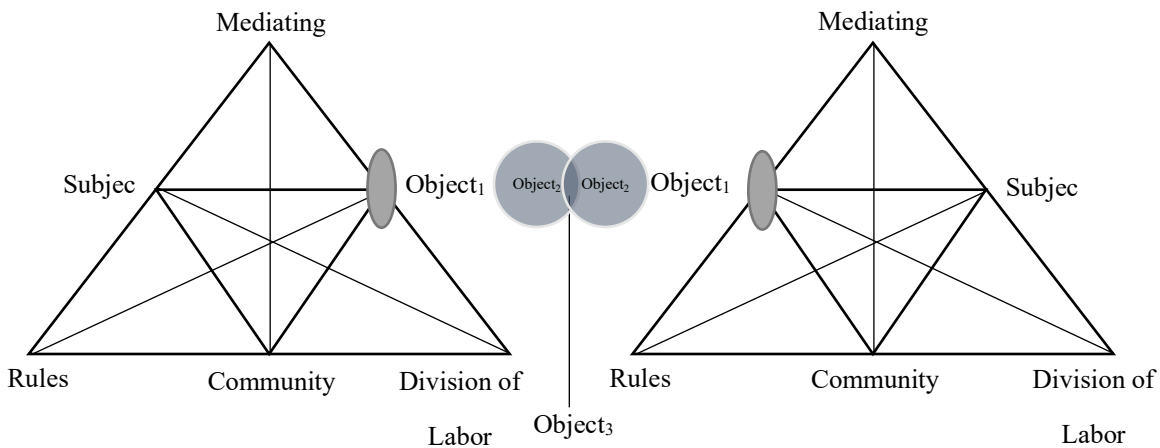

Figure 1. Third generation activity systems (minimal model)

The third-generation activity systems minimal model (*Figure 1*) identifies an object by its interactions with mediating artifacts, subject, rules, community, and division of labor. Mediating artifacts are the "tools and signs" used within a given system and derive meaning directly from the subject, community, and object. The subject is the person or persons of interest who operate in the system and function relative to the mediating artifacts, rules, community, division of labor, and the object. The community establishes rules enacted by the subject and object. The community defines its norms by rules, divisions of labor, and mediating artifacts and serves as the place of interaction for the subject and object. In addition, the community and object determine the division of labor. The division of labor influences the roles a subject will play within their community. The object is the system under operation. The other components of the system(s) influence the object until the object reaches a double bind. A double bind is a form of perceived impasse in which only specific components of the system derive benefit while the subject finds itself in a dissonant relationship with one or more of the system

components. The third generation of the model proposes two systems to define and establish the same object. When these systems interact, the initial object alleviates the double bind through questioning their system. Incidentally, the perceived "better" parts of each object (as a result of the system in which it has acted) become a third object.

Engeström (2009) used Bateson's theory of learning to serve as a bridge between situated learning and activity theory. This bridge identifies three levels of learning. These levels support the structure of the current study toward understanding teacher navigation within their organizations. Learning I encompass acquisition and conditioning. This is done in a given school system as the teacher navigates their role. Learning II includes rules and patterns that eventually create the double bind. For the purposes of the current study, Learning II includes the school functions (school staffing action, administrative support, salary, faculty influence, and student motivation, among others) outlined by Ingersoll (2001), Ruhland (2001), and Clark et al. (2014). Learning III begins the process of posing questions to resolve tensions imposed by the double bind (Engeström, 2009). Expansive learning thus is the systematization of Learning III to describe the ways in which people navigate their double binds. Within the current study, Learning III is the theoretical space in which teachers navigate their options when migrating systems (SBAE programs). The "learning challenge" set forth by Engeström (2009) systematized the acquisition of new ways of operating when a "correct answer" is not evident. This "learning challenge" speaks to the proposed expansive learning process undergone by migrating teachers when weighing different organizational systems (schools) of operation.

Ingersoll (2001) identified teacher migration as a function of the school system. School problems range from school staffing problems to negative organizational conditions. Organizationally, Ingersoll and Smith (2003) noted specifically that organizations benefit from appropriate amounts of turnover, school districts included. Turnover can aid in integrating innovation and new ideas (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). Teacher turnover, however, is not occurring in such limited amounts that it is a benefit to schools. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) indicated the high costs of employee turnover especially in fields requiring heightened levels of "commitment, continuity, and cohesion" (p. 2). Teacher mobility demonstrated utility among four potential options: staying, moving within a district, moving between districts, and leaving teaching (Feng & Sass, 2012). Furthermore, teacher turnover is delineated as an indication of the organizational function of schools. Therefore, the current study uses a theoretical framework to frame schools as the organizational systems being navigated outside of personal factors at play in decision-making.

Our study examines the underlying factors leading teachers through their "Learning III" within expansive learning in a modified third generation activity systems model (Engeström, 2009). In the case of teacher program transitions, we conceptualize Learning III to describe the process where teachers begin to question their fit in a given program. We propose this questioning to arise for a variety of reasons, personal or professional, that need further examination. We offer Engeström's (2009) approach to Bateson's expansive learning as a frame for the various considerations a teacher weighs in their decision to migrate programs. We speculate these considerations are made in terms of the acquisition of a new means of operation within SBAE. The new means of operation are the central focus of our current study and will be the primary target of investigation.

Methodology

As we explored why teachers move, how teachers are challenged by the process, and what systems are in place to aid in successful program migrations, we utilized a descriptive phenomenological approach; the phenomenon in question being teacher learning. "The empirical phenomenological approach involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the

experience" (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). The study of SBAE teacher migration requires the unique approach phenomenology provides that accounts for both the experience and the grounding of experience in reflective meaning making (Van Manen, 1990). Phenomenology approaches problems on two levels: original data obtained through open-ended questions and researcher description of experiential structures based on interpretation through reflective analysis (Moustakas, 1994). All teachers in the study were providing reflection on their program move, having migrated at least once within the last one to three years. The goal of phenomenology seeks to move beyond description of a shared experience (in this case, learning through SBAE teacher program migration) to what it means reflectively for individuals who have had the experience (Moustakas, 1994). To this end, the vignettes included in our research seek to provide context for the *epoche*; the approach of the researcher and attempt to remove judgement, but instead situate the researcher in the context of the phenomena (Merriam, 2009). Another important component of the phenomenological design involves viewing the participants as co-researchers (Moustakas, 1994). It is with this tenet in mind that our research took an iterative approach, going back to the study participants after data interpretation to ensure accuracy in the narrative presented. It is not the intent of our approach to be generalizable, however, having experienced the phenomenon, we expect transferability in the ways the experience was reflected in the data and our analysis and conclusions.

Sample and Data Collection

SBAE Teachers self-identified as migrating teachers through participation in an online discussion group and opted into the study after initial outreach by the researcher. Fourteen SBAE teachers were recruited; two were excluded from the study as teachers who changed licenses within schools rather than changing programs. Five did not respond after three attempts at follow up. The final sample for this study consisted of eight SBAE teachers located throughout the United States. All teachers in the study had experienced at least one SBAE program migration and ranged in teaching experience from one to sixteen years. Table 1 outlines participants by pseudonym, years of teaching experience, and years between migrations at the time of the study.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Pseudonym	Teaching Experience
Amber	• 17 years teaching experience • 15 years at traditional high school • 2 years at current career center
Bethany	• 16 years teaching experience • 8 years in traditional high school • 7 years in traditional high school • 1 year in current traditional high school
Caden	• 7 years teaching experience • 6 years in traditional high school • 1 year in current traditional high school
Jenny	• 13 years teaching experience • 1 year in traditional high school • 11 years in traditional high school • 1 year in current traditional high school (new state)

Table 1

Participant Profiles Continued…

Jeff	• 2 years teaching experience
	• 1 year in traditional high school
	• 1 year in current traditional high school
Jim	• 1 year of teaching experience
	• Moving for upcoming school year
Karly	• 15 years teaching experience
	• 13 years in traditional high school
	• 2 years in current traditional high school
Lisa	• 14 years teaching experience
	• 12 years in traditional high school
	• 2 years in current traditional high school

Interviews occurred via the Zoom platform to allow audio recording for subsequent transcription and ranged in length from fifteen minutes to sixty minutes. Participants engaged in a dialogue around six main questions: 1) Tell me about your program; 2) How did you arrive at your current program? 3) What have been the biggest challenges in your program transition? 4) What have been the most rewarding aspects of your program transition? 5) What are your long-term career plans? and 6) What advice do you have for SBAE teachers migrating programs (in process or considering)? We recognize additional research should be pursued given the amount of time the researcher was able to spend with the participants. We further argue the necessity of beginning to understand this phenomenon. Although the study of teacher migration within SBAE is in its infancy, we think it important to begin the conversation to share examples of migration processes and to engage continued study toward the conversation.

Data Analysis/Interpretation

Analysis of the transcribed interviews utilized Nvivo Qualitative Research software. *Phenomenological reduction* sought to "derive the inner structure and meaning" of the reflections conveyed regarding the SBAE teacher migration experience (Merriam, 2009). We used the theoretical framework as the basis for the phenomenological reduction (Appendix 1) and addressed the themes of navigating the systems between programs toward expansive learning (Engestrom, 2009). Themes included community, rules, mediating artifacts, object, and division of labor, subject, double-binds, and expansive learning. Each theme received a designation based on the identification by the interviewee as a factor of the vacated program or the new program. Additionally, data organized into clusters and themes through *horizontalization* with all data treated with equal weight (Merriam, 2009). The result is a "composite" structure of one interpretation of the SBAE teacher migration experience (Merriam, 2009). After multiple rounds of coding, this "composite" structure was then returned to participants for confirmatory review.

Findings

The research questions guiding this study asked: 1) why do agriculture teachers migrate programs?, 2) what challenges agriculture teachers about the migration process?, and 3) what systems aid agriculture teachers in successful program migrations? While, in total, the interviewees identified with thirteen themes relative to the activity systems framework, five major shared themes emerged. The most themes most heavily discussed included community, rules, mediating artifacts, expansive learning, and subject levels within the new program. Across the sample, teachers discussed their current

program as a greater driver than their former program in the decision to migrate. Many noting, as Caden did: "Moving programs has kept me in the profession; moving schools made every bit of a difference."

Why Move? My Time

Our first research question sought to address teacher motivations for migration. Teachers identified several reasons for why they chose migration but focused their attention on how they moved and the ways their new program made their move a positive choice. Among the reasons identified for migrating were family, time, administrative support, community support, and pay. Participants overwhelmingly identified having more time as a positive function of changing programs. Time, in itself, was not a theme but an overarching assumption in our theoretical framework. Time came up across themes, and identified positively, across components of the systems, toward family relationships and the ability to reset priorities toward work-life balance. Karly commented, "It's definitely the right [choice]. My family… they tell me I'm happier, and a lot of my friends tell me I'm happier. I don't always notice…But I am, I know I am." Furthermore, teachers discussed both the time required and allotted to be better teachers because of changing programs. Amber noted:

> I think the fact that I had to change things and move the apple cart around has been a really good thing for me. It's got me to think about my teaching again, why I do certain things, and what's really important.

Altogether, teachers identified their work as more than a job; they expressed commitment to the profession beyond a means of making a living. Karly added a few rewards of being an SBAE teacher regardless of the program:

> Knowing that no matter what school you're in that has FFA and Ag Ed, you're going to make a difference in a kid's life and seeing [their development] right away even though I was a total stranger to them. It's rewarding to know that if you're doing a program and it's working the way National FFA talks about that it can really happen.

Deep commitments to students, programs, and agriculture were resounding messages throughout our conversations.

Challenges: Resources and Expectations

Research question two sought to identify the challenges SBAE teachers face in making a program migration. Teachers identified setting expectations and leveraging resources (mediating artifacts) as the main challenges with changing schools. Rules and mediating artifacts presented interchangeably as expectations dictated available resources and vice versa. Teachers shared both frustration and contentment regarding navigating expectations within their new program. Karly noted particular frustrations with feeling like a new teacher all over again: "some of [my colleagues] view me as a new teacher, like legit new out of college, because I'm new to their school." Other challenges involved establishing new expectations with students, especially among teachers who taught for more than eight years in a previous district. Bethany said:

> I told the kids, 'You practice like you want to play" and "Would you be upset at your coach if they just threw you into the game?" And they said yeah. And I said, "Well that's kind of my thing. I don't want you to feel silly when you go to a contest.'

In multiple instances, teachers worked to negotiate their expectations in relation to the students' prior experience and the expectations of the broader community they served.

Supports: Community

Our final research question sought to identify supports within the system that aided teachers in perceiving their program migration as "successful." Along with these teachers, we define a successful

career transition as a move yielding reinvigoration. The most commonly addressed theme for teacher migration within the activity systems framework was the community in the new program. Teachers talked about community as administration, alumni, students, colleagues, administrative staff, mentors, and co-teachers. Within this theme, teachers repeated overarching community support, on a variety of levels, as one of their greatest sources of validation in terms of worth and value. Lisa put it this way: "I don't even have to say anything and they're here, and they're ready, and it's the community, and parents, and everybody." Most heavily discussed were administration, students and fellow teachers. Amber commented, "This school district has been super responsive to everything; so excited that the kids are getting those opportunities." Teachers discussed the challenge of student mindset as both a frustration and a reward of their new program. As a reward, Bethany discussed:

> Seeing the seventh and eighth graders really kind of take ownership of it and get excited…So ultimately, they kind of see the starting point and the end goal." Bethany also added this about her students, "I have this great group of middle-schoolers that are excited and they want to get involved and they want to do stuff.

Our participants, however, discussed other teachers as a double-edged sword. They recognized the challenges brought on by having different expectations from their predecessors, but also sought opportunities to work with their predecessors. Amber offered, "I think you have to work with whoever was there before, because they know what the program was." In regard to current colleagues, Jeff found significant support through his peers:

> Every month or so we have one day when we go out and we just, you know…talk about students and that sort of thing, so there's a lot more of that helping each other aspect…I'm really close with my peers.

Overall, SBAE teachers found value in a renewed sense of collegial culture in their new program compared to their former and expressed a heightened sense of administrative support upon entering a new program. Lisa added, "I still have to propose the idea and I still have to back up why we need to do this, but they're just on board."

The Perks? Expansive Learning

Finally, each teacher discussed the importance of their move as reinvigorating them in the profession. Jenny advised, "I just want people to understand that if they are not happy do not choose to leave the profession. You might find somewhere else that might be your niche and you do not have to do it all." Several expressed enjoying the challenge and recognized that changing programs helped retain them in SBAE. As Jim said, "I don't know why but [my new program] has so much potential and opportunity. I'm excited for it. It will be interesting to see what we can do." Each participant offered encouragement to other teachers regarding the positives of changing programs, especially the impetus the new program provided for breaking the norm, continuing to learn, and re-evaluating their teaching practice. Lisa offered, "It's okay that they have a different program and they're doing things differently but just to make sure that it still exists and they're still kind of trying to have that positive impact on the kids." Teachers in this study thrived on the opportunities and challenges presented in their new programs. Amber noted, "I believe that if you stop learning then you really have no place in teaching because everything changes. So I think [continuing to learn] was just a bonus for me." Recognizing the opportunity to do something they are already good at, in a new environment, provided new validation that contributed to their overall longevity as an educator.

Discussion and Implications

Researcher Vignette 4: *"You couldn't have done anything differently," my principal commented about a year after I had left the high school classroom. "You had set up your program so someone could just step in and take over." I have to wonder if that actually exists and if that is a reasonable expectation.*

Can someone actually step into a program and pick-up where his or her predecessor left off? Throughout this process, teachers have repeated, "I wasn't him," and "She wasn't me." Perhaps it is less about the individual teacher and individual program. Perhaps looking beyond the individual to the broader systems in play will provide a clearer picture of the supports aiding in teacher success.

Our study offers a different lens through which to view program migration. It is by no means exhaustive, generalizable, or the end of the conversation. Rather, we offer a fresh perspective as a means to understand the expansive learning that takes place for SBAE teachers as they move programs. Our study raises challenging questions and identifies additional work for researchers, teacher educators, school districts, and SBAE teachers. In recognizing the limitations of this study, it is important to note the sample is comprised only of teachers who benefitted from their program move. Although this provides a unique narrative, we recognize this portrayal does not embody the experience of all migrating teachers. In addition, the sample is skewed toward mid-career teachers, with a higher rate of females. Additional work is necessary to evaluate differences in experience based on career stages. Our study provides a new angle on the migration conversation, recognizing the need to assess other vantage points over the common dialogue and assumptions regarding the key influencers of SBAE teacher program migration.

Additional work is necessary for researchers, teacher educators, and SBAE teachers. For research, additional work should address both motivations for migration and seek to quantify the supports that retain teachers through the migration process. Given the function community support plays in validating the worth of an SBAE teacher, additional studies should explore how individuals within the community (administrators, alumni, students, and others) view their role toward supporting SBAE. The relationships identified in this study are worthy of further attention. Specifically, how do the relationships with the community (broadly defined) impact a teacher's perception of a successful migration? How do these relational discussions shed light on the broader systems affecting School-Based Agricultural Education? Examining programs with high teacher-turnover may be an essential next step to understanding the role of community support in SBAE teacher success. Programmatically, it may also be worth considering the type of program an individual would step into: Does migration look different for teachers stepping into multi-person versus single-person departments? How does migration work differ for those stepping into a "machine" compared to those presented with opportunities to reinvigorate a program?

For teacher educators and mentors, this work lends a starting point for offering career advice. Our hope is that we can begin to consider migration as a means of retention, recognizing that, regardless of motivation, people move. Thus, teacher educators and mentors can utilize the advice of the teachers in this study as they encourage SBAE teachers to consider their career trajectory. A resounding message from those interviewed was a plea for other teachers to consider their move seriously in terms of motivations for moving. For example, Karly posed these questions, "You really have to weigh your level of unhappiness where you're at. What's driving your move? Are you bored? Are you bored because you don't want to be a teacher anymore? What's the driving force that's giving you problems?" This advice offers an additional lens through which SBAE teachers are empowered to consider their career options.

Retaining quality employees through smooth transitions also benefits school districts. School districts must consider on-boarding migrating teachers in ways that validate their experience and establish them as seasoned professionals rather than "newbies." And, although this is a noble goal, it appears very little is in place in the broader school system to help migrating teachers recognize the supports available to aid in their success. While discussing supports leading to successful migration, Bethany offered, "I think it's kind of up to individual teachers to recognize. I don't think there's really necessarily any supports in place." Yet, Jenny noted the importance of finding ways to work with those

in your building as integral to success: "A positive work environment. You have to be able to get along with your co-workers." With community discussed as such an integral piece of teacher success through migration, it behooves school districts to consider the ways their teachers are connected throughout their system of practice in terms of the mediating artifacts, rules, divisions of labor, and especially community.

This goes hand in hand with the advice offered by the teachers in our study to other SBAE teachers. Jeff advocated;

> Don't be afraid to take a job you think may not work out. I discovered so many different ways to not make a lightbulb, but my year of experience somewhere else prepared me a lot better than I thought it would for my next experience. Don't be afraid to fail.

Without careful consideration, the stress of a move may not produce the desired result and could instead lead to additional teacher attrition and community fatigue toward a revolving door of agriculture instructors. Teachers must consider what truly moves them before they make a program change but should not shy away from a potential change that may retain them in SBAE.

References

Clark, M. S., Kelsey, K. D., & Brown, N. R. (2014). The thornless rose: a phenomenological look at decisions career teachers make to remain in the profession. *The Journal of Agricultural Education, 55*(3), 43-56. doi:10.5032/jae.2014.03043

DiCarlo, M. (2014). *Opportunity to churn: teacher assignments within new york city schools.* Washington, DC: Albert Shanker Institute. Retrieved from http://www.shankerinstitute.org/blog/opportunity-churn-teacher-assignments-within-new-york-city-schools

Engeström, Y. (2009). Expansive Learning: Toward an activity-theoretical reconcepturalization. In K. Illeris, *Contemporary theories of learning: learning theorists...in their own words* (pp. 53-72). New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved from https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1085/b8aaeee9d65dccbe930dca5fe6034bbaeb4d.pdf

Feng, L., & Sass, T. (2012). *Teacher quality and teacher mobility.* Andrew Young School of Policy Studies Research Paper Series No. 12-08. doi: 10.2139/ssrn.2020373

Foster, D. D., Lawver, R. G., & Smith, A. R. (2016). *National agricultural education supply and demand study, 2015 executive summary.* The American Association for Agricultural Education. Retrieved from http://aaaeonline.org/resources/Documents/NSD%20Summary_2015.pdf

Gary, L., Taie, S., & O'Rear, I. (2015). *Public school teacher attrition and mobility in the first five years: results from the first through fifth waves of the 2007-08 beginning teacher longitudinal study.* US Department of Education. Retrieved from: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015337.pdf

Goldring, R., Taie, S., & Riddles, M. (2014). *Teacher attrition and mobility: results from the 2012-2013 teacher follow-up survey (NCES 2014-077).* Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gove/pubsearch

Haddad, B., & Velez, J. J. (2018). Feel the churn: quantifying teacher migration in California. *Proceedings of the Western Region of the American Association for Agricultural Education Conference,* pp. 97-100. Boise, ID. Retrieved from

http://aaaeonline.org/resources/Documents/Western%20Region/Meeting%202018/2018_WA
AAE_Poster_Proceedings.pdf

Ingersoll, R. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: an organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(3), 499-534. doi:10.3102/00028312038003499

Ingersoll, R. M., & Smith, T. M. (2003, May). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 30-33. Retrieved from: https://www.gse.upenn.edu/pdf/rmi/EL_TheWrongSolution_to_theTeacherShortage.pdf

Klapoetke, A., & Buttles, T. (2016). Agricultural education teacher turnover in wisconsin from 2010-2015. *Research Poster Proposal for the American Association for Agricultural Education Conference.*

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: a guide to design and implementation.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass: A John Wiley Imprint.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Putter, B. (2019, January 18). Employ millennials? here's why you should not try to retain them. *Forbes*. San Francisco, CA, United States. Retrieved from https://www.forbes.com/sites/brettonputter/2019/01/18/employ-millennials-heres-why-you-should-not-try-to-retain-them/#2216bf224207

Roberts, T., Harder, A., & Brashears, M. (. (2016). *American Association for Agricultural Education National Research Agenda: 2016-2020.* Gainesville, FL: Department of Agricultural Education and Communication.

Ronfeldt, M., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2012). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Education Research Journal, 50*(4), 4-36. doi:10.3102/0002831212463813

Ross, S. M., Wang, W., Sanders, W. L., Wright, S. P., & Stringfield, S. (1999). *Teacher mobility and effectiveness in restructuring and non-restructuring schools in an inner-city district.* Cary, NC: SAS Institute Inc. Retrieved from https://www.sas.com/govedu/edu/teacher_mobility.pdf

Ruhland, S. (2001). Factors influencing the turnover and retention of minnesota's secondary career and technical education teachers. *Research paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Career and Technical Education.*

Smith, A. R., Lawver, R. G., & Foster, D. D. (2017). *National agricultural education supply and demand study, 2016 executive summary.* Retrieved from American Association for Agricultural Education: http://aaaeonline.org/Resources/Documents/NSD2016Summary.pdf

Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy.* London, Ontario, Canada: The State University of New York.

Appendix 1: Codebook

Code Label	Description
Community-Pull[1]	The community is the space in which the subject, mediating artifacts, and object interact at the filled school. The community defines the rules and division of labor. Examples of community include: administration, alumni, local businesses, students, FFA programs, and other agriculture teachers
Community-Push[2]	The community is the space in which the subject, mediating artifacts, and object interact at the vacated school. The community defines the rules and division of labor. Examples of community include: administration, alumni, local businesses, students, FFA programs, and other agriculture teachers
Division of Labor-Pull	Division of labor defines the role the agriculture teacher plays at the filled district. Examples of division of labor include: working hours, maintenance mode, course load, roles of students or alumni, and roles within the school.
Division of Labor-Push	Division of labor defines the role the agriculture teacher plays at the vacated district. Examples of division of labor include: working hours, maintenance mode, course load, roles of students or alumni, and roles within the school.
Double Bind	Double bind references the conflict in the choice and navigation to move programs. Examples of references to double-bind may include phrasing such as: "It was hard." "I had to do the right thing for my kids." "It was just the better fit for me."
Expansive Learning	Statements of expansive learning express growth through the process or reflection on having made a positive decision. Examples of expansive learning include: "I continued learning." "I needed a new challenge." "I was able to reset my expectations."
Mediating Artifacts-Pull	"Tools and signs" used within a given system that derive meaning from the subject, object, and community at the filled program. Examples of mediating artifacts may include: facilities or resources (financial and otherwise). Mediating artifacts do not include human resources or support.
Mediating Artifacts-Push	"Tools and signs" used within a given system that derive meaning from the subject, object, and community at the vacated program. Examples of mediating artifacts may include: facilities or resources (financial and otherwise). Mediating artifacts do not include human resources or support.
Object-Pull	Object references the filled school. Examples of object reference specific operations that make up the whole school/district/program.
Object-Push	Object references the vacated school. Examples of object reference specific operations that make up the whole school/district/program.
Rules-Pull	Rules are the logistical functions of the filled program. They are interpreted by the subject and defined by the community and the object. Examples of rules include: logistical functions of the object including paperwork, copiers, busing/fieldtrips, FFA norms, and expectations.
Rules-Push	Rules are the logistical functions of a given object at the vacated school. They are interpreted by the subject and defined by the

	community and the object. Examples of rules include: logistical functions of the object including paperwork, copiers, busing/fieldtrips, FFA norms, and expectations.
Subject	The teacher navigating two programs. The teacher navigates in terms of mediating artifacts, rules, community, division of labor, and object. Examples of subject include: personal references to self, family, reflections of self-process throughout program migration.

[1]Push indicates a function of the vacated district/program

[2]Pull indicates a function of the newly occupied district/program